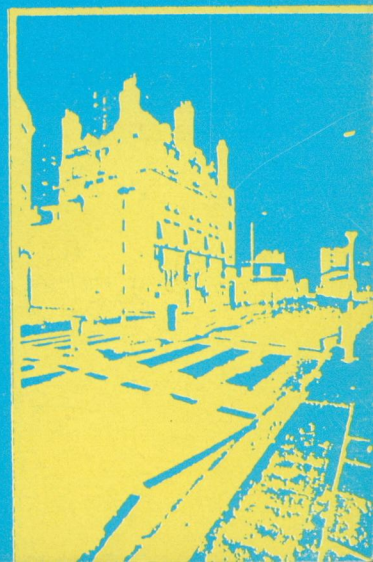


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# BUDHISM IN THE CITY





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# BUDDHISM IN THE CITY

'Snake Pass' is a perfect name for the winding, looping stretch of road that carries a motorway-weary motorist the fifty miles from Manchester to Sheffield, two of England's largest cities. I rode it for the first time just a couple of weeks ago, doing my best to keep the tail lights of my guide in view as he blazed our trail past the rocky outcrops, wind-blasted trees, and looming hillsides of the Peak District. Darkness and drizzle drew a veil over the beauties of that pastoral world, but the second half of the journey, as the road began its descent from the heights, was enlivened by a sudden view of Sheffield in its entirety, spread across its valley setting like a vast saucer of light on the edge of the high moors. Somewhere in the middle of all that, I thought, was my next home—though I had yet to find it. Somewhere else, too, was the site of a future FWBO centre, for several Order members had declared that if the Windhorse Publications team were to move to Sheffield, they would come too, to start an FWBO centre.

In a newspaper cartoon I once saw, two vacuum-cleaner salesmen sat in their van, parked on a hilly outcrop which afforded a view of a town's suburbs: a view of nothing but rows and rows of identically manicured streets and houses. 'Let us pause a while,' said one, 'and admire this inspiring prospect.' Though aware that there might be a readier market for vacuum cleaners than for the Dharma in the city below, I nevertheless allowed myself a small shiver of excitement over everything that the future might hold as I caught my own first sight of Sheffield.

Seen from the hills, or from the air, and especially at night, a city is always beautiful. How good it is to admire the interplay of light and darkness, the sheer artistic scope of the thing from a distance, forgetting the litter strewn back-streets, the angry traffic, the sweltering shopping streets, the rotting industrial wastelands, and all those hundreds of thousands of people! And yet it is the people who make a city, drawn there by the unspoken consensus of market forces to trade, build, organize, learn, and even to rob. The buildings, factories, shops, and roads exist for them and for nothing else.

Seen from the standpoint of the present, and especially when one's mind is inspired, how easy it is to form the comprehensive vision of an entire town transformed by the Buddha's teachings, again forgetting for a moment that not a single member of that gigantic, humming organism went there consciously motivated by a thirst for the Dharma!

For those who will choose to face them, ahead lie all the familiar challenges, tasks, and chores associated with the development of an FWBO centre. There will be a meeting-place to find, publicity to organize, funds to raise, classes, courses, and weekend retreats to arrange. In time, when a few people start showing some real interest, there will be mitra groups and mitra retreats to run, communities and right livelihood ventures to encourage into existence, a Dharma centre to buy, and perhaps an arts centre too, or a 'bodywork' institute. In time a Buddhist subculture, even a 'Buddhist village', will emerge. But throughout all that, underpinning it and making it work, will lie the task of meeting people, of befriending them, of gladdening and uplifting them with Dharma talk and Dharma practice, just as the Buddha did 2500 years ago when he entered the towns of Northern India. There can be no short cuts, no easy routes.

A few days ago I arrived in London to work with Paramabodhi on the design of this issue of *Golden Drum*. His studio is down in the airless basement of the London Buddhist Centre. Catching sight of Dhammarati, the Centre's chairman, I tried to fix up a date for a chat over lunch or dinner. It took us a while to get our diaries into synch, not least because Dhammarati seems to be spending much of his time these days being interviewed by the press, radio, and TV. This is not just because his Glaswegian vocal habits, his blond hair and (almost) boyish face, and his fashion-conscious dress-sense make him 'good copy', but because, after twenty-one years in London, and ten years in Bethnal Green, the FWBO is becoming known, has indeed become an acknowledged part of the city's life.

Of course, this does not mean that the LBC's task is done. If anything it is just beginning. Now there will be even more people showing an interest, yet more classes to run, more communities and co-operatives to launch.

Whether big or small, brand new or 'established', a city Buddhist centre is never more than an opportunity. For the city dwellers, it is an opportunity to encounter the Dharma in a setting where they probably never expected to find it. For the Dharma workers, it is an opportunity to give and to carry on giving. For someone who is serious about their Dharma practice there can be no other reason for living in the city. But it is a good reason.

Nagabodhi



# TOWN OR COUNTRY?

*Most Westerners live in towns and cities. But are these the best places for Dharma practice? Chris Pauling debates.*

In the deep forest a bhikkhu sits cross-legged at the foot of a tree. A Zen monk listens to the cry of wild geese at nightfall. A Tibetan hermit watches the sun sink over the roof of the world. Our images of the spiritual life are, for the most part, images of a life lived in the peace and beauty of nature.

And with some reason. Since the time of the Buddha and before, people have sought out the world's wildest places for their spiritual practice, setting up monasteries and hermitages in mountains and forests as far as possible from the distractions of the towns. For Westerners huddled in noisy, crowded cities such a life has a strong romantic appeal. But surely it cannot be the whole story—if it were it is hard to see how the Buddhist tradition could have been handed down to us over the last two-and-a-half thousand years. A tradition which only exists in the wilderness can expect to find few new followers.

Certainly most Western Buddhists do not live in the country. Most of us, like most Westerners in general, live in towns and cities—perhaps because our livelihoods are city-based, perhaps because the city is what we are used to, or perhaps just because we have not taken the initiative to move. These are reasons—of a sort—but are there some

more valid reasons why Buddhists should choose to live in what seems, on the face of it, a very inauspicious environment for the practice of the Dharma?

By comparison, the advantages of living in the country seem almost too obvious to be worth discussing. The most obvious of all is the absence of unhelpful stimulation—the absence of the usual goads that trigger us to want, to envy, or to fear. Modern Western cities bombard us with messages which play on our conditioned responses, not only fanning our basic animal instincts to eat, couple, and compete, but also adding a whole new set of cravings and anxieties to our repertoire. Without constant mindfulness modern city life makes simplicity and contentment almost impossible to achieve. By contrast, simple peace of mind is much more easily won away from the bright lights. In the words of Ashvaghosha, 'A brightly shining fire, when not stirred by the wind, is soon appeased; so the unstimulated heart of those that live in seclusion wins peace without much effort.' (*The Buddhacharita*). To win peace in a modern city can require a very great deal of effort indeed.

But the advantages of a life lived close to nature are not just negative, not just due to the absence of unhelpful stimulation. To live surrounded by nature has in itself a positive, therapeutic effect on our minds and hearts. A beautiful environment invites us to be open and perceptive—a state of mind which can be almost painful in the harsh environment of the city. And if we are not open and perceptive we cannot really be aware.



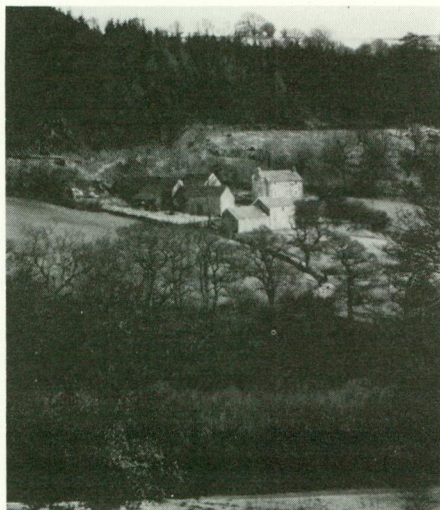


There is also a close affinity between the appreciation of natural beauty and the practice of meditation, a connection which is difficult to define in words but which is clearly illustrated by the subtle and profound art of the Buddhists of China and Japan—a connection which will be obvious to most people who have spent time meditating in a natural environment.

One aspect of this connection perhaps lies in the frame of mind needed to enjoy natural—or any other—beauty. We cannot enjoy nature if our minds are disturbed by craving, ill-will, or anxiety; if we cannot disengage from the useless chatter in our heads; or simply if we cannot be bothered to summon up the mental energy needed to be aware of our surroundings. In exactly the same way, meditation is impossible if our minds are disturbed, overstimulated, or dull. Because the same mental qualities are needed to enjoy our environment as are needed to meditate, to open ourselves to the pleasure nature offers is automatically to put ourselves in the right frame of mind for meditation—while to meditate successfully hugely increases our appreciation of our surroundings. The two reinforce and multiply each other so that, on a country meditation retreat, almost every aspect of our experience can become profoundly enjoyable.

But for most of us such a meditative existence, idyllic as it sounds, is not an option as a permanent way of life. It may not be practical, but, more importantly, most of us are just not ready for it. We may be able to enjoy such a life for a few weeks or even a few months, but in the end the pressure from those cruder parts of ourselves that demand cruder pleasures—or just the desire for some action and distraction—will build up to the point where it can no longer be denied.

The *Udana*, probably one of the earliest Buddhist scriptures to be committed to writing, contains a story which throws a great deal of light on this dilemma and how we should handle it. This tells of a monk named Meghiya who, against the Buddha's advice, wishes to take himself off alone to 'a delightful mango grove' to 'strive for concentration.' When the determined Meghiya makes this request for a third time, the Buddha shrugs his shoulders, says 'Well, Meghiya, what can I say when you talk of striving for concentration?'—and Meghiya goes off to



Vajraloka

his mango grove. But before long he is back, genuinely puzzled that, despite his good intentions and the beautiful, undisturbed environment he has chosen for himself, he could not rid himself of what he calls 'thoughts lustful, thoughts malicious, and thoughts harmful.'

The Buddha's words to Meghiya at this point are revealing and important. 'When the heart's release is immature,' he says,—and for most of us, as for Meghiya, the heart's release is immature—one thing above all will help it grow towards maturity. This is spiritual friendship, or intimacy with those who share our vision and ideals—and particularly those who are somewhat further along the path than ourselves. And if, as will probably be true for most of us, the people who inspire and strengthen us are mainly to be found in the city, then this is the best of reasons for spending much of our time there, whatever its other disadvantages.

But even for those who are temperamentally suited to it, and even where spiritual friendship can be found in the country, a life spent on permanent country retreat may not always be the best way forward. The country is the ideal place to deepen our meditation and so extend and refresh our vision—few of us would question that. But meditation is only one part of the spiritual life, and the widened perspectives it gives us become hollow and can turn sour unless they are acted upon—and for most of us the city will be the ground of our action.

Each of us must strike our own balance between the need for meditation and the need for action in our lives. In doing so we will probably also need to strike a

balance between town and country living. If we devote ourselves to action but ignore the need for meditation—the need for the country—we will lose our vision, our perspective will narrow, and our actions may become useless or even harmful. But, in the same way, to devote ourselves exclusively to a meditative, country life has some very real dangers.

One of these is that such a life can lead us to fantasize that we are more developed than we really are. It is (relatively) easy not to crave if we never see the things we crave for. It is (relatively) easy not to hate when the only people we see around us are friends. And it is (relatively) easy to feel goodwill for all mankind from the lofty heights of our meditation cushion—but to step down and actually inconvenience ourselves for real, infuriating human beings is entirely another matter. To be sure that the gains we have made are robust we need to act on them, we need to test our sinews, to deliberately place ourselves in challenging circumstances—and the city is a much more promising arena for this trial of strength than the country.

A second danger of a permanent country life is that, unless we are already very advanced, it can turn into a selfish retreat from the problems of our world. Viewed as an end in itself, meditation amidst the peace and beauty of nature can become a refined form of hedonism. Certainly Buddhism should and does make us happier. But, beyond a certain point, to practise just to increase our enjoyment of life is a spiritual dead-end. We become happier by expanding our horizons, by becoming less selfish, and any step back into a narrow, self-centred view will stop us in our tracks.

