

GOLDEN DRUM

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BUDDHISM FOR THE WEST

C O N T E N T S

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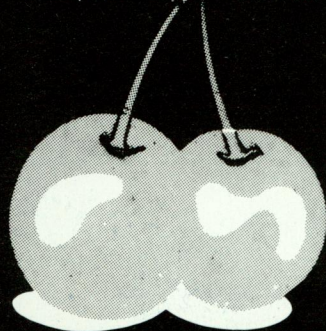
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BUDDHISM FOR THE WEST

Even nineteen years ago, when the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order (FWBO) was coming into being, the words 'Western Buddhism' had nothing more than an abstract value. There was, for sure, a rising level of interest in Buddhism. The London Buddhist Society and its satellite groups had a substantial membership; a number of important canonical works had been available in translation for many decades; great teachers and masters had visited the West to give talks and teachings; a few attempts had even been made to establish monastic Orders on our various shores. But, for all that, Buddhism was little more than an academic — or purely eccentric — curiosity. While it enjoyed a share of the limelight bestowed by the contemporary preoccupation with things Eastern, nobody could have spoken of Buddhism as one of the living religions of the Western world.

How things have changed! Today it is sometimes claimed that Buddhism is 'growing' faster than any other religion in the West. In Britain, Europe, and the USA, Buddhist centres dot the map, Buddhist texts adorn the shelves of all good bookshops, and Buddhist teachers — Eastern and Western — proclaim the *Buddha-Dharma* to gatherings of increasingly resolute practitioners and disciples. The Buddha's message, still travelling and adapting itself to circumstances as it has done for two and a half thousand years, has arrived in the West, and arrived to stay. A revolution and a renaissance has begun.

The origins of the FWBO — our wing of that revolution — were humble in the extreme. Sangharakshita had just returned to live and work in the West after spending twenty years in India. With a handful of friends, he drew up the constitution of an entirely new kind of Buddhist movement: a movement with no official members or elected councillors, which would offer Buddhism as a practical path to spiritual development, and which would serve as a context in which Westerners could follow a Buddhist way of life.

Zen Buddhism was in vogue at the time; soon it would be the turn of the Tibetan Tantra; not long since, it had been the Theravada. The Roshis, the Lamas, Rimpoches and Geshe, the Theras and Mahatheras flew in and out stirring up interest, occasionally making a substantial mark — and so remaining to develop movements of their own, each one as perfect a transplant of its native model as its disciples could fashion.

Sangharakshita — the Venerable Mahasthavira Sangharakshita, author of *A Survey of Buddhism*, editor of *The Maha Bodhi Journal*, and founder of the Triyana Vardhana Vihara in Kalimpong, who counted Theravada scholars, Tibetan incarnate Lamas, and a Chinese Ch'an yogi among his teachers — also wanted to make the Dharma available in the West. He, however, had been born in London. For twenty years he had travelled and lived in the East and embraced a completely Eastern — and Eastern Buddhist — lifestyle. He now believed, nevertheless, that Buddhism would take root in the West only when the vital core of the Dharma could be contacted here, transmitted by people who were living a *Western Buddhist* life.

To prevent exotic distraction he allowed his hair to grow, and wore his robes only for ceremonial occasions. He sought out Western cultural models and a Western language through which

to communicate the universal principles of the Buddha's teaching, and returned again and again to the heart of that teaching, always asking himself, and urging his followers to ask, 'Why did the Buddha give this advice? Where and how does it fit into the spiritual life?'

Meetings took place in a shop basement, in hired halls, in a converted warehouse; there was nothing exotic about the externals. But a movement began to take shape. Sangharakshita's talks and meditation classes, his welcoming personality and defiantly uncharismatic character attracted all kinds, from Cockney cab-drivers to university lecturers, from ambitious professionals to aspiring hippies.

Over the years, the Movement grew, spread, developed, and defined itself. Branches and new centres opened their doors, and people began to take the plunge into a Buddhist way of life: communities formed, Right Livelihood co-operatives emerged, books appeared, Order members were 'born' — who themselves became teachers and Centre-founders.

There are now about thirty FWBO contact points around the world. Some of these are large, beautifully appointed urban Centres, a few are lone Order members who tour their regions, giving classes and talks, creating the basis for a future centre. Thousands, even tens of thousands, of people are in contact with the FWBO — or whatever it is called in the non-English-speaking countries.

The Movement is of course still young, and still quite small, but it has a powerful 'identity', an unmistakable 'flavour', and an approach to the Dharma which is proving effective in the conurbations of the West and in the village localities of India. — Which is as it should be, since it is in the very nature of the Dharma that it should appeal to, and be of help to, any human being, no matter who, what, and where he or she may be.

The FWBO has, in a sense, come of age. And now it is time for it to speak with a new voice. That voice is *Golden Drum*.

The image of a golden drum appears at the heart of *The Sutra of Golden Light*, or *Suvarnabhasottama Sutra*, a composite Mahayana text dating from the fifth century C.E. The drum appears there as an image in the Bodhisattva Ruchiraketu's dream, shining everywhere with golden light like the orb of the sun, surrounded on all sides by innumerable Buddhas. As the drum is beaten, verses spring forth: verses of confession, verses of the highest and most sublime aspiration, verses of profound, all-embracing compassion. The golden drum of the Sutra is of course the voice of the Dharma itself.

Our Golden Drum too will be a voice of the Dharma, sometimes teaching, sometimes explaining, when possible rejoicing in merits, where necessary offering criticism. It will keep you in touch with what is happening in the constantly unfolding mandala of the FWBO, and will itself be an element in that mandala.

It will be a voice that no doubt speaks most directly to those who are actively involved with The Friends of the Western Buddhist Order. But if it is heard, appreciated, and welcomed much further afield, then so much the better. Our hope is that, like any other branch of our Movement, it will make new friends all the time.

Dharmachari Nagabodhi

WHAT IS BUDDHISM?

The FWBO is a new Buddhist movement. It is, in a sense, the response of the Buddhist tradition to the condition, needs, and language of the modern world. But what is Buddhism itself, in essence? Here, Dharmachari Tejananda, chairman of our Bristol Centre, attempts to put it in a nutshell.



Buddhism is essentially the way to Enlightenment: a way that any human being can pursue, given the necessary energy, idealism, and willingness to change.

Enlightenment can be described as the total fulfillment of human potential, a fulfillment first realized and taught by Siddhartha Gautama — the Buddha, or 'Enlightened One' — in India 2500 years ago. Millions of people have since followed his teachings, and 'Buddhism', or the Buddha-Dharma as it is more properly called, has taken root in many human societies. In the present century, a distinctively Western Buddhism has begun to emerge.

Whatever form Buddhism takes it always serves the same end: Human Enlightenment. Its approach is entirely pragmatic.

What Enlightenment is 'in itself' cannot be described in words and concepts. This does not mean that it is impossible to gain an appreciation of it, or a feeling for it, even if indirectly. We can make an initial approach by trying to understand some of the recorded words and teachings, or by familiarizing ourselves with the lives of enlightened human beings.

The essence of the teaching is that *unenlightenment*, when compared with Enlightenment, is an essentially unsatisfactory state. It is unsatisfactory not because our experience of life is necessarily painful (it might indeed be predominantly happy), but because we fail to understand our own nature: we fail to see things as they are. Our thoughts and actions arise from a deeply held conviction — an implicit belief — that we and the people and things around us are solid, permanent and dependable, and that true happiness and fulfillment can be gained from them. In fact, as is quite easy to acknowledge on a relatively superficial, rational level, nothing is permanent: possessions wear out, our own bodies are subject to disease and ageing; ultimately, loss or death are unavoidable.

The deepest human suffering arises from the inevitable conflict between our belief in, and longing for, permanence, and the impermanence which we actually experience in all that we cling to and hold dear. True happiness, then, can only be found in a state of non-clinging, of freedom from the delusion of permanence; a state in which the nature of mind and being has reached complete accord with reality.

However, such an account is just one among many possible perspectives on Enlightenment. It suggests what the Enlightened person has *overcome*. But if we study the lives and actions of the Buddha and his Enlightened followers through the centuries, we will glimpse

the more 'positive' qualities of Enlightenment.

Here, the unfailing keynote is active compassion: a selfless, unstinting regard for the needs of others, an altruism firmly based on the clarity, understanding, insight, and sympathy of someone who has broken through the apparent distinction between 'self' and 'other'.

Buddhist literature abounds with examples of selflessness. The Buddha's immediate and always appropriate response to the needs of people he encountered, whether princes or villagers, merchants or brigands, is reflected in the actions of his Enlightened followers. Their perfectly natural, spontaneous actions appear to us as 'outward expressions' of mental states quite beyond our comprehension. Even so, they provide us with a glimpse of an ideal to which we can respond, and towards which we can move.

Movement, or growth, towards that ideal involves the realization in one's own life of successively higher levels of consciousness and being. These — and the state of full Enlightenment they ultimately lead to — do not arise by chance; they must be systematically developed. This involves more than the undertaking of certain formal practices. In traditional terms, it involves, above all, 'Going for Refuge' — seeking one's 'refuge' not in limited, impermanent, unsatisfactory things, not in one's own limited self-view, but in the state of perfect 'selflessness', Enlightenment itself; especially as embodied in the 'Three Jewels' — the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

The Buddha is the Enlightened human being — ourselves in potentiality. All human beings can become Buddhas. Going for Refuge to the Buddha means active commitment to gaining Enlightenment.

The Dharma is both the Truth — true perception of things as they are — and all that an individual must do to realize that Truth. In the second sense, the Dharma comprises many different ways of training, but all have three main aspects or stages:

Firstly, a basis of action must be established which is more aware and less self-orientated: a basis of 'skilful' rather than 'unskilful' states of mind. 'Unskilful' states arise out of our clinging to the delusion of permanence. We constantly maintain this delusion through the twin reactions of craving and grasping for anything which reinforces it, and hatred or revulsion against anything which threatens it. These reactions may give us a relative sense of secure, stable 'selfhood', but only at the expense of the pain which we inevitably experience when our delusion is forcibly disrupted

by reality — as, for instance, when we encounter death.

'Skilful' states are the direct opposite of delusion, craving and revulsion. Skilful action arises from states such as clarity, altruism and disinterested love, or compassion. In practice, skilful action is developed through the observance of various precepts, or principles of training.

This leads naturally to the stage of meditation. Through this, the development of skilful mental states — especially awareness and emotional positivity — is intensified. This enables one to bring about a far greater refinement and integrity of being, but at the same time, more robustness and resilience. Dwelling in completely skilful states such as these tends to attenuate the sense of a dichotomy between 'self' and 'other'. This, in turn, provides the basis for 'insight' meditation: methods which are devised to enable the individual to see through their self-delusion once and for all.

The ultimate realization of this is the stage of Wisdom — united with Great Compassion — which is Enlightenment itself. Going for Refuge to the Dharma, then, is one's attempt to practise and actualize it.

None of this can be done in a vacuum; we can neither develop wisdom nor express compassion without involving other people: we need the Sangha. To see through our self-delusion and to develop selfless altruism is very difficult indeed. We need support, advice, help, warmth, admonishment, criticism: in other words, friendship from others similarly committed to Enlightenment. At the same time, we ourselves need to develop these qualities towards others: we have to learn to give unselfishly, to sympathize and to empathize with other people. The 'network' which thus builds up, of giving and receiving in friendship, on the shared basis of commitment to the Three Jewels, is the Sangha. To Go for Refuge to the Sangha is to participate — with ever increasing wholeheartedness — in it.

Buddhism involves neither abstract speculative philosophizing about the nature of reality, nor passive dependence on religious formulae, blind belief, or vicarious 'salvation'. It is a direct, practical means of cutting through the self-delusion and self-centredness which limits us and which is the source of unsatisfactoriness in our individual and collective lives. It is a way to realize our noblest and most truly human aspirations: to be most effective in fostering the welfare of other living beings. As such, it constitutes a way to fulfillment — and an implicit challenge — for all humanity.

Meditation, the Direct Method

Beginners' Meditation Classes, held at all FWBO Centres, offer most people their first point of contact with our Movement. Dharmachari Nagabodhi introduces the realm of meditation, and explains its place in the Buddhist path.

You've done a hard day's work. You're tired, bleary-eyed, and dull-minded; you'd like nothing better than to get back home, make yourself a drink, and sit down in front of the television for an hour or two. But you can't: you've arranged to meet a friend and go to a concert.

At first the performance hardly touches you, you barely even notice it since your mind is wandering so much — replaying the day's events, smarting over a snub, planning the weekend break. But gradually the music begins to work its magic and encroaches on your thoughts, lifting you momentarily out of yourself. Maybe it's only the powerful, dramatic sections that reach you first, but as the movements pass by, you find yourself being drawn deeper and deeper into the melodies, rhythms and moods, and at last captivated by the subtler beauty of the piece.

Later, you walk home realizing that you are feeling better: energized, enriched, and enlivened: you can see colours again, appreciate the sharp freshness of the night air, recognize that all those objects jostling about you are people! Somehow the music has gnawed its way through your senses and changed your state of mind; it has 'raised' your level of consciousness.

If we take any note of our experience, we ought to be able to recognize that we enjoy — or suffer — an infinite range of mental states, an entire gradation of 'states of consciousness', from the lifeless and cramped, to the expansive and sensitive. And if we are at all mindful we will be able to recognize that our general state of consciousness can be powerfully influenced by the activities we engage in.

There are many contexts in which we can experience the kind of positive transformation suggested by the concert story: getting out into the countryside, enjoying an intimate conversation with a close friend, or taking some physical exercise — particularly if it is a form that requires discipline and concentration . . . There are many ways in which, working through our body or our physical senses, we can make an 'indirect' impact on our mind — waking

ourselves up a little more, calming down anxious states, developing confidence and emotional warmth.

Many people are attracted to the arts, to Hatha Yoga or Karate, or take regular breaks from the city for this very reason. These 'indirect methods' can have a strong effect on the mind, often without demanding much in the way of conscious initial effort on our part. However, this effect has limits.

The human mind has mountains of hidden potential — for inspiration, creativity, vision, and altruism — of which an indirect method can show little more than the foothills. If you want to climb higher then you will have to take up the practice of meditation, which is the *direct* method of working on the mind. Sitting quietly in meditation, free from external distractions of any kind, we work with our mind *on our mind*, and try to take the transformation still further.

There are many kinds of meditation technique. In the Buddhist tradition alone there are hundreds, if not thousands, of specific methods. All of them are tools with which we can work directly on our state of mind. Some are aimed at overcoming hatred, anxiety, or greed, others stimulate the arising of lucidity, loving kindness, or clear understanding. They are not easy to practise, but their effects are very pure and very powerful. Between them they offer a unique key to the limitless riches and resources of the mind.

In the Buddhist tradition, all these numerous meditation practices fall into two major categories; they are either *Samatta* or *Vipassana* methods.

A *Samatta* practice is one which helps us to calm down — and even temporarily suspend — the flow of vague, superficial, and confused thoughts that occupy so much of our mental space. Our minds are capable of original ideas, objective thought, of receptivity to beauty, even profound insights. And yet we spend most of our time caught up, often quite uncomfortably, in the turbulent surf that dances on the outermost fringes of the mind, obsessed by petty cravings, beset by minor irritations and resentments, sapped by directionless anxieties. As a consequence we have no clarity, no potency, no peace, and little inner contentment.

By taking up a simple concentration practice like the 'mindfulness of breathing', or the more emotionally-based *metta bhavana* ('development of loving-kindness'), two *samatta* practices which are taught at all FWBO centres, we learn that it is possible to break through that surf, and strike out into the calmer, deeper reaches that lie just a little way beyond.

When explained, these techniques sound simple, but they are not so easy to practise. There is no magic to them, no gimmick involved. They are no more and no less than reliable tools. If we apply them honestly and conscientiously they will not only teach us a lot about

ourselves, but will take us high into the realms of meditative experience, to profoundly satisfying states of calm, inner harmony, imagination, and energy. They can help us change our lives.

A *Vipassana* practice is one that stimulates the arising of insight. While a *samatta* practice may point the way to change, and invest us with the emotional and mental resources required to effect that change, *vipassana* practice acts as a kind of trigger for change. Insight is something which transforms our fundamental perception of life, our vision of reality. If insight arises, we cannot but change.

To give an example, we may fully accept that everything — including ourselves — is impermanent. Yet how many of us live or act from that knowledge? The fact is that our knowledge, our understanding, even, is intellectual; it is not *insight*. If we had insight into impermanence, we would see everything in a new way, *see* everything as it is affected by that truth. This would have enormous implications in every area of our lives.

The ultimate purpose of the Buddhist life is to see reality face to face, to see things as they are: completely, from our depths, and to be transformed by that vision. *Vipassana* practices, like the contemplation of impermanence, or the contemplation of the links of conditioned existence, are extremely powerful, to be undertaken only by those with a firm basis of *samatta* practice. The truth, after all, can shatter and burn; 'Humankind cannot stand very much reality.'

The ocean of meditation is as vast and deep as the mind itself. It offers the greatest adventure a human being can undertake. And yet it is so easy to set out! All you have to do is go along to an FWBO centre. There are classes with full instruction for beginners every week.



