GOLDEN DRUM

A Magazine for Western Buddhists. Price £1.25 August 1989—October 1989 (2532) No. 14

BUDDHISM AND VEGETARIANISM

GOLDEN DRUM

AUGUST 1989—OCTOBER 1989 (2532)

(Formerly the FWBO Newsletter)
Published by Windhorse Publications for the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order

© Windhorse Publications 1989

Editor Nagabodhi
News Chris Pauling, with help from Chittapala, Padmavajra, Pramodana, Iris McClean, Judith Sloboda
Book Reviews Tejananda
Outlook Advayachitta
Editorial Assistance Shantavira, Jayaprabha
Design Paramabodhi
Printing Aldgate Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1

Subscription address and advertisement enquiries: Windhorse Publications 136 Renfield Street, Glasgow, G2 3AU

Subscriptions £5.50 pa (UK & surface mail) £7.00 pa (airmail) Subscriptions may be paid directly into Girobank account no. 10 439 6105

DATA PROTECTION ACT
If you receive your *Golden Drum* through the post it means that your name and address (only) are kept on our computer files. The Data Protection Act requires that we inform you of this.

Advertising rates: Full page £80, ½-page £45, ¼-page £25, ⅛-page £15. Booking deadline for issue 15: 6th October; artwork by 18th October. Discounts are available for series bookings. Inserts charged at £40.00 per 1000. Bookings and fuller details: 354 Crookesmoor Road, Sheffield, S10 1BH. Tel: 0742 684775

BUDDHISM AND VEGETARIANISM

What part can Buddhists play in helping to avert the threatening ecological crisis? This was a major discussion theme at last year's general meeting of the European Buddhist Union.

For all kinds of reasons, it was confidently asserted, Buddhists could and should be recognized as having a great deal to offer. Was it not fair to suggest, even, that we are humanity's rightful ideological leaders in the struggle to regain sanity, balance, and environmental health? Buddhism promotes unselfishness, realism, gentleness, and tolerance; it advises us to be mindful of ourselves and others and satisfied with little; it promotes an attitude of harmony with nature based on the perception of 'universal interpenetration'. And so on—all of it true. Soon we were moving on to a few of the great specifics: in particular, what could Buddhists do to halt the alarming proliferation of nuclear power stations—against which, it was assumed, the Buddha would have doubtless preached had they been around in his day.

This was all very well, if rather predictable. And yet, only the previous night, we had gathered in one of the the UNESCO Building's banqueting rooms—along with a dazzling band of ambassadors—for a lavish buffet supper, almost entirely dominated by meat and fish dishes. In fairness to the organizers I should quickly point out that it was possible for a vegetarian to compose a good meal out of the salads and side dishes, but in fairness to my point it must be added that I saw very few delegates making any attempt whatsoever so to do. My contribution to our discussion was therefore to suggest that a more consistent espousal of vegetarianism—at least at our conferences—might serve as a simple and eminently feasible first step in our efforts to provide a 'Buddhist' example of kindness, awareness, and ecological responsibility.

Writing this, I am acutely conscious that I am burdened with a substantial communication problem. I know that some readers will probably be aghast to hear—even to catch their first hint of the fact—that there are serious Buddhists who eat meat. To them the 'allegation' will seem so bizarre and so serious that they will assume I am exaggerating. I am not, and I must add that in my ten years of Buddhist 'function-hopping', Samu Sunim's 1987 conference in Michigan, USA, was the only major non-FWBO event I have attended where the catering was entirely vegetarian.

But then again, I know that many more readers will be wondering what the fuss is about. Of course Buddhists eat meat! All kinds of Tibetan lamas do it; many Japanese roshis do it, and most Theravada bhikkhus—before noon—do it. And why shouldn't they? Where did the Buddha categorically state that eating meat was absolutely unseemly, completely prohibited? As on all other matters, there is no dogma on this; but nor is there any clear doctrine. And nor is there any traditionally universal code of practice. As Sagaramati's article will demonstrate, the issue remains unclear, with the result that the vegetarian Buddhist would seem to be in the minority.

By leaps and bounds, the available scientific evidence and commentary seems to be pointing with mounting confidence and urgency to the fact that we humans must form a new relationship with our environment. We are going to have to learn to see ourselves as participating in a delicate process of life on a planet which we share with innumerable species of other beings—upon whom we actually rely not only for company but for survival. All this, as we will soon read, requires imagination and integrity. But already the pundits and politicians seem poised to admit that the required amounts of these qualities are so lacking in the vast majority of us that it will take government action, some harsh laws, and a lot of help from market forces, to encourage us to change our ways.

All in all, and assuming that we are not already too late, there is no doubt that the world's Buddhists could be offering a lead. Even putting aside our high ideals, principles, and theories, it is surely to be expected that the *practice* of Buddhism might engender a community of people richly endowed with imagination, integrity, vision, responsibility, and any number of crucially needed qualities. Buddhist meditation, Buddhist ethical practice, key Buddhist teachings on Right Livelihood, generosity, non-violence, and the recognition that actions have consequences, if fully practised, would inevitably stock the world with better people: the kind of people it badly needs.

So is it too much to expect of the world's Buddhists that they should give a lead? Is it too much to ask of the world's Buddhists that they express and manifest some loving-kindness towards, and solidarity with, other beings, by making a special effort to refrain from eating them?

* * *

I would very much like to thank Dharmachari Abhaya for 'guest editing' the last issue of *Golden Drum*. His kind efforts not only made it possible for me to visit New Zealand and Australia, but also gave me my first complete break from the FWBO's quarterly magazine since I became editor of the *Newsletter* in summer 1975.

Nagabodhi

BUDDHISM AND THE ENVIRONMENT

To live in harmony with nature is a crucial Buddhist practice. Nick Wallis explains why

When we look at the traditional Buddhist texts there seems to be very little direct reference to what would these days be called environmental or ecological ideas. As we imaginatively enter the world in which the Buddha lived and taught, the reason for this becomes clear. The picture that emerges is one of a culture that lived in far greater harmony with its environment, if sometimes at its mercy, and an 'Environmental Movement' simply wasn't needed. The strong connection that people felt with nature is illustrated particularly in the story of the Buddha's life, in which all the most significant events occur in the countryside and are associated with trees: his birth at Lumbini as his mother grasped the branch of a sal tree, his early experience of states of meditative absorption beneath the rose apple tree, his Enlightenment beneath the Bodhi-tree, and his Parinirvana (death) between twin sal trees. So in seeking to apply the Dharma to the area of the environment, we have to look for underlying principles that are appropriate

to the very different world that we ourselves inhabit.

We don't have to look very far. In the vision of universal interpenetration, one of the Mahayana flowers of the Buddha's teaching of Conditioned Co-production (*pratitya samutpada*), we have a basic insight into our relationship with nature. This vision is exemplified in the simile of Indra's Net: High above in heaven, on the roof of the palace of the god Indra, there hang innumerable jewels interlaced in a great network. As the light reflects off these multifaceted gems not only does each jewel reflect the whole cosmos, but also every other jewel in the net, including all the reflections from all the jewels, the reflections of the reflections, and their reflections. . .

In this beautiful vision we can begin to connect imaginatively with the mutual interdependence of all processes. Bringing this insight down to earth it becomes clear that by harming nature we are in fact harming ourselves. There are plenty of examples to demonstrate this in the current media: acid rain, the greenhouse effect, the ozone hole, radioactive contamination, to name but a few. These reactions of nature to our carelessness harm us not only physically but also psychologically, as we face the threat of our environment becoming increasingly inimical to healthy human life.

Restating this vision of interpenetration in a positive sense, to improve the quality of our lives we need to live in greater harmony with nature. This may sound like a simple truism, but in fact it is certainly not the way in which our culture approaches nature. In the modern materialist culture, no doubt strongly influenced by the traditional Christian view that God put nature there for people to use for their own purposes, we approach the environment from the viewpoint of resource management. In many cases with large industrial companies this is better termed resource mis-management, as the narrow-minded drive for profit means that huge amounts of toxic substances are pumped into our skies, rivers, and oceans, and scattered across the land where they become 'someone else's problem'.

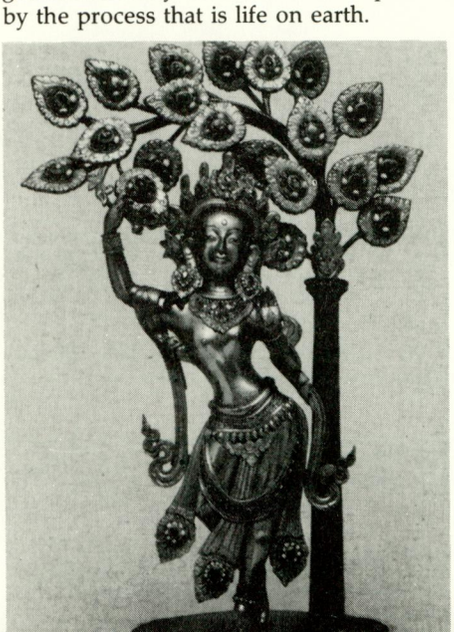
The 'resource management' approach leads us into difficulties on a more personal level though. In seeing ourselves as the 'managers', and therefore above nature, we can easily lose those very qualities which give us our humanity. This is particularly noticeable in the way we exploit animals as a food source. Whether it is the immeasurable brutality involved in the slaughter of animals to keep the kitchens of the world constantly supplied with meat, or the killing of the peaceful giants of the sea by wealthy countries such as Japan, these acts degrade the human race as a whole. The Buddhist position, on the other hand, emphasizes a harmonious interaction between ourselves and nature, neither passive nor attempting to dominate, and quite naturally leads us to consider the possibility of vegetarianism.

So this is the vision, but how do we put it into practice? Here we find Buddhist ethics come to our aid, with the basic principle of non-violence *(ahimsa)* or harmlessness. In the statement of the first precept, abstention from harming living beings, we can see how much of the industrial use of resources contravenes the principle; in chopping down a rain forest we destroy a habitat for other creatures and set up the conditions for top soil erosion, which in turn leads to floods and famine thereby incurring untold suffering on others. So to put this principle into practice we also need a high degree of awareness of the consequences of our actions—this is a prerequisite for any truly skilful action.

Often, the actions that we commit in relation to the environment also contravene the second precept, abstention from taking what is not given. This can happen in quite a crude sense or in a very subtle one. How many of us have, while wandering through a field of flowers, plucked some up—more than we needed—as if they belonged to us and without a thought that others will be deprived of the pleasure of appreciating them? The principle of non-violence should not be taken to mean that people should absolutely abandon their use of the earth's resources for fear of harming any living beings whatsoever. After all, we are also part of nature, and need to maintain a healthy concern for our own welfare and that of fellow human beings. We need to use the resources available to free ourselves from the clutches of nature's destructiveness: storms, floods, and famines. However, with the awareness of the consequences of our actions, we have a great responsibility to use the resources in as harm-free and useful a way as possible. As Sangharakshita has said, 'Right use of nature is part of the spiritual life.' This again leads us to consider the possibility of vegetarianism. At a rough estimate it takes ten times as much vegetable matter to feed a person on a primarily meat diet as it does to feed that person on a vegetarian diet. In a world with an ever increasing strain on the food supply the luxury of eating meat seems more and more unethical, quite apart from the slaughter of the animals involved.

If we can begin to deepen our relationship with nature through an understanding of interpenetration, and live more in harmony with our environment using the principle of non-violence, then a growing awareness of nature will begin to feed into our spiritual practice. Our ability to develop as individuals is closely bound up with the environment in which we live; harmonizing that environment will have a positive effect on our spiritual practice. After all, in the natural world we find many of the most inspiring symbols of our potential for development; the blue sky, the great ocean, the lofty mountain peaks. There are many examples of the fruits of inspiration that come from humankind's experience of the beauty and splendour of nature, especially the wildest places. From the scientist to the mystic, individuals have found the mysteries and complexities of nature to be a source of insight and uplift. For this reason alone it is vital that at least some of our wild places remain.