Buddhism is not about creating our own heaven-on-earth, shut off from the suffering around us. Far from making us wish to be separate, practising the Dharma should make us more aware of our connectedness—with the world, with other people, and with society. It should make us realize that we cannot free ourselves without freeing others, and that our work to change ourselves must be matched by work to change society. Like it or not, our society is an urban society, and to have any hope of changing it, many of us, much of the time, will have to put up with the rough-and-tumble of city life.



# CITY CENTRE

*The London Buddhist Centre is ten years old. Dhammarati, the Centre's chairman, finds the pace exhilarating. . . .*

Friday was a busy day. Thames Television came in the afternoon: two Volkswagen vans full of hardware and crew from the outside broadcast unit, filming for a daytime religious programme. As they left, the designers and photographers arrived to take pictures for our tenth anniversary publicity. Meantime, in the midst of all this activity, the 'Friday Class' was quietly assembling for an evening of meditation and puja.

This is the dilemma of a city Buddhist centre: here were people practising the Dharma, getting on with their meditation,

We are setting up conditions that let people grow spiritually; without planning, no classes; without meetings, no Right Livelihood; and without preparation, no Dharma teaching.

Still, with such a busy schedule it's easy to lose touch with the deeper, subtler experiences of a meditation practice, to become narrow and unmindful. It's a dilemma, but not a new one. Ten years ago, when the London Buddhist Centre was being created, the building workers were working hard, and putting in long hours. Meditation was suffering, and some people were finding it difficult to get up early in the morning to sit. One party wanted more stress on meditation, and argued that the work had to slacken off. The other party saw how important the work was, and was impatient with any change that would slow work down. In a question and answer period, Sangharakshita was presented with the dilemma: 'Do we do more meditation,' the questioner asked, 'or do we do more work?' 'You have to do more of both,' he replied.

In that answer, and in the building site that was to become the London Buddhist Centre, the distinctive elements of the FWBO's approach to the Dharma were taking shape. Before the London Buddhist Centre project, only a handful of people had worked full time for the movement, staffing the centre at Archway, in North London. By 1975, however, the centre was due for demolition. The whole area, in fact, was due for demolition and, as more squatters moved in and the buildings fell down, it was becoming a wilderness. A new centre in better surroundings was clearly needed.

In 1975 the Greater London Council leased us the Old Fire Station in Bethnal Green, 'a vast Victorian masterpiece of civic architecture' according to Subhuti, the first chairman, 'with influences as varied as Queen Anne mansions and Bavarian castles.' The building had been empty for five years, and between them neglect, vandals, and two fires had left it almost derelict. A volunteer team, with only one skilled man, started work, expecting the project to take a matter of months and a few thousand pounds. In the end it took three-and-a-half years and £150,000.

while all around them was the bustle of bright lights and activity. It is, however, a necessary bustle. The most important things a public Buddhist centre can do is let people know that the Dharma is available, and set up the conditions that make it available. A viewing audience somewhere in millions will watch the TV programme, and tens of thousands will see the leaflet. For some it will be the first time they have heard of the Dharma, and for those who want to know more, there will be a wide range of centre activities they can attend.

Running those activities is hard work. When I became a Buddhist I half expected to end up in the Himalayas somewhere, meditating in my cave and moving contentedly towards Enlightenment. Life around the London Buddhist Centre is different from that. Next week I have a Filofax full of meetings: meetings for running the Centre; a teachers' meeting to plan the programme; a meeting of the business managers; a discussion on the legal structure; a team meeting to discuss objectives and working problems. I'll be preparing and leading study, conducting meditation, and at the weekend leading an introductory retreat. Other Order members and Friends working around the Centre are equally busy.

None of this activity is for its own sake.





Friends' Night at the LBC

The amount of committed effort needed to build and pay for the centre was a breakthrough for the Friends, and set a pattern for how the Movement would grow and organize itself for years to come. Two needs had come happily together. The Movement needed a centre, and funds to pay for it. People around the centre needed ways to involve more and more of themselves and their lives in their spiritual practice. The new centre project provided that. The building work needed the full time commitment from a community sometimes as big as thirty-five people. Their hard work made the new centre possible. In the process people found out how valuable it was working together wholeheartedly with others on something felt to be of value. The movement grew, and so did the people doing the work.

In the next year or two, partly because the money was needed, partly because people wanted to be more involved, more Right Livelihood businesses began to grow up around the new centre. The canteen which fed the workers opened up to the public, a second hand furniture business opened. The community's bulk wholefood buying became the basis for a wholefood shop, and the people who laid out the quarterly newsletter set up a design studio. In November '78, the centre opened, and since then has been running classes and courses in meditation and Buddhism.

Today, ten years after that opening, the LBC has become a busy organization. Around five hundred people a week attend the activities. A 'Buddhist village' has grown up around the Centre. Almost a hundred people live in the various communities, and fifty people work in the centre and the Right Livelihood

businesses. The vegetarian café has become the Cherry Orchard restaurant; the furniture shop has become a book and gift shop. All of our businesses are busy and expanding, and more people come through the doors of the Centre every year.

Because so much time and energy is spent in the details of running the Centre, these are the things that come quickly to mind, the things that we quote to demonstrate the Centre's growth. But really, they are a means to an end. Their real importance is that they create the conditions for spiritual change in the people who come to the Centre.

Those people come for many reasons. Some want to learn how to relax; some want to tone up muscles at a Yoga class. Many won't want to get any more involved than that. For those who want to go deeper, however, the possibility is there. People can come to talks on Buddhism. They can attend a course and learn how to deal with difficulties in meditation. They can do a course about the Buddha, the Buddha's teaching, and the nature of the spiritual community. They can learn about the precepts, and about carrying spiritual experience into everyday activity. They can learn about the nature of conditionality in the Wheel of Life, or look in detail at what the experience of developed self-awareness and 'Individuality' would be like. They can attend the 'Working in Meditation' class and learn how to take their meditation experience deeper, or attend one of the many retreats we run, to put what they've learned into practice more fully. With the large number of Order members the Centre has to draw on, we're working towards one of the fullest presentations of the Dharma available in

the country.

Some people will want to get more involved still, and may move into a community, making their home life part of their practice, or join a Right Livelihood business turning work, the activity in which we spend most of our waking hours, into an arena of spiritual effort. It's a short step from there to the central act of a Buddhist life: the decision to Go for Refuge, the decision to make one's spiritual ideals so centrally important that one is willing to reorganize one's whole life around them.

I came back from almost two months on retreat recently, meditating quietly in the country. On the morning I came back, the Centre, as ever, was lively. Builders were cleaning and renovating the Old Fire Station in preparation for the tenth anniversary celebrations in November. The Cherry Orchard was being redecorated, Chintamani was recutting and gilding the Buddha figure in the main shrine room, to finish before the new session of classes started the next week. The Centre seemed full of energy.

It would be tempting to speculate how, and by how much, the Centre might grow in the next ten years; I've no doubt that it will grow. Whatever form the growth takes, the important point is that within this busy growing Centre, people are practising the Dharma, deepening their own spiritual experience. Meanwhile they're working, through the Centre and its activities, to make it easier for people to come in contact with that spiritual experience, and let them taste it for themselves. People are practising and people are working. In the next ten years we'll still be trying to follow Sangharakshita's advice and do more of both.



need to be discriminating about the things with which we come into contact. If, in the traditional phrase, we 'guard the gates of the senses', we are likely to develop the ability to avoid that which irritates and overstimulates, and cultivate a lifestyle more conducive to meditation.

This may sound a little 'precious', as though the intention is to make ourselves too sensitive to bear the



## GUARDING THE GATES OF THE SENSES

*You can practise Buddhism in the heart of the city. But, as Kamalashila points out, you have to be on your guard.*

8 **W**hen we leave the city to go on on retreat, the change can be quite a shock. It can take several days to adjust, during which time we may find ourselves unable to experience the quiet hedgerows, the rocks, and the trees in any full sense. A barrier seems to stand between them and our senses, one filled with bustle, traffic, and noise. It is comparable to the experience we sometimes have when returning home after a long time away. The old familiar things are there—but how odd it is being amongst them again.

Whether we live in the city or the country—and whether we notice it or not—we constantly take in a multitude of impressions through our senses. Even though we are not usually aware of the process, the overall effect on our mental state is very strong. The sights and sounds evoke an emotional response of one kind or another: unpleasant ones will tend to arouse irritation and dullness, and pleasant ones an enjoyment which perhaps tends towards excitability and craving.

Because it is such a basic key to our mental state (and thus our life), anyone who practises the Dharma is well advised to monitor their sense experience, to remain aware of the effect of their surroundings and the situations they go into. In order to keep our minds as clear and bright as possible, we

harsher side of life; but that is not what is meant. In the long run this practice creates strength of purpose and character. Really it is weak and irresponsible to be indiscriminating and uncaring about our state of mind, which, after all, affects others as well as ourselves. The deeper our mindfulness and self-honesty becomes—and it will deepen constantly if it is practised constantly—the more clearly will we come to know ourselves and see what is needed, understand what in our experience is worth encouraging, and what is not.

There is, of course, nothing 'wrong' with our sense experience in itself. As the phrase has it, our senses are simply 'gates' which are open or closed to the multitude of objects surrounding us. Actually, most of us need to *increase* our awareness of the senses themselves. Sounds, smells, and sights are all around us, but so often we take them in dully, without really seeing, smelling, or hearing them. Much of the time we can even be unaware that we have senses at all, experiencing a generalized whirl of impressions which we take for granted. Indeed, most of us ought to be more sensual, more *awarely* sensual. The sensual does not exclude the spiritual.—This kind of mindfulness is an essential aspect of the spiritual life.

However, our minds tend to

respond to all these sense impressions, and are affected by them. It is the mental states thus created that matter. Obviously, we all have different minds and are attracted, repelled, and affected by different things. The gauge of whether some situation is harmful or helpful to our practice is the effect it has on us. Only we, or someone close to us, can tell. Perhaps we *can* attend a late night party and meditate the next day. But I would imagine that it could have some detrimental effect. We have to be careful of our tendency to rationalize, to make up excuses, such as 'If I go to that party I will meet people and that will be an opportunity to put my *metta bhavana* into practice', or 'If I go it will be a good test of my mindfulness'. Reasons like these might sound very plausible, but are rarely more than attempts to obscure our real motives.

This guarding the sense-gates therefore depends upon our ability to be mindful, and, even more, on our ability to be honest with ourselves. Guarding the sense-gates is obviously an important teaching for our life in the ordinary world, where there are such things as parties and noise, violent movies, and a million delightful and dire distractions. But even when we go away on retreat, where these possibilities no longer exist, the principle still applies.

In order to keep a certain freshness and openness of mind, we should limit the quantity of sense-experience and make life simple. Otherwise, if we are bombarded with experience, we will become over-stimulated. Over-stimulation first makes us restless and speedy, and then dull and stupid.

Naturally, as well as simplifying and reducing the quantity, we should improve the *quality* of our intake by being discriminative. This will influence the quality of our general mood, and then the quality of our meditation practice.

Even in the city, it is not just a question of avoiding too much exposure to the wrong sort of stimulations, but of getting as much as possible of the right sort—whatever tends to put us in an inspired, positive mood. Perhaps there are people we know who have this effect on us; perhaps we could spend more time with paintings and poetry or listening to beautiful music, or out of doors amongst greenery and flowers. A lot of people find that they are happier if they have a certain amount of physical exercise every day. All these activities make a very good counterweight to the often dull, grey, tense, and noisy city environment—where the majority of us live, and a substantial minority of us try to meditate.





Dhammadinna at Jambala

# IN THE TOWN BUT NOT OF IT

*Surrounding many FWBO centres are the first stirrings of a Buddhist sub-culture, particularly in the form of co-operatives and communities. Dhammadinna lives the life.*

**A**t 9 a.m., after meditation and breakfast, Rosy and I leave our community to join other commuters on the overground train to Liverpool Street. The many houses for sale, or being renovated, that we pass on the way indicate that the East End property boom is well under way. Young professionals are moving into the Inner City either to be near the new Docklands development or to be able to travel into the City in just fifteen minutes. Normally, as a full-time student, I would be joining them as they plunge into the maelstrom of the rush hour at Liverpool Street, my patience challenged by the ever increasing vagaries of the London Underground system. However, as a summer co-op worker, I disembark quietly at Bethnal Green and walk with Rosy through the park to Globe Road, home of the Pure Land Co-operative. Here we part company, Rosy to work at Windhorse Typesetters and myself in Jambala. My other community fellows also work in the Co-op, Ruth as manageress of the Cherry

Orchard Restaurant, and Marianne as receptionist at Bodywise, but they start at different times and, rather more courageously, usually bicycle.