Points of Contact

FWBO centres, and there are now 25 of them spread around the world — attract hundreds, if not thousands, of people to their doors every week. Nicolas Soames, a Centre 'user' for many years, offers a glimpse through their doors.

Solitary practice is a difficult and lonely business, particularly when the winds of distraction and doubt are swirling around outside so noticeably — and so continuously. The ease of the initial enthusiasm, which blots out the sounds of the moaning winds for a while, disappears early on, well before the bedrock of true commitment has been reached. Once again, there we are, immersed in the bright baubles of our hi-tech, dangerously comfortable, twentieth century life.

It doesn't seem to matter what the practice is, but whereas with a technique like Judo you can keep yourself going with the short term goals of gaining belts, and with a musical instrument you can do much the same with grade exams, a satisfactory award scheme for meditation has yet to be devised.

But keeping going is a real problem, for the reasons that drive us to an FWBO centre to learn meditation in the first place are not resolved after a few months or even a year or two. And I know — it is nine years since I first walked through the doors of the FWBO. Then again it may just be that I'm a slow learner.



The near decade has allowed me, however, a certain perspective on FWBO centres, particularly as I have always lived outside a formal community, with my wife and two children. I have also travelled fairly extensively, seeing not just FWBO centres abroad — notably in India — but also other Buddhist communities from the borders of Tibet, to Malaysia and to the historic remains of Indonesia.

The first comment that has to be made is that FWBO centres are unique, or more precisely, they have an atmosphere unique to themselves, tangible yet elusive. It is strongly noticeable when you enter a centre for the first time, whether it is one of the main, urban, public centres, or a temporary centre, such as a retreat in a school (I think of them as mobile centres, for the atmosphere and environment that is created is much the same), or a formal retreat centre.

The other day, I dropped into Hockney's, the restaurant associated with the Croydon Centre, to have a *haute cuisine* vegetarian meal and watch a historic Japanese film. There was nothing ostensibly linking it with the strongly Buddhist environment of the London Buddhist Centre, or the more intimate surroundings of the West London Buddhist Centre housed in a Georgian terrace behind Notting Hill. Yet between all three there is an unmistakable common thread. I found it even in the totally different setting of central India. In the chaos of a Maharastrian town such as Poona or Aurangabad, the feeling of a centre would emerge from a hut or house run as a meeting place by the FWBO (or TBMSG as the Movement is known there).

This was a feeling I first noticed at my first centre, 'Pundarika', in north London. It was, in reality, a converted warehouse in a sea of squatted houses scheduled for demolition, but to me it was — and will remain in memory — a slightly austere but vibrant jewel of a place, where there was a strong sense of collective effort fuelled by individual practice, underpinned by the metta and mindfulness being put into action.

It was in the mid 1970's, a time of much alternativeness, but I remember thinking that as I was incapable of making any worthwhile value judgements on the practices themselves — experience could be the only possible judge — I was forced to go by the people. I concluded that I would rather be like those I met at Pundarika than any others I had come across. It seemed a rather naive idea at the time, and sounds just as naive now, but I can think of many worse decisions I have made.

Being active in many areas, both professionally and socially, and being committed to a family life, at least while the children were young, I did not follow the direct route of Beginners' Night — Friends' Night — men's community — gardeners' or builders' co-operative —

frequent men's retreats — mitrahood and ordination; but then no rulebook forced my hand. I have done most of those things, sometimes in an odd order — which demonstrates the flexibility of the centre system.

For some years I went to regulars' classes, and then mitra study groups, and stretched my busy diary even further by including some Yoga classes. I made time for the range of retreats offered by the FWBO: men's retreats at Padmaloka, meditation retreats at Vajraloka, and family retreats that we set up with various other families with young children. For a time I developed a pattern of staying in Sukhavati men's community one night a week, an experience which I much appreciated. I offered the FWBO some of my experience in other areas, which resulted in articles for the Newsletter, and Judo events at Padmaloka as part of the martial arts programme. And my wife, Jennifer, a musician, did the same, giving concerts and lectures on Mozart and Schubert.

As my circumstances changed, so did my regular attendance at a formal centre. Evening Judo practices became a more urgent demand, and the only shrine I entered for months on end was the shrine room I had built in my attic. In a strange way, after some years, I regarded that attic as a kind of FWBO centre, a small wayside somewhere along Hadrian's Wall, within spearthrow of the painted Picts. And in fact generations of Judo friends and 'Friends' friends have been through that little attic, and meditated and practised Judo and Yoga down in my dojo on the other side of Roman Verulamium.

Generations of new faces, also, passed through the London Buddhist Centre, which is, I suppose, nominally my 'local'. I would turn up for a festival day for a breath of fresh air after months of murk, and many of the faces would be strange. Yet others would be warmly familiar, bearing new names perhaps, but the same clear and direct friendliness, though noticeably stronger and firmer. Each time, I received a fresh input of inspiration, a bit like the bolt of urgency I felt when standing beneath the big bronze Buddha at Kamakura — except that the feeling came from living people, which is an important difference.

Gradually I became aware that FWBO centres are too young to rely on a tradition built by the history of years into the bricks and mortar, and that they simply reflect the people who attend them. These are people who view life differently in detail, but who are working towards a common ideal. And ultimately therefore, each person within the FWBO, when grounded in practice, can be a Centre even in the middle of Trafalgar Square. And that is quite an ideal to strive for.

Living the Life

The FWBO offers a 'world within the world', rooted in Buddhist values and in the aspirations of individual Buddhists. Nagabodhi outlines some of the major elements in this 'new society'.

Meditation, talks and lectures, study groups, Dharma courses, Hatha Yoga, Karate, 'Tai Chi, massage, 'pujas', communication-exercises, plays, poetry readings and films . . . The publicity material put out by any FWBO centre suggests that a lot is going on. But how does the FWBO differ from any other group that lures the public in with exciting events and exotic techniques?

The fact is that it is quite radically different. Events, experiences and techniques are indeed on offer, but they are not what the FWBO is really *about*; in themselves, they are doors to something far greater: an entire way of life.

Buddhism is rooted in a human ideal and in human potential. Having nothing to do with any god, it offers help to those who wish to embark on a path of higher development. It is about radical self-transformation towards whatever notion of perfection one is able to entertain.

As a Buddhist movement, the FWBO has precisely this purpose. No matter how powerful, none of the teachings and methods it makes available will have much more than a superficial effect unless set in the context of a life that provides scope and space for change to take place, and in which a commitment to change has arisen. No one can make much progress with meditation, for example, if they are only interested in its novelty value, or if they live in a chaotic house, surrounded by noise, arguments, unsympathetic friends or relatives, trapped in a fixed way of being by everyone else's habitual view of them. For a while, meditation may act as an occasional compensation, but in time, the obvious contradictions in the situation will give rise to painful conflict.

Many people are aware of this problem, whether they have learned to meditate or not. Anyone who has had even a momentary experience of their deeper, more substantial 'side' must wonder from time to time how to reconcile those fuller potentialities with the relatively superficial lives they reluctantly admit they are leading. They grasp at impossible straws, hatch extreme and frankly unrealistic schemes — fantasize about living in a cave, travelling to the East, or starting a self-

sufficient small-holding somewhere far from the rat-race . . . but very rarely does anything come of it.

One thing that the FWBO can immediately offer such people is a 'retreat' — perhaps the first substantial step that many take in the direction of a saner life. Here, a number of people get together in the country to form a temporary community for a few days, or even weeks. The routine is balanced and regular, external distractions are few, the arrangements simple. In these ideal conditions they meditate and perform a range of other spiritual practices, agree to create periods of silence, and in between enjoy communication which is based on shared awareness and shared aspiration.

While the retreat lasts, they live a truly 'Buddhist' life, in which every moment, every conversation and thought somehow contributes to the discovery and fuller development of what is best and richest in them. As the retreat progresses they come to know, and nurture, a truer, more radiant being who

Co-op workers in London



resides within them.

Even an occasional dip into the retreat world can have enormous benefits. Those who pause in this way even once or twice a year cannot but take something of that new self back with them to their 'normal' lives — and find the clarity and strength required to make essential adjustments and modifications.

For many, regular visits to a centre, the occasional retreat, and a progressive upgrading of their lives is enough to keep them in tune with the calls of their spiritual ideal. Others, however, perhaps because they feel a more urgent commitment to spiritual development, or simply because they find it practically impossible to reconcile Buddhist activities with their home and work environments, decide to take things still further.

In the early days of the FWBO, the sight of tearful retreatants hanging around on the last day, reluctant to return to their ordinary lives, was commonplace. They did not want to return to homes where there would be no encouragement to meditate, no



Breakfast in the Bombay community

sympathy for their aspirations, no conditions for their practice, or to resume jobs that were either boring or over-fraught with anxiety, which were socially useless or even downright ethically dubious. These were the ones who pioneered the FWBO's burgeoning world of communities and Right Livelihood co-operatives.

To begin with, a few people who had got to know each other at classes and on retreats found houses and flats and started to live together. Over time, gradations and levels of intensity began to emerge as they established the arrangements that best suited their



individual needs and temperaments.

Now there are perhaps forty or more residential communities spread around the Movement. They vary considerably in size, from three to twenty-plus, and each has its own distinct flavour. In some, everyone involved works in the same co-operative, or helps to run a public Dharma centre; in others the members meet for a morning meditation, an evening meal, and for regular community evenings, yet spend their days engaged in a wide variety of activities, from ordinary 'outside' jobs to meditation and Dharma study. At Samayatara, a women's community in London, each member has her own room; at Heruka, a men's community in Glasgow, all the rooms are shared by at least two people; at Dapodi, in Maharashtra, everyone eats and sleeps in just one big room.

Many community dwellers have found their spiritual needs incompatible with the dynamic of a sexually mixed living situation, so most communities are what we somewhat baldly call 'single sex'. At Vajraloka, a community in North

Wales dedicated to meditation practice, strict celibacy is practised, and ensured by rule.

It was a small step from setting up the facilities for living together to establishing a way in which fellow Buddhists could work together. Firstly came some simple, cheaply financed enterprises such as market stalls and light removals ventures. Then, as capital mounted up, hand in hand with more adventurous — even visionary — thinking, some of the businesses became more substantial, and more decisively structured so as to turn remunerative employment, a greedy devourer of time and energy, into a powerful form of spiritual practice for those involved.

Not all FWBO co-ops are big or financially powerful; in Brighton there is just one small building and decorating business, employing about four men. But some are doing very well indeed; in Croydon, the Rainbow Co-operative turns over some £350,000 per annum, creates a net surplus of £65,000 a year, and supports about forty people. All the co-operatives aim to provide their

members with ethically skilful work, to devote all profits to Dharma activities, and to give Buddhists a chance to work together, thus learning how to apply Buddhist principles in one of the most challenging areas of daily life.

Between them the Centres, communities, and co-operatives offer almost anything, from a friendly evening of meditation and Dharma study, to a completely Buddhist environment where it becomes meaningful to talk about, and undertake, 'total commitment' to Buddhist ideals and a Buddhist life — a world within the world, a 'new society'.

No one has to go any further into this world than they choose; all are free to come and go as they please. Anyone is free to find some like-minded people and set up something new, thus adding yet another dimension to the Movement: perhaps an arts centre, or a medical centre, a retreat community, or a new study group . . .

Like the people involved with it, the FWBO itself is developing and changing all the time. Perhaps one day it will be perfect.

who is SANGHARAKSHITA?

What are the qualities that account for the remarkable achievement of the FWBO's founder? Dharmachari Abhaya offers some suggestions.

10 **T**here is a story, now well known in the FWBO, which tells of Sangharakshita sitting in a train somewhere in India in the late sixties, holding up a letter, and exclaiming to a friend: 'Do you know what this means? A new movement!'

That remark, far from being his impulsive reaction to the letter (from the English Sangha Trust discouraging him from returning to England), was in fact a clear-sighted response. During his recent two-year stay in England he had seen the urgent need for a new approach to Buddhism in the West. Now came a declaration of intent from which he would never veer.

The new movement (initially called 'The Friends of the Western Sangha') was born several months later, in London. Almost twenty years old now, it is well into its sapling stage. Looking at his achievement as founder of the Movement and head of the Western Buddhist Order, one might isolate Sangharakshita's quality of steadfastness and say that here is a man who follows what he sees to be the truth with unswerving determination.

But there is a misleading hint of dourness about such a description. It is true that he has never flinched or lost patience in the face of obstacles encountered in running the Movement over the years, perhaps the most formidable being people's unwillingness to change! But, as he put it in a recent interview, 'To me it seems I'm just living my life; I'm doing what I think it's right to do, and that's that'. This has an almost casual ring to it, suggesting no grim gritting of teeth but rather a taking of everything in one's spiritual stride.

There is an element of truth in both emphases; together they suggest something characteristic of the man, a combination of strength and ease, which is, after all, a quality of the Bodhisattva, who performs his heroic deeds with a joyful spontaneity known as *lalita*, the Bodhisattva's sport or play.

The harmonization of polarities is something of a key to Sangharakshita.

'Some people say that Buddhism is just an Eastern religion. This is what some Christians in the West say. They say that because Buddhism is an Eastern religion it cannot be understood and practised by people in the West. Such Christians forget that Christianity itself is of Eastern origin. But Buddhism is, in fact, not an Eastern religion. It is a universal religion. Even though Buddhism originated in India, it spread over the whole earth. Buddhism can be understood and practised anywhere in the world, because Buddhism addresses itself to the individual human being, regardless of race, nationality, caste, sex, or age. Buddhism is, therefore, the religion of man.'

This is one of the reasons why I am a Buddhist. I believe that humanity is basically one. I believe that is possible for any human being to communicate with any other human being, to feel for any other human being, to be friends with any other human being. This is what I truly and deeply believe. This belief is part of my own experience. It is part of my own life. It is part of me. I cannot live without this belief, and I would rather die than give it up. To me, to live means to practise this belief. Therefore this belief is part of my religion. It has nothing to do with the way in which I dress, nothing to do with what I call myself. It is a matter of the way I am, the way I exist. It is the way I naturally function in the world. This is what religion really is. It is what you most truly and deeply believe. It is what you are prepared to die for. It is your life. It is what makes you what you are. It is what makes you behave in the way that you do. Religion is therefore a very important thing. In fact, it is the most important thing.'

SANGHARAKSHITA (Extracted from a talk given in Worli, Bombay: 22nd Dec. 1983. Published in booklet form as Dr. Ambedkar's True Greatness by Triratna Grantha Mala, Poona).

Many people remain throughout their lives painfully polarized at one extreme of their being. Others opt for an uneasy compromise between impulsive poles. This is not to suggest that Sangharakshita has experienced no conflicts in satisfying the demands of his 'nature'. The first volume of his memoirs, *The Thousand Petalled Lotus*, indicates that he has. But, on the whole, his life seems to have been, in one respect, a process of integration, of harmonizing opposing forces within himself.

His liking for Blake is significant here. He has always encouraged people to be themselves: not to repress, but to

create themselves: to be *individuals*. In this respect, as in others, he is, as every good teacher should be, a living example of his own teaching.

Another pair of opposites that he has succeeded in harmonizing is that of tradition on the one hand, and individual talent on the other. In a very positive sense, Sangharakshita's approach to the Dharma is impressively traditional. The sure grasp and thoroughness of his understanding of the Dharma in its fundamental principles and in its myriad forms of expression and ramification, is impressive. He has always insisted that the FWBO is non-sectarian, that it is



Nic Gemmel, Illustrated London News

not Theravada or Zen, not Mahayana as opposed to Hinayana, but a *Buddhist* movement which recognises and puts into practice what is of value in all schools and traditions.

What has also to be remembered is that he brought to this comprehensive appreciation of the tradition a considerable individual talent which has enabled him to hand on to others that tradition to which he himself is heir. This is where his genius undoubtedly lies, namely in his ability to interpret the Word of the Buddha, to bring it to meaningful life for others. It is this that has stimulated so much growth in the Movement.

He has given a fascinating account of his attraction to the figure of Saint Jerome as an expression of the archetype of the Translator. That the Movement is now flourishing in countries with such diverse cultures as England and India is evidence of his achievement as 'translator', as interpreter.

The core of his individual contribution to the ever-developing flower of the Dharma is his teaching on the Higher Evolution of the Individual, his emphasis on the Twelve Positive Nidanas — often formulated in terms of the 'Creative Mind', and, above all, his insistence (in accordance with the

Buddhism of the Buddha's day!) on the Sangha, that is, the Spiritual Community, as consisting essentially of all those who Go for Refuge to the Three Jewels, and not just those who choose a particular life-style, such as that of the monk, to express their commitment. His name, *Sangharakshita*, 'Guardian of the Spiritual Community', is very appropriate.