We must beware of over-sentimentalizing nature though; the cycle of life in the natural world can be at times a very harsh one. Our technological development has to some extent freed us from this and a 'back to nature' movement will certainly not solve humanity's problems. With so much at stake every little action counts. Hopefully enough people will wake up to the fact that we urgently need to change our attitudes to nature so that we and future generations may continue to be inspired by the process that is life on earth.



The Buddha's Parinirvana. Surely no excuse?

Do Buddhists Eat Meat?

Sagaramati does not see how a committed Buddhist can justify eating meat. Others would beg to differ

No thoughtful Buddhist would disagree with the claim that Buddhism, in its various forms, has always taught non-violence. Indeed, it could be said that Buddhist morality is no more than an expression of this principle within different contexts and relationships. But despite this agreement of principle, there is no corresponding agreement over practice with regard to our eating habits. As we shall see, this difficulty may be rooted in the Buddhist texts themselves.

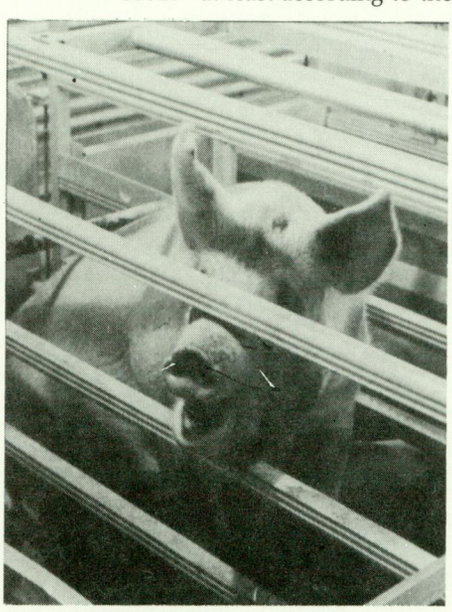
In a well known episode in the *Mahaparinibbana Sutta*, the ageing Buddha is shown to eat some 'bad pork'—which seems to result in his death. Does this not suggest that the Buddha himself ate meat? There is actually so much disagreement among scholars concerning the meaning of the term translated as 'pork' that what the Buddha actually ate cannot really be established. In the corresponding Chinese sutra, the term is translated as a type of fungus.

Nevertheless, it does seem—at least according to the Pali texts—that the Buddha and his followers did eat meat so long as certain conditions were met. These conditions were that a monk should not have seen, heard, nor have any reason to suspect, that the meat was from an animal killed specifically for him. If these three conditions were met then the meat was said to be 'blameless'. There are some four references to the 'blamelessness' of eating meat—once in both the *Majjhima* and *Anguttara* Nikayas, and twice in the *Vinaya*. However, for a householder to have an animal killed in order to feed a monk was reckoned to result in great demerit. In the *Sutta Nipata* a previous Buddha, Kassapa, is admonished by a brahmin for eating 'stinking meat'. Kassapa replies with a long list of unskilful mental states and declares that *such* are 'stench', not the eating of meat. There is also the notion from the *Vinaya* that meat and fish are 'excellent food' for those who are ill. Interestingly, in the Chinese 'eqivalents' to the *Majjhima* and *Anguttara* Nikayas, the sutras dealing with the 'blamelessness' of eating meat are absent.

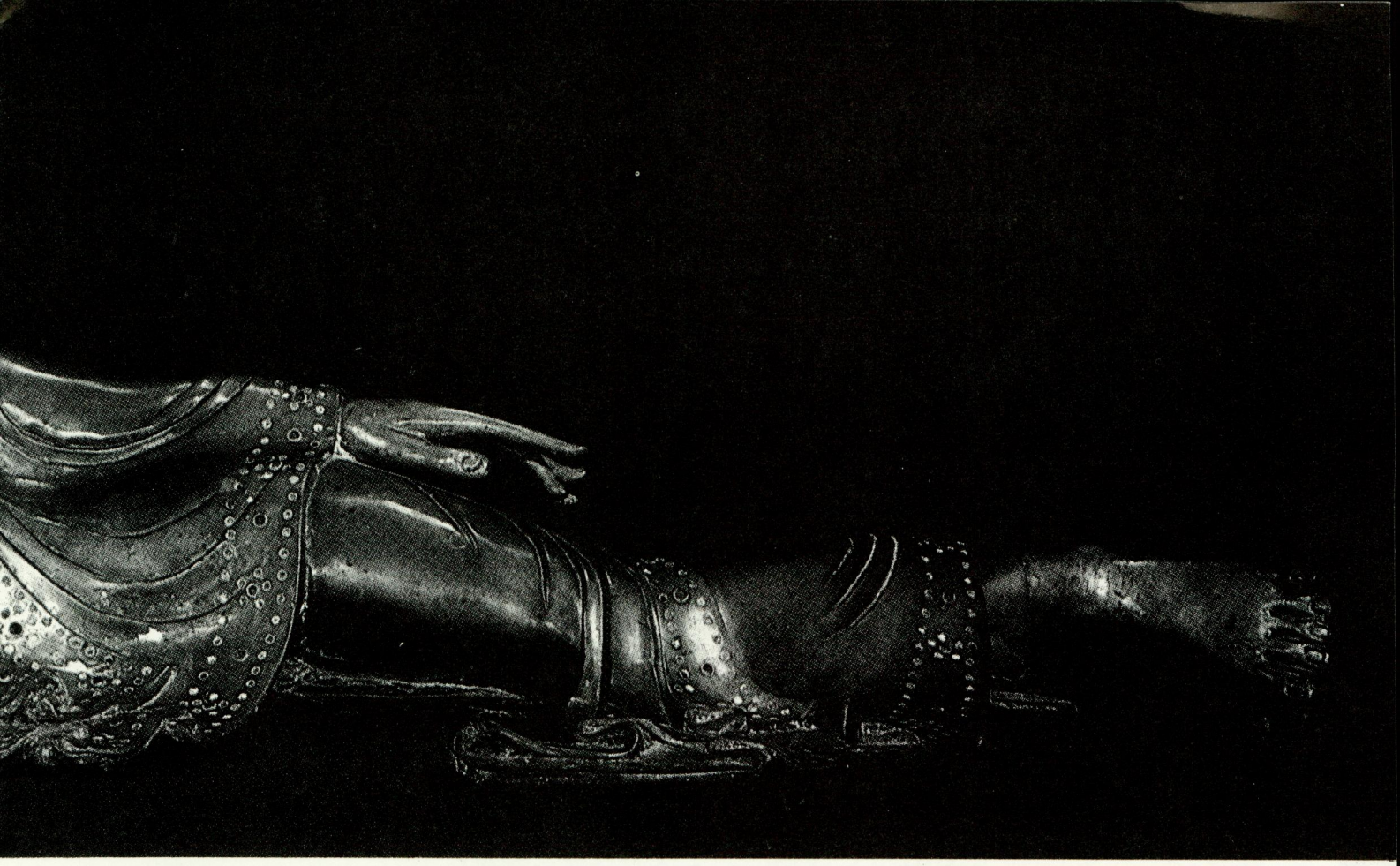
In contrast to these few canonical references to the conditions under which meat might be eaten, there is an overwhelming abundance of exhortations to be 'ashamed of roughness, full of mercy, and dwell compassionate and kind to all creatures that have life'. The Buddha also teaches that we should refrain from harming plants and seeds, not to speak of sentient beings. Is there not, therefore, a tension in the texts themselves? Is it really possible to 'dwell kind and compassionate to all living creatures' and to eat their flesh knowing that it was taken in an act of violence?

It can be argued that as the Buddha lived in a meat-eating, non-Buddhist society, he taught the monks simply to accept what was offered to them, given the conditions above, as a practice in even-mindedness. In so doing, the Buddha was simply going along with the standard practice of the shramanic community. But should not the situation change when that society has an increasing number of Buddhists within it?

The oldest extant written records which reflect the Buddha's teaching—the Ashokan edicts—show the king to be very concerned, as a Buddhist, with the welfare not only of his human subjects, but also with that of animals. Hunting and fishing are prohibited in his kingdom, no animals are killed in his kitchens, and the killing of animals for food is restricted elsewhere in his kingdom. Indeed, he even reports the



Reaching the end of the production line



establishment of medical services for animals. Given that the dates of Ashoka's reign—268 to 232 BCE—are now well established, and the fact that many modern scholars have moved the Parinirvana of the Buddha some 80 to 120 years or so in our direction, the implication is that Ashoka's reign was much closer to the time of the Buddha than was earlier supposed. Do not these inscriptions, therefore, provide reasonable evidence about the nature of early Buddhist practice within a growing Buddhist society?

The real issue, however, is one of ethics and not of social mores or *Vinaya* rules (the vast majority of which have little or nothing to do with ethics, but are concerned with establishing the unity of a religious order): Is there an ethical link between the killing of an animal and the eating of its flesh?

To say that eating an animal's flesh has no ethical connection with the brutal act of killing it and the fear and terror experienced by it shows a thoroughgoing insensitivity to life, a poverty of imagination, and an incapacity to reason. Although one may not have killed the animal oneself or had someone else kill it for one, one is not freed from responsibility for the killing. A butcher or slaughterman kills an animal not for himself but for a market of consumers. If there were no market of meat-eaters there would be no point in butchering animals except for one's own consumption. Therefore if one decides to eat meat one has also decided to become part of the market of meat consumers. And if one has become part of this market one is connected with the demand to which the butcher or slaughterman responds. There is a very definite relationship between the meat-eater and the brutal act of killing, between one's desire to taste flesh and the actual pain and suffering undergone by the animals.

If one is trying to practise the teachings of the Buddha by becoming kinder and more compassionate to *all* creatures it is quite obvious that one relatively easy step to take is withdraw from the market for animal flesh. Surely, in our age, no form of meat eating can be said to be *entirely* 'blameless'.

Within the Mahayana the situation is quite different. There are many sutras which clearly see the connection between meat-eating and the suffering of animals. In the *Lankavatara* a lengthy passage explains why one should not eat meat. Also certain Mahayanists follow the *Brahmajala Sutra* (not the Pali version) as their moral code, and this prohibits meat-eating. This code is followed in China by both monks and lay-people. Three years ago I stayed for a few days in a Ch'an monastery in Wu Tai Shan, the mountain region in China sacred to Manjushri, and was served, along with the monks, only vegetarian food.

Tibetan monks do not follow the *Brahmajala Sutra* but the Mulasarvastivadin *Vinaya*, which is much the same as its Theravadin counterpart. But their sutras are mainly Mahayana and, because they are followers of the compassionate Bodhisattva Ideal, one would expect Tibetan Buddhists and their European and American followers to practise vegetarianism. However, my own encounters suggest that there are many who do not. This would be understandable in the harsh, barren landscapes of Tibet, but not in London, Paris, or New York. Some years ago I asked a Tibetan lama why so many Tibetan Buddhists ate meat. He replied that it was a matter of what type of meditation practice one did. If one did a Mahayana practice such as the visualization of Avalokiteshvara or Tara then one should not eat meat as one had to remain 'pure'. But if one performed a Tantric practice, such as visualizing one of the wrathful deities, then the power of the practice purifies one—regardless of one's eating meat. I must stress that this exchange was conducted through a translator who may not have grasped the point of my question and, indeed, may have misrepresented the lama's reply. Nevertheless one must at least argue that the reason for refraining from eating meat is not to safeguard one's own 'purity' but to prevent the unnecessary suffering of animals. The former is more in the spirit of Hinduism, the latter that of Buddhism.