The Jambala day begins at 9 a.m. when one of us comes in to take the window-grilles down and Hoover the shop. The rest of the team arrive at 9.30 for a meeting which involves both business and reporting-in. At 10 we open the doors to our first customers.

Jambala is primarily a gift shop selling cards, stationary, toiletries, jewellery, a wide range of household goods including vases and crockery, and miscellaneous gifts ranging from teddy-bear erasers to inflatable dinosaurs. People who live and work in the area obviously appreciate the shop's existence since it means they do not have to make a journey to the West End in order to buy presents. Now that we have also opened a well-stocked bookshop we can offer yet another service.

The day passes quickly at Jambala. Serving customers involves much more than pressing the buttons on a computerized till. We try to meet each customer and provide a positive, communicative atmosphere in the shop. Unfortunately, we also have to keep a careful eye on the shop and everyone in it to prevent people being tempted into unskilful action. Since the turnover of goods is so fast, much of the work involves unpacking and pricing newly delivered stock, and trying to keep the small and crowded stockroom in order. Every week the entire shop is cleaned from top to bottom and new displays are arranged. The full-time workers, Ratnavandana, Helen, and Jo, are also involved in meeting representatives, attending and buying at trade fairs, keeping the accounts up to date, and planning for the future.

As with other businesses in the Pure Land Co-operative, working in Jambala involves a lot of interaction with 'the world'. We take this into consideration during our once-a-week team *metta bhavana* practice, during which we

extend our loving-kindness towards team members, customers, salesmen, delivery men, all the companies who supply the goods, and the people who make the goods all over the world. This really does help us to put our work into a wider perspective, as well as deepening our awareness of all those who make it possible for us to work in Right Livelihood and thus support the London Buddhist Centre. The *metta* practice also acts as a reservoir of positivity on which we can draw when faced with difficult customers and grumpy delivery men.

It can sometimes seem difficult to relate selling a 'frog in a bath' to the Bodhisattva Ideal, but our *metta* practice also helps us to make that connection. Jambala can be seen as a cave of jewels, the crystals and lustre glass shimmering in the windows. Many customers buy such gifts for friends thereby expressing their generosity, while we attempt to relate to them with friendliness and positivity.

The pace of a day in Jambala can be hectic, but we are surrounded and supported by the presence of the other co-operative businesses and the London Buddhist Centre itself. At lunchtime I have only to cross the road to the Cherry Orchard for lunch with a member of the team or someone from another business; people around the Centre pop in to buy cards and presents for one another; after work the Cherry Orchard is still open so that I can eat there and then go on to a class at the Centre. This is very different from my days at college. There, my lunchtimes are usually spent in a large, noisy, crowded, and messy Student Union snack bar where it is difficult to get anything decent to eat or to communicate at any depth.

I enjoy living in London and value the cultural activities that are available. I am also committed to my studies. But I very much appreciated my summer, living, working, and practising within the both challenging and nourishing Mandala of the Pure Land Co-operative and the London Buddhist Centre.



# TRANSFORMING THE CITY

*Living in the city is not just a question of coping with it as best we can. Kulaprabha believes that Buddhists should take the initiative.*

‘Go now and wander for the welfare and the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, welfare and happiness of gods and men. Teach the Law that is good in the beginning, good in the middle and good in the end, with the meaning and the letter. Explain a Holy Life that is utterly pure and perfect. There are creatures with little dust in their eyes who will be lost through not hearing the Law. Some will understand the Law.’ (*Life of the Buddha*, Bhikkhu Nanamoli).

There are of course differences between the situation in the Deer Park at Isipatana two-and-a-half thousand years ago, when the Buddha uttered those words, and the situation we find ourselves in now. Then, the Buddha was addressing sixty-one Enlightened human beings; now, those of us reading this are probably not Enlightened. Then, those followers went forth into a predominantly rural society containing a few small towns and cities; now, we live in great conurbations of millions of human beings, in cities large enough to appear from space as myriad lights weaving humanity’s constellation around our planet. To go now and work for the benefit of the many is to carry the light of the Dharma into the streets of our cities.

In those cities are to be seen great beauty and great ugliness: complex scenes where extremes of wealth sit side by side with extremes of poverty—material, cultural, and psychological. Glasgow, where I live, is one such city. Driving around it brings a series of vivid impressions of its life: a hallucinating vagrant wandering along the street, his arms gesticulating at unseen enemies; an illuminated concert hall, the shafts of light surrounding the building an external parallel to the beams of sound surrounding its enraptured audience; bargain hunters jostling each other; football crowds; a painted phoenix rising the entire four-storeyed height of a tenement gable wall; mothers waiting at the school gates, a protective cordon against the ever threatening ‘stranger’; advertising hoardings offering instant solutions to any unsatisfactoriness that life may bring. Above the level of the traffic lights the city’s Victorian architecture comes to life: sculptured



heroes and heroines hold ships, books, and musical instruments in their outstretched arms and lift their gaze to far horizons from their vantage points on well-proportioned buildings erected when Glasgow was one of the world’s biggest ports. Inside those buildings is the hum of business, study, research, machinery, discussion; deals are made in some, lives saved in others.

Such scenes are repeated in many other cities. Do they need changing? Can they be called ‘good’ or ‘bad’? Is it a realistic task to transform a city? And, anyway, is that not the responsibility of professional agencies? Before considering these questions, it is important to be clear about our purpose, about what is being transformed and why.

In sending his first followers to work for the welfare of the many, the Buddha was acting from an Enlightened standpoint. His definition of ‘welfare’ had not the limited meaning to which we have become used in a phrase like ‘the Welfare State’.

A Buddhist working in the world may become involved in projects for social change, but social change in itself is not the main objective. Such a person will wish to see ethical, non-exploitative, non-discriminatory attitudes in their personal and business communities; but, again, such helpful living and working frameworks are not the Buddhist’s final objective. The transformation of our cities cannot be left solely in the hands of politically or socially motivated people, worthy though their motives may be. A spiritual perspective is required.

A spiritual transformation is not merely an attempt to change what is bad into





Glasgow

photo: Glasgow District Council

what is better. What is better may well lead to a longer and happier life, but that life will still end in death just as surely as will any other life. What needs to be transformed is our vision of ourselves and of our cities. Our lives, instead of being meandering attempts to avoid acknowledging the inevitability of death, could become currents for our own personal experience of Wisdom and Compassion. Our cities could be supports for the spiritual life of their citizens. With the advantages of humanity's scientific and technological discoveries at our fingertips, with easily available access to inspiring art and music, and with our personal practice firmly established in the Buddha's teachings, what could we not achieve? This is a far cry from the accepted goals of a materialist society. But is it possible?

Co-operative businesses, Buddhist centres, and communities of Buddhists living together will sound familiar to readers of *Golden Drum*. These are some of the practical ways in which we have made a start in transforming our cities. To such external structures can be added an eye for the wider opportunities thrown up by our present-day political and social situation. In Glasgow, for example, there are Buddhists adept at unearthing the government help available for new business initiatives; others are finding that meditation classes can be of help to the long-term unemployed; the organizers of a series of workshops for women have asked us to lead one on meditation; another small group of women have recently asked for someone to teach meditation to help them cope with the emotional after-effects of

surgical trauma. Those of us with children are becoming more active in talking to teachers about the kind of religious education we want for them; and teachers with their pupils are coming to the Buddhist Centre. We can also act effectively in co-operation with non-Buddhists whose aims coincide with our own—concern for the environment and concern for human rights are two areas in which much has been done by organizations sustained by the 'grass-roots' individual efforts of their members. Not everyone in our city will respond to Buddhist values and ideas, but some will, and if others benefit indirectly then so much the better.

It is easy to think of ways to communicate the Dharma, easy to write them down in impressive lists. But finding the most *effective* ways and maintaining effort over a long period of time is difficult, and brings us back to the most important ingredient in any attempt to transform our city—ourselves. An expanded vision of our city needs to be rooted in an expanded vision of ourselves.

In our attempts to transform the city we need as much awareness of ourselves and of our ultimate spiritual motivation as we need of the city itself. Our desire to change ourselves must be as firmly held as our desire to change our environment—indeed the one is the reflection of the other. Our city is a mirror of our own lives.

To consider again those scenes from Glasgow life, are they not really scenes enacted within our own minds? Do we not sometimes gesticulate mentally at imagined enemies, or dwell in self-

absorbed rapture, enjoying the fruits of our skilful actions but becoming complacent about maintaining our previous efforts? Do we not allow ourselves to become caught up in the pursuit of pleasure, envious of, or secretly craving, others' possessions? These are our own manifestations of the realms of the unenlightened mind which appear in the Tibetan 'Wheel of Life'. Appearing in us they also appear in our creations—which include our cities.

A city reflects, on a large scale, those factors of which we need to become more mindful in ourselves. Perhaps there is not too much difference between bringing our own inner realms of existence into awareness, and making a real connection with the objective realms which surround us. And, with the help of the Dharma, our awareness of those subjective and objective realms might include some awareness of the way out of them. The eventual choice is not between good and bad, right and wrong, skilful and unskilful, but between the mundane and the transcendental, between seeing things as they appear and seeing them as they really are.

This is perhaps the most important reason for carrying out the task of transforming the city. Reading about Buddhism only bears fruit when it leads us to practise the Dharma. In the same way, will not our personal practice lead to an involvement with our wider environment as we become aware of our intimate connections with other human beings and with our social and cultural context? Further, just as personal practice feeds back into and lends added discrimination to our reading, will not some active involvement with our environment lend new discrimination to our personal practice? What starts off as a quest for greater personal understanding and perspective can lead to the discovery that real perspective is imbibed with an experience of solidarity and concern for other human beings. No doubt our present experience will need time and effort before it matures to the level of those first Enlightened followers of the Buddha. In the meantime let us appreciate the value of our wider perspective and of those feelings of solidarity and concern which we experience already—and put them into practice.



# THE REVOLUTION COMES WEST

**Jai Bhim! Dispatches from a Peaceful Revolution**

by Terry Pilchick

Published by Windhorse

pp. 240, Paperback

price £5.95

There are probably already more people in contact with Trailokya Bauddha Mahasangha Sahayaka Gana (TBMSG), our Indian wing, than with the rest of the FWBO put together. In ten years time the Order in India will probably be equal in size to the rest of the Order worldwide. So you won't fully understand the FWBO—or its likely future development—unless you have some experience of the peaceful 'Dhamma revolution' which TBMSG is fomenting in India.

If you can't go and see for yourself then at least read these 'Dispatches' by Terry Pilchick, better known to readers of *Golden Drum* as Nagabodhi. In fact, in some ways, reading *Jai Bhim!* might be better than actually travelling to India, because you would be hard put to find such an enjoyable travelling companion.

The style of the book fizzles and bubbles, does handsprings and cartwheels, and generally keeps you amused as you jolt across India in various unlikely forms of transport. Because it is so entertaining, it makes light of the complex tale which the book has to tell.