To direct a Movement of this scale — albeit still in the earliest stages of its growth — flashes of vision are not enough. It has to be a Vision that is sustained without break, one that continually penetrates more deeply into the essence of the matter. This depth of vision has enabled Sangharakshita to develop to a very high degree that most most difficult of skills — keeping to the Middle Way, what Buddhism is about, after all. He keeps the tendencies to both extremes well in balance. Never losing sight of the ever-opening vistas and widening horizons, he manages at the same time to keep both feet firmly on the ground. His approach is ever practical, in accord with the needs of the situation. Unrealistic flights of fancy he has always strongly discouraged. He is for clarity of thought and is firmly in line with Samuel Johnson, his literary hero, in seeing the need 'to clear the mind of cant'. One has only to be in his company when cant arises to realize this: he is merciless with it! At the same time, it must not be forgotten that the founder of the FWBO is a poet, with a share of the poet's vision, which makes for balance in his overview of things. Though he sees clearly what is before his eyes, he knows and feels the need to dream. After all, we belong, as he puts it, equally to both worlds, to the world of the senses and to the archetypal. The inward man and the outward man must not be allowed to drift apart. As he remarks at the end of one of his poems:

... History shows,
The best but live what once the poet
dreamed.

If we do our duty, his dream becomes our reality. Long may he thrive!

* cf. *St Jerome Revisited* (a special edition of *Mitrata*)

Buddham

I sat in the small hut, alone beside the shrine. Outside, the grass-covered walls of the booth had been hung with garlands, and rows of small dark-orange flower heads adorned the table on which rested a beautiful white statue of the Buddha. A few minutes earlier, I had left the silent hall where twenty-five men on this ordination retreat sat meditating, each sending out thoughts of loving kindness to those about to be ordained. As I walked the short distance to the specially built ordination hut, I saw above me the vast Indian night sky, filled with unfamiliar constellations. Before me, on a cliff face a mile away, I could just make out the dark holes of the Caves of Bhaja, a deserted Buddhist rock-cut monastery dating from the first century BCE — the Buddhist past smiling on the Buddhist present. As I sat waiting, I heard the distant beat of drums, crude and irregular — the noise of the Group, the unconscious human collectivity, from which each of the ordines was about to go forth to join the Spiritual Community.

One by one they came to the hut and took from me a flower, a candle, and a stick of incense which they offered to the shrine, signifying their gratitude and reverence for the Buddhist Ideal. Using an ancient formula, each then formally requested ordination — for the ordination can only be given to those who voluntarily ask for it, no one can be forced to receive it. Then they repeated after me the words of 'going for refuge' to the Three Jewels of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, thereby expressing their wholehearted commitment to the Ideal of Human Enlightenment. This was the central act of the ceremony. Each was pledging himself to work towards the highest human goal, in fellowship with other members of the Order. That goal is more than merely personal and each was also devoting himself to helping others to develop upon the Path.

The Ten Precepts were recited next. In chanting them after me the new Order member was not undertaking to follow any particular way of life. Rather he pledged himself to principles which are the basis of a completely ethical life — a life which is the expression of going for refuge to the Three Jewels. Most of those being ordained that week were married with families, and had full-time jobs of

various kinds. Social expectations that everyone should marry are very strong in India and there are only five unmarried Order Members there. However, since married life is likely to impose extra limitations upon anyone trying to follow the spiritual Path, most Order members world-wide prefer to remain single or, if they are already married, to refrain from acquiring extra family responsibilities. A few have taken a vow of celibacy and are called 'Anagarikas', homeless ones, and wear the traditional yellow robe on ceremonial occasions. However, the Order is neither lay nor monastic but emphasizes the primacy of commitment to the spiritual Ideal in the act of going for refuge to the Three Jewels.

So far the ceremony had been conducted in Pali, one of the canonical languages of Buddhism — probably used by the monks and nuns in the cave monastery behind us at their own ordinations. Indeed, the tradition in



An ordination at Padmaloka

which these present ordinations took place stretches back in an unbroken lineage to the Buddha himself — although to further stress commitment rather than lifestyle, Order members are not called by the traditional terms *Bhikshu* (monk) and *Upasaka* (lay-follower), but all, whether married or single, are *Dharmacarīs* (m) or *Dharmacarīnis* (f): 'followers of the Dharma' — the Dharma being the 'Truth' or the 'Teaching'.

But the next part of our ceremony was in Hindi, for few of the ordines spoke English. (In fact, on this occasion, all spoke Marathi as their mother tongue — Hindi is used because it is the official language of the Republic of India.) I carefully recited another version of the same Ten Precepts expressive of their positive spirit, trying to get my tongue to differentiate the subtle sounds of Hindi.

Those who were taking this step,



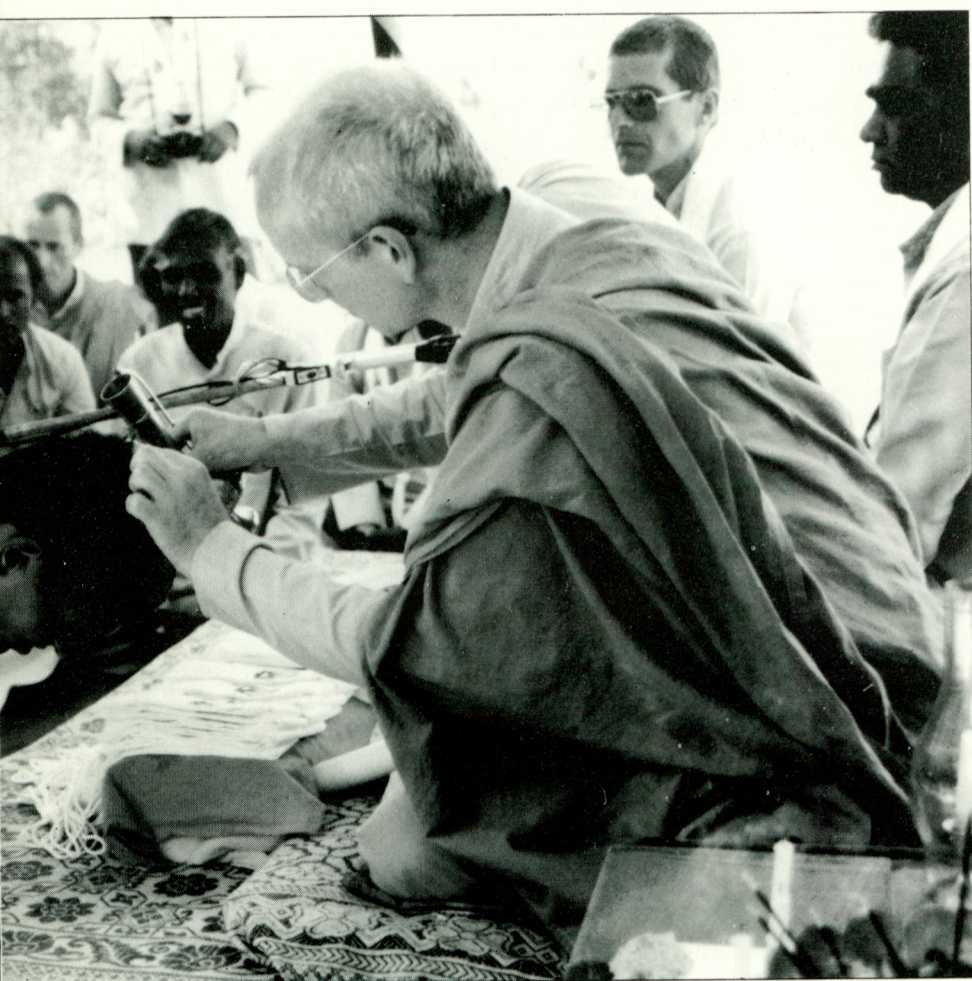
Public ordinations at Sadhamma Pradeep

perhaps the most important in their lives, had been preparing themselves for a long time. They had all attended a number of preliminary retreats. All had been accepted for ordination by the Order members who knew them, and by Sangharakshita, the head of the Order. One had asked for ordination almost six years ago and only now was considered ready. This moment in the hut, reciting the formula of going for refuge to the Three Jewels and the Ten Precepts before a senior member of the Order, was of the greatest importance to every one of them, and their faces shone with happiness. Each expressed in his own way his consciousness of the high and serious step he was taking; some smiling, almost dancing, and some with a kind of solemnity, aware that they were setting out on a nearly impossible task. The refuges and precepts recited, I then gave each of them the mantra of the

At the heart of the FWBO is the Western Buddhist Order, an expanding community of individuals who are firmly committed to the Buddhist Ideal.

Subhuti, the first Order member, after Sangharakshita, to have conducted ordinations communicates the spirit of ordination — and of the Order.

saranam gacchami



Buddha or Bodhisattva upon whom he wished to meditate. These mantras all derive from the symbolic system of Mahayana Buddhism and convey in sound form particular aspects and qualities of the Enlightened Individual. Each of the Buddhas or Bodhisattvas embodies Enlightenment from a particular point of view, so by meditating upon that figure and repeating his mantra, one will be brought into contact with Enlightenment and will thereby be able to reveal it in one's own mind. Repeating the mantra after someone who has a greater experience of the qualities it invokes acts as a kind of introduction to the Buddha or Bodhisattva, forming a connection which one can deepen and intensify through one's own practice.

Finally, I told each of them his new name, chosen in advance by Sangharakshita. Each name expressed

some spiritual quality, and symbolized the fact that its new owner had died to his old life and had set out upon a fresh one, founded firmly on the principle of human perfectability.

Throughout that week the ceremonies continued, three or four each night, led alternately by Anagarika Kamalasila, Suvajra, and myself. For the first time, ordinations into the Western Buddhist Order were being performed by Order members other than Sangharakshita. This was a most important step for the Order — the moment, in a sense, when it started to come of age, beginning to be truly independent of its founder. Over the past seventeen years, since the Order's establishment in London in 1968, Sangharakshita had personally ordained about 270 men and women of some twenty nationalities, themselves now carrying out Buddhist activities in fifteen or so countries. With the seventeen

Indians we ordained that week a new era had opened up for the Order.

These ceremonies were conducted in private, taking place simply between the ordinee and the senior Order Member officiating. This signified the new Dharmacari's readiness to carry out his pledge to follow the spiritual Path whether anyone else would or not. At the end of the week, however, came a public ceremony, in the presence of other Dharmacaris and Dharmacarinis and of mitras, friends, and relations who had made the long journey by train from Pune or Bombay.

A crowd of three or four hundred gathered in the noon heat to witness this important event. The ceremony was more or less the same as the one followed at the private ordinations. Dressed in his yellow anagarika's robes, Kamalasila led, and all the ordinees chanted together after him the various Pali and Hindi verses. He invested each of them with their *kesa*, a stole of white cloth emblazoned with the Three Jewels wreathed in fire upon a red lotus. (Order members wear their kesas on retreats and public occasions.) At this moment they formally became full members of the Western Buddhist Order (known in India as the Trailokya Bauddha Mahasangha — 'The Buddhist Order of the Three Worlds').

At this public ceremony the new Dharmacaris dedicated themselves to the goal of Enlightenment before the Spiritual Community and before society as a whole. They now took their place in the Western Buddhist Order, a Spiritual Community of men and women dedicated to developing themselves as individuals and to working together to transform the world in accordance with Buddhist principles. Sharing with other Order members a common vision, these seventeen men would find opening up for them a new depth and warmth in their relations with other Dharmacaris and Dharmacarinis. They would find themselves participating in a community, spread throughout the world, in which identity of purpose enhances individual freedom. They would find, as I had done, when they met a Dharmacari for the first time who came from a culture so different to their own as India's is to England's, that they had more in common with him than with their own average fellow countryman.

The Buddha lived, taught, and died in India, and for 1500 years His teaching was a significant and benign influence on the subcontinent. But all conditioned things, even Buddhist movements, are subject to the Law of Impermanence, and for the last 1,000 years Buddhism has been effectively dead in the land of its birth.

Until, that is, October 14th 1956, when Dr B. R. Ambedkar and 600,000 of his followers turned their backs on Hinduism and took the Refuges and Precepts from a Bhikkhu, thereby formally becoming Buddhists.

Their reasons for this dramatic mass conversion stemmed from their status within Hinduism — they were regarded as 'Untouchables'. Their touch was held to pollute a caste Hindu and they were denied many basic human freedoms. Wells and public tanks were forbidden to them, they could not even enter the temples of their own religion. They lived in ghettos on the outskirts of the villages, and were only allowed to do their 'traditional' work — those tasks that the caste Hindus considered polluting — cleaning latrines, removing the corpses of humans and animals, or just scavenging. For centuries, education or any form of social or economic advancement were denied to them, and all the while they were subject to abuse, mistreatment, and occasional atrocities.

There are presently some eighty million 'Scheduled Caste' people (Untouchables and similar) in India. After a lifetime of work for their social uplift, Dr Ambedkar — himself born into an Untouchable family — decided that political and social change were not enough; what was needed was a revolution in the mind and heart of man, a non-violent revolution that could transform society through the transformation of the individuals within it. He chose Buddhism as the vehicle of that revolution.

In the weeks that followed the first mass conversion rally, four million more 'Untouchables' converted to Buddhism. They were almost all very poor, many were illiterate, their sole asset being a tremendous faith in Dr Ambedkar, a man of immense



The Indian Connection

Since 1978, the FWBO, or Trailokya Bauddha Mahasangha Sahayaka Gana, has been active in India. Dharmachari Vajraketu, who established our Centre in Bombay, explains how we came to be there, and what it is like to work there.

moral stature. Unfortunately, he died just seven weeks after the first mass conversion ceremony, leaving the new Movement leaderless and four million Buddhists eager to hear about the Dharma but without access to it. At this time almost the only Buddhist monk active in India who was awake to the needs of the ex-Untouchables was Sangharakshita, who had known Dr Ambedkar for several years.

For seven years Sangharakshita spent each winter touring the towns and villages of Western India, teaching the Dharma to the new converts. However, he came to see that without a Sangha to work with him, he would do little lasting good.

He returned to the UK and founded the FWBO, all the while keeping in touch with his Buddhist friends in India, so that when two of his English disciples decided, in 1978, to carry on his work in India, they found a network of enthusiastic friends ready to help. The movement grew quickly — starting in Pune but soon spreading throughout the state of Maharashtra and beyond, so that it is now second only to the UK in the number of indigenous Order members, and it commands by far the largest mass support of any FWBO anywhere in the world.

Broadly speaking, our approach has two aspects, a 'macro' and a 'micro'. The macro involves going to Buddhist localities in cities, towns, and villages and giving general lectures. People are exhorted to give up superstitious practices: the worship of Hindu gods, the

Caste and Dowry systems, drinking (alcohol is a big problem amongst the poor in India, akin to drug addiction in the West), explaining the significance of the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha, and encouraging people to practise the precepts, to develop metta, and thus to follow Dr Ambedkar's teaching and example.

These lectures are not given in splendid temples, nor even in seedy halls, but mostly in the open air, wherever a bit of space can be found — usually patches of waste ground, quite often outside the public lavatories in those localities lucky enough to have them, or in corridors in tenement blocks, or along the myriad passages that wind between the shabby hutments that serve so many millions as home.

There is always a microphone and loudspeaker, for audiences usually average several hundred — sometimes far more for big events (Sangharakshita himself can attract audiences of thousands night after night). Always there will be a little shrine set up: a table with a plaster statue of the Buddha, and a photo of Dr Ambedkar, both decorated with garlands of flowers, and chairs for the speaker and dignitaries. Everyone else sits on the ground, women and children at the front, the men behind. Often, the huts will have been draped with fairy lights, sometimes even a precarious little stage will have been constructed out of bamboo poles and planks, and hung with scraps of brightly coloured material.

Except in the rainy season,

lectures like this are going on most nights of the week; even though the number of Indian Order members is growing rapidly we still cannot keep pace with the number of requests for lectures that are received.

While just one lecture can sort out a great number of confusions and misconceptions, it is not enough of a basis for a wholehearted Dharma life. This is why the Trailokya Bauddha Mahasangha Sahayak Gana (as the FWBO is known in India) gives much emphasis to the 'micro' aspect of teaching: working more intensely with smaller numbers of people in classes, study groups, and retreats, as well as the more informal personal contact of Kalyana Mitrata that is such an important feature of Sangharakshita's approach to Buddhism.

It is this micro aspect which helps individuals to develop to the point where they can Go for Refuge, and which prepares them for the active teaching role that they themselves will inevitably assume after their Ordination. For although the Movement was begun by Europeans, it is now almost wholly run by Indian Order members, who are in the best position to disseminate Buddhist teachings amongst their people. A flourishing publishing wing has translated and printed many of Sangharakshita's key works into Marathi and, indeed, book sales are now a significant source of income for TBMSG.

Besides teaching and publishing, a full time country retreat centre has been built, and medical, social, and educational projects are underway in several different localities — all organized and run by members of TBMSG who, had it not been for Dr Ambedkar and Sangharakshita, might well still have been restricted to the most uncreative employment in Indian society.

Experience suggests that, given clear instruction and consistent encouragement, many can easily make the transition from 'nominal' Buddhism to living Buddhism. There is a real possibility that the Buddha's teaching will influence society in a way that it has not done in India for more than a thousand years.