Finally, what about meat eating as a part of Tantric ritual? The simple answer is that such acts as eating meat, drinking wine, having sexual intercourse with an outcaste, drinking menstrual blood, and eating excrement, were all 'taboo' acts. If eating meat does not go against a deeply rooted aspect of one's conditioning, it is an empty act. Meat eating in this context presupposes that one is a strict vegetarian.

There are many more arguments as to why the compassionate teachings of the Buddha imply that one should consider becoming a vegetarian—if not a vegan, and for those interested in a much fuller statement of the case, Roshi Philip Kapleau's excellent book, *A Buddhist Case for Vegetarianism*, is to be recommended.

Images And Animals

Most human beings eat animals without a second thought. Pete Hannan thinks there is something wrong in this relationship.

If we consider the way in which we think and speak about the natural world and human culture, we find that our language is often highly symbolic: 'mother' nature, the 'light' of reason, and so on. Nature and culture are seen as opposites, and as being in conflict. Symbolic thinking is not necessarily a bad thing in itself: humans use symbols and metaphor to convey meaning quite as much as they use rational concepts. But what starts as symbolic thinking frequently turns into literal thinking, literal language, literal action; we need to review our symbolic thinking, as well as the process by which it leads to action, to check whether our symbolism is still beneficial or whether it is causing harm.

The conquest of nature has for some centuries now been a conscious aim of Western culture, from the harnessing of rivers, fossil fuels, and nuclear power for energy, to the clearing of the wildest areas for farming, habitation, and transport.

Until very recently, all this 'conquering' activity was carried out without any strong awareness that it might have harmful consequences; one could say that it was almost the duty of culture to tame, domesticate, and dominate nature.

Our growing awareness that our approach to the natural world does have harmful consequences should lead us to re-examine our basic attitude to our relationship with nature: is the current world-view preventing us from acting in a way which protects the natural world?

It seems to me that the mainstream of Western tradition has painted us into a corner where we humans feel and see ourselves as alone in the world: the Christian, scientific, and other philosophical traditions have gradually erected strong, solid boundaries around the human species, stressing our uniqueness, our difference, and our separation from other animals—despite the now general acceptance of an evolutionary account of our origins.

This process has involved the denial to other animals of various characteristics which have been considered peculiarly human: language, reason, intelligence, emotions, moral sense, structured lives, and so on. This denial has a number of roots: ignorance of the real facts of animal life, the need to justify what humans do to other animals, and a misuse of symbolism, both the general nature-culture symbolism already mentioned and the specific use of many animals as symbols for human characteristics.

Until recently in Western Europe we knew very little about the actual lives of animals except those we domesticated or hunted: what was 'known' was derived from travellers' tales and from fables and mediaeval bestiaries where stories of animals were consciously aimed at making ethical and religious points.

It is only in the last few decades that systematic observation has been undertaken of some species as they actually live in the wild (e.g. Jane Goodall's life and work with the chimpanzees at Gombe in Tanzania, Niko Tinbergen's study of herring gulls). Much of this information is now widely available—in the West, at least television wildlife programmes have done much to present such information—and shows that the lives of animals are far more complex, structured, and interesting than

had been believed: we can start to recognize that different species, in different ways, have much in common with humans, and that appreciating the particular qualities of humans does not require us to insist on a hard and fast barrier between us and other animals.

With the domestication of some animals, and in particular with the rearing of animals for food, we have a strong incentive to come up with justifications: the raw facts of animal rearing and slaughter evoke in most people a spontaneous response of horror and pity. If, however, we are committed to eating meat, the product of the slaughter, we need ways to suppress or avoid this response, and there seem to be three options: to remain ignorant of the details ('I can't bear to see cruelty!' says someone, carefully avoiding the sight); to believe that this treatment is, despite appearances, right and proper (the main line from the Old Testament onwards); or to view animals as so stupid and insensitive that they don't feel very much, and what they do feel can't matter. In practice, most of us choose all three options.

The relationship between humans and domesticated animals is one of almost absolute power: the power over birth, death, and everything in between. The beliefs and images we hold about these animals are a product of this power relationship, and a good instance of basic Buddhist insight: that only when we are operating in the love mode (on the basis of *metta*), and not in the power mode, can we see ourselves and others clearly. The simple but radical way to see these animals clearly is to step out of our power relationship with them, that is, to give up as far as possible our dependence on them for food and other products.

Not only do we view domesticated animals in a poor light, but we also use them as symbols for human characteristics: pigs stand for ignorance or greed, chickens for cowardice, sheep for foolish obedience, and so on. Other animals too have become standard symbols: snakes for hatred, treachery, or sexuality; hawks for belligerence; lions for courage; gorillas for strength or ferocity; monkeys for mischievousness; sharks for rapacity; wolves for mercilessness.

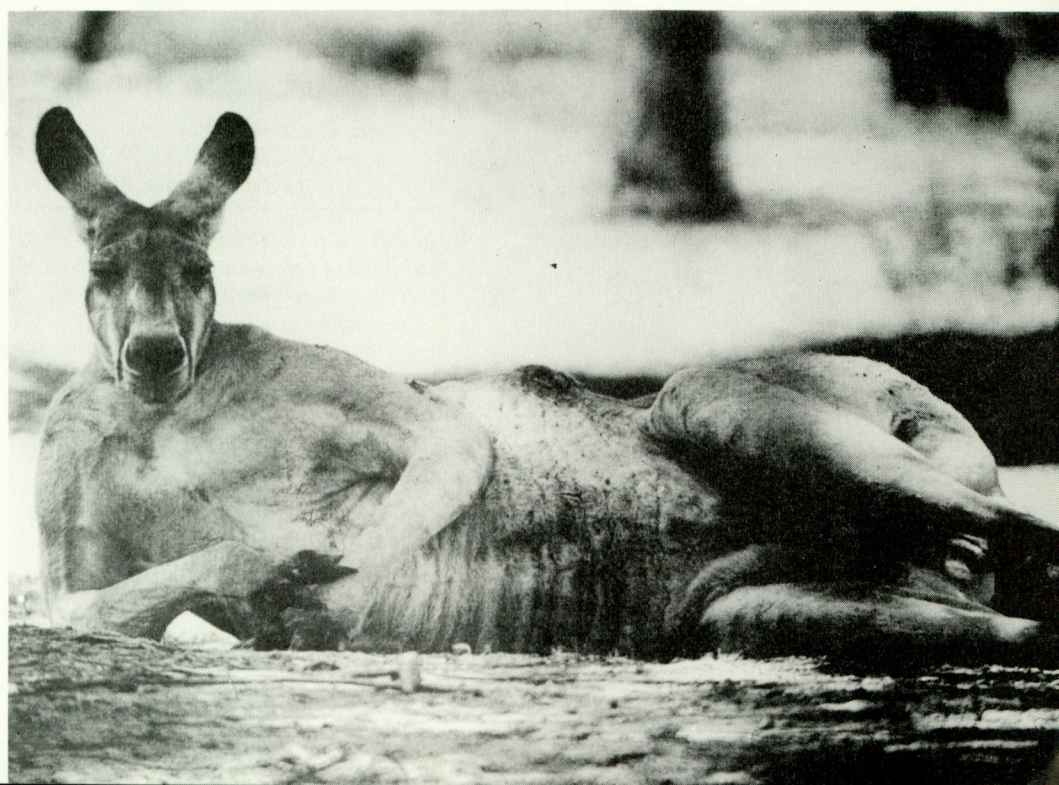
Again, there is nothing necessarily wrong with this sort of symbolic language; but what seems to have happened is that, once a symbolic use of an animal is established in a culture, the quality which that animal symbolizes is applied back to the actual living animal.

For example, wolves: in legends and fairy tales, in adventure stories, and in describing people, wolves are predatory, merciless, cruel, hungry—always! They chase and eat people (literally or metaphorically); in our image world, this is what being a wolf amounts to. But this image of wolves also guides our attitudes when we encounter actual wolves, leading to exaggerated fear and a violent response. However, careful observation of wolves going about their daily lives has revealed a very different picture, of a structured, co-operative social life, with no more fierceness than is needed for a carnivore to live: for instance, while most of the pack is out hunting, one or two wolves stay behind to mind the cubs, and food is brought back for them; a lot of time is spent resting and playing; if two wolves get into a fight, it usually ends when one wolf submits, without much damage being done; and wolves rarely attack humans. It seems that humans *blame* wolves for being carnivorous, and project onto them the unbridled habit of killing, which is actually a trait peculiar to humans.

This process of projection, where we apply to the real, living animals their symbolic meanings, maintains the polarity with which we started: nature becomes the wild, dangerous, inhospitable darkness inhabited by alien enemies; culture becomes the ordered, safe, homely light, the only place where we can find relatives and friends—but what if our experience of human society and culture does not match this expectation? We will then feel lonely indeed.

The alternative to such a bleak, isolating experience of our place in the world is not a vision of nature as a Garden of Eden, a paradise on Earth where all is peace. In the end, we must aim to see the natural world as it really is, undistorted by any limited world-view; but in the meantime perhaps a more useful view is this: nature is not territory to be conquered, but the community to which we belong; the natural world is our home (the only one we've got), it's where we grew up, and we share this home with thousands of more or less distant relatives and friends, some of whom we might prefer to steer clear of, but all of whom are fascinating and contribute to the whole.

If we damage this home beyond repair, we will have no opportunity to develop our own potential; but (a point not so often considered) we will also destroy any chance for other animals to develop theirs—before we even know what it might be.



ETHICS AND IMAGINATION

We share this planet with millions of other beings. To live *as if this were the case is not easy. Jayaprabha explains*

The sullen killing continues.
The killing of the largest creatures in the world,
It is unthinkingly supposed
That the rest of life will not be shrivelled in the process.
Large creatures disappear. . .
Life becomes smaller. . .
Blind dwarves
Crawl on top of corpses of slaughtered giants
To see further into their impending solitude:
Gentle visionary giants
Most fully appreciated when dead
Are reassuringly unreal.

Heathcote Williams, *Whale Nation*

The night is fresh and cool—
Staff in hand I walk through the gate.
Wisteria and ivy grown together along the winding mountain path;
Birds sing quietly in their nests and a monkey howls nearby.
As I reach a high peak a village appears in the distance.
The old pines are full of poems:
I bend down for a drink of pure spring water.
There is a gentle breeze, and the round moon hangs overhead.
Standing by a deserted building,
I pretend to be a crane softly floating among the clouds.

Ryokan

What we see in the world, and the way we interact with it, is deeply influenced by our thoughts and beliefs about the world. Our thinking is itself conditioned by the limits of our awareness and understanding, not only of the world, but also of ourselves.

For a whaler, no doubt, whaling can be exciting; and there is a living to be made. Nevertheless, the whalers standing so proudly atop their catch seem to be telling us that they are not just killing whales for material gain, but also for the thrill of self-aggrandizement. By conquering a king of beasts they see themselves as being greater, as somehow incorporating the great beast's power into their own. And yet, by seeing themselves and the whale in this way, they are surely missing the point. In his poem, Heathcote Williams proceeds to suggest that whales are kings in their own realm not simply because they are the largest and most powerful creatures there, but because they do not use their power as a medium of destruction.

The poem has a romantic air to it, yet it is really making a point that relates to humankind. With so much power at our finger tips, it is our ability to *withhold* violence, at the prompting of our more compassionate nature, that could make *us* kings in *our* realm. Our capacity for compassion sets us apart from the animals. And yet, by its very nature, compassion generates no alienation through power—and therefore no real separation.