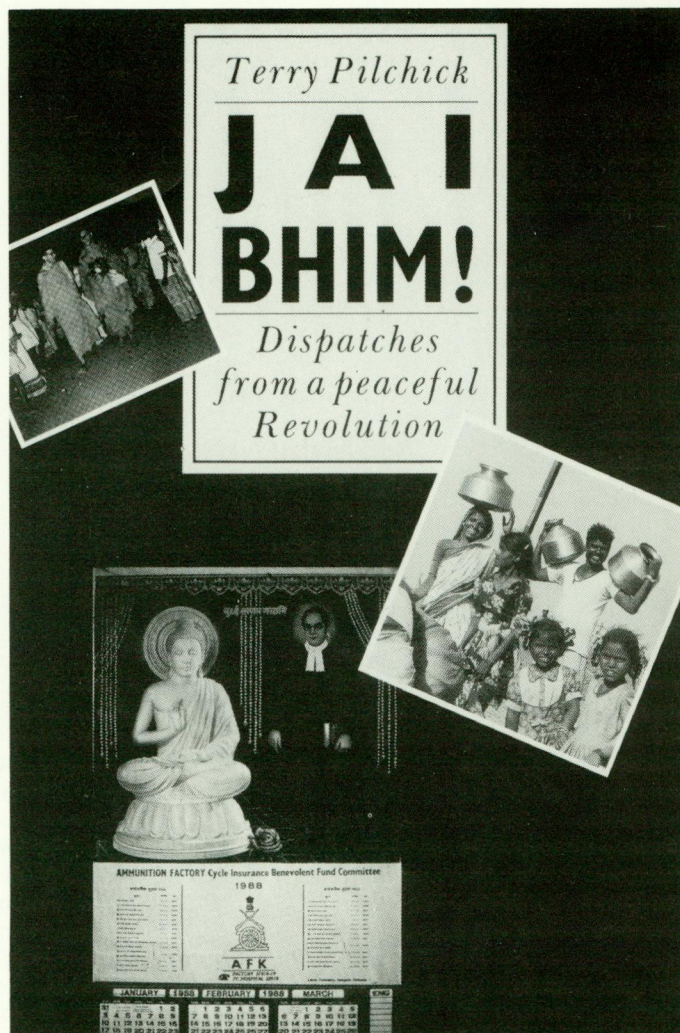
Nagabodhi explains the shocking and degrading position from which the ex-Untouchables are emancipating themselves. He tells the extraordinary story of how Bhimrao Ambedkar rose from being a young Untouchable, not even allowed to sit in the schoolroom with his fellows, to become Law Minister of India. Ambedkar's indomitable courage in championing the ex-Untouchables' cause earned him their total devotion, so that to this day they greet each other with the 'Jai Bhim!' ('Victory to Bhimrao!') of the book's title.

The book's main task is to describe how Ambedkar's vision of Buddhism, as a force which could bring about a peaceful 'Dhamma Revolution', is now being realized by Sangharakshita and TBMSG. The first part describes events surrounding Sangharakshita's tour of Maharashtra in 1982. The second gives the author's impressions of TBMSG in 1985. Since then the 'Dhamma Revolution' has gathered momentum. In fact it is developing so fast that the book is already in danger of being out of date.

The movement in India is the product of some colourful characters. There is the driving force of Lokamitra, who demands the utmost of everyone around him (a demand which even seems to extend to cows!). Then we meet Dharmarakshita, who keeps appearing magically in the midst of vast Indian crowds to rescue the author. Another strong character is Bodhisen, who always says 'yes' when asked to do something for the Dharma, at whatever cost to his sleep or his patience. And of course there is Sangharakshita, of whom the author has to totally revise his understanding after seeing him as at home in India as in the West.

One of the most unique characters is Jyotipala. Born over a pub in Barnsley, Yorkshire, he is now promoting the Dharma in India, wearing robes but determined to be a 'man of the people'. Among his other attributes Jyotipala is a genius at getting onto buses (which, as Nagabodhi wryly observes, is something you can be in India, where in overcrowded cities the attempt to board a bus is reminiscent of a miniature version of the storming of the Bastille).

Chapter seventeen describes the author's journey with Jyotipala in a bullock-cart to give a talk at an outlying village. The whole chapter is hilarious as Jyotipala gives his talk against impossible odds.



Yet all the time we can feel a hum of excitement in the air. Here are people urgently wanting to change their lives, and turning to the Dharma—not materialism—in order to do it.

Chapter fifteen describes a public meeting where Nagabodhi defends the peaceful 'Dhamma revolution' against proponents of violent Marxist revolution. He explains how Ambedkar's desire to see social organization based on liberty, fraternity, and equality has been achieved on a small scale in some areas of the FWBO in the West, and how, in TBMSG, we are now seeing the beginnings of an experiment in Buddhist social organization on a much larger scale.

Marxism advocates a violent revolution to change the socio-economic order by 'seizing the means of production'. The Buddhist social revolution recognizes the need to improve economic and social

conditions (and Nagabodhi catalogues TBMSG's achievements in these fields). However, the 'Dhamma revolution' is based on the understanding that what really produces everything, what truly needs liberating, is the mind of each human being.

What comes through most strongly from this book is the seriousness with which people in TBMSG take the Dharma, their dedication to Ambedkar and Buddhism, and the heroic sacrifices they are prepared to make to further the 'Dhamma Revolution'.

The Three Jewels have caught fire in India. This book is a torch carried to the West. Please buy it, give it to your friends, to other Buddhists, to people who are interested in India, to people who care about peaceful social change.

Spread the word. Without a shot being fired, the revolution has begun.

Vessantara



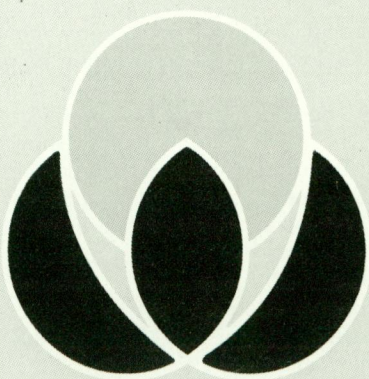
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## SEEKING THE HEART OF WISDOM

*The Path of Insight Meditation*



Joseph Goldstein & Jack Kornfield

Forewords by His Holiness the Dalai Lama & Robert K. Hall, M.D.

**Seeking the Heart of Wisdom: The Path of Insight Meditation**

by Joseph Goldstein and Jack Kornfield

Published by Shambhala  
pp. 195, Paperback  
price £8.95

Joseph Goldstein and Jack Kornfield are Americans who, after training in Asia, have been teaching 'Insight' meditation in the United States, Canada, and Europe since 1974, when they were invited by the late Chogyam Trungpa to give classes at his Naropa Institute. Their book is a collection of sixteen essays based on talks given at meditation retreats, most of which are followed by 'exercises' through which the reader can work on the subject of the talk in his or her own practice.

As the subtitle of this book is 'The Path of Insight Meditation', the meaning of 'Insight Meditation', as used

here, perhaps needs some explanation. All Buddhist practices have Insight as their ultimate goal, and all mainstream schools of Buddhism practise forms of Insight (or Vipassana) meditation. But the traditional view is that Insight—direct seeing into the nature of Reality, with no reliance on words or concepts—can only be developed on the basis of an ethical lifestyle, a warm and open heart, and a firm foundation of mental calm and concentration acquired through the preliminary practice of 'samatha' meditation. Most schools therefore emphasize these aspects rather than Insight for those starting out on the Buddhist path.

The branch of Buddhism which seems to offer 'Insight' meditation to newcomers is a recent development of the Theravada school. By its choice of name it could seem to be offering a short cut to the goal of the Buddhist path. But on

the evidence of this book the 'Path of Insight Meditation' cannot be accused of offering any superficial easy options. The authors state plainly that 'for spiritual practice to develop it is absolutely essential that we establish a basis of moral conduct in our lives'. They stress the importance of emotional growth towards an attitude of loving kindness. And they make no bones about the fact that 'to learn to concentrate is central to mastering the art of meditation'.

*Seeking the Heart of Wisdom* is divided into three sections. The first deals largely with the details of meditation as taught by the 'Insight' school. Obviously this is slanted towards the needs of the schools' followers, but meditators from all traditions are likely to find much that is useful to their practice.

The remainder of the book consists mainly of fundamental Buddhist teaching, re-expressed for Westerners in a way which is interesting, and sometimes inspiring. The material and approach is not specific to the 'Insight' school; it is not even specific to the Theravada: it is simply Buddhist. The authors seem to have made a conscious effort to make sure that this is the case, for which they deserve much credit.

The topics covered include the Seven Factors of Enlightenment, the life of the Buddha, Karma and its results, the Five Spiritual Faculties, and the Three Characteristics of Conditioned Existence. The lists may sound a little daunting, but the traditional formulations are always dealt with in a lively way, the discussion is never abstract or academic, and the emphasis is firmly placed on the practical business of leading the spiritual life.

The authors skilfully present those aspects of the Dharma which some Westerners shy away from as being pessimistic, puritanical, or downright unbelievable in a

very positive and plausible manner. To accept the reality of suffering is shown to be life-enhancing. Conscious restraint in our actions is shown not to mean any loss of freedom, but to represent liberation from the slavery of conditioning and habits. And, after asking sceptical Westerners to 'suspend disbelief', the law of Karma is shown to give us an opportunity to take charge of our destiny.

The book ends with two excellent chapters on 'The Path of Service' and 'Integrating Practice', dealing with the need for compassionate activity in the world, and with ways to bring our meditation practice into our daily lives. This last chapter remedies something of a lack in the rest of the book which, probably because it was originally aimed at people on meditation retreats, can give the impression that mindfulness is something we only practise while meditating.

The book is well seasoned with stories from Buddhist literature, poems, sayings of Zen masters, and quotes from a selection of sources ranging from Mother Theresa to Carlos Castaneda—all of which adds a good deal of colour, interest, and even humour to its pages.

*Seeking the Heart of Wisdom* is not a highly structured book which needs to be read from cover to cover. Whatever structure there is seems mainly to have been imposed after the material was written, and there is some repetition which could have been weeded out by tighter editing. Nor is it entirely an original book. The content is mainly traditional, but the treatment and style sometimes carry strong echoes of other books and other teachers. However, the Dharma is nobody's property, and these are comments, rather than criticisms, on what is basically a good book of sound teachings, and one which is sure to help the cause of the Dharma in the West.

Chris Pauling



# OBJECTIVE HISTORY

## Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhists and their Tibetan Successors

by David Snellgrove  
Published by Serindia  
pp. 664, 125 illustrations, 6 maps  
Hardback, price £30.00

**T**his is a long and detailed study of various aspects of Buddhist history. It covers the evolution of Buddhism in India, focussing on the Vajrayana. It also looks at the Buddhism of Central Asia and Nepal, and the conversion of Tibet. It is a study by a scholar who is not a Buddhist, and contains a wealth of often little-known but important information. This is usually very interesting, and at times challenging to commonplace assumptions about Buddhist history.

It is interesting, for example, to learn that the Sthaviravada 'school' of Indian Buddhism had many adherents who were Mahayanists, or that Bon was not a primitive folk religion but a heterodox form of Buddhism that had entered Tibet quite early.

Snellgrove challenges historical simplifications concerning the establishment of Buddhism in Tibet. He demonstrates that the attitudes of the Tibetan kings to Buddhism were much more complex than they are portrayed by later Tibetan historians. He suggests that the famous debate at Samye was unlikely to have happened, and that the story of intense political rivalries between supporters of Bon and Buddhism is an anachronism.

In his section on the Vajrayana he makes the distinction between the Vajrayana proper, associated with the later tantras, and the earlier tantric Buddhism of the Mahayana. He argues that the Vajrayana so incorporated non-Buddhist elements, especially in the *anuttara-yoga* tantras, as to be in effect not Buddhism at all.

However he at times makes

interpretations of basic Buddhist doctrines and practices which bring into doubt his understanding of Buddhism as a whole—and with this his ability to comment upon the 'orthodoxy' of the Vajrayana. Contrary to his usual practice, such interpretations are based upon insufficient evidence. He asserts, for example, that the use of mantras (which he translates as 'spells') for higher religious purposes 'would have been contrary to the whole tenor of Buddhist doctrine, insofar as its practice was based upon a strict moral code (*sila*), mental composure (*samadhi*), and wisdom (*prajna*) . . .—these three constituting what he calls the 'rationalizing approach' of earlier Buddhism (pp. 122-3). Here he seems to accept the theory that early Buddhism was a dry rationalism. Yet in his first chapter he is at pains to play down the 'rationalizing approach' in early Buddhism. There, he suggests that Buddhism is a system of belief akin to Christianity, with 'believers' accepting 'mythological' dogma with little rational enquiry. Perhaps his uncertainty is an indication that early Buddhism was neither dry rationalism *nor* system of belief.

At another point he states that 'Buddhist thinkers . . . seem to accept placidly the anomaly of *karma* as an all-controlling force and the everyday experience of a man's seeming ability to make a free decision to do right and wrong.' (p. 25). Here he has made the common mistake that there is a fatalistic Buddhist doctrine called 'karma' which holds that all we experience or do now is determined by our past deeds, with karma meaning the 'moral effect of our acts'. The Buddha condemned such fatalism. The actual doctrine is that while volitional actions (*karma*) do have consequences (*vipaka*), not all consequences stem from volitional actions.

To be fair to Snellgrove some

Buddhists make a similar mistake, but if one is going to criticize a Buddhist doctrine one must be clear about what exactly it is, especially one of such importance. Moreover, failure to understand the doctrine of *karma-vipaka* can lead directly to the inability to appreciate that the use of mantras (or any aspect of Buddhist ritual) is the deliberate and rational performance of skilful actions for their positive consequences. Mantra chanting can lead to *samadhi*, for example.