The first problem facing the Buddha after His Enlightenment was how to communicate his experience to others. His Enlightenment was an experience hitherto unknown; there was no existing language, whether of ideas or images, with which to communicate it. The Buddha, and his followers after him, had therefore to develop a language that could communicate something of what Enlightenment was.

The process of developing such a language took place over a period of centuries. It began in the realm of words and ideas, with new ideas being introduced and many old words being re-defined, and gradually moved on to embrace other spheres, such as mythology and cosmology. By expressing the Buddha's teachings through more and more areas within the culture, Indian Buddhism was able to speak ever more fully to the individual Buddhist, and to ever more people.

Similarly, for Buddhism to become established in the West, it will have to learn to speak the language of Western culture. Within the FWBO this process has to some extent already begun. One could say that in the business world, for instance, 'Right Livelihood' has been introduced, in which teams of people work together in a 'skilful' way, that is, in a way that is conducive to their own and others' development. A parallel development is taking place in the area of words and ideas: old words such as 'individual' or 'skilful' are being redefined, and new words, such as the Pali *metta*, which have no satisfactory English equivalent, have been introduced, along with a host of new ideas.

However, there is also the world of the arts, in which it is especially important that Buddhists become involved. More than in most other areas of Western culture, the arts can express values that are upheld by Buddhists, while at the same time attracting widespread interest within society. Great works of art are produced by men and women with greater than ordinary understanding of life and compassion for others; through studying and enjoying the lives and works of these people, we can gain something of their understanding, something of their

A Bridge to the Future

The arts are a unique and powerful form of communication, capable of communicating refined vision and higher values. Dharmachari Dharmaruchi, who works at the Croydon Arts Centre, foresees the role of the arts in the development of Western Buddhism.

compassion, and some appreciation of the values by which they lived.

To give an example from poetry, Here are some lines by Keats, through which we can perhaps appreciate something of the truth of impermanence:

*Stop and consider! life is but
a day;
A fragile dew-drop on its
perilous way
From a tree's summit; a poor
Indian's sleep
While his boat hastens to the
monstrous steep
Of Montmorenci: Why so
sad a moan?
Life is the rose's hope while
yet unblown. . .*

The West has a rich heritage in the arts — in music, poetry, literature, painting, and sculpture — on the whole of which Buddhists can draw for inspiration.

But for Buddhism to become fully established in the West, Buddhists must themselves eventually learn to create great works of art, works that express Buddhist values. In this way Buddhism will be able to communicate itself more and more fully to individual Buddhists, to the artists of the day, and to society as a whole. Just as the rediscovery of ancient Greek and Roman works of art in the fifteenth century onwards brought about a renaissance in Western art, so too could the discovery by the West of the living Buddhist spiritual tradition bring about another artistic renaissance, but this time of a much higher order, and perhaps more far-

reaching.

Within the FWBO, the arts are already starting to become an important means of bringing people into contact with Buddhism. The FWBO's first Arts Centre was opened two years ago in Croydon High Street. This Arts Centre is part of a complex containing the Croydon Buddhist Centre and its associated businesses: a vegetarian restaurant and a wholefood shop. It was the profits from these Right Livelihood businesses in fact which provided initial finance for the Arts Centre and its bookshop.

The Arts Centre runs films, lectures, and plays, all of which are open to the public and reflect the Centre's artistic policy. Said Padmaraja, one of the Centre's founders, 'We believe that the arts can communicate to people a sense of values that can radically improve the quality of their lives. All our events are carefully chosen to be of a high quality and expressive of particular values.'

The opening season of events at the Arts Centre, which took place in the summer of 1984, featured the theme of non-violence. The season included lectures by well known figures in the arts such as the biographer Michael Holroyd, who lectured on *Lytton Strachey and the Victorians*, and Lawrence scholar Mark Kinkead-Weekes, who spoke on *D. H. Lawrence and the Great War*.

Last summer's 'Festival of Friendship' attracted many

more well known speakers, including the playwright Christopher Hampton, Dr Johnson's biographer John Wain, and Lawrence critic Keith Sagar.

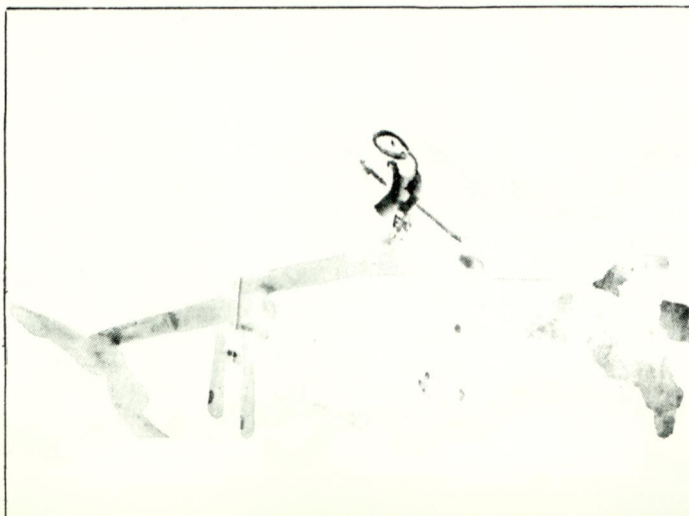
A feature of these lectures has been the size of the audiences. Of late, the lecture hall has invariably been full to capacity. Moreover, these audiences are largely young, and very appreciative. They come from all over South London and beyond. It seems that the Arts Centre is fulfilling a need in the cultural desert of South London — the need for values to live by. This has been echoed in the often-repeated comment that the Arts Centre is like 'an oasis'.

Many of the visiting speakers and performers are similarly impressed. Biographer Victoria Glendenning, for example, said that with Croydon's reputation being as it is (i.e. that of a centre of commerce and nothing more), the Arts Centre is 'changing the emotional geography of England', and Suzanne Graham-Dixon, of the Koenig Ensemble, said that the Arts Centre is one of only two places in England to be showing any real imagination in the planning of its programmes.

Through visitors like these, the Arts Centre is gaining a reputation as a venue for high quality arts events among many leading writers, painters, actors and the like, as well as amongst the public. There are now over 1100 current members of the Arts Centre, which is the sort of figure one would associate with a centre in India rather than one in the West.

This year should see the Centre launching a new arts magazine, mainly consisting of lecture material from previous seasons at the Centre. Given the high quality of this material, there is no reason why distribution of the magazine should not eventually take place at a national level.

The provisional title of the magazine is *The Bridge*, a symbol of the purpose behind all the Arts Centre's activities: that of providing a link between Western society and the Buddhist spiritual community, of providing a means by which man can encounter the teachings of Buddhism.



Where to find us

GLASGOW BUDDHIST CENTRE

329 Sauciehall St, Glasgow, G2 3HW
Tel: 041-333 0524

Sauciehall Street is Glasgow's main shopping street, and now provides the Glasgow Centre with its fifth base. Activities began in Glasgow when Gotami paid the town a visit in 1973.

The Sauciehall Street Centre is one of the finest in the Movement, hosting a full programme of evening and daytime classes and courses, which attract about 100 people a week.

There are three men's communities, and one for women. Right Livelihood ventures include 'Ink Print and Design', 'Gardening Friends', and a typesetting business.

FWBO Accrington

c/o 23 Harrington Street, Clayton-le-moors, Accrington, Lancs.
Tel: 0254 392605

There is no centre here as yet, but regular, weekly meetings and classes have just started. Contact them for more details.

MANCHESTER BUDDHIST CENTRE

18 Burlington Rd, Withington, Manchester M20 9QA
Tel: 061-445 3805

The Centre and Grdhrakuta community is situated in a residential suburb of Manchester. The Centre was acquired in 1977, and has been extensively refurbished since.

The Centre offers a full range of activities and attracts about 70 visitors each week. Order members also go out to Manchester and Keele Universities on a regular basis.

Another men's community has been established nearby. A film and video business — Vajra Films — is currently being formed.

TARALOKA WOMEN'S RETREAT CENTRE

Cornhill Farm, Bettisfield, Nr Whitchurch, Shropshire, SY13 2LV
Tel: 094875 646

Located just inside the Welsh border, in the county of Clwyd, Taraloka was founded in December 1985. A community of four lives there permanently, running a wide range of retreats for women.

VAJRALOKA MEDITATION CENTRE

Tyn-y-ddol, Corwen, Clwyd, LL21 0EN
Tel: 0490-81 406

A rural centre in the hills, founded in May 1980, and devoted exclusively to intensive meditation retreats. A full-time community of nine men lives at the Centre, and there are now plans to expand the community into a nearby farmhouse.

FWBO MIDLANDS

c/o 39 Portland Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 9HS
Tel: 021-454 7322

A full range of classes should begin during spring 1986. Until then there is a single 'regulars' class' (by invitation only) at Portland St.

A computer software business has been established, employing three, which is currently earning the funds with which a centre/community will be purchased.

BRISTOL BUDDHIST CENTRE

120 Long Ashton Road, Long Ashton, Bristol, Avon, BS18 9LS.
Tel: 0272-392 463

The Centre is currently located in the village of Long Ashton, two miles out of Bristol, though there are plans to move into town soon. The community/centre was founded in 1981 and now attracts some sixty visitors a week to a full programme of FWBO activities.

LEEDS BUDDHIST CENTRE

148 Harehills Avenue, Leeds, LS8 4EU
Tel: 0532 405880

Founded in January 1985 when Aryamitra moved down from Scotland. There is one men's community of six living in the Centre, which is about a mile from the town centre. Two beginners' meditation classes are held each week, as well as a Friends' Night and a Yoga class. A second-hand market stall brings in some extra funds, and there are hopes that this will grow into a Right Livelihood business.

NORWICH BUDDHIST CENTRE

41A All Saints Green, Norwich, Norfolk, NR1 3LY
Tel: 0603 627034

FWBO activities began in Norwich in 1976, and have been taking place in the present centre, two minutes walk from the bus station, since 1978.

The Centre offers a full range of activities and is the focal point for a large regional FWBO community. Local Right Livelihood ventures include a Yoga studio, Friends Building Services, Lion's Roar book production agency, Rainbow Cushions, and the Centre bookshop.

Order members also take regular classes at the local university.

PADMALOKA

Lesingham House, Surlingham, Norwich NR14 7AL
Tel: 050-88 8112

Six miles east of Norwich, Padmaloka has been Sangharakshita's base since 1976. Retreats have been taking place here since the earliest days, and the facilities now allow for retreats of 100 plus.

Retreats held here include pre-ordination courses, study seminars, quarterly 'mens events', Karate retreats and national Order weekends.

A community of 14 men runs the retreat centre, while another, separate community of nine is dedicated to helping Sangharakshita with his work.

THE OFFICE OF THE WESTERN BUDDHIST ORDER

Padmaloka, Lesingham House, Surlingham, Norwich, NR14 7AL
Tel: 050-88 310

As the Movement grows larger and spreads wider, Sangharakshita can keep in regular contact with its many elements only with the help of a dedicated secretariat. The 'Order Office Community' at Padmaloka is that secretariat, and helps him to deal with correspondence, and to play an extremely active part in the development of the Movement.

The Buddhist Information Service, currently being established by the Office, aims to be an information resource on Buddhism and Buddhist affairs for the British media.





THE LONDON BUDDHIST CENTRE 51 Roman Road, London, E2 OHU 01-981 1225

The lease on the 'Old Fire Station' in Bethnal Green was acquired in 1975, and it took some thirty men about three years to turn the almost derelict building into the London Buddhist Centre and Sukhavati Community.

The Centre is now by far the biggest in the Movement, and 'caters' for a local community of 200-plus Friends, many of whom live in the seven men's and nine women's communities.

Right Livelihood ventures, many of which form elements in 'The Pure Land Co-operative', include The Cherry Orchard Restaurant, Jambala (gifts), Windhorse Photosetters, Friends Foods, Windhorse Trading, Globe Builders, Octagon (Architects and building), and Phoenix Housing.

The wide range of weekly classes, that attract about 350 visitors each week, include all the normal FWBO activities plus massage, Alexander Technique, Tai Chi, and occasional arts events.

During 1984, the building which houses the LBC and Sukhavati community was purchased by the FWBO.

WEST LONDON BUDDHIST CENTRE, 7 Colville Houses, London, W11 1JB Tel: 01-727 9382

In 1974, Vangisa started leading classes at the Friends Meeting House. A succession of centres have followed, first in Fulham, then in Baker Street, and now in Notting Hill, close to Portobello Rd.

The Centre offers a full programme of activities, including Yoga and massage, and presently attracts about 60 visitors each week. There are two men's communities, and one for women.

The 'Blue Lotus Co-operative' has two businesses: 'Friends Gardening' which employs six men, and 'Friends Foods' employing six women.

CROYDON BUDDHIST CENTRE, 96-98 High Street, Croydon, Surrey CR0 1ND Tel: 01-688 8624

The Croydon Centre is on the edge of the town centre, about ten minutes' walk from the railway station. The Centre, originally 'FWBO Surrey' began life at Aryatara Community,



moving into Croydon in 1982 to share its premises with Hockneys Restaurant, Friends Foods, and the Croydon Arts Centre — all wings of the Croydon Centre complex.

The Centre offers its 180 weekly visitors a very full range of FWBO activities, while the Arts Centre, which draws about 150 guests a week, is already attracting serious attention as a venue for important yet intimate arts events.

The Rainbow Co-operative employs some thirty full-time workers, in the restaurant, wholefood shop, a building business, and the Centre's bookshop.

A retreat Centre for the southern counties is currently being created about an hour from Croydon, on the edge of the South Downs.

There are two men's communities, Aryatara and Rivendell, housing twenty-five men, and one women's community, Khadiravani, housing eight.

AID FOR INDIA 548 Kingsland Road, Dalston, London E8 4AH Tel: 01-241 1420

Aid for India was founded in 1980, by Kulamitra, as a wing of the Movement with the sole purpose of raising funds for our work in India. Although it has raised some money for directly Buddhist activity, its major triumph has been the raising of around £3,000,000 for the social activities of 'Bahujan Hitay'.

In itself it is a small unit, and depends for much of its work on regular voluntary manpower support from Centres around the UK.

AUCKLAND BUDDHIST CENTRE c/o P.O. Box 68-453, Newton, Auckland, New Zealand Tel: (Auckland) 789 320/775 735

The Auckland Centre is temporarily without permanent premises, and meetings are being held at the Civic Trust Building, in the town centre. However, outside of England, Auckland is the oldest established FWBO Centre, activities having commenced when Akshobya moved to Auckland from England, in 1971.

There are two men's communities, and one for women.

The Centre offers all the usual FWBO activities, and Order members go out to Auckland University to give 'continuing education' courses on meditation and Buddhism.

SYDNEY BUDDHIST CENTRE, 806 George Street, Sydney, NSW, Australia

Activities in Sydney began with the founding of a meditation community in Wollstonecraft in 1981.

A new and far bigger centre, on George St (close to the Railway Station) opened at the beginning of April this year. The centre offers a full range of activities, including mitra Study groups. There is one men's community, of four, in Neutral Bay.

WELLINGTON BUDDHIST CENTRE 18 Lloyd St, Mount Victoria, Wellington, New Zealand Tel: 04-851156

The Centre is situated about a mile south-east of the city centre. Although Achala began activities in 1976, it is only since 1985 that there has been a full Order team, living at Ratnajala community.

Each week there is a beginners' meditation class and a Yoga class, while courses are frequently given on meditation and Buddhism.

FWBO MALAYSIA c/o Dharmacharini Jayapushpa, 29 Medan Mahsuri Satu, Off Jalan Tengah, 11950, Bayan Lepas, Penang

There is no FWBO centre in Malaysia — yet. Jayapushpa, the FWBO's representative, has been organizing regular meditation classes, Dharma study classes, and retreats since 1983. She also goes out to colleges to give courses and talks.

ARYALOKA COMMUNITY Hearwood Circle, Newmarket, NH 03857 USA Tel: 603-659 5456

Newmarket is a small town sixty miles north of Boston. Aryaloka was acquired in August 1985 though the Boston Buddhist Centre, which preceded it, was established in spring 1981. Activities continue in Boston, but it is hoped that the Aryaloka retreat programme will prove to be an effective way of giving people a taste of the spirit of Buddhism.

Weekly meditation classes and 'Friends' Nights' are held at the Centre, but residential retreats will be its primary function.

Five men live at the community, and a wood-cutting business has been started. A second business is in preparation.

SEATTLE 2410 E. Interlaken Blvd, Seattle, WA 98112, USA

Dharmachari Aryadaka began holding weekly beginners' meditation classes and discussion/study groups at his home near the Arboretum on Capital Hill in 1985. He now offers three classes each week, and looks forward to a time when he will be joined by some more Order members able to run a full-time Centre.



TRAILOKYA BAUDDHA MAHASANGHA SAHAYAKA GANA (TBMSG) POONA Raja Harishchandra Rd, Dapodi, Poona 411012 India Tel: (Poona) 58403

The Poona Centre is in fact several centres, located in Dapodi, Camp, Yerawada, and Pimpri. The first Centre, in Yerawada, was founded in 1978.