Through his enjoyment of and identification with nature, Ryokan engenders a feeling of affection for everything that surrounds him. Ryokan's horizons are expanded by the aliveness that he sees, making him more alive. There is no separation between himself and the world he walks in. Nature, which includes not only wisteria and the mountain path, but also the village, the howling monkey, and the imaginary crane, *is* Ryokan. There is no question here of needing to conquer for life to be meaningful.

If it is to become something meaningful and alive, the Buddhist principle of abstention from harming living beings—or the development of universal love (*metta*)—requires a certain amount of imaginative effort on our part. Imagination bridges the division between our emotional responses and our intellectual opinions. Without this positive ingredient the way we relate to the world can be hard and cruel. Today, we are not just talking about the rearing and killing of animals but of a terrible, degrading alienation for them as living beings. Animals are treated as growing lumps of meat to be fattened without any concern for their suffering. Could it be that future generations will look upon this time as one of darkness and ignorance? Whatever happens in the future, the fact that such cruelty exists in our society right now must be having an effect on us all. But what can we do?

In *The Moral Status of Animals*, Stephen Clark says 'I choose to believe that animals feel pain for I wish to continue living in a world not wholly devoid of companionship.' This is a fundamental premise to be grasped if we are to move away from a mercenary approach to animals. To identify with other beings as our companions—if only because we are prepared to recognize that they experience pain—paves the way for some kind of communication with them.

Ryokan's poem illustrates this feeling of companionship. He and nature are one. The more we are able to identify with other people, animals, and nature in general as being part of ourselves, the more positive action we will take towards their well-being.

But we do need to know the facts. Our society does much to keep its consumers ignorant of the unpleasant realities behind the market-place. In order to avoid becoming ignorant accomplices to so much suffering we must make an effort to gather information on the activities that go against our principles. By asking 'Is this the world I choose to live in?' we throw some of the responsibility back onto ourselves. This, of course, will highlight our own involvement in the status quo (which supports our present life-style). Some cruelty-free products, for example, are more expensive than conventional ones. Are we prepared to pay the price of our beliefs?

We also have a responsibility to try to experience strong, positive emotions. Were they to allow themselves to experience their feelings of identification and compassion for the whale, those whalers would inevitably be faced with a conflict between their profession and their natural affinity with the whale. We can only change things if we ourselves are prepared to change.

Something which may prevent us from taking greater responsibility is the idea that we are powerless to do anything. Unless we know how to move towards an actively compassionate lifestyle, all our knowledge about suffering might leave us feeling angry, depressed, and impotent—until we become insensitive to the messages that our knowledge bears. It is important that we are realistic about what we can achieve; by being compassionate towards ourselves we will avoid the trap of trying to 'take on the world' and then dropping into an impotent heap of disillusionment when we fail.

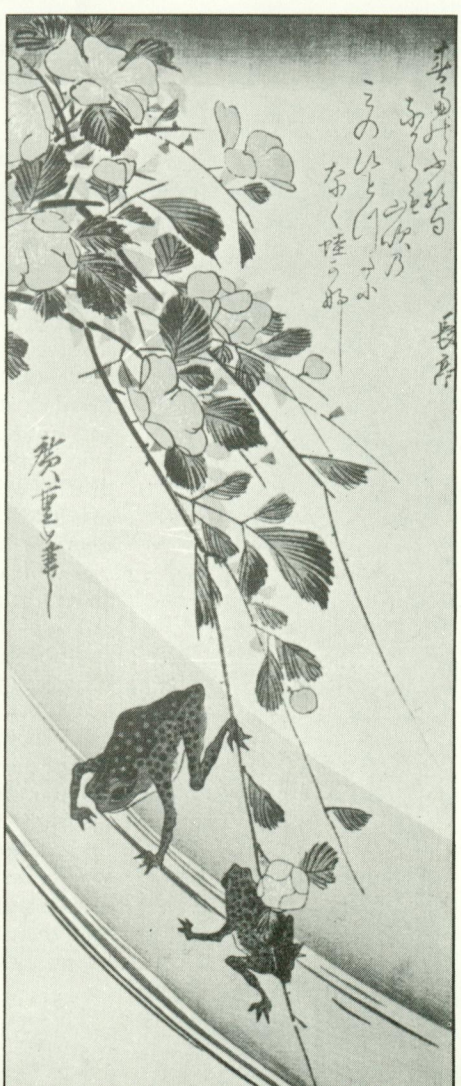
Our first step will probably be something quite personal to us. It may be to explore the possibilities of becoming a vegetarian, or to discover the positive alternatives to some of the harmful products we use. We might decide to give lectures informing others of alternatives; or if we don't have the time ourselves we might support some of the organizations that are doing something constructive on our behalf. For each individual the steps will probably be different.

Whatever it is, the first step may seem very hard. But through each step, we change and are changed by the path we take. As on any path, our perspective will shift as we move along. With each step we will extend our knowledge and increase the scope for further action, feel less impotent, and see more clearly what the next step could be. As Carl Jung says, 'One form of life can only be abandoned if another is taken up.'

When we have a clearer vision of the kind of world we want to live in then it is more likely to come about. By making a definite effort to visualize some of the more positive alternatives, guided by the principle of non-harm, we might 'draw' ourselves into the future changes more easily. At any rate, by thinking of the future in this way, we will at least see more clearly the obstacles that need to be addressed, and find a way to overcome them. This willingness to develop a new and positive *vision* is the crucial factor. We *know* about factory farming. We *know* about experimentation on intelligent higher animals. We *know* about the hunting and killing of whales and dolphins. We *know* about the abuse of the environment on a global scale which is destroying or threatening animals and humans alike. What seems to be lacking is a vision of a positive alternative, and a path to it. Imagining this path is the first step, the rest will come if we follow it through.

Once we know about and open our hearts to the existence of suffering it is not possible to remain neutral. If we ignore it, we are in danger of cutting off our compassionate nature. If we respond we will have to be prepared to be changed by the action we take. Compassion requires action. Seeking out knowledge whilst cultivating loving-kindness will naturally lead to change. It may begin with dreams of how we would like the world to be, but if we do not act, our love and imagination will run dry. Love in its purest form is revolutionary: it takes us beyond our limited experience of ourselves and our opinions to a feeling of identification and affection for all life. Although natural to our humanity, its realization requires that we take more responsibility for our thoughts and actions. This way we truly become great. Our ability to identify with life does not have to rely on fixed opinions. How we respond to life affects not only the world but also our mental and emotional state. However we see the world we live in, we are inexplicably but undoubtedly related to it. We *are* the world we live in.

Acknowledgements: Although many people have helped me in thinking about these questions, I want to thank especially two authors: Stephen Clark for his *The Moral Status of Animals* and *The Nature of the Beast*, and Mary Midgely for *The Beast and Man* and *Animals and Why They Matter*.



THE WHYS AND HOWS OF BECOMING A VEGETARIAN

Does a vegetarian diet have to be any less nourishing that a meat diet? Karunamaya offers some tips

Fifteen years ago I went to a slaughterhouse. Although I only went once and I didn't actually see 'anything', the visit left a strong lasting impression upon me. The cries of the animals and the almost palpable sense of fear in the atmosphere was quite overpowering. I went to collect fresh kidneys for experiments that I was involved in as a student of biochemistry. Watching the needless slaying of animals back in the university laboratories, the struggle and distress of an animal sensing that it was about to die, its fear reverberating with my own fear of death, and not being able to bring myself to kill, all of these experiences contributed to my decision to become a vegetarian.

My announcement that I had become a vegetarian was at first dismissed as a passing fad, then received with disbelief. After all, I had grown up in a rural community where the death of animals was considered a fact of life. And then there was concern about my health: I wouldn't be eating a balanced diet; my hair and teeth would drop out! On top of all this I didn't really have a clue as to how to become a vegetarian anyway, and would be filled with consternation when looking at all the packets and jars in my local wholefood shop. I managed to produce some fairly indigestible concoctions.

'How do I do it? Will I be getting a balanced diet? Is it healthy?' are some of the questions I encounter fairly frequently now that I work as a naturopath/osteopath. In theory a vegetarian diet should be a very healthy, balanced diet; there is a fair amount of evidence to show the health benefits of vegetarianism over a meat-eating diet. However, I am still amazed to meet vegetarians who hardly ever eat a fresh vegetable or a piece of fruit, or those who subsist on everything in the average 'junk food' diet except the meat.

There are many theories as to what constitutes a healthy diet. Though the basic ingredients are known, there can be controversy as to the optimum amounts required. In addition, more information on the interaction of various nutrients is constantly coming to light. Bewildering people with confusing scientific information is one way to exploit them and persuade them to buy unnecessary products, and the vitamin manufacturing industry would seem to be rather good at this. Nevertheless, vegetarians and vegans (those who abstain from the use of all animal products whatsoever) might find it useful to be more aware of the following nutrients.

Vitamins are essential micronutrients since they are involved in the complex chemical pathways whereby chemical substances are built up or broken down in the body. Certain vitamins can be toxic in large doses; they also work in balance with other vitamins—which is why I do not favour their indiscriminate use in synthetic form.

Vitamin B12 (cyanocobalamin) is not generally found in plants, though some may be present in fermented products (tempeh, miso, brewers yeast) and seaweeds. Deficiencies may lead to a form of anaemia and, if very severe, to irreversible changes in the nervous system. Unlike the other B vitamins, B12 can be stored for several years in the body, possibly masking a deficiency. What is more, the anaemia may not show up because of the presence of one of the other B vitamins, folic acid, plentiful in vegetables, which would hide the B12 deficiency. All of this is very important to vegans who should look out for foods labelled as containing B12. Studies of vegans have only infrequently shown a B12 deficiency. A very small amount is required for health and it is likely that some

people are able to manufacture their own B12 in the gut.

Vitamin D is also only present in animal products but is seldom deficient, even in the British climate. Most is manufactured in the skin by the action of sunlight, it is also added to margarines.

Along with vitamins, **minerals** are necessary for some chemical reactions. Some are also incorporated in certain structures in the body; for example, in bones and red blood cells.

Iron is necessary for red blood cells, muscle cells, and certain chemical reactions. A shortage will lead to anaemia. It is more easily absorbed from meat than from plants, but vitamin C helps the absorption of iron from plant sources, so a salad or some fresh fruit with a meal would be helpful. Sources of iron include dried fruits, green leafy vegetables, parsley, molasses, soya beans, brewers yeast, sprouting seeds, sunflower and pumpkin seeds, and wholewheat bread. Tea and coffee contain substances which block some of the absorption of iron so are best not drunk at mealtimes.

Calcium is necessary for bones, teeth, and certain chemical reactions in the body. Meat is not a very good source of calcium, but as dairy products are so frequently associated with it, it would be useful, particularly for vegans, to know of other good food sources—which include lentils, peas, nuts especially almonds, seeds especially sesame, soya beans, molasses, green leafy vegetables, and sprouting seeds. Vitamin D is needed for the utilization of calcium.

Zinc is an important nutrient in many metabolic processes. Deficiencies affect, amongst other things, the skin, hair, eyes, taste, and wound healing. This nutrient could be deficient in a vegetarian diet because of the high levels of substances called phytates in some plant foods, especially in wheat and particularly bran. The leavening of bread and sprouting of seeds destroys the phytates. Phytates may also impair calcium, iron, and possibly magnesium absorption. This emphasizes the importance of a good varied diet with no predominance of one food type. Rich sources of zinc include pumpkin seeds, sesame and sunflower seeds, nuts especially brazils, peanuts, peas, parsley, beans, sprouting seeds, and brewers yeast.