By the end of the book I found Snellgrove's interpretations of Buddhist doctrine rather tiresome, especially as he also has a tendency to use adjectives such as 'mythological', 'superstitious', 'credulous', and the like. It is clear that he has his own world-view and that this influences his interpretation of evidence.

One must ask whether a non-meditator is really qualified to hold a serious opinion about the meditation practices of the Vajrayana, or even translate *samadhi* as 'mental composure', any more than a non-historian can hold a serious opinion about the authenticity of a historical document. Can a scholar really comprehend, through intellectual enquiry alone, a spiritual path which explicitly recognizes the need for a basis of profound moral and psychological integration before its doctrines can be understood?

Moreover, can such 'scientific' scholarship achieve historical accuracy? Given that it reinterprets Buddhist doctrines in terms of its own world-view will it not distort its material, creating pseudo-history in the process? Such was the result of earlier scholarship which interpreted early Buddhism as a rationalistic nihilism and the Mahayana as a form of superstitious polytheism. Snellgrove argues against this earlier scholarly theory, only to fall prey to a similar error himself. He replaces the

overdrawn distinction between early Buddhism and Mahayana with another between Mahayana and Vajrayana.

Snellgrove's misunderstandings of Buddhist doctrine detract from what is on the whole an interesting, informative, and well-written book. To do it full justice would need a review far longer than this. It is not a book for the beginner, but is suitable as a work of reference for the serious student or practitioner able to use the information he presents, whilst being aware of the limitations of his approach. Overall such limitations show the need for good scholarship to be supplemented by competent spiritual practice.

Advayachitta

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## JAI BHIM!

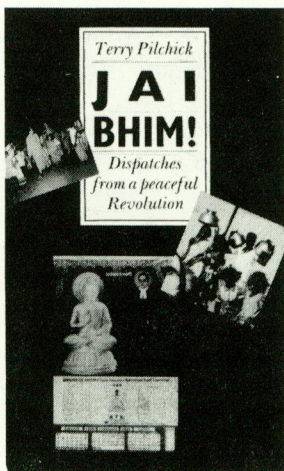
*Dispatches from a Peaceful Revolution*

by Terry Pilchick (Dharmachari Nagabodhi)

Jai Bhim! is the war-cry of a peaceful revolution, a unique experiment in social change based on the Buddhist ideals of non-violence, personal growth, and mutual co-operation.

In 1982 and 1985, Nagabodhi made two extended visits to India. Travelling around Buddhist localities with Sangharakshita, meeting and living with the people who make up TBMSG, he gained an intimate impression of the Indian Buddhist scene. This book is at once a record of what he saw and a moving tribute to Dr Ambedkar's 'mass-conversion' movement.

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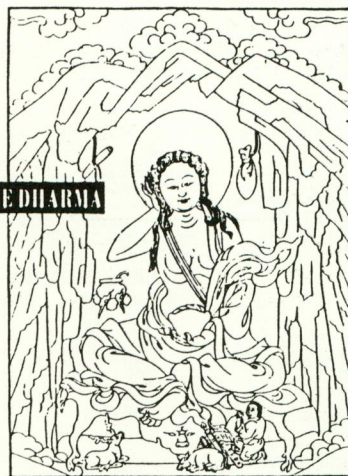
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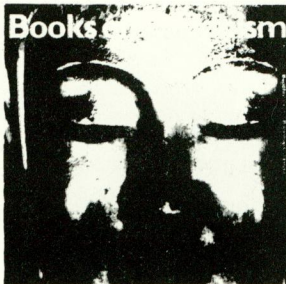


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# A PROBLEMATIC PERSONALITY

**M**onday 8 August saw the public inauguration of the Samye Temple at Kagu Samye Ling Tibetan Centre in Eskdalemuir, Scotland.

Samye Ling, founded by the Ven. Akong Rinpoche in the mid-sixties, is one of the longest-standing centres of living Buddhism in Britain—indeed in the West. The completion of the magnificent new temple, built and decorated almost entirely by Samye Ling's own residents and visitors, climaxes a considerable achievement.

The opening festivities—complete with dance, music, drama, kite flying, pipe bands, and puppet theatre—attracted a large number of visitors and a great deal of mainly

sympathetic publicity.

Some British Buddhists were however saddened—even shocked—to see that the one secular personality prominently involved in the inauguration itself was the Rt. Hon. David Steel, a Scottish member of Parliament, and former leader of the Liberal Party.

Steele first rose to prominence in 1967, when he succeeded in piloting the Abortion Act through Parliament. This Act made it lawful for a doctor to carry out an abortion during the first twenty-eight weeks of pregnancy. Some commentators have opined that Steele's place in history has been more firmly guaranteed by his involvement with this reform than by any of

his subsequent achievements.

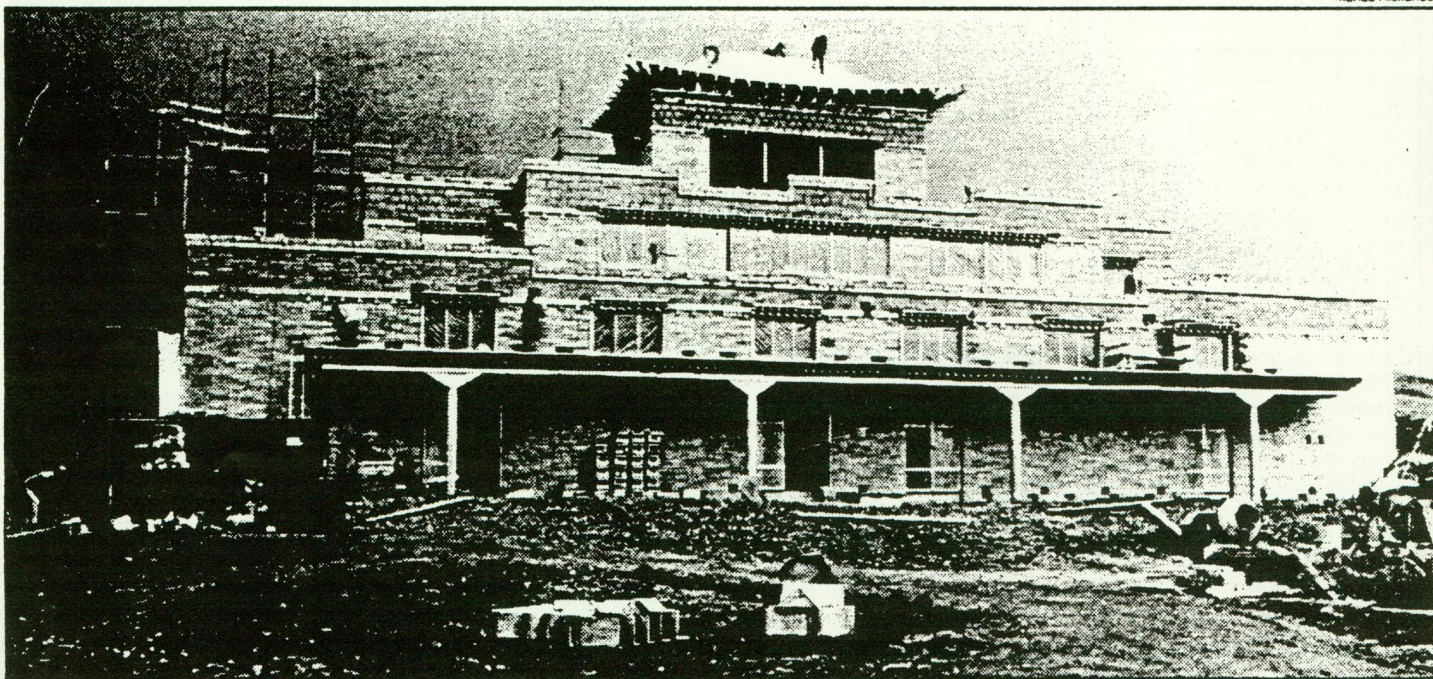
From a mundane perspective, the Abortion Act has probably alleviated a great deal of suffering. However, increasing numbers of Western Buddhists are opening their minds and hearts to higher perspectives, and are openly entertaining doubts about the desirability of abortion.

To begin with, Buddhist tradition holds that individual human life and consciousness-potential begins not at birth but at conception. Then, the relatively easy availability of abortion has inevitably allowed some people to take a less than totally responsible attitude to the risks involved with sexual activity (risks to their own psychology and physiology, since few escape the trauma of abortion

unscathed, as much to the 'unwanted' foetus). Readers wanting to know more about a Buddhist view of abortion are advised to read David Stott's *A Circle of Protection for the Unborn* (reviewed in *Golden Drum* No. 6).

In view of his connection with the abortion lobby, Steele's prominence at a widely publicized Buddhist event was surely ill-advised. To some extent at least, many newspaper readers and television viewers will have been lulled—if only indirectly—into the assumption that Buddhists are in favour of abortion. The fact is that many of them are reviewing their attitude to this issue, and many of them are not in favour of abortion at all.

Manus Alexander



Neil Maclean

Building the Samye Ling temple: the first phase is due for completion on August 8 this year. Carving a water lion, left, takes dedication and skill

"If you have a good eye and a steady hand," I was told, "there is no reason why, even on the shortest of visits, you can't be involved somehow in the decoration of a temple. You could help paint one of the friezes, for example, if you can keep a brush inside a line."

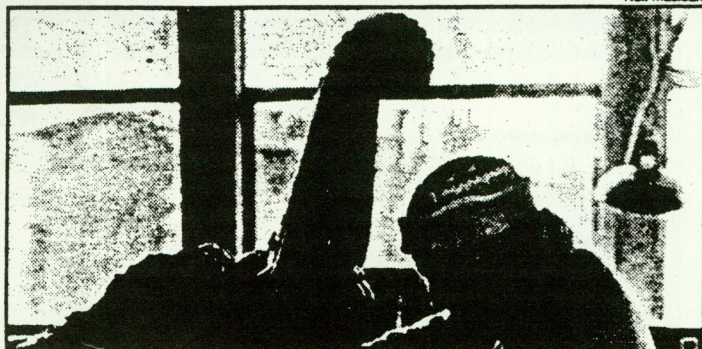
Keeping a brush inside a line is something I can't even do when I clean my teeth, but fortunately there is also gardening to be done, housework, unskilled labour around the grounds, statue making, printing and pottery work. Children are welcomed by Jan

## Sunday Times Travel Brief

### SAMYE LING

**How to get there:** By road: to Carlisle and Langholm, and then by the B709 to Eskdalemuir. By rail or coach: To Lockerbie and then by taxi.

**Things you should know:** Eskdalemuir is the trough of the Borders, collecting rain which it will later turn to mud or ice. This is Wellington boot country, and it is best to take a pair along. It is also a few degrees colder there than anywhere else, and





# INSPIRED COMPLACENCY



Some three hundred people gathered at the UNESCO Building in Paris this October to participate in an International Congress of the European Buddhist Union.

This really was an international meeting, for the delegates and observers who—at times—half-filled the complex's capacious Chamber Number Twelve came from France, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Holland, Spain, Italy, Belgium, Hungary, and Great Britain. Three shrines (Tibetan, Theravada, and Zen), prepared by members of the French Buddhist Union, competed with the speakers' dais to dominate the 'business end' of the room.

Enjoying the patronage of Dr Ananda Guruge, The Sri Lankan ambassador to UNESCO, this conference was without doubt the best organized function yet held by the Union. Speakers, on the whole, spoke for their allotted time, and transcripts of most talks were instantly available—as was simultaneous interpretation of the talks and their ensuing discussions into English and French.

Entitled 'Buddhism and Modern Western Culture', the conference sought to provide a forum for some kind of encounter with this theme. Delegates therefore listened to

and discussed talks on 'Buddhism and Society', 'Buddhism and Inter-religious Dialogue', 'Buddhism, Philosophy, and Science', and 'Buddhism and the Environment'.

To the uninitiated, such a recipe might sound rich and alluring, and without doubt it must be possible to bring together the Buddhists of Europe to contemplate these matters in a way which really would justify all the time and expense involved. However, it is hard to see how this conference could have sent anybody home fizzing with new insights and ideas as to how they, in their own spiritual practice and work for the Dharma, might be able to make a more effective impact on Western culture. For a meeting of people who actually practise the Dharma—and it was evident that a far higher proportion of this year's delegates fitted into that category than ever before—too many talks were of a predominantly speculative or even academic nature, and far too few were delivered by those actively involved, on a daily basis, in the task of bringing the Dharma to life in the West.