Although a great many classes are held at the Centres, most Order members are fully engaged in going out to give talks in neighbouring localities. It is consequently impossible to assess how many thousands of people are contacted each week.

There is a retreat centre, 'Saddhamma Pradeep' at Bhaja, a men's community at Dapodi, and Right Livelihood is offered in the form of administration — of TBMSG and 'Bahujan Hitay' activities (see separate entry) — translation, publishing, and bookselling.

TBMSG AHMEDABAD, c/o Bakul Bhavan, Behind Gujrat Vaishya Sabha, Jamalpur Road, Ahmedabad 38001, India

Dharmachari Bakula and Ratnakar held classes for many years under the auspices of the Gujarat Buddhist Society, in 1979 Purna moved up from Poona and activities were henceforth continued in the name of TBMSG.



The Centre, a small vihara in the heart of the Old City, is mainly used as a base for a busy programme of locality visits. Even so, about 75 people come to the vihara each week for meditation and Dharma study classes.

TBMSG AURANGABAD Bhim Nagar, Bhavsingpura, Aurangabad, India

Although Order members were visiting Aurangabad soon after Lokamitra's arrival in India, activities got onto a firm basis when Jyotipala and Mahadhammavira moved here in 1982. The present chairman, however, is a local man, Nagasena.

The Centre holds regular classes, but again, most activities occur away from the centre, in nearby localities and villages, and at Milind College.

TBMSG BOMBAY 25 Bhim Prerana, Tapodhan Nagar, Bandra (E) Bombay 400051, India

There are more than a million Buddhists in Bombay, and very few centres where the Dharma is being taught. In 1982, Vajraketu moved here from Poona, and after a year of nomadic life, established the present community/Centre/base.

The present chairman is Vajrasila, and through classes at Tapodhan Nagar, at Siddharth Vihar, and in localities all over Bombay, he and other local Order members are probably in contact with about two thousand people a week.

TBMSG ULHASNAGAR
Block A, 410/819, Subhash Hill,
Ulhasnagar, Thane 421004, India
Ulhasnagar is a suburb on the south-east edge of Bombay. Activities began there in 1981, and the present Centre was established at the end of 1984. The Centre offers regular classes, and serves as a base for locality work in Ulhasnagar and Bombay.



BAHUJAN HITAY ('For the Welfare of the Many')

Raja Harishchandra Rd, Dapodi,
Poona 411012 India
Tel: (Poona) 58403

Founded in 1981, Bahujan Hitay undertakes social welfare projects among slum and village dwellers. It is the chief recipient of funds raised by Aid for India, and has so far set up a primary health and community project in Poona, and educational resource centres (which provide accommodation, library facilities, adult literacy classes, kindergartens, and creche facilities) in Lohagaon and Ulhasnagar. More similar projects are now being prepared for Aurangabad, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, and elsewhere, and future plans include schools and job training schemes.

HELSINGEN BUDDHALAINEN KESKUS, PL288, SF-00121, Helsinki 12, Finland

Activities began in Helsinki in 1974. There is currently one men's community, and a successful bean-sprouting business. The centre offers its fifty-plus visitors each week a full range of FWBO classes and courses.

People have been very active on the translation and publishing front, and texts brought out include *The Three Jewels*, *The Essence of Zen*, *Human Enlightenment* and *The Ten Pillars of Buddhism*.

FWBO NETHERLANDS c/o P.O. BOX 1559, 3500 B.N. Utrecht

There is no centre yet in the Netherlands, but Vajragita, the 'Chairman, treasurer, and travelling bookshop', has been holding regular weekly classes in Utrecht since 1984. There are also frequent weekend retreats.



FWBO STOCKHOLM, (VASTERLANDSKA BUDDHISTORDENS VANNER) Hillbärsdalen 5, S-126 54 Hagersten, Stockholm, Sweden Tel: Stockholm 97 59 92

Retreats have been held in Sweden for almost ten years, but it was in summer 1982 that Sona moved to Stockholm to set up a centre and community.

As well as organizing retreats, the centre runs beginners' meditation classes, a 'Friends Night' and mitra study groups.

FWBO W.GERMANY c/o Rechstr. 9 D-4300 Essen 11

There is no single Centre in Germany. In 1983, Dhammaloka and Dharmaapriya based themselves in Essen and began touring the country offering talks, classes, and retreats. Recently, Ajita has moved down to Karlsruhe, and will use that as a focal point for activities in the South.

BRIGHTON BUDDHIST CENTRE, 15 Park Crescent Place, Brighton, Sussex, BN2 3HF Tel: 0273 698420

Activities began in Brighton in the early 'seventies, when Order members regularly visited the Brighton Buddhist Society to give classes. In 1974, Buddhadasa established a Centre in George St, and Mangala moved it to its present location, in the heart of town, in 1980.

There are presently two men's communities associated with the centre, and a small building co-operative.

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REBIRTH RECONSIDERED

Rebirth and the Western Buddhist

by Martin Willson. Published by Wisdom Publications. Price £2.75

Western Buddhists with even a passing interest in the subject of Rebirth are strongly advised to read Martin Willson's, *Rebirth and the Western Buddhist*. Indeed, the fact that there are so many Western Buddhists with but a passing interest in this important subject bears ample testimony to the timeliness of this excellent essay.

There is no scriptural doubt that the Buddha revealed and taught a doctrine of Rebirth. All accounts agree that he often spoke about his own previous lives and those of others; they also agree that, as an aspect of his Enlightenment, he gained insight into the moral principles affecting the Rebirth process. Despite their diversity, all the schools and sects of Buddhism — including those whose stated ideals may occasionally strike a somewhat prosaic and limited note — are unanimous in declaring that the goal of Buddhist practice is release, not merely from the dissatisfaction inherent in this our present life, but from all the sufferings and frustrations of numberless lives: in other words, from an endless round of rebirth.

Excepting those who turn eagerly to the Rebirth doctrine for purposes of self-aggrandizement or for psychological reassurance in the face of death, many Western Buddhists prefer — and feel free to prefer — to keep their minds passively open on the question. Disillusioned by the dogmas and superstitions of Christianity and other forms of theism, many are attracted to Buddhism precisely because

of its 'rational', even 'scientific' qualities. Few are in a hurry to embrace a rather complex doctrine of Rebirth, no matter how central it may seem, while it remains 'unproven' by respectable, scientific evidence. If the Dharma is 'whatever helps one to develop'; as it is sometimes minimally put, who can be blamed for wanting to pick and choose a little between the teachings, not least when some of them look disturbingly like the accretions of Oriental superstition? Rebirth doctrine can be to some extent interpreted in down to earth, psychological terms; 'Is there any point,' the sceptics ask, 'in taking things further than that?'

Martin Willson says that there is. He says so, moreover, neither as a crank nor as a coldly detached scholar, but as a clearly committed Buddhist who sees in the refusal to give this doctrine serious consideration at least a failure of receptivity and devotion. He further questions, with telling perception, how anyone might mobilize the commitment and supreme effort required to practise Buddhism, even for their own sake, unless motivated by a response to the implications of Rebirth. We have much to lose by failing to take this teaching as seriously as we could.

Willson approaches his theme from several important angles. He begins with a brief survey of the rapidly mounting observational evidence for Rebirth, passing tantalizingly, if necessarily quickly, through the

researches and writings of Francis Story, Joan Grant, Edgar Cayce, Ian Stevenson, Arthur Guirdham, et al. Here, as elsewhere in the work, he demonstrates the impressive amount of research that he has devoted to his subject, and presents his findings in a way that will stimulate many readers to follow in his tracks.

In two rather dense sections he investigates the 'logical proofs' for Rebirth according to traditional Buddhist philosophy, and the limitations of the materialistic, 'scientistic' world-view which have given rise to so much scepticism in this area. What is notable about both these chapters is the even-handedness and honesty of Willson's thinking, his impressive grasp of his subject matter, and his refreshing freedom from a partisan desire to champion one cause at the expense of the other. For example, when examining the seemingly opposing claims of heredity and karma as psychophysical determinants, he alights on a genuinely 'synthetic' approach which not only allows each perspective its due, but which throws stimulating shafts of light on both.

In the last major segment of the work, Willson deals with some specific and problematic aspects of his theme. How are we to approach teachings that offer us the daunting prospect of non-human rebirths? What are we to make of those insistent 'reminders' that every being has been at some time our mother? After death, can we expect an instant Rebirth, or a

period in some kind of intermediate state? Moving with impressive ease from anecdote to science and from philosophy to logic, Willson proposes a few excesses in need of pruning, and offers some modified interpretations. It is not his intention to convince or to present the reader with a fully developed 'theory'. Rebirth, he believes, will become increasingly widely accepted whether Buddhists participate in the research process or not.

He does however believe that Western Buddhists have much to gain from actively working towards this synthesis — if only in the recesses of their own Western-conditioned minds. He strongly urges us neither to 'ignore Science nor beat a headlong retreat before it, but work towards a new synthesis . . . (for) it cannot be claimed that the Dharma has been established in the West until it is possible for anyone to accept the Buddhist teachings without feeling that they conflict with scientific truth.'

All in all, this is a well written, conscientiously researched and clearly presented piece of work. It is rather strange that Wisdom Publications, who normally lavish great care on their productions, have seen fit to give this one such a scrappy finish. Let us hope that the next edition (the first being already out of print) will be better produced. Such a significant essay — one which could make a significant impact on the Western Buddhist world — deserves not only congratulations but the best treatment.

DRAGON'S HEAD *snake's body*

Western Buddhists are beginning to attract some serious media attention. But what sort of image are we being given? Subhuti assesses two recent broadcasts.

Buddhism, it is sometimes asserted, is the fastest growing religion in Britain. Whether this is so or not, it is certainly true that Buddhism is attracting increasing attention from the British media. Its old grim and life-denying image is happily fading, but new myths are replacing it. Sometimes Buddhism is projected as a kind of psychotherapy, an antidote to the anomie of the modern age, or else it is seen as part of an increasing transplantation of Eastern culture, adding to the pluralism of British society. The frequent presentation of Buddhism as essentially monastic feeds the fascination of the guiltily affluent with a life of self-denial. These images reflect to a large extent the presenters' own preoccupations, but they also convey the way in which many Buddhists in Britain today see themselves.

Two major programmes on radio and television have recently added further distortions to the popular picture of Buddhism. Firstly, there was the BBC Radio 4 production, *The Lion and the Lotus*, broadcast in November last year. This was a somewhat amateurish affair, badly edited, and jumping bewilderingly from voice to voice. There were a few errors of fact, and the translation of the *Dhammapada* used was a very poor and inaccurate one.

The presenter set out to discover whether a distinctively Western form of Buddhism is developing, and carried out his investigation through a series of excerpts from interviews with six or seven English Buddhists of various kinds. It was hardly a representative selection and, the final one apart, few of the speakers were quoted in sufficient depth to give a very clear idea of their teaching and practice.

Before introducing Sangharakshita as one who is trying to develop a specifically Western form of Buddhism, the presenter commented that some Western Buddhists consider that 'the attempt to preserve the monastic form of Buddhism traditional to another culture is inappropriate here'. Whilst we might agree with this, there is some danger of misunderstanding. The FWBO is certainly not unfavourable to monasticism in general. We have, after all, our own centre at Vajraloka where people live a monastic life, and many FWBO communities have a structured daily routine in which spiritual practice plays a major part. Again, celibacy is much valued in the Order. What we are

critical of is the assumption that to follow the Dharma one must live like someone from an Eastern culture. Nor can we agree with a rigid distinction being made between monastics and lay people — as if the monks and nuns are the 'real' Buddhists, the rest simply having the duty to support them.

The central difference in the FWBO's approach, as compared with that of many Buddhist groups in the West, lies firstly in our emphasis on personal commitment to the Ideal in the act of Going for Refuge to the Three Jewels. It is commitment that is primary — not that one is a monk or a layman. Our second major disagreement lies in the conviction that the culture of the West cannot be ignored. We must allow the Dharma to express itself anew within this very different culture, whilst remaining faithful to the essential principles of the Dharma. Since these topics were never adequately discussed the programme failed to get to grips with the fundamental issues of Western Buddhism.

What was perhaps more alarming was the programme's tendentiousness. Everything led in a certain direction — presumably the presenter's chosen view of Buddhism. Towards the end we encountered an ex-bhikkhu who now teaches 'Insight Meditation'. His, we were told, is a very different kind of Buddhism: no Buddha images, no chanting, no incense, based solely on mindfulness and meditation. In the few words that were spoken one could sense that old bug-bear of Buddhism in the West — 'protestant Buddhism', with no element of colour or devotion. Intellectually sophisticated but emotionally dry, its practitioners are in severe danger of developing a 'dragon's head but a snake's body'.

Our presenter, however, was off on his chosen course. Having correctly emphasized the centrality of mind in Buddhism, he led us to the interest it has attracted from Western psychologists, and so to a lengthy interview with an academic psychologist who leads Zen retreats. Presumably he was the star of the adaptation of Buddhism to the West, since he was given far more air time than anyone else and since his piece came at the climax of the programme. The dragon's head had grown far larger and the snake's body much thinner. There was no emphasis on positive emotion or on a skilful way of life. We were simply treated to a long account of



fierce and forcible self-confrontation on a 'Zen' retreat and the kind of platitudinous insights resulting from it. Buddhism certainly had adapted to the West. Indeed, it had adapted so well that it ceased any more to be Buddhism.

Leave Your Luggage at the Door was broadcast on television by Channel 4 in January this year. The programme set out to demonstrate basic meditation and to explore some of its benefits. The presenter, David Brandon, is a teacher of Zen meditation and, understandably, it was mainly the Zen approach which he discussed. On the whole it was a good introduction to the subject in quite down-to-earth terms. Mr Brandon managed to make meditation seem useful in everyday life, particularly to those suffering through illness or mental stress. He even managed to give a certain spiritual depth without talking in 'religious' terms. There were however some points to be commented on.

There is an emphasis very often made in British Zen Buddhist circles — as also amongst those who practise 'vipassana' — on 'confronting' yourself in meditation. In this programme there was much talk of 'facing up' to one's own anger or fear of death. The concluding words were that meditation may be an upsetting, even disturbing experience, but that this was necessary if one was to live more abundantly as a human being.

There is of course some truth in this,



samadhi or meditation. At one point, Mr Brandon made an interesting statement: he talked of the importance of a teacher and suggested that one could go to a Yoga teacher, a Zen teacher, or a Buddhist teacher — as if Zen and Buddhism were two different things. Throughout he spoke of 'Zen' teaching this or that. Zen is becoming for some people a separate religion in which they can ignore the plodding systems of the Buddha's own teaching, and the element of devotion and emotion, and go straight for 'direct insight'. Without the basis of major changes in one's life and behaviour, insight is merely intellectual self-delusion: dragon's head, snake's body. The best Zen teachers are Buddhists first and foremost, using Zen as a way of expressing Buddhist truths.

One final comment: Mr Brandon declared that the time for conflict and criticism between the major world religious systems was over and that there was now a growing harmony between them. I can appreciate his attempt in such a public medium as television to avoid the pettiness of religious squabbling. However I hope that he (and Achaan Sumedho who was heard making similar pronouncements during the programme) are not blinded to the very real differences that exist between the viewpoint of most Christians and Muslims, for instance, and most Buddhists. Much of Christian teaching is, from a Buddhist point of view, open to criticism and Buddhists can do great service to Christians by honestly declaring their differences. Where Mr Brandon and the Venerable Sumedho are of course correct is that there should be no animosity between the members of different religions. Criticism and genuine differences of outlook need not — and amongst Buddhists seldom have done — preclude friendliness and well-wishing.

Mr Brandon's programme will, I suspect, do more good than harm and I applaud his attempt to make meditation accessible and relevant. What is revealed by both these programmes, which is rather more alarming, is the tendency for Western intellectuals to make of Buddhism a teaching which suits their own inclinations.

Shortly after our deadline a 'major' feature on British Buddhism appeared in *The Observer*, a prominent English Sunday Newspaper. An account of this disappointingly ill-conceived piece will appear in our next issue.

but I wondered what had happened to the cultivation of the positive and skilful states of mind. Treated thus, meditation began to sound like a nasty medicine which you must take to cure you of life's ills, rather than a systematic cultivation of those higher states of happiness and clarity known as the *dhyanas*. Again and again the Western Buddhist ignores the positive emotions, going for the 'grown-up' stuff of trying to gain deep insight. The danger is that one ends up with smart intellectualisms which have no firm basis in one's experience.

A further aspect of this somewhat one-sided presentation was that there was no mention of the need to change one's life in order to deepen one's meditation. Meditation began to seem like a panacea. One did not have to work at it outside the actual sitting practice by making the kind of radical readjustments which are so often necessary. There was no discussion of the very important subject of preparation for meditation: of morality, for instance, or of the context in which one meditates. No doubt, time did not permit a very full exploration but nonetheless a somewhat lop-sided impression was given.