Protein is, second to water, the most common substance in the body. Hair, nails, blood, muscles, the organs, the enzymes, some of the hormones, and other chemicals involved in the biochemical processes of the body are all made from protein. It consists of long chains of building blocks known as amino acids, eight of these (nine in children) cannot be manufactured within the body and must come from our food.

There are many myths surrounding protein, for instance 'the more protein the better.' It is true that any protein in excess of requirements is converted and used as sugars in the body, but there is also some evidence to link excessive protein consumption with certain degenerative diseases such as osteoporosis (thinning of the bones).

Another myth identifies protein exclusively with animal foods. While it is true that only animal protein contains the correct balance of essential amino acids, many plant foods contain a good deal of protein. The grains, legumes (beans, lentils, peanuts), and nuts (including seeds) are especially rich in protein. On a diet containing a mix of these foods there will be no difficulty in meeting the daily protein requirements. It might be of interest to note that the recommended daily intake of protein is in the region of 50 grammes (2 ounces) a day for an adult—and even this small amount is thought to err on the generous side.

If there is any concern about adequate protein intake it might be useful to be familiar with the idea of protein complementarity. Combining two plant foods within the same meal allows the deficiency of an amino acid in one food to be offset by a preponderance of it in the other, allowing more of the total protein content in the meal to be available for absorption. Good combinations include any grain with a legume; or a legume with any nut; or dairy products with grains, nuts, or legumes. Peanut butter on wholewheat bread, rice and beans, or macaroni cheese would then all contain what is known as a complete protein.

As far as possible the diet should consist of wholefoods, whole grains, and pulses, and include plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables. Refined carbohydrates (white flours and sugar) are lacking in essential vitamins and minerals and should be avoided as far as possible. A good mixed salad (not just lettuce, tomatoes, and cucumbers) or at least some lightly steamed vegetables should ideally be included each day. Try to have as wide a variety of foods as possible to ensure an adequate intake of all nutrients.

Changing your diet can be a shock to the system, especially if your usual diet has been a typical 'junk food' diet. The digestive system has to adapt to the new diet and the intestinal flora need to change, otherwise problems such as diarrhoea, nausea, and flatulence may result. If possible it would be advisable to make the change over a few months, maybe via a stage of low-fat diary products before too many grains and pulses are included.

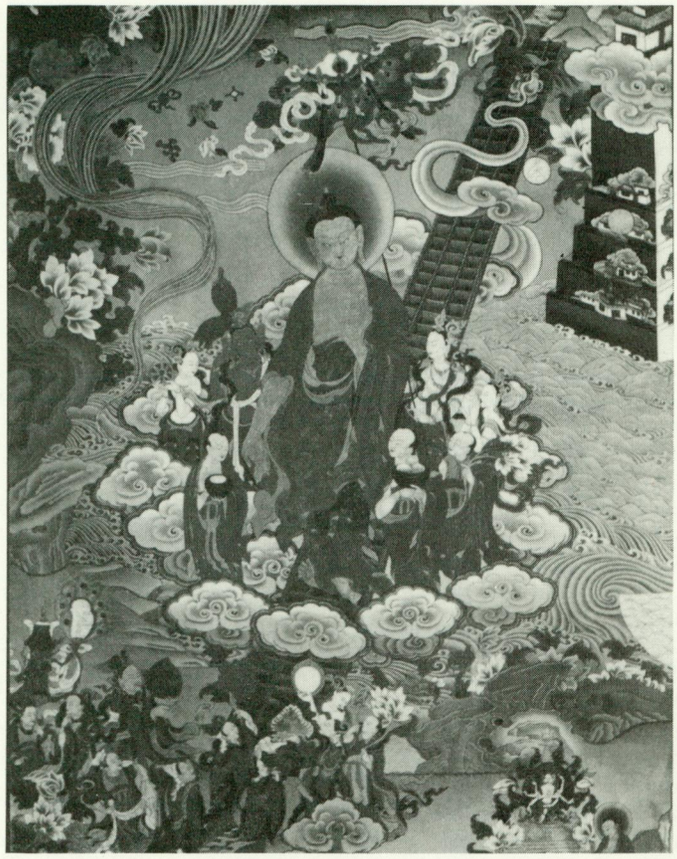
There are an increasing range of textured vegetable protein meat substitutes available which may at times prove useful, but this tends to encourage staying with the familiar. When changing from a meat-based diet to a vegetarian one, probably the main quality needed is a willingness to experiment.

To conclude, the image of the happy smiling cartoon piglet and chicken singing 'eat me' cannot be further from the reality of modern meat production. The emphasis on ever greater yields means that animals are increasingly treated as machines and with much cruelty. A vegetarian diet can be healthy, nutritious, and delicious, an expression of kindness to ourselves, to other beings, and to the world.

Foods to try

Miso A paste made from fermented soya beans. Good when added to stews and soups as a base, or spread thinly on bread and toast.
Pulses (Beans and lentils) Good source of protein. Can be hard to digest, so best to soak overnight and cook well. Sprouting also makes them more digestible.
Seaweeds A tasty addition to stews, soups, salads. Very rich in essential minerals. Try arame, hiziki, nori. Also agar-agar to thicken desserts as a substitute for gelatine.
Soy Sauce Best to use shoyu or tamari, fermented soya beans. Again adds useful flavour to savoury dishes.
Sprouted seeds Easy to make in a jam jar in a warm place. Very rich in nutrients. Try alfafa, green lentils, chick peas, mung beans.
Tahini Made from ground sesame seeds. Rich source of calcium and zinc. Use in hummus, to make creamy sauces, or spread on bread. Also try other seed and nut pastes, such as sunflower spread.
Tempeh Another fermented soya bean product. Chop up and add to stir-fry vegetables. Rich in protein.
Tofu Soya bean curd, another good source of protein. Use as tempeh; in desserts, salad dressings.
Yoghurt More nutritious than the original milk because of the action of the bacteria. Good for health of the bowel. It is easy to make your own. (Can also be made from soya milk.)

More Poetry Please



The Tibetan Dhammapada: Sayings of the Buddha
by Gareth Sparham
Published by Wisdom
pp.235, paperback
price £7.95

This is a revised edition of a work originally published in 1983. I have no doubt that many Buddhists will pick up this book out of a strong curiosity to see a Tibetan version of the well known and much loved *Dhammapada* from the Pali canon. Anyone doing this will soon realize that they are dealing with something substantially different—for, notwithstanding the decision to capitalize upon the popularity of the Pali version with the title, the text translated here is not a Tibetan recension of the Pali *Dhammapada*, but rather a Tibetan translation of the *Udanavarga* (literally 'Collection of Inspired Utterances').

A *dharmapada* is a particular class of canonical text, and several early Buddhist schools appear to have had their own versions, each being a compilation of categorized verses extracted from the sutras. The most famous is, of course, the Pali version preserved by the Theravadin school. A further seven *dharmapadas* have been found in various languages and scholars now think that the *Udanavarga* was a Sanskrit *dharmapada* belonging to the Sarvastivadin school.

The *Udanavarga* is several times larger than the Pali *Dhammapada*, and contains all the verses of the latter, albeit in a radically different order, as well as material from the *Udana* and other sources. There are parallels between the divisions of the two works, although the sections are by no means identical. In fact even where the title and general content are the same, the order of verses may be different, and in the longer text they are often interspersed with other verses on the same theme.

The *Udanavarga* has attracted much less attention than its Theravadin counterpart, having only been translated twice before, both occasions over fifty years ago Overall I am very glad to see a new translation of what is certainly an important text appear in an attractive and reasonably priced format. Moreover, the present edition comes with forty pages of notes to the translation, largely drawn from Prajñavarman's Commentary on the *Udanavarga*.

Despite this, I have reservations. The first, and perhaps least important, is the absence of a concordance to the Pali and Tibetan compilations; indeed, the author makes no mention of the Pali at all! This makes it difficult for the non-specialist to compare verses which are common to both, or to examine the relationship between the sections of the Tibetan and Pali.

This difficulty is exacerbated by the terminology which Mr Sparham has used to translate from the Tibetan, which at times seems to obscure, even distort, the meaning. Thus *arhat* is rendered 'Foe Destroyer', a literalism of translation to which many are regrettably resigned by now, but in fact it is based upon a false etymology of the Sanskrit word, which really means 'worthy one'.

Of course, discussion of this sort raises important questions with regard to the function of translation: should it be concerned with revealing what the Tibetans thought their Sanskrit originals *meant*, or should it be concerned with recovering the original meaning of the source text? Even so, what are we to make of 'caution' for *bag yod/ apramada*, which is surely better translated 'vigilance' or 'heedfulness'; of 'inferior itinerant' for *kun tu rgyu/ parivrajaka* (wanderer); and of 'infant' for *byis pa/bala* (fool). In the last example here, Mr Sparham tries to defend his translation, 'infant', by dismissing 'purely literary' considerations! (p.197).

This naturally brings me to a more serious reservation, concerning the general literary quality of this translation. Whether or not it is technically accurate, I dispute Mr Sparham's confident assertion that it is 'highly readable' (p.13). Despite the obvious interest of a practising Buddhist in the words of the Buddha, I found reading this book rather hard going, and the reason for this is that the translator has not rendered the Tibetan poetry which, he assures us, is of a high quality, into something approaching English poetry. Let us look at an example, from section 11 'The Ordained Person'(!):

Inferior itinerants
Again amass afflictions in the future.
So always do this specific task
With unremitting steady work.

All the inferior actions,
All completely afflictive austerities,

And what is not perfect pure conduct
Seem meaningful but are not so.
vv.2-3

Regrettably, much of this book uses the terminology and diction of a technical treatise from the Abhidharma. As with other translators apparently pre-occupied with the *dGe lugs* debate tradition (see translator's Introduction), this work reads as cold and stilted—a far cry from poetry. Surely poetry involves the choice of language and imagery that motivates the whole person—engages the emotions as well as the analytical mind? The translator himself admits that in Tibetan these verses embody 'a beauty and life in the poetic language . . . that is an integral part of the whole. To ignore this . . . is to lose a vital part of the original'.(p.13)

Undoubtedly I want to support the translation and publication of any of the sutra material, so much of which remains locked away in the Tibetan *bKa' 'gyur*, and which is so often overlooked or ignored by modern translators. Yet clearly in the case of this book, at best it stands as a reference to the content of the *Udanavarga*—if not its spirit. These criticisms notwithstanding, and bearing in mind the low price and excellent standard of production which we have come to expect from Wisdom Publications, I think one could well justify buying a copy so as to have some access to a major compilation of *Buddhavacana*.

Sthiramati

A Lama Returns

Reincarnation: the Boy Lama
by Vicki Mackenzie
Published by Bloomsbury
pp.180, 8 plates, paperback
price £4.99

Reincarnation: The Boy Lama tells the story of Lama Yeshe, the Tibetan monk who established the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT) and of Osel Hita Torres, who is held to be the reincarnation of the late Lama. The value of the book is twofold: it provides a vivid and inspiring account of the life and personality of the late Lama Yeshe, as well as convincing evidence that, in the case of Lama Yeshe at least, 'reincarnation' is a fact of life. (A better term to use, perhaps, would be 'rebirth', which connotes less strongly the notion of a 'soul', or unchanging essence, at the core of the human personality.)

Vicki Mackenzie was for a number of years a disciple of Lama Yeshe, and in the first part of *Reincarnation* she tells of her own and others' encounters with him, and gives an account of his life and achievements. Her style is quite lightweight and colourful, she writes with evident devotion, and she succeeds very well in bringing alive Lama Yeshe's very attractive and warm personality. What comes across most strongly is the depth of his concern for other people, and his determination and ability in communicating the Dharma to Westerners.