Above all, the conference seemed geared to convey a mood of inspired complacency. We Buddhists are heirs to a

profound and marvellous spiritual tradition, was the implicit message: in the Buddhist teachings are antidotes to all the ills of the West, and some day people will realize this. Then we will take our rightful place on all the appropriately influential bodies,—and our elites will at last be welcomed into the ranks of the world's elite. . . .

This mood is as premature as it is questionable. We European Buddhists have a long way to go before we can be confident that Buddhism is even going to begin to take root in the West, let alone make its influence felt. Most of us have yet to face the trauma of the deaths of our first leaders; very few movements have begun to address the issue of the Bhikkhu (or Lama) and laity divide; many depend for their survival on financial assistance from overseas or from immigrant ethnic

Buddhists, and for their numerical strength on the attractive power of charismatic oriental teachers. We have hardly reached the point when we can be sure that Buddhism will survive. We certainly have not begun to discover what European Buddhism is really going to be about. Perhaps, one day, we will have a conference on themes like these.

As for the issue of the FWBO's membership of the Union (see *Outlook*, issue 9), the business meeting—at which the new Constitution was to be discussed—came to an end before this item could be debated. Whether or not membership of the EBU will be open to movements whose members are 'predominantly Buddhists' or 'professed Buddhists'—and thus whether it is to remain a truly *Buddhist* Union, will be decided next year, in Budapest.

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## ENCOURAGING TRIBUTE

Although the High Commission in London could not provide a reason, the sixty paise postage stamp currently circulating in India shows a traditional representation of the Buddhist scholar and poet Shantideva, author of the *Bodhicharyavatara*, and the *Shiksha-Samuccaya*.

Until the inauguration of Dr Ambedkar's movement of mass conversion in 1956, Buddhism had almost completely died out in India, even though it was once the main religion in the land. The nine million Buddhists now living in India are still very much in the minority, and will doubtless feel encouraged and heartened by this gesture.



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भारत INDIA

1988



# Events

December '88 - April '89

18 Dec-6 Jan **PADMALOKA WINTER RETREAT:** led by Subhuti on the theme of **THE THREE PROTECTORS**, archetypal figures that embody the three principal aspects of Enlightenment. (There may be ordinations during this retreat.)  
Dec 18-23 *Vajrapani - The Bodhisattva of Energy*  
Dec 23-30 *Manjugosha - The Bodhisattva of Wisdom*  
Dec 30-6 Jan *Avalokiteshvara - The Bodhisattva of Compassion*

17-19 Feb **MEN'S EVENTS: THE FOUR GREAT RELIANCES:** How can we know what to rely on in our spiritual quest? Talks by Tejananda, Devamitra, Pramodana, Kamalasila will explore criteria for spiritual life.

23 March  
2 April **NATIONAL MITRA RETREAT:** led by Subhuti on the theme of **GOING FOR REFUGE**, an excellent opportunity during the Easter break to experience the wider sangha with talks by Devamitra, Saddhaloka, Ratnaguna, Subhuti, Suvajra, Surata, Sona.

All these events are open to men with previous experience of FWBO meditation and Puja. For further details see the Padmaloka programme, or contact:

**Padmaloka**

BUDDHIST RETREAT CENTRE FOR MEN

Lesingham House, Surlingham, Norfolk NR14 7AL 050 88 8112

## THE CHERRY ORCHARD VEGETARIAN RESTAURANT

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*'One of the best traditional vegetarian restaurants in London. Cozy but elegant... prices are very reasonable.'*

### Company

*'A charming and inexpensive place... exceptionally good value. I found the food to be of the highest quality and the service very friendly.'*

### LAM

*'Delicious wholesome food in a pleasant, friendly atmosphere.'*

### Time Out Student Guide

*'Imaginative dishes made from fresh and wholesome ingredients. They do miraculous things with aubergines... Some of the freshest salads in town.'*

### City Limits

*'Run with cheerful enthusiasm... offers carefully prepared vegetarian food.'*

*'Delicious sweets.'*

### Egon Ronay's Just a Bite

*'Altogether a useful place to know about.'*

### City Limits

*'Open Tues-Sat 12-9.30pm (last orders)'*

*'Closed Sun & Mon'*

*'4 minutes from Belbun Green tube'*

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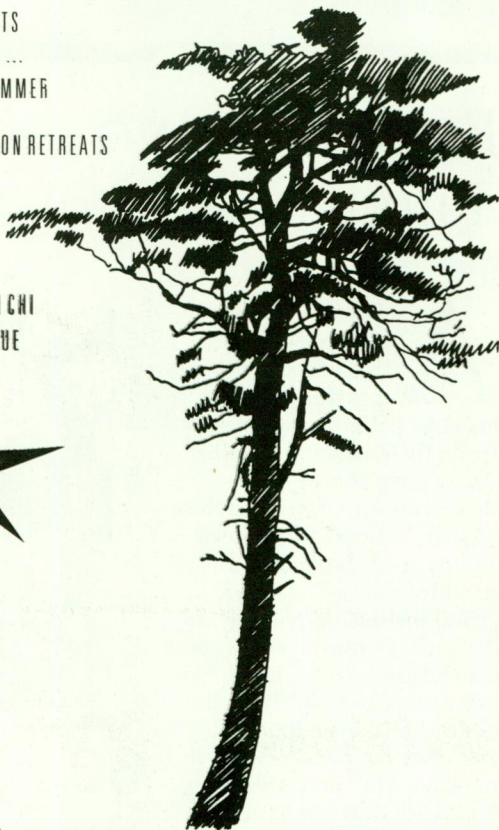
## tārāloka

BUDDHIST RETREAT CENTRE FOR WOMEN

INTRODUCTORY EVENTS  
SEASONAL RETREATS ...  
WINTER/SPRING/SUMMER

INTENSIVE MEDITATION RETREATS  
STUDY SEMINARS  
WORKING RETREATS

WEEKEND EVENTS ...  
YOGA/MANTRA/SAGE/TAICHI  
ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE

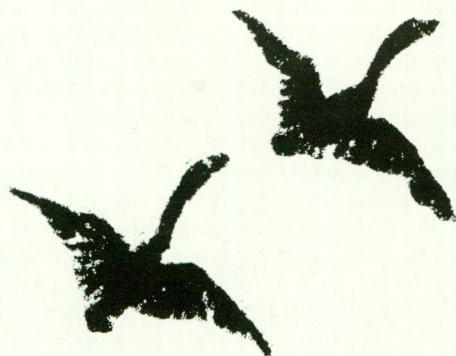


For more details see our brochure - or contact the Secretary.

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

## MITRA MEDITATION TEACHERS WEEKEND WORKSHOP

17-18 DEC 1988 (10.00am-5.00pm)



This workshop is for men and women mitras who support or lead meditation classes. It will provide an opportunity to work with the *Vajraloka* team on the presentation and dynamics of teaching meditation.

The workshop will be led by Vajradaka.

Cost: £15.00

Booking: Send £5.00 deposit to:  
Vajraloka, Tyn-y-ddol, Trerddol, Nr Corwen,  
Clwyd LL21 0EN.



# SANGHARAKSHITA DIARY

'The media aren't interested in what I have to say. They prefer the Bishop of Durham!' In what sounded more like a challenge than a lament, Sangharakshita was commenting on the media's bias towards controversy during a local radio interview in April.

Who could have predicted though that nearly two hours of national television time would soon come his way? Nevertheless a forty-five minute documentary about Sangharakshita was made in August for ITV, and in October he is going to India to make a sixty minute film for Channel 4. Both films will be transmitted in the next few months, the first hopefully in November, and the other at Christmas. This represents something of a breakthrough for the FWBO, and the resulting publicity could create a wave of interest at our centres around the country, making a fitting conclusion to the twenty-first anniversary year of the FWBO.

The hour-long film to be shot in India will examine Sangharakshita's personal involvement with the ex-Untouchable Buddhists and their leader Dr B. R. Ambedkar. It will also look at the work of Sangharakshita's many disciples in India. The FWBO (or, rather, TBMSG, to give the Indian title) has now been active in India for a

decade, under the guidance of Lokamitra, (who initially went to India for Yoga training!). Lokamitra recently returned to the UK for his first visit in five years, spending some time with Sangharakshita at both Guhyaloka and Padmaloka. His visit culminated in the August Order weekend when, introduced by Sangharakshita, he spoke about the extraordinary work in India.

Quite coincidentally, British TV viewers will soon be able to see a film biography of Dr Ambedkar. The film is to be made by Kenneth Griffith, the British actor-director who has just made a film on Jawaharlal Nehru. He not only writes and directs his films, but plays all the parts himself (twenty-five roles in the Nehru film, for example). When they met at the London Buddhist Centre recently, Mr Griffith was keen to hear Sangharakshita's personal impressions of the great man, particularly to help him with his role, or, rather, total immersion in the character of Dr Ambedkar.

Another of Sangharakshita's visitors at this time was his old friend, Mr Rustomji, the ex-Prime Minister (Diwan) of Sikkim, and his wife. They had last met thirty years before when Sangharakshita used to visit the Sikkimese capital of Gangtok to give talks on Buddhism for the royal family and government.

Since his return to Padmaloka



Sangharakshita with Mr and Mrs Rustomji

in August, Sangharakshita has been following a new daily programme. Temporarily putting aside literary work, and in particular his memoirs, he will be devoting himself more fully to his personal involvement with the Western Buddhist Order. This he intends do partly via the Order Office, his office team based at Padmaloka, and he has therefore been more involved than usual with the day to day work of this three man team. Starting the day with an hour of meditation, he has then been holding a morning business meeting. On Sunday nights he leads a study group on Al Ghazali's *The Duties of Brotherhood* for the office team

and other members of Padmaloka community.

All this actually marks the start of a new phase for Sangharakshita, during which he intends to visit many of the British chapters, or local branches, of the Western Buddhist Order. There was one important break from this new routine, however. In September he made a short visit to Taraloka, the women's retreat centre in Shropshire, to ordain nine women. This is the largest number of women yet ordained into the Western Buddhist Order at one time, and increases the number of women Order members from fifty-seven to sixty-six.

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Sangharakshita with the new Order members





## LBC PREPARES FOR ITS SECOND DECADE

In November the London Buddhist Centre celebrates its tenth anniversary. This will be marked by a week of celebrations from 22 to 27 November, and preparations are well under way to make sure that the Centre is looking its best for the historic event.

A major effort to refurbish the exterior of the LBC is nearing completion—a project made possible by generous grants from Tower Hamlets Council, the Department of the Environment, and English Heritage. The Buddha rupa in the large shrine room has also been refinished by its original sculptor, Chintamani, and the Nalanda crest over the main gate is to be renovated. The Centre's new programme, which will be released at the time of the anniversary celebrations, is being designed by a team of high-class graphic designers, and should also

help to raise the LBC's public profile.

Auspiciously there have recently been several clear indications that the Centre's success is growing and that interest in its activities is increasing. For example, this year's annual report showed income 24% up on the previous year—a definite sign that many more people are attending classes and courses.

There has also been considerable interest in the LBC from the media. In August, Anglia TV filmed some activities in and around the Centre, including scenes from the Cherry Orchard restaurant, to be used as part of a documentary on Sangharakshita and his work in establishing the FWBO. In September Thames TV conducted several interviews among the Friends, and filmed a number of activities for their

'Currents' programme (see 'Media Interest').

In keeping with the LBC's higher profile and updated image, it has even borrowed some management techniques more usually associated with City whizz-kids than with Buddhists. The Centre has recently completed a 14-page document setting out its Aims (the general principles underlying its activities) and its Objectives (the specific projects which must be put into effect and the targets which must be reached to realize its aims) to provide it with a unified structure for planning its activities and defining people's goals and responsibilities.

Of course the Centre's fundamental aims have not changed, and many of the objectives have been pursued for years. But to have them clearly set down provides a

coherent framework within which everybody can see how their activities fit in with the overall goals of the Centre—making people more conscious of their part in the whole, providing explicit targets against which progress can be measured, and giving clear principles to refer to in case of confusion.