Listening to Mr Brandon's programme and to some of the statements made in *The Lion and the Lotus*. I begin to wonder what has happened to several basic Buddhist teachings such as that of the *dhyanas* and of *sila* or ethics as a basis for

A Fresh Breeze

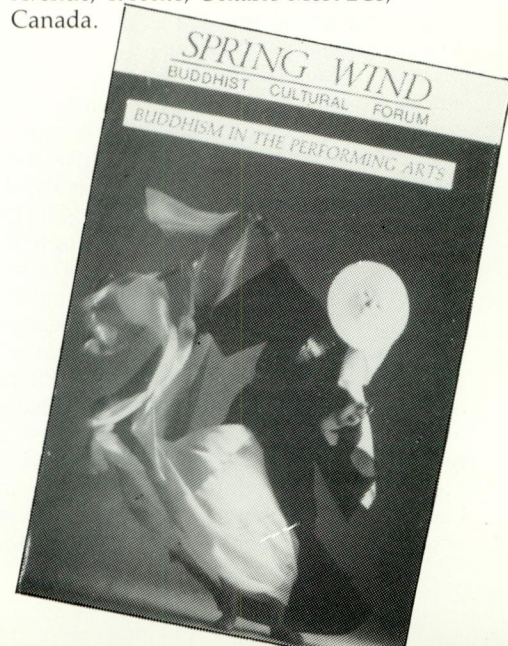
Spring Wind — Buddhist Cultural Forum is published by the Zen Buddhist Temple in Toronto, Canada. The Temple, and its American counterpart in Anne Arbor, Michigan, are centres of Korean Zen Buddhism under the spiritual direction of the Venerable Samu Sunim.

Although clearly committed to their chosen branch of the Buddhist tradition, Samu Sunim's disciples take a lively and creative interest in all developments on the Buddhist, and non-Buddhist, scene. Their quarterly journal — if one can call such a substantial publication a mere journal — provides its readers with a regular feast of Dharma teachings, information, anecdote and stimulation.

Recent issues have focused on such themes as 'Buddhism and Peace', 'Buddhism in India Today' (which includes a lengthy article about TBMSG by Nagabodhi), and 'Buddhism in the Performing Arts', treating each topic with satisfying thoroughness. Articles are well-written and thoughtfully blended, exploring their subjects in sufficient depth to capture and reward the readers' interest.

Besides its thematic content, and regular episodes of a few on-going serializations — which currently include a valuable account of a 'pilgrimage' to North American Buddhism — each issue of *Spring Wind* offers sensible and courteous coverage of what Buddhists are doing around the world.

A subscription to *Spring Wind* costs \$15.00 a year. Enquiries to 'Spring Wind', Zen Buddhist Temple, 46 Gwynne Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M6K 2C3, Canada.



Caring for Prisoners... ..and the Dying

As the number of Buddhists in Britain continues to increase, it seems to be a sad fact of life that the overall percentages are reflected in the population currently resident in Her Majesty's prisons. In 1984 there were some ninety prisoners officially registered as Buddhists, though it is thought that as many again might have declared themselves so, had they realized that they would have thus become eligible for visits by Buddhists.

By right, any prisoner can request a visit from a representative of his or her own faith, and Buddhist visitors have been putting in an appearance since the 1950's. In the absence of any central organization or co-ordination, however, these visits have been irregular and informal. Until recently there was no reliable channel through which the prison authorities could liaise with the Buddhist world to ensure a more regular and reliable flow.

'Until recently', that is, for enter: *Angulimala*, a 'Buddhist Prison Chaplaincy Organization', whose aims are 'to make available facilities for

the teaching and practice of Buddhism in Her Majesty's Prisons.' More specifically, Angulimala hopes to recruit teams of Buddhist Chaplains and Visitors, handle liaison between Buddhists and Home Office officialdom, and explore the possibility of providing released prisoners with some form of after-care and advisory service.

These are laudable aims, and the Venerable Khemmadhammo and Yann Lovelock, the project's prime movers, deserve congratulations and strong encouragement. Already several members of the Western Buddhist Order have become involved in the fledgling organization, and Sangharakshita has been happy to become a Patron.

An incidental bonus of this project is that it stands to provide British Buddhists from all schools and groups, with an opportunity to work together in an unambiguously positive way, and thus to experience themselves as a wider spiritual community, or Sangha.

Let us hope that another socially oriented venture, Denis Sibley's *Buddhist Hospice Project* will bear similar fruits.

Still very much at the initial discussion phase, this project aims to 'provide a refuge for dying Buddhists of all schools and nationalities, provide community based service for those who may wish to die in their own surroundings, provide a bereavement service for the survivors and dependants, and promote a better understanding of the physical, psychological, and spiritual needs of dying people by planning and developing an on-going educational programme.'

There is no doubt that such a project will be of immense value to many people, and, like Angulimala, will provide British Buddhists with another excellent project on which to co-operate in a healthily non-sectarian way.

One faintly sectarian cloud has appeared on the horizon, however, in the wording of a letter inviting people to attend a recent seminar on the project. **'Members of the Sangha will be present'** we were informed. These Sangha members were in fact, one

bhikkhu from the Chithurst Vihara.

While Buddhism is still young in the West, we have what might be an unrepeatable opportunity to take care with our terms. It would be a shocking thing if the noble word *Sangha* came to connote nothing more than the members of one particular ecclesiastical branch of the Buddhist tradition. Yet even The Buddhist Society's *Middle Way* now frankly headlines news from Chithurst as 'Sangha News'. This invitation suggests that the misnomer is catching on.

In and out of robes we can now find ordained, full-time, and fully committed people connected with many Buddhist organizations in the West. To single out any one fraternity for a kind of terminological VIP status is misleading and spurious.

Perhaps the wording of the invitation was a mistake, based on an old chestnut of a misapprehension. One can only hope so. The dying do need our help and it would be a shame if the bug-bear of sectarianism was to impair our combined efforts on their behalf.

Genocide in Bangladesh?

According to the Chittagong Hill Tracts Support Group, some ugly events are taking place in that part of Bangladesh. Reports suggest that some 85,000 government troops are currently carrying out a brutal programme of suppression and colonization against the indigenous, and traditionally autonomous tribal people.

A ban on journalists, and strict information censorship, makes it impossible for us to know the full story, but reports submitted by Survival International, the Asian Anti-Slavery Society, and UNESCO strongly indicate that this 'secret war' — officially presented as a drive against communist insurgents — has all the hallmarks of a brutal campaign of genocide.

Eye witness accounts of bayonettings, lynchings, rapes, and of women and children

being burned alive are stomach-turning; no 'cause' whatsoever could conceivably justify such savagery. The fact that these atrocities are being carried out by the members of government forces is alarming, and the government concerned unforgivable. (It seems extraordinary that such a government should take the self-righteous attitude it recently did towards some cricketers who have visited South Africa.)

The predominantly tribal people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts are not only ethnically different to the lowland Bengalis, they are also non-Muslims. Most, in fact, are Buddhists. In the past years they have been displaced from the best agricultural land, pushed around by hydro-electric schemes, and now directly attacked. By 1984 it was estimated that 185,000

tribal people had died, in the course of a decade, as a direct result of military action.

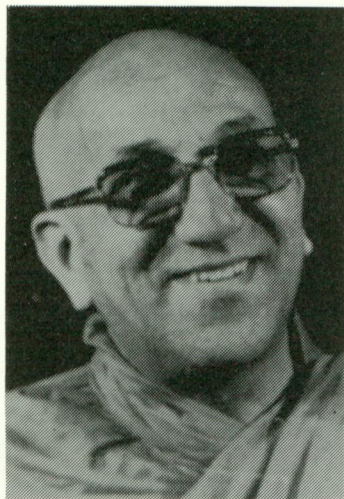
The October-December issue of the *World Fellowship of Buddhists Review* reports the opening of a new 'Office of the Buddhist Religious Welfare Trust' in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The chief guest on that occasion was the Minister in charge of Religious Affairs, who we can only hope will devote himself immediately to the task of stirring his government's conscience over the the plight of those Buddhists who inhabit the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Further information can be obtained from Survival International, 29 Craven St, London WC2 5NT, and the Anti-Slavery Society, 180 Brixton Rd, London SW9 6AT. Donations to the CHT Support Group may be sent to John Phillips, 77 Walton Rd, Wavendon, Milton Keynes MK17 8LY.

Precept For

Vajradhatu Sun, the impressive bi-monthly newspaper produced by Chogyam Trungpa's disciples in Boulder, Colorado, seems to have developed something of a taste for liquor. Readers are frequently regaled with advertisements for liquor stores and bars, and one recent issue even carried a full page article about 'The Pleasures of Sake', a potent beverage from Japan.

In the West, where there is an established tradition of 'social drinking' many Buddhists take a somewhat discretionary attitude towards the fifth precept — which enjoins abstinence from drinks and drugs that confuse the mind. While a few Buddhists no doubt make their abstinence from alcohol complete, many feel free to indulge in the occasional drink — if only to the extent that it



The Ven. Ananda Mangala

It was with great regret that we learnt of the death on January 28th of the Venerable Ananda Mangala Nakaya Thera, a Sinhalese bhikkhu who lived and worked in Singapore. In June 1985 he visited our Croydon Centre and stayed with the Venerable Sangharakshita at Padmaloka.

We are sad that the warm ties of friendship so recently made are so soon severed, and we offer our heartfelt condolences to his many disciples and friends.

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does not seem to impair mindfulness. In the Buddhist East, of course, where 'social drinking' is largely unknown, and where a person will see little point in drinking unless to get drunk, the fifth precept is usually understood to imply strict teetotalism.

In several contexts, Sangharakshita has recently been 'thinking aloud' on this topic. With alcoholism now rife in the West, trailing so much sorrow and waste in its wake, it could be that the time has come for committed Buddhists to set an example, by having nothing to do with alcohol at all.

Sangharakshita has urged people to think about and discuss this matter a little. It would be encouraging to say the least to hear that a similar reappraisal was taking place on the other side of the Atlantic.



Tantric Night Out

Tibetan Monks of the Gyu-me Tantric College perform authentic tantric rituals, chanting in their unique 'One-voice chording' technique — each monk individually intoning three-note chords, accompanied in an exotic setting of thangkhas, ritual instruments and exotic costumes.' Thus ran the blurb on a colourful poster advertising an event at a London theatre this January.

This is not the first time that London audiences have been invited to attend a tantric 'performance', but it may well be the first time that such an event has been held in a theatre, and advertised in such a popular way.

When Westerners are so easily enticed by this kind of oriental exoticism, the monks themselves — quite possibly in serious need of funds for their college — can perhaps hardly be blamed for making themselves available. However, there are risks associated with this sort of thing, and Western Buddhists need to do some serious, discriminative thinking about the tendency of which this is an example.

Some might argue that these entertainments — as well as the now freely available texts on tantric meditation practice, or colourful thangka posters and calendars — are planting seeds, stimulating

public interest in Buddhism, while at the same time answering the needs of sincere, practising Buddhists for study material.

Unfortunately, the kind of interest thus stimulated rarely has much if anything to do with the Dharma itself, and may even hinder Westerners from developing a more authentic understanding of Buddhist ideals and practices. Someone who has lived with a Yab-yum poster for years, who is familiar with all the nuances of the Kalachakra Tantra, and for a few pounds can bid monks to chant for him, may find it a little hard to accept that a real spiritual life begins with a few simple concentration exercises, and some close attention to ethics.

Buddhism as a spiritual force is still so new to the West that the first priority for Western Buddhists of all sects and schools must surely be to sort out the principal Dharma from its accumulated cultural manifestations. It is easy to excite ourselves and others with the exotic aspects of the tradition we have inherited. Even so, we will be far truer to that tradition — and will gain far more from it in the long run — if we set out by asking ourselves what it is that we, and all Westerners, really need from the Dharma, and how we can best practise — and present — that.

Blasphemy Trials in Germany

The November 1985 issue of *The Freethinker*, a monthly journal for British secular humanists, gave prominent space to a report on a trial currently under way in West Germany.

Three students and a lawyer, members of *Bunte Liste Freiburg*, or 'Rainbow Group' have been charged under an obscure article of the Criminal Code for publishing and distributing allegedly blasphemous material.

The material in question was a poster advertising a week of talks and discussions on the influence of religion in public life. The poster depicted a priest holding a glove-puppet of God; in the priest's pocket could be seen a copy of the notorious concordat made between the Vatican and the Nazi Party — a pact which did much to enhance the Party's air of respectability at the time.

This latter aspect of the poster — a reference, after all, to historical fact — was considered particularly offensive to the Catholic Church. Proceedings began, and have been continued by the Public Prosecutor, even though a jury rejected the case at its first hearing.

The final outcome is still unknown, but what is already clear is that the authorities are showing considerable resolve to treat such 'offences' very seriously indeed. Similar trials are said to be in progress in several other major towns, while official harassment of atheists is becoming common.

Interestingly enough, the West German blasphemy laws are so old that, like their British equivalents, they had long been regarded by many as obsolete and irrelevant. It is not very long since we in Britain learned that things are otherwise: that even in our 'enlightened', pluralistic age, the old Church-State axis still has a few teeth left: teeth which it is not embarrassed to gnash or even snap when the chance presents itself. Now, it seems, a similar, and by some accounts more disturbing lesson is being learned in Germany.

At any hour of the day or night, on any day of the week, an FWBO event is taking place somewhere. The event might be a meditation class in Seattle, a fundraising 'Jumble Sale' in the heart of Wellington, New Zealand, a Dhamma talk in a primitive Indian village — ten kilometres by bullock cart from the nearest road, or a special screening of a gem from the BBC's film archives, introduced by its director at the Arts Centre in Croydon. As the Movement spreads further afield, its range of activities and interests is growing richer all the time.

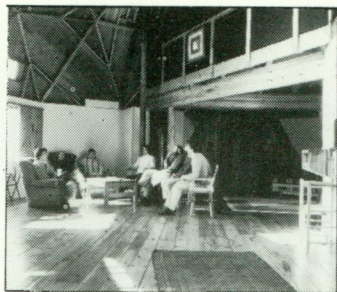
There was a time when it was quite easy to work out how many people throughout the FWBO had spent time on retreat during the mid-winter months. Now it is perhaps impossible to calculate; there are so many retreats taking place, and so many people taking advantage of them.

The London Buddhist Centre's annual Winter Retreat at Battle in Sussex attracted 78 people this year. They obviously felt they had gained from it; a great many of them appeared at classes the following week, and an unprecedented 30 made their way to the London Centre just a couple of weeks later for a weekend 'reunion'.

Padmaloka, the retreat centre in Norfolk, reported a record attendance of eighty plus on its three week men's retreat. As their retreat facilities expand and improve, the resident community are now looking forward to the time when a hundred or more people will attend all their events.

This retreat period marked the entry of 'Talaroka', the new Women's Retreat Centre, onto the scene. A three-week retreat, dedicated to the three Family Protectors Avalokiteshvara, Manjughosha and Vajrapani, was immediately followed by a study seminar on the *Udana* or 'Verses of Uplift' from the Pali Canon, and then by a residential weekend for women Order members. All reports from the place are highly enthusiastic, though there is still a great deal of work to be done. All women with building skills and physical strength are warmly invited to get in touch with Sanghadevi at 'Talaroka'. A full programme is now set for the coming months, with weeks devoted to anything from intensive meditation to work on the retreat complex itself.

Down under, in New Zealand, two summer retreats have just been held at Kiwanis Camp, a beautiful place in a natural bush setting with its own private beach. About 30 people attended the Open retreat, which was centred around the theme of the Five Spiritual Faculties, and twenty-nine attended the women's retreat a little later. The theme of Devotion was featured on the women's retreat, the shrine being



A study group in Aryaloka

completely redecorated each night to highlight a particular aspect of the seven-fold puja.

In New Hampshire, the ten-day winter retreat attracted a disappointingly low number of participants, but the new Centre's programme of weekend retreats does seem to be arousing interest, and the regular introductory meditation classes are now bringing increasing numbers of enthusiastic people along. 'Aryaloka' has received some excellent coverage in the local press recently, so on balance it looks as if the US team's leap from town centre to Country Retreat Centre is beginning to pay off. It can be no accident that the first mitra ceremony for several years has just taken place there. Bob Ebberson, who has been an important figure in the New Hampshire development, became a mitra at the end of a three-day 'Thanksgiving' retreat.

There was a significant 'first' early this year, in Holland. Retreats have been taking place there for many years, led or supported by visiting Order members from England or Germany, and attended by a mix of Dutch and German people. There were in fact two major retreats this winter, held in Germany, which were attended by German and Dutch men and women. This February, however, came the first 'all-Dutch' retreat. Vajragita, the 'lone' Order member working in Holland was joined by Gunabhadri and Bodhimitra, two Dutch Order members currently living in England, and a retreat was held exclusively for Dutch people, with no interpretation or translation needed.

Another 'first' was the two week summer retreat organized by the Sydney Centre. As well as signifying the growing maturity of the FWBO's presence in Sydney, it must have come as a welcome break from all the work that regulars have been putting into the construction of a new Centre right in the heart of town. Their ambition has been to create a centre which will have the power to raise people's spirits the moment they enter the door. Although the final opening is still a little way off, it is already clear that they have created something magnificent — and have a centre big enough to meet the demands of their steadily growing sangha. The retreat particularly featured



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meditation, but time was put aside each day to give everyone a chance to tell their life story.