Lama Yeshe was born in Tibet in 1935, and was soon recognized as the incarnation of a famous abbess. At the age of six, at his own insistence, he entered a large monastery where he lived for nineteen years. When the Chinese invaded in 1959 he fled to India. After his sheltered monastic existence, he found life in India 'a big shock'. His comment on the whole episode is characteristic: 'Actually the Chinese were very kind—they forced me to meet the outside world, and truly test the Dharma. I could have spent the rest of my life meditating, but that's not good enough. A monk's life should be used for others.'

This is precisely how he did use his life. He learnt English, closely observed the Westerners he encountered, and, with his friend and disciple Lama Zopa, began holding retreats near Kathmandu. Over the years he acquired a large following of Westerners. Following two world tours in 1974 and 1975, he realized it was time to establish a proper organizational basis for his activities, and the FPMT was founded.

Lama Yeshe continued to be active right up until his death in 1984. It seems that he kept himself alive by the power of his mantra for a number of years—he suffered no fewer than 200 heart attacks—but, the author states, 'the public face was always one of extreme vitality, dynamism, . . . perpetual giving.'

After recounting Lama Yeshe's death, Vicki Mackenzie writes briefly about the rebirth process, and relates a series of fascinating stories surrounding the deaths of eminent Tibetan teachers. The account of the rebirth process, however, is inadequate, and does not even mention the relevance of karma.

The author also speculates in this part of the book on Lama Yeshe's spiritual attainments. She infers from Lama Yeshe's personal qualities and his ability to talk intelligently on the 'Great Shunyata experience' that he must have actually had this experience. Later on she refers to the Dalai Lama as 'this living Buddha'. These kinds of assertion, which are not uncommon in modern Tibetan Buddhism, are of little value, and perhaps actually misleading. How can one possibly *know* the extent of someone's spiritual attainments unless one knows that person very well and has oneself made comparable spiritual progress?

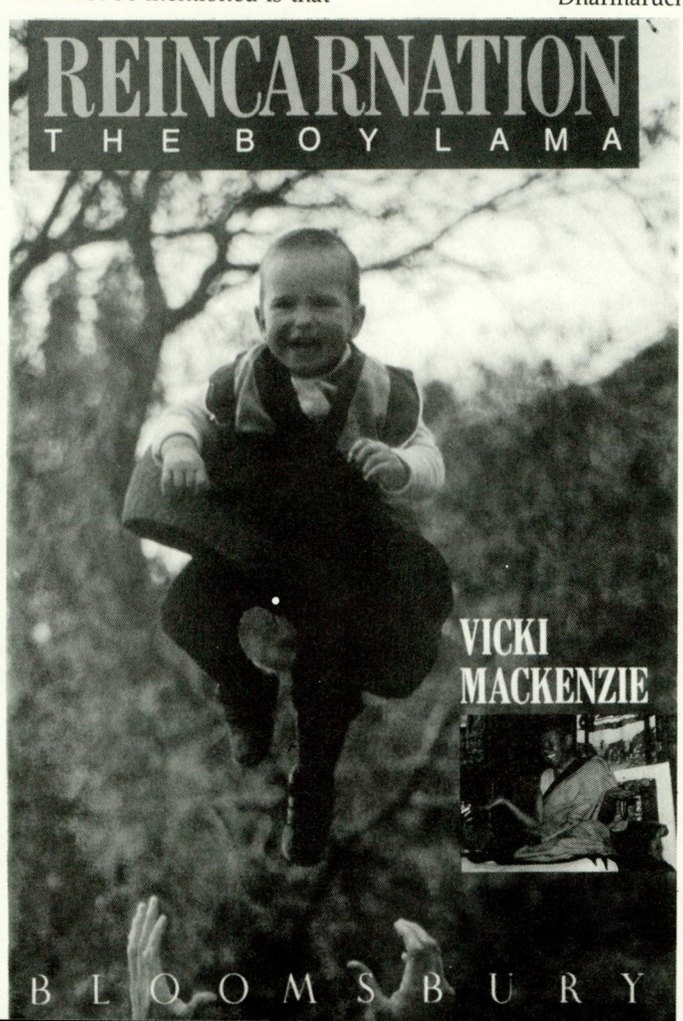
Furthermore, does it really matter what 'level' someone has attained? Surely, all one really needs in a teacher is someone who embodies the Dharma to a greater extent than oneself. Of course, it can be of value to see one's teacher as symbolizing enlightenment and, for instance, to refer to the Dalai Lama as a 'living Buddha' in this spirit. But it is important to be clear that this is what one is doing, and to make this clear to others.

The final part of *Reincarnation* tells the story of Osel Hita Torres (now 'Lama Osel'). As with Lama Yeshe, Vicki Mackenzie writes colourfully and with feeling, and brings alive the personality of the young boy. Whether or not one believes he is the reincarnation of Lama Yeshe, it cannot be denied that Osel has a remarkable personality, with a maturity beyond his years.

An important reservation that must be mentioned is that the author gives the impression of not having understood the doctrine of *anatta*. In discussing whether or not Lama Yeshe and Osel are the 'same' person, she uses the metaphor of a rose plant, which seen on two consecutive days has different characteristics but the same 'essence'. According to the *anatta* doctrine, of course, there is no 'essence', only characteristics. It is a pity to find such a misleading error.

However, the overall impression left by *Reincarnation* is a positive one. It is written very much from the heart, and will almost certainly impress those Western Buddhists whose acceptance of rebirth, due to their cultural background, is largely intellectual. It will also provide stimulating and thought-provoking material for any Westerners who are unconvinced about rebirth. It is well illustrated and, the above reservations aside, recommended reading.

Dharmaruchi



Images Of The Sacred

The Living Tree: Art and the Sacred
by John Lane
Published by Green Books
pp.212, paperback
price £12.50

In every generation—perhaps more frequently—language and its terms of reference need to be reassessed; being alive to all the shifting winds of its times, language must change and modify its meaning accordingly. For example, it is now possible—thanks to many separate events during the last three decades—to speak about Yoga, meditation, vegetarianism, and, indeed, Buddhism, without being met with gazes of jittery incomprehension. Again, concepts such as quest, sacrifice, pilgrimage, harmony, and personal transformation are once more appearing over the rim of our culture and regaining meaning for us.

John Lane's book will be an invaluable contribution to this long-term process of cultural and inner synthesis. The topics he deals with are of crucial centrality to our times: the questions of art's nature and function, the alienation of people from their work and natural environment, and the role of the 'sacred', especially with respect to these foregoing questions.

The author—himself a painter of talent—begins his book with a chapter on his own quest. He describes, in an economic yet energetic and flowing style, his education in Croydon, his artistic awakenings, early influences, revelations and subsequent deep questioning of his own life's direction, and his later abandoning painting for full-time teaching in a bleak North Yorkshire school; he concludes:

'I began to understand what in a sense I had always known: that life and art and religion are all one; names for the same experience—the same intuition of reality and identity. More and more clearly I began to see that without the fullness of a sacred vision, imaginative art cannot flower.'

While embodying an important truth, this passage also conceals a trap which many of those writing about the sacred seem not to acknowledge; that is, that life, art, and religion can only be one if you have a unifying vision to perceive them so: otherwise they can be appallingly at odds. Art practised merely as an adjunct to profane values, no matter in what formalities it clothes itself, is not a transformative power, but merely another distraction. And such unifying vision is, in the actual world, rare.

Although John Lane is clearly aware of this (it is part of his main thesis after all) I feel that he doesn't drive the point home half hard enough; creating the social context and underlying conditions for spiritual vision to arise in any culture is an unremitting, intense effort: 'a lifetime burning in every moment', in Eliot's phrase. Art as a 'surrogate for religion' is entirely as barren, ultimately, as no art at all. To say that 'every man is a special kind of artist', whilst true potentially, is, for most people, to ignore the prior need for huge stretches of transformative inner work.

John Lane ranges sensitively through a wide spectrum of artists, historical periods, and traditions in his exploration of the complex relationship between art, craft, labour, religion, and the individual experience of the sacred. The alienation of man from his daily work is a recurrent theme. Quoting writers and artists as widely differing as Eric Gill, John Fox, Wendell Berry, Robert Bly, James Hillman, Cecil Collins, David Jones, Schumacher, and Sangharakshita, he establishes a strong case for the radical 're-vision-ing' of the entire work-ethics-aesthetics-religion substratum of present Western society.

Subsequent chapters present necessarily brief sketches of the life and works of artists from Duccio, Pierra della Francesca, and Leonardo, through Blake and Chagall, to Stanley Spencer and contemporaries such as Cecil Collins and Winifred Nicholson. In each case their 'concern to reconstitute a sacramental vision in their art' is highlighted.

In a short final section John Lane gives an introduction to his own work as a painter, and reproduces some of his own paintings in a colour section at the end. This was a sticking point for me. There are many superb paintings discussed in the book which cry out for the privilege of full-colour reproduction; for example Winifred Nicholson's *Sunroom* in which 'the paradisical and vivid goodness of four molten bars of light strike a white wall—spectrum colours like those which flash and glow with an ethereal iridescence in other late paintings of rainbows and prism-haunted rooms. . .' It seems astonishing that an image described in such lucent and ecstatic language should be relegated to monochrome reproduction when no less than sixteen of the author's own are afforded full-colour status.

Lane's radical vision and commitment to art as a discipline for inner evolution is unquestionable. He has produced a book which ought to become a working document for future artists (in the widest sense of that term) concerned for the resurrection of the arts as an integral part of the life of every individual, and of society at large. My fear however is that it will become another (decaffeinated) coffee-table book and never be seriously read by the people who would most benefit from it. This fear is only emphasized by the price (£12.50 in paperback) and by the book's slightly self-conscious 'classy' feeling (shadows of William Morris's socialist Kelmscott press?). However, that said, as a work of contemporary cross-cultural synthesis this lucid and invaluable book should provide a strong foundation for future workers in all disciplines of the radical arts to build on.

Ananda

Also received:

Alternative States of Consciousness
Hilary Evans
Aquarian

The Elements of Shamanism
Nevill Drury
Element

Our Fragmented World
Ronald Harvey
Green

Hinduism
Margaret Stutley
Crucible

The New Diplomats
Jim Garrison and
John-Francis Phipps
Green Books

Practical Magic and the Northern Tradition
Nigel Pennick
Aquarian

The Reincarnation Workbook
J.H. Brennan
Aquarian

Rene Guenon and the Future of the West
Robin Waterfield
Crucible

The Rider Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion
edited by Stephen Schuhmacher and Goert Woerner
Rider

The Union of Bliss and Emptiness
H.H. The Dalai Lama and Tenzin Gyatso
Snow Lion

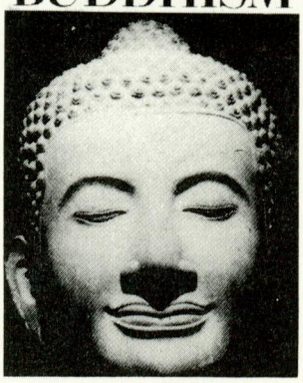
Universal Compassion
Geshe Kelsang Gyatso
Tharpa

Errata:
In our review of *The History of Indian Buddhism* in our last issue, we failed to mention that this considerable work was translated into English by Sara Webb.

In his review, Sthiramati mentioned that Etienne Lamotte was a Jesuit priest. We have subsequently learned that he was never a Jesuit, being in fact ordained as a Thomist.

TAPE LECTURES ON

BUDDHISM



eg the Ven. Sangharakshita's controversial 'DISCERNING THE BUDDHA' (£4.40, post free anywhere): (70 mins) 1986

In trying to discern the Buddha, we are trying to discern the highest kind of being — an Enlightened being. But it seems that the Buddha considered that the Dharma is higher still, deciding to 'live under it, honouring and respecting it'. Does this mean that there were reaches of the spiral of development that he had not yet explored?