With such a framework established, managing the Centre will become a matter of handing the appropriate objectives to the appropriate person—such as the financial targets to the Treasurer—with a mutually agreed time-scale, and then reviewing progress every so often. It is then up to the individual concerned to figure out how to achieve the objective—where to find the money, who will help them, and so on. The Centre is currently in the process of time-tabling, prioritizing, and allocating the objectives to those who will be responsible for implementing them. Out of this will grow the mechanisms—the practical means for putting the objectives into action.

This document contains enough challenges to keep everyone at the LBC stretched for years to come, and by allowing all concerned to see their work within the wider context it should have a strong unifying effect on everyone associated with the Centre—whether they are working in a co-op, teaching meditation, or handling any other aspect of the Centre's activities.







## LBC CO-OPS BREAK NEW GROUND

The refurbished Cherry Orchard ▲

Team-based co-operative businesses are an important part of the FWBO's attempts to create a Buddhist lifestyle for the West. They are making it possible for Buddhists to practise 'Right Livelihood'—that is, to earn their living by doing ethically sound work in a helpful, positive environment.

Such Right Livelihood co-operatives are a significant feature of life in the 'Buddhist village' which surrounds the London Buddhist Centre in Bethnal Green, and recently there have been a number of encouraging trends in this area of the LBC's activities, with more people choosing to work in Right Livelihood ventures, and several significant developments in the businesses themselves.

The gift shop Jambala has expanded and extended its range of business with the launch of a new bookshop. This opened on 24 June, and as the only quality bookshop in the area, it has met with a very positive response. Jambala now has a stable team of five women, plus several part-time workers. The team feel that they are now in a position to make serious plans for the future, plans which include the purchase and renovation of the original gift shop premises.

Earlier this year Windhorse Typesetters opened up a new area in their business when an artist joined their team to deal with graphic design, and recently they further expanded this area of their work by buying a process camera. The team of four women have had so much custom that they have literally been working day and night, and they have plans for a major project involving the purchase of new, more sophisticated equipment which will give them extra facilities and improve their efficiency. They have obtained a grant from the Department of Trade and Industry for consultancy fees for the project, and hope to have the new equipment in operation before the end of the year.

In August the Cherry Orchard restaurant was extensively redecorated—its new look reflecting the more professional approach that its team of fifteen women is bringing to the business. The restaurant's trade is going from strength to strength, and it has received several favourable reviews from both restaurant guides and the national press. Plans are currently underway to expand and renovate the restaurant premises sometime next year.



Jambala's new bookstore



# B O D Y W I S E

Bodywise—the London Buddhist Centre's facility for bodywork methods of health and self-development—is thriving, according to Mary Goody who teaches massage there. The public response is highly appreciative, while within the FWBO the usefulness of 'indirect' physical methods of development is becoming increasingly widely recognized.

At the moment the centre offers classes or individual consultations and treatment in Yoga, massage, Alexander technique, dance, osteopathy, naturopathy, acupuncture, T'ai Chi, Aikido, and—soon—homeopathy.

More people are visiting Bodywise than ever before, with some 250 passing through every week. Classes are usually fully booked, and practitioners seeing individual clients are kept very busy. The Bodywise team is also developing an involvement in community health, having run workshops and stalls at local

'Health Weeks', and taken classes out to other venues, particularly those catering for the over-sixties. They have plans to extend this involvement, and hopefully to cater for specific groups such as a local 'special needs' school, and young mothers living in flats in the area.

But Bodywise is not only a thriving alternative health centre, providing a substantial range of classes and therapies. It also provides something more—something different, and something very unusual. This is an emphasis on awareness and emotional creativity, sustained by the practitioners' own meditation practice. This resonates with those that visit the centre, giving them something more than just a nice experience or a healthier body—a taste of that awareness and creativity within themselves.

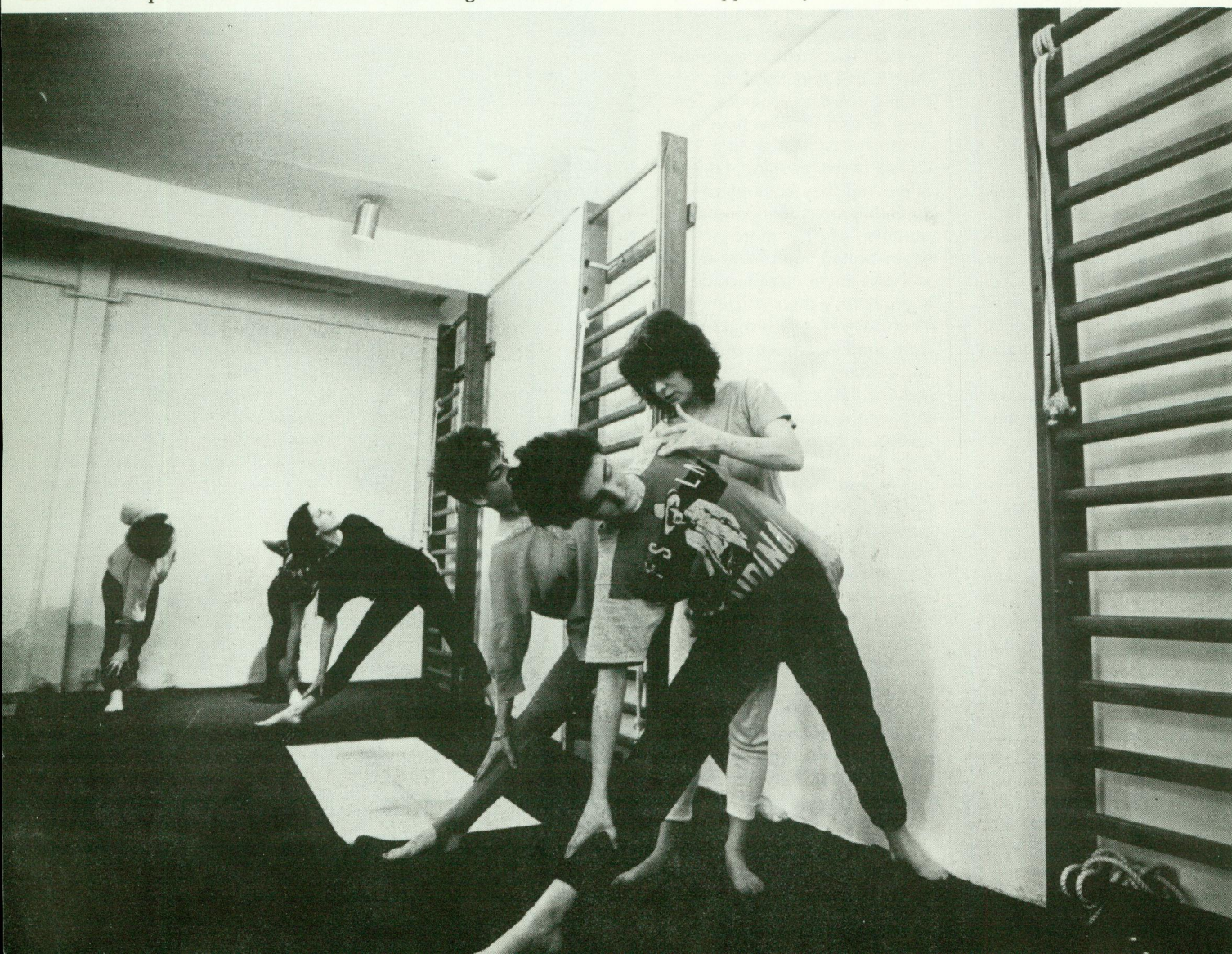
Bodywise had its beginnings in 1984, when the teachers at the London Buddhist Centre's annexe began to meet

regularly for both business purposes and mutual support. This, along with the choice of the new name 'Bodywise' in 1986, led to a new momentum and a new sense of identity and purpose, which have since made the centre something much more than the sum of its parts, all of which had existed for some time.

The Bodywise team currently consists of eight women who jointly run the centre's administration and teach the 'core' activities: three teachers of Yoga, two of massage, one of Alexander technique, one of dance, and one full-time administrator and receptionist. Other Order members and mitras also offer classes in Yoga, Alexander Technique, T'ai Chi, and Aikido, as well as occasional workshops on a variety of subjects such as drama, healing, and energy work in massage. Space is also made available for teachers not involved in the FWBO, and an increasing number are using this opportunity—not easily

found in the East End of London—to teach their own perspectives on physical and emotional well-being in a comfortable and pleasant setting. (People often comment on the friendly atmosphere at Bodywise, and this is another major reason why so many frequent it, whether to attend classes or to rent space.) Of course all such activities at Bodywise (which have ranged from shiatsu to dance therapy) must be acceptable to the team in the light of their own approach and ideals—for example they must not be emotionally manipulative.

A major development in the centre's activities over the last two years has been the setting up of treatment rooms for individual consultations, and the growing number of practitioners treating clients at Bodywise on a regular basis. These currently include two masseuses, two Alexander technique teachers, three osteopaths/naturopaths, and three acupuncturists, while a











Khemasiri's ordination

## NINE WOMEN ORDAINED AT TARALOKA

24 Sunday 25 September saw the public ordination of nine new women members of the Western Buddhist Order. This was the largest number of women ordained together in the history of the FWBO, and also the first time ordinations had been conducted at Taraloka, the women's retreat centre in Shropshire. These ordinations marked the culmination of an ordination course for women which this year has been modified and somewhat expanded, in ways which Vidyashri reports have already made a significant difference for the women's wing of the movement.

The course—the whole of which was held at Taraloka—began in April with two ten-day ordination request retreats, attended by about sixty mitras. These were led by Vidyashri and Sanghadevi with a team of nine other Order members, and were very successful events—Vidyashri reports that they generated a very positive atmosphere, and helped many mitras to clarify their direction. She adds that it seemed an important step forward for women mitras to gather together in such numbers, giving everyone involved a strong experience of Sangha.

The course continued with a month-long retreat attended by ten mitras, led by Vidyashri and supported by a team of five other 'weighty' (in Sangharakshita's words) Order members. This was entitled 'The Red Rose of the Heart', and centred on an exploration of the ten ethical precepts accepted by members of the Order—viewed as expressions of love and freedom—supplemented by meditation practices and a good deal of ritual. Vidyashri describes this as a rich, intensive event.

In September the course reached its conclusion with a two-week ordination retreat. One innovation, introduced as an experiment this year, was that this was attended by five women, mainly mothers, who had been unable to attend the one-month retreat. The nine newly ordained women included the first two 'home-grown' Order members from Taraloka, two women from Brighton who will form the first-ever women's chapter in that town, plus three new Order members from the London Buddhist Centre, one from Diss near Norwich, and one New Zealander who will shortly return home to help run the Wellington Centre.

## VAJRALOKA RAISES THE ROOF

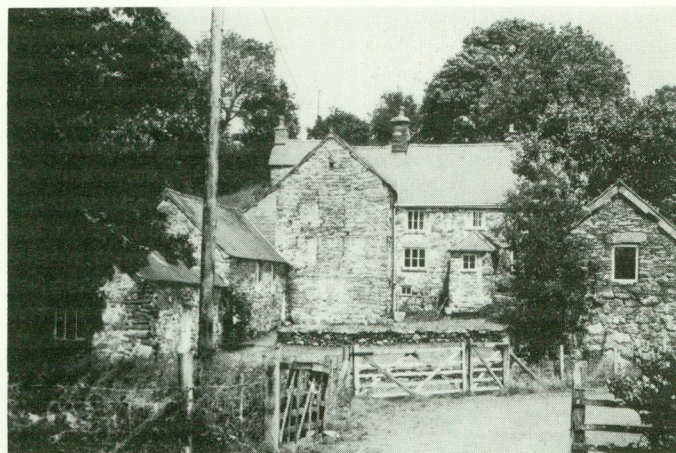
Over the last few months a number of major improvements have been made to facilities at Vajraloka and Vajrakuta, the men's retreat centre in North Wales and its associated satellite centre mainly devoted to study, located a few hundred yards down the road.

At Vajrakuta a new large shrine room has been completed, along with a new bathroom and further guest facilities, and a caravan has now been made available for solitary retreats. At Vajraloka the new roof to a barn which will eventually be used as a dining room has been completed over the summer. When finished this much

larger dining room will significantly increase the number of retreatants the centre can cater for.

Both centres have had a busy and productive summer, including a very successful mindfulness retreat at Vajraloka, which was a full house, and two courses for meditation teachers, one for men at Vajraloka and another for women at Vajrakuta.