Life stories, initially introduced as elements of the Tuscany ordination courses, seem to be enjoying something of a vogue, particularly in communities, where they provide members with an excellent way of getting to know and understand each other. As well as bringing people together in an entertaining way, these sessions give people a unique chance to see their lives as a whole, and to get a perspective on the various patterns that run through them. It is no longer rare to find people who have told their life stories four or five times by the time they are ordained! They are now even being taken up as an activity on 'Friends Nights' at the Leeds Centre.

One place where life stories might be a little premature is in the children's classes held at our Indian centres. Twenty five children now come along to the Vihara in Ahmedabad each week, while at least as many attend the weekly sessions in Poona. As children of Dr B. R. Ambedkar's Buddhist followers, they might be tempted to describe themselves as 'born Buddhists'. But if they are learning their lessons correctly they will soon realize that there is no such thing as a born Buddhist; each of them will one day have to come to an individual decision on

that. Of course, if they do decide that they want to place the Buddha Dhamma at the centre of their lives, Trailokya Bauddha Mahasangha Sayaka Gana will be there to guide them and provide them with facilities for practice.

Mangala, who lives and works in Ahmedabad, recently led a four day retreat a little way out of town. This was the first retreat of any length that the Ahmedabad Centre has been able to organize for a long time, and came as a welcome sign that the troubles which have plagued that city, and which seriously interrupted classes at the vihara, are now truly over. He and the other Order members in Ahmedabad are now looking forward to a move from the rather cramped facilities afforded by the Jamalpur Road vihara. It looks as if an Aid For India/Bahujan Hitay plan to build a hostel in Ahmedabad for schoolchildren from poor families will be moving forward during the coming year. Once all the land purchase formalities are concluded, it is hoped that a corner of the available land will be available for Dharma activities.

Still in India, there has been the major ordination retreat at Sadhamma Pradeep (See Subhuti's article), and a meditation retreat also at the Bhaja Centre, led by Kamalasila, chairman of the Vajraloka Meditation Centre in North Wales.



THE WORLD

Over the Diwali period, in November, there were no less than six retreats, at Wardha, Aurangabad, Ambernath, Dapoli, Sholapur, and Saddhama Pradeep. Combined attendance was a little over 380!

Shortly after the ordination retreat, while the 'ordination team' was still in India, came a weekend convention for those Order members who are taking a leading responsibility in the Movement's development. The idea of the weekend was to initiate a forum for the sharing of vision, and for effective discussion on matters which affect the overall direction of TBMSG. Soon after the convention came to an end, work began on the construction of a dormitory block at the retreat centre. Funds for this aspect of our work are still short, but the new facility, which will provide sleeping space for at least twenty, cannot be delayed any longer.

Padmasuri is also in India on a six-month visit and she too is leading retreats at Bhaja, as well as visiting all the major centres, giving talks and working with Buddhist women. Her retreats, like all events in India, are very large and very effective. Women there, she reports, are extremely keen to practise Buddhism; in the past months, there has been a small flood of requests from women who would like to become mitras.

Padmasuri originally went to India some years ago, to work as a nurse on the Dapodi medical project, funded by Aid for India supporters in the West. The new medical centre at Dapodi is steadily rising, and the lower floors are already in full use, housing regular clinic sessions, literacy classes, a library, and a creche. The main TBMSG headquarters and community have also moved across from Ambedkar Society in Yerawada, to Dapodi.

While in the West, centre secretaries place advertisements around their towns, and encourage the public to come to their centres, in India most Order members go out as much as possible to lead events in Buddhist localities. The Anniversary of Dr Ambedkar's death, on December 6th, and Constitution Day, on January 26th, are key events in the Indian Buddhist calendar, and many Order members were out and about in Maharashtra and Gujarat on those occasions. The big crowds seem to appear by magic in Maharashtra, where most of Dr Ambedkar's followers live, but Mangala reports that in Ahmedabad too he found himself speaking to 250 people on December 6th.

Going out to people may be the norm in India, but Order members elsewhere now seem to be taking far more initiative in this way. Bristol, Sussex, Cambridge,

The West London Centre

Manchester, Keele and Norwich universities in Britain all receive regular visits, while teams from the Auckland Centre have been going out to their local University for several years. In Penang, Malaysia, Jayapushpa goes out each week to give a class at a local teachers' training college.

Like Vajragita in Holland, Jayapushpa is something of a rare phenomenon: a 'lone Order member', working with no other Order members nearby, through weekly classes, talks, regular day retreats, to build up a network of friends and contacts, preparing the ground for the day when there will be a fuller FWBO presence in Malaysia. For the time being she is being hosted by the Bayan Baru Buddhist Association. Over Christmas and the New Year she organized a couple of special one-day events, which featured The Sutra of Forty-Two Sections.

Aryadaka is another 'loner' who has been getting things off the ground in Seattle, USA. Aryadaka is a land surveyor and builder, and hopes soon to be able to support an Order member to live out there with him and work full time on Buddhist activities. Meanwhile he holds regular classes at his home, organizes weekend retreats, and is now planning a more substantial retreat for the summer. He has been writing enthusiastically about the abundance of energy in America, and looks forward to a time when some more of it (he is American



Jayapushpa leads a discussion

himself, after all) will be available to the Order.

If the acquisition or redevelopment of property and new facilities has anything to do with energy, then the Movement beyond Seattle can hardly be bankrupt of it. 'Rivendell', the country retreat centre purchased a year ago by the Croydon Centre, has already served a number of retreats. Even so, a team of 'Rainbow Builders' is still busy on a complete refurbishment. When it is ready, Rivendell — or whatever it will finally be called — will be an invaluable facility for our southern English centres.

A new women's community has formed in Glasgow, and soon there will be a women's type-setting business as well. In Wellington, New Zealand, a 'solid five-bedroomed house' has been acquired and turned into a men's community, 'Ratnajala'. Silaratna writes, somewhat ambiguously, that the house overlooks the Aro

Valley, 'one of the more colourful and lively of Wellington's inner city areas.'

The opening date for the new Sydney Centre is now fixed for April 6th — the date on which Halley's Comet will be at its brightest in the southern sky. No comets lit the heavens, however, when the West London Centre opened its doors to the public, a little later than hoped, in mid-November. Although the Centre 'looks finished to the "casual observer"', some final touches are still being added. Even so, nobody in West London has any doubts that the move from Baker Street has been a good thing. Already classes are filling up, and attracting a good many 'locals' — which is something that the commercial Baker Street setting never allowed.

For a while it looked as if the Norwich Centre was going to have to move from its All Saints Green premises, to make way for yet another multi-storey car park. However, letters and petitions to local authorities, and some favourable coverage in the local press have combined to convince the Municipal Council that the Norwich Buddhist Centre deserves to be left alone. Meanwhile, Tejananda would like nothing better than to see his growing community and Centre being moved from Long Ashton to the heart of Bristol. A property search has begun, along with a fund-raising drive, and mortgages are being looked into. He hopes to find a single premises suitable for a public centre and an eight-man community.

Sometimes it is not so much a matter of finding new premises, as making better use of those already available. Sona reports that the cellar in the Stockholm community has now been turned into an office. Although the 'public centre' aspect of activities in Sweden is taking a long time to get off the ground, there is now an increasingly enthusiastic core of regulars and mitras. Nobody doubts that a lively Centre will soon emerge. The recent publication of Sangharakshita's lectures on 'The Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path' — in Swedish — will doubtless play an important part in making the Centre better known.

Meanwhile the old community shrine room and some previously unused attic space at the top of Sukkhavati in East London have just been turned into a lounge meeting room. The plan is to see the men most actively involved in the London Buddhist Centre's work housed under the same roof, in Sukhavati. This has meant that the community's size is rapidly rising, and by April there should be about 25 men living there. The wall joining the old lounge and guest room has now come down, and a beautiful new shrine room is being constructed. Chintamani,

who sculpted the rupas and painted the magnificent mural in the London Buddhist Centre, has been commissioned to paint a 'mural back-drop' for the community's new shrine.

There has been a sharp increase in the size of the Vajraloka community in North Wales. Nine men now live there, and are busy reorganizing the Centre's programme of activities. Their scheme is to put less time aside for a 'general retreat programme', and devote more space to special, intensive retreats. Plans include retreats for the Movement's meditation teachers, mindfulness retreats, Order meditation retreats, and an intriguingly titled 'Enlightenment Seshin', scheduled for the Wesak period.

The community in Essen, West Germany, however, is shrinking. Dharmapriya is spending a few months at Vajraloka, Dhammaloka is looking for a new base in the Rhine/Ruhr area, and Ajita has moved down to Karlsruhe. There has been a strong FWBO connection with this southern city for some years now, thanks mainly to the work of Chistina Richter, a mitra now living at the Khadiravani women's community in South London. Ajita hopes that his move will put activities in Karlsruhe onto a more regular basis.

On the Right-Livelihood front, the Pure Land Co-op in East London has recently purchased the buildings that house part of the Cherry Orchard Restaurant and Windhorse Photosetters, which means that every major aspect of the FWBO's presence in Bethnal Green is now assured for the future.

Over in West London, Friends Foods, the women's wholefood business has just completed negotiations for a new lease on the premises. Not many years ago, Friends Foods was struggling to stay afloat. Now the business is doing extremely well — it is in fact the strongest business in the West London 'mandala'. This transition is a dramatic example of what can happen when a small group of people decide to face the challenge of a 'crucial situation'. Perhaps Annie Fowler, who must take a great deal of the credit for this success story, will one day write up the story for *Golden Drum*.

There have always been small bookstalls at our centres. In the last year or two, however, some centres have realized that these are not just minor facilities, ancillary to their classes, but important ventures in their own right. Even on retreats, bookstalls can bring in substantial income; Anjali reports that the bookstall at the New Zealand women's summer retreat took in \$900!

At Padmaloka, Tim Crowe has begun to extend the bookstall into something of a proper bookshop



The Order team in Sydney

for visiting retreatants. At the LBC, Jayaprabha has been steadily developing the bookshop, now well established in its own separate room, and reports that it will not be long before the shop is supporting at least one full-time worker. A mail-order catalogue is in preparation, which should boost the shop's sales enormously. The bookshop at the Croydon Centre, of course, is now a major concern, and takes its place alongside the restaurant and the Arts Centre as a powerful magnet to the people of Croydon. In Helsinki not only do they have a bookshop, but they translate and publish many of the books they sell. A collection of Sangharakshita's poems, recently published under the title *The Veil of Stars*, provided the basis for a public poetry reading event in February. Apparently, 400 people attended.

With or without thriving co-operatives and bookshops, all centres are in the business of raising funds, either to finance their centre activities, or to support a host of appeals to which they are generally committed.

A major search is now on to find people willing to take to the streets this spring to knock on doors and ask the public to support our social projects in India. Aid For India has now raised something in the region of £3,000,000 for the Poona Project, the Hostels project, and for Dhardo Rimpoché's ITBCI School in Kalimpong, but the fundraising continues since there is no shortage of channels out there for every penny we can raise.

During April and May, Padmasuri will be touring British Centres to tell people about the specifically Dharmic, as opposed to social, aspect of our work in India (if indeed the two can really be separated). She hopes that the tour will raise at least as much as the £50,000 raised by Vajraketu when he made a similar tour a few years back.



Women's retreat in New Zealand

In Wellington, a car boot sale and a 'healthy living weekend' of meditation, Yoga and Tai Chi raised \$700 for Sangharakshita's 60th birthday fund — money which will go towards the creation of adequate facilities for him and his secretariat. For the same appeal, the Croydon Centre has organized a literary walk, a car boot sale, a benefit dinner, a poetry and music evening, and an Aikido demonstration!

Of course, between all the retreats, fund-raising events, and building projects, and underlying everything else taking place in the Movement, are the regular weekly activities at the centres: the introductory meditation classes, Friends' Nights, Dharma courses, the talks, and mitra study groups. For several thousand people, spread around the world, these activities are the FWBO: their only contact with the Movement. The introduction of just one class a week to a new town or city means that the FWBO has arrived there.

In Birmingham, for example, there is no centre yet, and the community that will start one in the coming year is still based in London, concentrating on earning money for the project through 'Midland Orion', a computer software business. But there is a regular class on Monday night, so the first definite step has been taken towards establishing 'FWBO Midlands'. On the other hand, the fact that there are now five Order members and four classes a week taking place in Wellington means that the time has come for the

Order team there to cut their legal bonds with the Auckland Centre, and become fully autonomous.

Hatha Yoga, Tai Chi, and Karate have long been taught within the FWBO as healthy physical disciplines — and as important 'indirect methods' of raising consciousness. In Norwich, Satyapriya is developing his plans to introduce more Aikido into the Movement, while in East London, Judy Senior has recently started teaching the Alexander Technique on a regular basis. Her first two courses were over-booked, so it looks as though the A.T. is here to stay.

Where is it all heading? What does all this activity add up to? A report like this, which can only give a very brief glimpse of the Movement's life, might suggest that the FWBO is turning into a huge, global organization. Well, perhaps, in its small way it is; after all, we have reached the point when the sun never sets on it!

But for all that, the true purpose of the FWBO is revealed in the considerable changes we see taking place in our friends and in ourselves, or when we welcome back another 'batch' of new Order members from Tuscany or Bhaja, or hear, as we did this January, that a special retreat is being arranged so that two women, now Kalyanashri and Tarashri, can be ordained. These are the events, after all, which demonstrate that everything else is working. These are the events that prove that the centres, co-operatives, and communities add up to something far more than a group.

Centre secretaries complain that three months is not very long, and confess that little has happened since their last report. Maybe to their generalized eyes, nothing much is happening: a new meditation course, a new community, a slightly fuller shrine room on a festival day . . . These things may not look very exciting or important, and yet even the smallest and subtlest of them has an 'inner meaning' that far outweighs its more superficial significance. A new meditation course means that more people are learning to meditate; how can one assess the impact of that on even one person? Who is to say what fruits will emerge in time, in that person's life, in the world beyond? A new community means that anything from three to twenty people are taking on the challenge of a radically alternative lifestyle; their endeavour will bring further changes, fresh insights, another example of what can be done to those who are considering their own direction in life, another element in our 'new society'. Nothing that takes place in the FWBO can be dismissed as trivial or insignificant, for every activity or event has the power to change people, and people have the power to change the world.

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A Question of Balance

Helping others or helping myself? Which shall I choose? Shall I opt for the airily altruistic Bodhisattva Ideal of Mahayana Buddhism, or for the down-to-earth Theravada, where I can seek Nirvana for my own sake? This is the monstrous quandry that seems to confront some newcomers to Buddhism. However, at a seminar held at Padmaloka in January, nineteen Order members examined the quandry in depth and found the monster to be no more than a trick of the light, based on a misunderstanding.

Those who acknowledge a close connection with the Western Buddhist Order are called mitras. One advantage of being a mitra is the chance to follow a systematic three-year programme of Dharma study. The second year of this course starts with a close look at the Bodhisattva Ideal.

Hoping to clear up any doubts or misunderstandings concerning the principles or details of Mahayana Buddhism, Sangharakshita suggested that the course teachers themselves went back to school, and during the seminar gave them an opportunity to question him in depth on the topic.

After meditation and breakfast together, the participants listened to a series of taped lectures on the Bodhisattva Ideal, given by Sangharakshita in 1967. They then broke up into groups to

discuss areas needing further exploration, clarification or revision. Each evening Sangharakshita joined the seminar for a question and answer session. Many topics were covered, but I will concentrate here on just one of them; perhaps the most interesting.

During the question and answer sessions it became increasingly clear that Buddhism advocates a balanced spiritual life and reveals a balanced ideal. While it is necessary to be self-regarding, to apply oneself vigorously to one's progress along the path, one cannot ignore other people since they are the most noticeable part of the world in which one tries to grow. The only attitude towards others which is consistent with spiritual progress is the attitude of loving-kindness — which eventually becomes Compassion.

The provisional goal of a Buddhist's spiritual life is to gain Transcendental Insight or Wisdom. And since Insight consists in trying to break down the hard and fast division between 'self' and 'other', wisdom cannot be separated from compassion, compassion being the overwhelming urge to alleviate suffering in the world by dealing with its root cause, ignorance.

From the very beginning, Buddhism encouraged a life in which the self- and other-regarding aspects were har-

moniously balanced, and in which the ideal of compassion was as important as that of wisdom. Wherever Buddhism has been nourished by spiritual heroes who have attained this ideal, men and women with Transcendental Insight, the balance has been maintained. However, there have been times when groups of Buddhists have drifted away from genuine spiritual experience, falling back on a literal-minded and even fundamentalist reliance on the scriptures and other writings. Then the balance has been lost, and one-sided Buddhist schools have emerged.