DHARMACHAKRA
PO BOX 50 CAMBRIDGE CB1 3BG
send stamp for free catalogue

New from Windhorse Publications

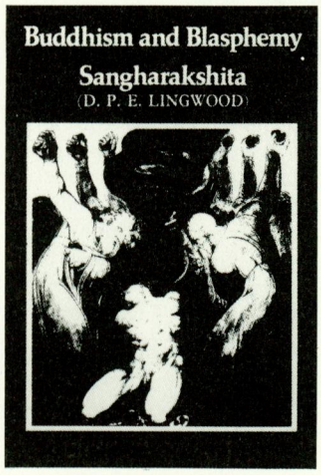
BUDDHISM AND BLASPHEMY

by Sangharakshita

Under English common law anyone who insults the Christian God so as to offend one single Christian can be prosecuted for blasphemy. This law was last used not in the Middle Ages, but in 1977. Now, in the wake of the Salman Rushdie affair, there are suggestions that this anachronism should be extended to protect other religions.

In this booklet Sangharakshita explains why Buddhism does not want—or need—the protection of blasphemy laws. He argues that these laws could be a serious obstacle to the religious freedom of Buddhists—and to the mental health of anyone raised under the shadow of an authoritarian God.

To free ourselves from this shadow many of us *need* to thumb our noses at the wrathful God of our ancestors. We *need* to 'blaspheme'.



24 pages, Paperback
Price £1.95
ISBN 0 904766 07 1

A PILGRIMAGE
IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE BUDDHA
December 17 1989 – January 5 1990.

Following a successful pilgrimage with the Venerable Thich Naht Hanh in November 1988 to the places that the Buddha visited in his earthly existence, we are organising another pilgrimage from December 17 1989 to last for 19 days until January 5 1990. We will go at a slower pace than tourists usually do so that we can practise meditation and cultivate an atmosphere of mindfulness.

We plan to limit the number of pilgrims to 20 (on a first come, first served basis) because it is our experience that too large a group can be counter-productive to the purpose of the pilgrimage.

If there are any groups of people who would like a pilgrimage organised at any other time, we would be willing to coordinate the arrangements in India, subject to our own schedules.

In Peace

Aradhana Seth and Shantum Seth

For any enquiries concerning this pilgrimage or future journeys, please contact us at:

Seth Consultants Pvt. Ltd.
40-42 Janpath (First Floor),
Pearcylal Building,
New Delhi – 110 001.
Tel: 3015467,
Telex: 31-61919 REPI IN.
Fax: 3323676.

Would you like to advertise?

GOLDEN DRUM

For rates, etc., contact
Dharmachari Shantavira at:

354 Crookesmoor Road,
Sheffield, S10 1BH.
Tel: 0742 684775

Leeds Buddhist Centre Men's Community needs Community members. If interested please contact Aryamitra, Leeds Buddhist Centre, 148 Harehills Avenue, Leeds, LS8 4EU. Tel: 0532 405880

Blasphemy Laws To Extend?

In Britain, Muslims have been continuing their protests against Salman Rushdie and his novel *The Satanic Verses*. As well as holding demonstrations they have been pursuing legal means to suppress the novel, and so far they have been granted a judicial review of the British blasphemy law to examine whether this might, by implication, cover blasphemy against Islam as well as Christianity.

After this review had been granted, one member of the Muslim legal team said, 'This is a great victory for all religious people.' One wonders whether such hyperbole could ever have been more mistaken. Blasphemy laws are the enemies of religious freedom, shackles upon the individual's search for spiritual truth.

Those wanting to read a clear Buddhist discussion of the topic of blasphemy will be pleased to know that Windhorse Publications has just reissued Sangharakshita's essay *Buddhism and Blasphemy*.

Truth And Misinformation

Much has been written about the violent suppression of the movement for democracy in China, which unfolded before the world's eyes this June. Perhaps one point that still needs to be stressed is that the cynically blatant rewriting of history—which accompanied the suppression—could have disastrous consequences.

A common recognition of the principle of objective truth is vital to world communication and the avoidance of war. If there is no such recognition then 'truth' degenerates into 'whatever happens to be in accordance with the interests of a particular class, sovereign state, or ideology', as Sangharakshita put it in his *Buddhism, World Peace, and Nuclear War*. The suppression of facts not in accordance with ideological interests goes hand in hand with the suppression of people. It is especially alarming to set the actions of the Chinese government against the growing freedom of information and movement towards democracy in countries such as Poland and Hungary (where, on the very day that the Chinese campaign of disinformation began, the once discredited leader, Imre Nagy, was reburied with honour).

If one is sincerely concerned with people's welfare, including one's own, one must not distort or be 'economical' with the truth. To recognize and benefit from the truth one must learn to speak it. The importance of the Buddhist precept about speaking truthfully should never to be underestimated.

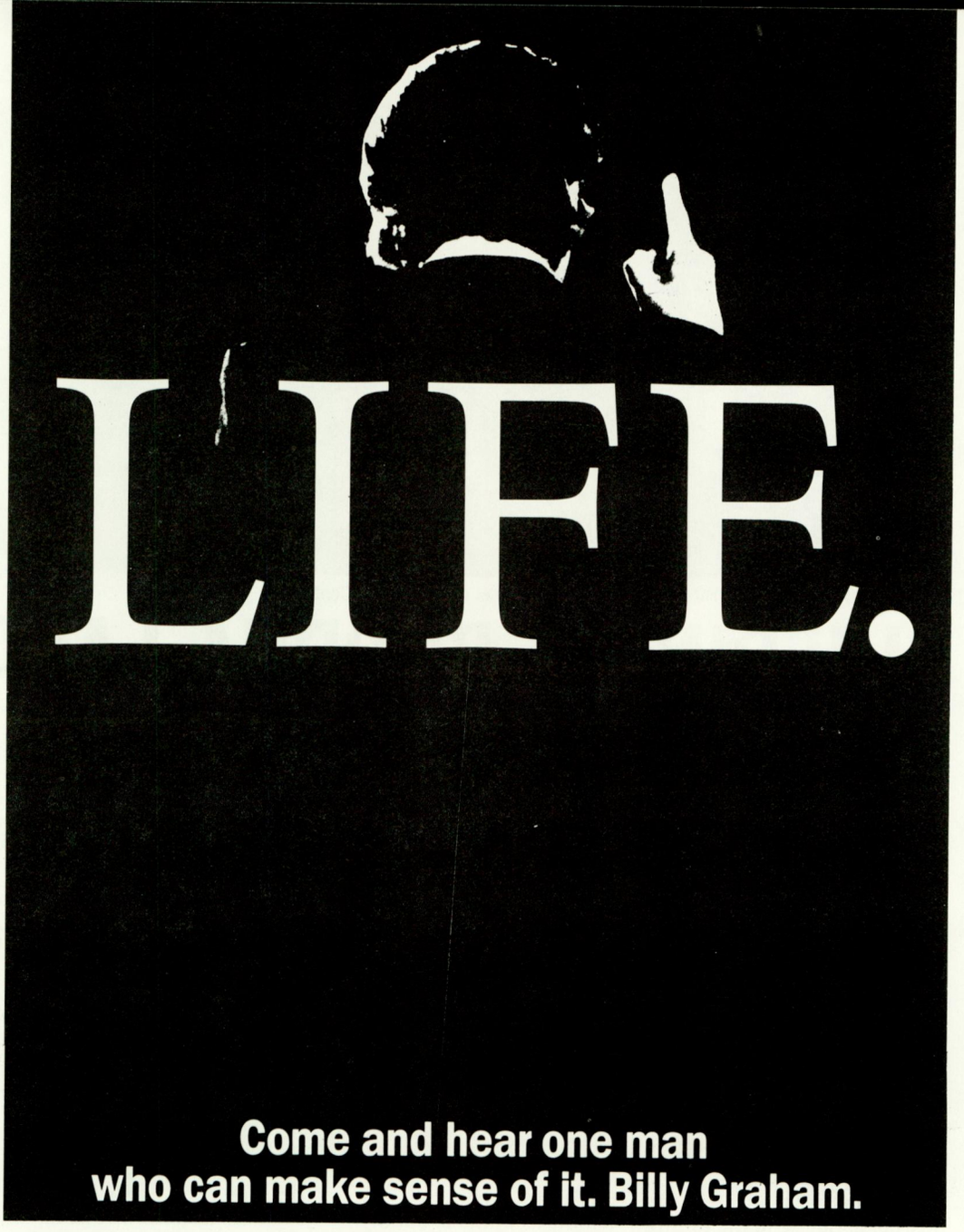
After the PLA moved in

Ambedkar Shock

Readers will be disappointed to learn that Kenneth Griffith, the actor and film maker, has had to abandon his project for a film biography of Dr B R Ambedkar. While filming a life of Jawaharlal Nehru at the invitation of the Government of India, Mr Griffith became fascinated by the history of Ambedkar's life, his personal achievements in rising above his lowly origins, his contribution to the creation of modern India, and his years of struggle of behalf of the Untouchable community culminating in his conversion to Buddhism. Returning to the UK he set about research for a script and obtained backing for the project from Thames Television.

Sadly the Indian Government has refused Mr Griffith permission to film in India, without giving a reason. Buddhists not only in India but throughout the world will be distressed that the life story of one of the greatest figures in the modern Buddhist revival should be subject to such censorship.

It is difficult to understand this decision. Mr Griffith is not guilty of any crime which might justify his exclusion. Could it be that even thirty-two years after his death the powerful forces against which Ambedkar had to struggle during his life are at work in an attempt to erase his memory? Such an attempt carries no possibility of success: his example is already before us as an individual who stood up against injustice and gained the profound insight that the teaching of the Buddha could heal the wounds of centuries of oppression and provide humanity not only with the highest ideals but also the practical means by which these ideals could be realized by the individual and expressed in society. Such an example deserves to be trumpeted throughout the world.



Billy's Back

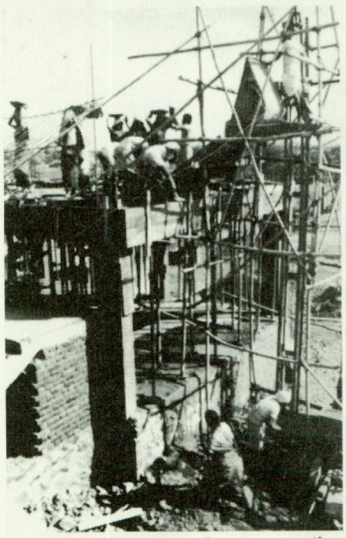
In June Britain received another highly publicized visit from the roving evangelist Billy Graham.

Dr Graham clearly has a certain integrity, in that he does not urge people to join an organization of his own but recommends them to join the church of their choice. His emphasis on positive relationships between people of different races is also praiseworthy. But what effect does he actually have on people?