Members of the Vajraloka team also conducted a retreat in the Saurland of central Germany. None of the team speak German, and they report that a wide range of teaching approaches were used, including mime.



Vajrakuta



## A NEW CENTRE FOR CAMBRIDGE

Despite the strong FWBO presence in Cambridge, until now there has been no permanent centre in the City, and classes, meetings, and other activities have been held in a nearby community centre. But the purchase of a new house means that this rather unsatisfactory state of affairs will soon be brought to an end.

In August Windhorse Trading bought a four-storey terraced house next door to the existing Windhorse community on Newmarket Road. Windhorse are renting the basement and ground floor of the new house to FWBO Cambridge for use as the new Cambridge Centre, while the two upper floors already house a new men's community of Order members working either for the Centre or for Windhorse Trading.

Conversion work on the Centre is well underway, and has involved laying a new shrine room floor in the basement, while a rupa is currently being made by sculptor Chintamani. The shrine, public rooms, and garden will all be finished to a very high standard, providing a beautiful environment for those attending the new centre. If all goes to plan the Centre will open officially on Sangha Day, 19 November.

At the moment classes in Cambridge go well, and attendances at both the beginners' and regulars' meeting are high. During the University term Ratnaprabha will be giving a course of lectures at Clare College under the auspices of the University Buddhist Society, and Kulananda will be leading a meditation class at King's College.



Kulananda

## LEEDS STRETCHES ITS SEAMS

The Leeds Buddhist Centre, founded five years ago by a single pioneering Order member, Aryamitra, has just seen the return of its first home-grown Dharmachari (Aryasingha) from the ordination course in Spain, swelling the Centre's complement of Order members to three.

Aryasingha reports that this is a time of great excitement and potential for change at the Leeds Centre, and that there is a definite impetus towards finding a new property, as the Centre is now at the stage where it is being held back by the limitations of the existing premises, both in terms of size and location.

Paradise Gardening, the Leeds Centre's Right Livelihood garden maintenance and landscaping business, has also been doing very well, with plenty of work during the summer. The business now provides a very good work situation for its members and also helps to support the Centre.

## EXPLORING RITUAL

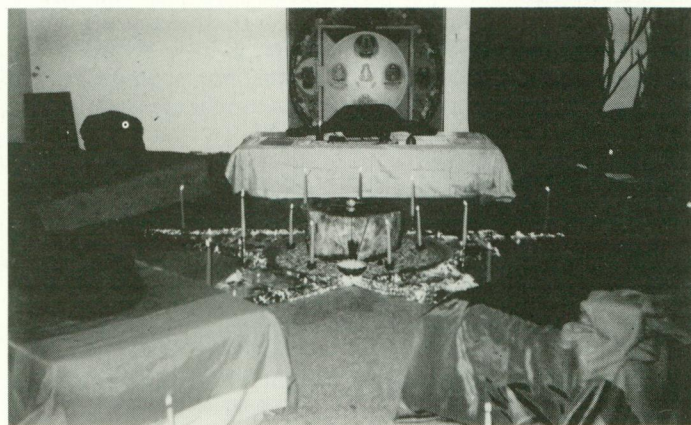
Between 9 and 16 September the Padmaloka men's retreat centre held a Puja Retreat for mitras, led by Kovida, Suvajra, and Bodhivajra. This was an imaginative exploration of the topic of puja in relation to the practice of Buddhism in the West.

Puja is the element of ritual and ceremony in Buddhism—and contrary to some preconceptions it is an important part of Buddhist practice. Although many of us are initially drawn to Buddhism because we find its teachings attractive at a rational level, reason alone cannot take us far along the Buddhist path. Buddhism sets out to change us—not just superficially but right down to our most basic motivations. However rational we may think we are, only our emotions can really penetrate to these depths.

The purpose of religious ritual, chanting, music, and art is to involve our emotions in our spiritual life, which is essential if we are to mobilize the energy it requires. But this is an area where many Western Buddhists face a major problem.

Many Westerners have difficulty with the idea of religious ceremonial because in our culture we are conditioned to over-value the rational intellect and ignore or reject the emotions. Others have difficulty because in rejecting Christianity they have forcibly rejected the emotional appeal of Christian worship, and this reaction colours their response to Buddhist puja.

But perhaps a more general problem is that existing Eastern forms of puja simply lack the power to move us deeply, because they are the product of a different culture



One of the puja retreat shrines

with which we have had no connection in our early life. For this reason many Western Buddhists find that they can be more deeply moved by, say, a performance of Handel's Messiah or the beauty of a medieval cathedral than by their Buddhist equivalents. As part of the naturalization of Buddhism we need to develop our own equivalents, with equal power to invoke our emotional energy.

This retreat took a small step towards addressing these problems. Through a series of exercises, workshops, and brainstorming sessions the retreatants explored the various aspects of puja, and tried to develop forms which they fully understood and with which they could connect at an emotional level.

Much of the work centred on the nature of the space used for the puja. Many retreatants felt hampered by the existing shrine-room, which seemed to incorporate too many preconceptions. They therefore started with a completely empty room which they gradually elaborated. Initially the shrine was kept very simple, and was based on natural objects. But by the end of the retreat the shrine-room

had become very elaborate indeed—nothing less than a 3-D representation of the cosmos, with a central shrine representing the world, on which participants looked down from raised platforms, while Bodhisattvas in turn looked down from the roof above.

The retreatants also experimented with various forms of chanting, sometimes accompanied by a drum, as well as with song, music, dance, rhythmic speech, and various aspects of ritual. Over the course of the retreat the pujas became longer and longer, and the ritual more and more elaborate and emotionally charged.

According to Kovida everyone involved said that their eyes had been opened to the potential power of puja, and that they had enjoyed the retreat immensely. But valuable as the event was it did no more than scratch the surface. There are no immediate plans for a follow-up, although at some point Kovida would like to spend perhaps three months exploring similar areas, preferably in a very remote place. Hopefully he will get the chance.



# THE JAI BHIM TOUR

During September and October, Nagabodhi travelled almost 2,500 miles to launch his new book *Jai Bhim!* *Dispatches from a Peaceful Revolution* at every major UK centre of the FWBO.

His first engagement was in Cambridge on 1 September, the book's publication date; subsequent evenings saw him speaking and signing copies of the book in Brighton, Croydon, East and West London, Manchester, Accrington, Glasgow, Norwich, Nottingham, Birmingham, and Bristol. Many of these evenings were advertised publicly, so for some centres Nagabodhi's book has already begun to serve as a bridge between the FWBO and the world beyond.

Nagabodhi began his fifty minute talk with the claim that Buddhism is essentially and unavoidably revolutionary. The revolution it fosters, however, is one not of the masses, but of the individual. Even a little meditation practice, he said, inevitably induces us to look at ourselves more deeply, ask difficult questions, and make changes in our lives. Those with whom we live and work will notice and be affected by those changes; they will be influenced, some may even be inspired to try some meditation for themselves. In that way, he said, as increasing numbers of people work together, in harmony, to change themselves and their

world, the revolution that began with just one individual can spread further afield.

Summarizing the history and plight of India's Untouchables, Nagabodhi then explained why Dr Ambedkar, their leader throughout the 1930s, '40s, and '50s, had chosen to lead them into a revolution based not on violence but on the practice of Buddhism. 'This was an extraordinary, even eccentric decision,' he said, 'The only parallel one can perhaps draw is to try to imagine Nelson Mandela urging South Africa's blacks to relinquish any thought of violence, and instead turn to Buddhism!' No wonder Ambedkar's initiative was misunderstood, even by his own followers. But Ambedkar did have reasons, ones that he had pondered on for two decades, and now it would seem that the work of TBMSG (the FWBO's Indian wing) is showing definite signs of reviving Ambedkar's vision for a peaceful revolution.

In the brief time available, Nagabodhi could only hint at the nature of those signs. Understandably, he urged his listeners to buy and read his book for a fuller, richer account.

Although envisaged as a more sedate enterprise than any of his trips to India, Nagabodhi's tour was not without incident and texture. During the four day gap between his evenings in

Manchester and Accrington, Nagabodhi spend three days house-hunting for a Windhorse Publications office/community complex in Sheffield. He looked at six houses, made bids on three, and had an offer accepted on one (—stand by for more news). On the morning of his departure for Accrington he awoke to discover that someone had broken into his car and stolen most of his clothes along with, he rather hoped, at least one copy of his book. The good news came a couple of days later when he arrived in Glasgow, from where Windhorse Publications are dispatched to FWBO centres, to discover that his book had sold 800 copies in its first three weeks. Even more good news was to come at the LBC when somebody placed a cheque for £1000 into the *dana* bowl after his talk. There, as elsewhere on the tour, all *dana* collected during the evening was earmarked for the Dharma Fundraising wing of the Karuna Trust (Aid For India).

In January, Nagabodhi will be leaving England for a few months to visit Auckland, Wellington, and Sydney. Doubtless he will be doing some more promotional work there. But first, on his way out, he will be spending some days in San Francisco, where his book has been published by Parallax Press.

Nagabodhi in Brighton



## NEWS FROM TBMSG

In Aurangabad, Nagasena reports that the Centre there is planning to purchase an area of land for use as a forestry plantation and for agricultural purposes. This scheme will be run as a Right Livelihood venture to generate much needed funds to support TBMSG's activities.

Vimalakirti reports from Wardha that classes there are going very well indeed, with regular attendances of between two hundred and three hundred people a week. Fifty-one people have now asked to become mitras, and many more are interested. In Nagpur—the site of Dr Ambedkar's conversion to Buddhism and the first mass conversion ceremonies, and therefore a place of great symbolic significance to India's new Buddhists—Vimalakirti has started taking four classes a week, and there are requests for more. Classes are also being held at three more locations near Wardha.

On Dharma day over three hundred people attended Wardha's celebrations and many more had to be turned away due to lack of space. At these celebrations the Sevenfold Puja was performed for the first time at such a major public event in TBMSG's history. This was very well received, with many people being so inspired that they have begun to attend classes regularly.

On 25 August the Wardha Centre celebrated Sangharakshita's birthday—Vimalakirti reports that Sangharakshita is something of a mythical figure for those involved with TBMSG. He will be opening a new hostel building in Wardha on 22 October, and people are very eager to see him.





# GUHYALOKA REUNION

During the first week of September, twelve Dhamacharis flew down to southern Spain to join Vessantara, Mokshananda, and Dharmavira for the first ever 'Guhyaloka reunion'. The twelve, who had all been ordained on the first Ordination Course to be held at Guhyaloka, in the latter half of last year, were themselves surprised to find how many of their fellows had found the time and funds to make the thousand mile trip.

The programme was simple: some meditation and puja, plenty of time for walks and talks, and a daily reporting-in session in which each Dharmachari shared the experiences, successes, and failures of his first year in the Order. It was an excellent opportunity to catch up with each other, and to strengthen bonds of friendship that had formed the previous year.

Not everyone had had an easy time, and most of them had found themselves working

very hard at their 'home centres'. Sarvananda reports that everyone seemed substantially stronger, though a little tired and battle-weary. Many reported that it was their experiences at Guhyaloka the previous year, and particularly their memories of the sheer beauty of the valley setting, that had nourished them through their first demanding year as Dharmacharis. Being in the valley once again and finding it even greener and more fertile—thanks to the heavy rains that had lashed it in the past year, brought everything back, and offered a chance to gain some fresh perspective on their lives in the UK.

By the end of the week, the retreatants had decided to return again next year. A few may be there even sooner, however, since there are now three huts on the land available for those wanting ideal conditions for solitary retreats.



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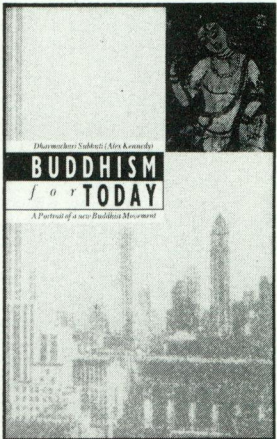
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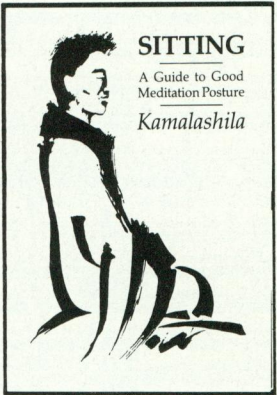
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