It seems that the Mahayana doctrines arose in response to a tendency of this kind, the Bodhisattva ideal of Mahayana Buddhism giving a far more explicit emphasis to altruism than previous written teachings. The Mahayana Buddhists did not deny the spiritual value of teachings selected for emphasis by schools with a more self-regarding approach. However, lacking an acute historical sense, they could not trace the development which led to a drift away from the altruistic side of the Buddha's teaching and example. They therefore concluded that the one-sided ideal of the 'Hinayana', as they termed these schools, was a genuinely alternative ideal to that of the Bodhisattva. A follower of the former, they thought, sought Enlightenment for his or her own sake only, while a Bodhisattva sought a higher kind of Enlightenment for the benefit of all beings.

Sangharakshita pointed out that we have no need to accept such distinctions in practising the Dharma today. The FWBO is not a Hinayana movement, but neither is it a Mahayana movement. It recommends the Buddhist life, in which the interests of self and other are fostered in a dynamic harmony. It advocates the Buddhist ideal, in which Enlightenment is sought for the sake of one's own happiness and understanding, but also for the welfare of all.

The monstrous quandry is not a quandry at all, but a gentle reminder of the need for balance in the Buddhist life.



Croydon

The Croydon Arts Centre is running Croydon's first ever Film Festival. Many rare and interesting films being shown, including several about composers such as Benjamin Britten, Handel, Stravinsky, Bach, and Schubert. Many of these are being introduced, either by the films' directors — who include Nicholas Roeg and Colin Nears — or by eminent critics. The Festival also includes several lectures on the cinema, including one by Professor Richard Ross of the Royal College of Art's Film and Television School, who will be introducing a retrospective of films made by RCA students.

The Film Festival has resulted in some unprecedented publicity for the Arts Centre. Features have appeared in at least four South London papers, and both 'London Broadcasting' radio and Croydon's local television station have been





Padmaloka Notebook

It was a pleasant London afternoon in early December when British Airways flight 529 came to a halt at the terminal. Sangharakshita was back in England after three months in Italy. Another successful Tuscany Course was over. Twenty-three new Order members were criss-crossing Europe on their way back to Norfolk for their first Order Weekend.

Waiting in the arrival-lounge to meet Sangharakshita was Subhuti — himself about to leave for India. An important moment had come in the history of the FWBO: Subhuti and two others were about to become the first senior Order members, other than Sangharakshita, to perform ordinations into the Western Buddhist Order.

In India, Subhuti met up with Suvajra and Kamalasila, and a couple of weeks later, they performed seventeen ordinations at the Bhaja Retreat Centre (see Subhuti's article). The public ordinations took place on December 22nd, and any lingering uncertainties about this development were finally dispelled by three loud cheers at the ceremony's conclusion.

Sangharakshita, meanwhile, remained at Padmaloka. During December and January he saw over seventy people in personal interviews.

During this period Sangharakshita was writing a 'Letter from Italy', in four instalments, for *Shabda* — the Order Newsletter. Hopefully this will be published some time as a companion volume to *Travel Letters*. Once his 'Letter from Italy' was finished, he turned his attention to writing a booklet about Dr Ambedkar and the Indian mass-conversion movement. This booklet may be ready in time for the 30th Anniversary of the first Conversions to Buddhism, on October 14th this year.

Sangharakshita commented recently that he has not had a single day off since his return from Italy, two months ago. To allow him to write with less distractions, a tiny 'writing-chalet' has been purchased, which now rests in the garden far from the house.

A new service that the Order Office is providing is the 'Buddhist Information Service'. This is primarily a media information service for the Movement, especially in the UK, and gives information and advice related to Buddhism, and Buddhist attitudes to world affairs. It will handle all official contacts with other Buddhist groups, as well as the media.

Recently, Dharmadhara attended two Buddhist seminars with a medical theme. On January 19th there was a seminar on Tibetan Medicine at Rigpa, in London. Here, Dr Lobsang Rapgay, a Tibetan monk and physician, described the practice of the Healing Buddha to a gathering of some fifty Buddhists and non-Buddhists. During a break, he remarked that he knew of Sangharakshita in Kalimpong, as his brother had gone to Bhante's school there, over twenty years before.

The second seminar was concerned with setting up a Buddhist Hospice, a system which will provide support and solace to Buddhists who are dying. This will undoubtedly improve the quality of life for the terminally ill, and help turn what are only too often the last few blasphemously pointless weeks of life into an opportunity for spiritual development, both for the dying and for their survivors. This important project will be the first of its kind in the world, and we wish it every success through the years during which it will be established.

Last but not least, much of Padmaloka has been redecorated. Padmapani, whose refined eye had much to do with the superb finish of the Glasgow Centre, came up from London to arrange the interior-design, and to carry out much of the work. At last, visitors to Padmaloka can be entertained in tasteful and elegant surroundings.

Something to watch out for in June will be Sangharakshita's seven talks for Thames Television's series of 'Night Thoughts'. We have been informed that they will be broadcast during the week following Sunday June 1st.

Film Festival

regularly transmitting an interview with Padmaraja about the Festival. Furthermore, the Daily Telegraph is hoping to run an article on the Festival, and BBC radio will be visiting the Arts Centre later in the season to cover one of the lectures. This has all happened during the first three weeks of the Festival, and a lot more coverage is expected in the weeks to come.

Plans for the next season, starting in late April, are now well under way. The season has the provisional title *The Slumber of Apollo*, and will comprise an exploration of the influence of classical civilization on Western culture in general, and on various artists in particular, such as Picasso, Goethe, Shelley, and Nietzsche. It will also look at the waning of classical values in our age, and the present condition of Western culture.

As regards projects for the

future, two that seem to hold great promise are local television and an arts magazine (see separate article). Local television is a recent introduction in Britain, but could well attract large audiences. Said Padmaraja, 'Local television has enormous potential. Lectures, plays, and events of this sort would make ideal television programmes, and would be a way of reaching a much wider public, while maintaining the intimacy of the gatherings at the Arts Centre. I can see the Arts Centre functioning in future as a television studio, with live audiences. We could even start making our own programmes, and selling them to television companies. Indeed, we could also make programmes about our Buddhist activities — meditation classes, Yoga classes, and so on.'

PADMALOKA MEN'S RETREAT CENTRE 1986

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KARATE & MEDITATION WEEKEND 18-20 April

GARDENING RETREAT 18-25 April

AIKIDO & MEDITATION WEEKEND 25-27 April

*MEDITATION WORKSHOP 16-18 May

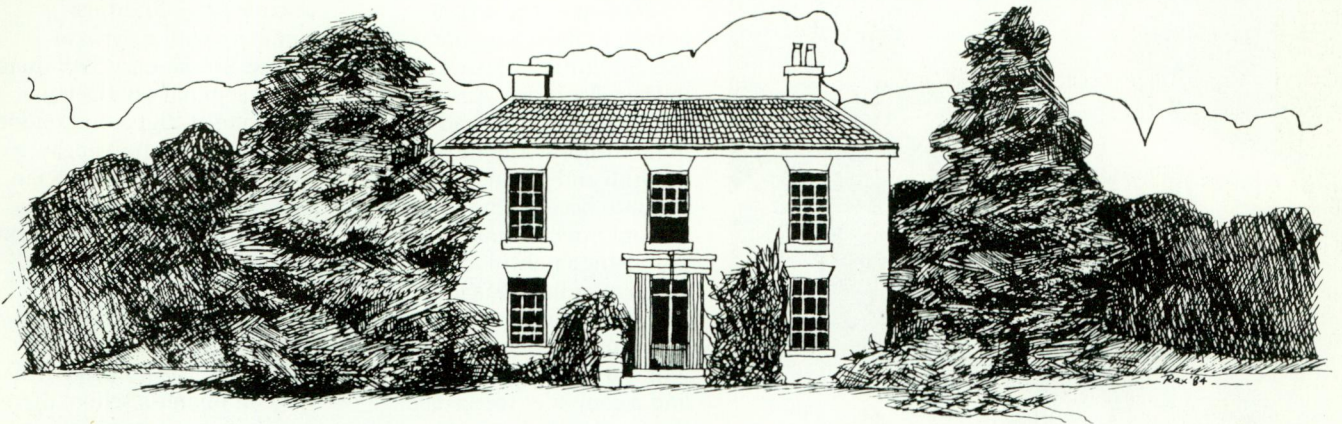
*MEN'S EVENT Going for Refuge 23-25 May

MEDITATION & BUDDHISM COURSE 30 May-1 June

SUMMER RETREAT 11-25 July

OPEN DAY 26 July

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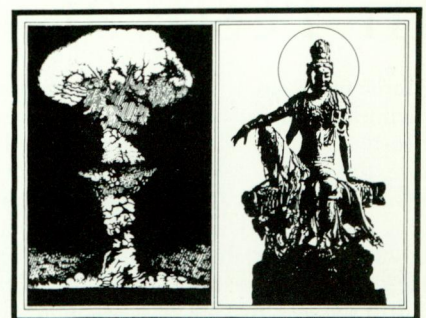
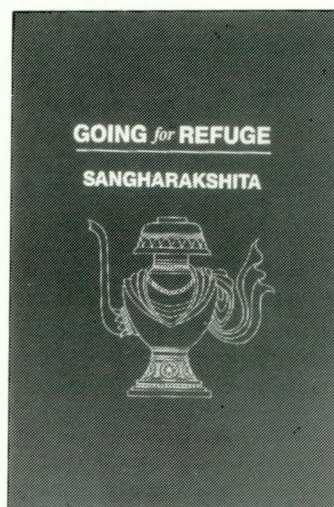
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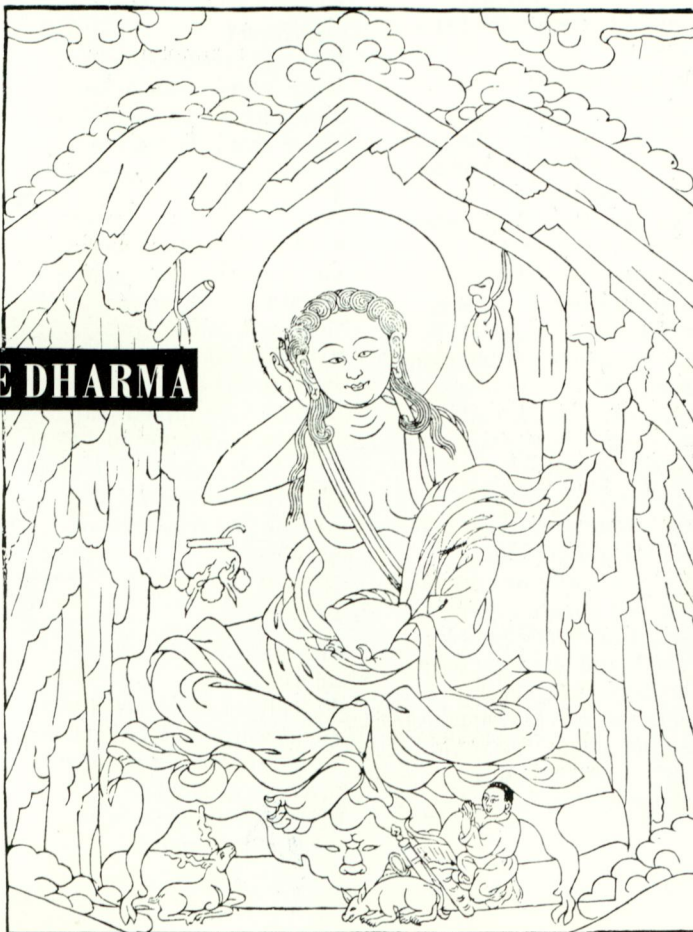
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The FWBO: A Brief Chronology

1 9 6 4

●The Venerable Sangharakshita visits England at the invitation of the English Sangha Trust. After a prolonged stay of two years, he decides to work permanently in the West.

1 9 6 6

●Returns for a farewell visit to India. While there, he comes to the conclusion that what is needed in the West is an entirely new kind of movement.

1 9 6 7

●Establishes the FWBO (initially called The Friends of the Western Sangha) at a meeting in London. Teaches meditation in a tiny basement room in Monmouth St, in London's West End.
●Retreats are organized in houses belonging to the 'Ockenden Venture' in Haslemere, Surrey.
●*The Three Jewels* Published.
●Sangharakshita delivers a lecture series, 'Aspects of Buddhist Psychology'. In the 10 years that follow he will deliver around 160 lectures, on many aspects of Buddhist practice and philosophy.

1 9 6 8

●Twelve men and women Go for Refuge at a ceremony in London, and the Western Buddhist Order is born.
●FWBO Newsletter launched.
●First FWBO community formed at 'Sarum House' (later 'Aryatara'), Purley.

1 9 7 0

●Sangharakshita goes to America to conduct a 'Hall Seminar' on Buddhism.

1 9 7 1

●Akshobya and Lim Poi Cheng initiate FWBO activities in Auckland and Christchurch New Zealand.
●'Sakura', the Monmouth St Centre, is closed. For a year the Movement maintains a nomadic existence, using hired halls and rooms around London.

1 9 7 2

●An old warehouse in Archway, awaiting demolition, is acquired, and for £278.00 transformed into 'Pundarika', the FWBO's new Centre.
●A speakers' class and a fortnightly 'Ordination Class' is introduced to the weekly programme.
●First 'men's retreat'.

1 9 7 3

●Sangharakshita takes a one-year sabbatical in Cornwall. For the first time, Order members lead classes on a regular basis.
●First women's retreat.
●*The Essence of Zen*, the FWBO's first book, is launched.
●Regular visits by Order members to Brighton and Glasgow.
●Vajradaka leads retreat in Holland;
●Vajrabodhi and Bodhishri return to Finland, to initiate FWBO activities there.
●Sangharakshita leads first of approximately 50 study seminars, on the *Bodhicaryavatara*.

1 9 7 4

●First Order Convention. *Shabda*, the Order Newsletter, launched.
●'Kalyana Mitra System' introduced.
●Classes begin in Ealing (later to become the 'West London Centre') and Cornwall.
●The first 'Basic Buddhism' courses are offered at Pundarika and Aryatara.
●A small printing press is installed at Aryatara. 'FWBO (later Windhorse) Publications' is launched.
●Sangharakshita attends the first of many 'European Retreats' in Holland.
●The Brighton Buddhist Society transforms itself into FWBO Brighton, and
●Buddhadasa begins activities at the new Brighton Centre.
●Sangharakshita visits New Zealand, and conducts twelve ordinations, thus firmly establishing the Movement on the other side of the world. A branch is established in Wellington.

1 9 7 5

●The Old Fire Station in Bethnal Green is acquired on a reasonable long-term lease. Extensive building, conversion and redecoration work — costing around £160,000 — begins on what will become The London Buddhist Centre.
●The first Right Livelihood businesses are developed, as fund-raising ventures for the new London Centre.
●Devamitra opens the Norwich Buddhist Centre.
●*The Thousand Petalled Lotus*, the first edition of Sangharakshita's memoirs, is published. Sangharakshita moves into Padmaloka, with Vajrakumara and Ratnapani.

1 9 7 7

●Amaravati and Mandarava, two large women's communities, are established, in London and Norfolk.
●Lokamitra takes Anagarika precepts, preparatory to his departure for India and an advanced Hatha Yoga course with B. K. S. Iyengar. Once there, he finds himself becoming involved with Sangharakshita's Buddhist friends, giving talks and leading a retreat...
●FWBO activities begin in Manchester.
●An old farmholding in North Wales, suitable for conversion into a meditation retreat centre, is acquired.

1 9 7 8

●Lokamitra returns to India, with Kularatna, this time to establish a wing of the Movement there.
●London Buddhist Centre opens to the public. (Lease on building transformed into purchase agreement in 1974.)
●The Pure Land and Rainbow Co-operatives become the FWBO's first registered co-operatives.

1 9 7 9

●*Buddhism and Blasphemy* published.
●Sangharakshita visits India, and conducts first ordinations. Also visits Malaysia, Australia, and New Zealand.
●Activities begin in Stockholm, Sweden.

1 9 8 0

●Order teams move to Boston — USA, Sydney — Australia, and Bristol — England.
●The Vajraloka Meditation Centre in North Wales opens.
●Aid for India is established to raise funds for projects in India.

1 9 8 1

●First 'Tuscany' Ordination Course, during which twenty-four men are ordained.

1 9 8 2

●Sangharakshita travels extensively in India, giving about 40 lectures in three months.

1 9 8 3

●Subhuti's book about the FWBO, *Buddhism for Today*, published.
●Activities start in Leeds, Diss — England, Bombay and Auragabad — India, and in W. Germany.

1 9 8 4

●FWBO joins the European Buddhist Union.
●First edition of *Buddhism for Today* (3000) sold out.
●Jayapushpa goes to Malaysia to prepare ground for FWBO.
●Vajragita goes to Holland.
●Sadhama Pradeep Retreat Centre, at Bhaja, opened by Sangharakshita.
●A progressive 'Study Course' for Mitras is initiated.

1 9 8 5

●First ordinations conducted by Order members other than Sangharakshita take place at Sadhama Pradeep.
●Aryaloka, in New Hampshire is acquired. The first retreat is held there.
●*The Eternal Legacy*, and *The Buddhist Vision* published.
●'Taraloka' Women's Retreat Centre opens after a three year fund-raising drive.

1 9 8 6

●*Golden Drum* launched.