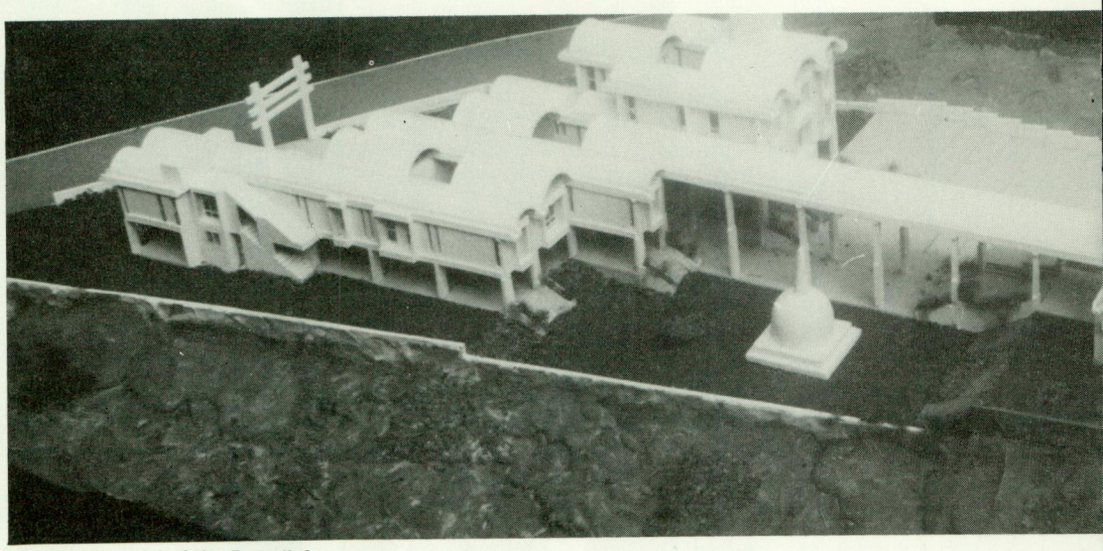
His advertising campaign stressed that he is a man who can 'make sense' of 'life'. If one newspaper interview is accurate, as well as being a staunch believer in the Bible he was also a strong supporter of the American war effort in Vietnam. Given the extraordinarily intensive American bombing of innocent people during that war one might question precisely what sense he makes of life, and how much he values it.

If one of his recent meetings was typical then after a build up of 'atmosphere' by other speakers and by communal singing, Graham took the stage and presented people with the choice between believing in Christ or going to hell for eternity. Does a sudden 'conversion' to belief in the teachings of Christianity, in such an emotionally charged meeting, have a positive spiritual effect? Could such a conversion to *any* religion be anything more than superficial and psychologically problematic? Or can a person be led into a dangerous religious cul-de-sac in which their belief in being 'saved', or in being 'right', undermines their ability actually to develop any further spiritually? Does not the business of spiritual development require a far more dynamic kind of commitment, involving continual questioning after the truth, to bring about an authentic, positive, and far-reaching transformation?

One can only fear that in the Christianity of Billy Graham the emphasis on belief may undermine commitment to the truth, especially as the Christian God is one who punishes disbelief. This correspondent left a meeting feeling that emotional blackmail had taken place; this does not seem to be his conscious intention but appears to stem from the very nature of Christian doctrine: 'Love God, or else. . .'



The Dapodi Centre under construction



Architect's model of the Dapodi Centre

BUILDING A BUDDHA-LAND

At Dapodi in Poona—site of our largest centre in India—work is well under way on a major construction project to provide a new centre building. This will be used both by our social work wing, as well as for more narrowly defined 'Buddhist' activities in the area.

The construction work now going on at the site is only the last, if most visible, stage of a long and difficult process. According to Padmavajra, ten years were spent cutting through a tangled web of bureaucracy before we could even begin building what will be a large and impressive centre—and an important focal point for Buddhists from all over India.

Building work has also started on a new shrine room and meditation hall at our retreat centre at Bhaja in the hills between Poona and Bombay.

SANGHARAKSHITA DIARY

At the time of writing Sangharakshita is enjoying a period of quiet retreat at his flat in the London Buddhist Centre, taking a break from the organizational responsibilities he has shouldered over the last two decades. Here he has spent the past few months reading and reflecting, with an occasional outing to the theatre or to visit an exhibition.

At the end of April he spent two weeks at Padmaloka in Norfolk, where his secretariat and the Office of the Western Buddhist Order are located, catching up with his mail and the many organizational matters that need his attention.

In May he paid a visit to the Croydon Buddhist Centre, where he gave an 'experimental' reading of longer poems—his own and others'. The evening included a musical interlude, during which Friends of the Croydon Centre played pieces by Telemann, Bach, and Mozart.

Sangharakshita has asked that people wishing to write to him should continue to address their letters to Padmaloka, as he would prefer not to have letters sent direct to him while he is on retreat. Although some mail is held over for a time at Padmaloka, he does read it all personally in due course.

UTTAR PRADESH – PLANTING THE SEEDS

In the ten years since TBMSG, the Indian wing of the FWBO, was founded, it has been working mainly among the ex-Untouchables Buddhists in the state of Maharashtra, in western India. This state—which occupies an area slightly larger than Britain—has by far the largest number of Buddhists in India, but there are also Buddhists in other areas, many of them also ex-Untouchables. Over the years, TBMSG has made important links with the Buddhists from these other states. In Ahmedabad, the largest city in Gujerat—the state to the north of Maharashtra—we have had a centre ever since we began work in India. Now we are poised to open a centre in the city of Hyderabad, the capital of the southern state of Andhra Pradesh, and we have made strong links with Buddhists in the other southern states of Karnataka and Goa.

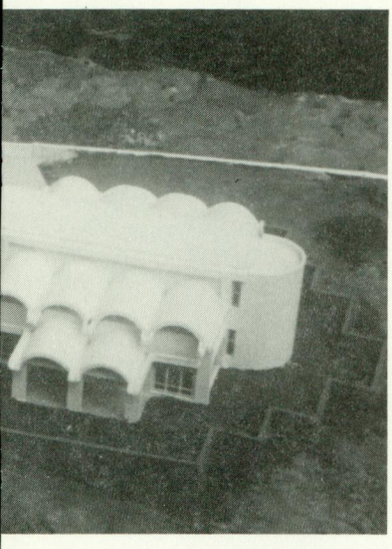
In March Lokamitra, Vimalakirti, and Bodhisagara undertook our first lecture tour of India's biggest state, Uttar Pradesh, in the north of the sub-continent. They also found time to lecture in the capital city, Delhi. The tour was organized by Bodhisagara, himself a native of Uttar Pradesh, from the hill station of Dehra Dun, and for many years a well known activist in the region. Bodhisagara—who was ordained by Sangharakshita last October—feels that TBMSG could be very effective in Uttar Pradesh, and is eager to start a centre in Dehra Dun.

The lecture tour was mainly of an exploratory nature, its main aim being to allow the Order members to observe the nature of the Buddhist community in Uttar Pradesh, and to assess the possibility of establishing a centre there. Apart from Dehra Dun and Delhi the tour took in the important towns of Meerut, Gaizabad-Hapur, Hastinapur, and Saharanpur. Besides lectures the tour also included slide shows of the history of Buddhism in India and of the activities of the FWBO/TBMSG throughout the world, plus screenings of the British Channel 4 television programme on Sangharakshita's recent Indian tour, *In the Footsteps of Ambedkar*.

Although audiences at the lectures were—by Indian standards—quite small, they were appreciative of what they heard of the TBMSG, and the tour party was urged to visit the area again in the near future. Asked for his impressions of the Buddhists of Uttar Pradesh, Lokamitra replied that they are 'certainly not lagging behind their brothers and sisters in Maharashtra, they are equally determined'. Lokamitra went on to say that he is eager to see TBMSG start a centre in Uttar Pradesh, and that he had no doubt that once such a centre was established our activities would spread very quickly throughout the region.

One possibility might be to start a retreat centre at Sarnath, an important traditional pilgrimage centre for Buddhists, and something of a focus for the modern Buddhists of Uttar Pradesh. Meanwhile, Bodhisagara has returned to Dehra Dun, and will be conducting Buddhist activities there in a modest way—planting the seeds for a future centre in Uttar Pradesh.

Bodhisagara lecturing in Dehra Dun



FOR THE WELFARE OF THE MANY

Our Ahmedabad centre has recently added an important new element to its social work activities: a hostel for poor 'ex-Untouchable' boys, mainly from the villages north of Gujerat. Such hostels are an important feature of our Indian social work wing, Bahujan Hitay—'For the Welfare of the Many'.

Children in rural areas often do not have access to an adequate school, and caste feelings are still very strong in the villages—much stronger than in the cities—so that ex-Untouchable children often suffer discrimination at the hands of teachers and other children. Hostels provide rural ex-Untouchable children with a home in the city where they can receive a decent education in an atmosphere which is not caste-ridden, giving them a start in life which would have been impossible in their home villages.

So far we have established six children's hostels in India, five for boys and one for girls. (Girls hostels are rarer because many families are reluctant to send their daughters away from home, partly because of fears for their safety.) There are plans to open at least three more hostels in the near future.

Our correspondent Padmavajra recently stayed for four days with the boys of the new Ahmedabad hostel, and found them to be one of the happiest, liveliest, and most helpful groups of children he had ever spent time with. Much of the credit for this happy atmosphere must go to the hostel's 29-year-old warden, Ratnapriya. Ratnapriya keeps a careful eye on the boys, helping them with their studies and with any personal problems. But in spite of his busy schedule he manages to maintain an intensive programme of meditation and Dharma study, rising at 4.30 in the morning to begin his long morning practice. Some of the boys have been so impressed by his example that they have themselves taken up regular meditation.

The Ahmedabad hostel is currently housed in rather cramped, rented accommodation, but construction work has started on a new purpose-built hostel which will accommodate sixty boys. Our only girl's hostel—situated in Veshrantwadi, a few miles from our largest Indian centre in Dapodi, Poona—is also based in rented accommodation. At the moment this houses twenty-five girls between the ages of eleven and fourteen, but construction work has begun on a new building for up to seventy girls.

Ahmedabad hostel boys

BUDDHISM AND NON-VIOLENCE

In March Lokamitra, Padmavajra, Ratnakar, and Bakul participated in a seminar on 'Buddhism and Non-Violence', organized by Gujerat University's Department of Buddhist Studies. The seminar—which was also attended by His Holiness the Dalai Lama—brought together leading Indian academics, practising Buddhists, and latter-day followers of Mahatma Gandhi.

The Dalai Lama inaugurated the seminar in a colourful public ceremony. Later, in a more intimate talk to the participants, he stressed the fundamental importance of tolerance and non-violence in the Buddhist tradition, saying that the experience of shunyata or 'emptiness'—insight into the lack of independent selfhood in all beings and all things—should make us realize how interconnected we are with other beings. From this an attitude of tolerance and non-violence should follow quite naturally. For the benefit of the non-Buddhists at the seminar he also emphasized that Buddhism differs from most other religions in that it has no place for a creator God.

The seminar itself covered a wide field: it included talks on Zen and non-violence, non-violence in the Pali Canon, non-violence as it manifests in Buddhist art, and practical methods for developing a non-violent attitude in our daily life. This last subject was covered by our own Order members, and by two young Tibetan monks from the Drepung Monastery in southern India.

Padmavajra reports that the seminar was an enjoyable and stimulating meeting of minds, and that Gujerat University is to be congratulated for its impressive organization of the event.

SEVEN ORDINATIONS AND A NEW MATURITY

In June seven men joined the Western Buddhist Order in the course of a three month ordination retreat at our retreat centre in the mountains of south-eastern Spain. In an important departure from past practice these new Dharmacharis were not initiated by Sangharakshita. Instead, Subhuti conducted the public ordination ceremonies, while private ordinations were divided between Subhuti and Suvajra.

The fact that senior Order members are now performing ordinations in the West represents a new phase in the development of the Western Buddhist Order. Previously Subhuti and Kamalashila had conducted ordinations in India, partly for practical reasons. But in the West until recently all new Order members have been initiated by the founder of the Order. That some of Sangharakshita's pupils are now felt to be ready to take over this role indicates a new maturity—and is an important step towards the future.

The seminar at Ngatiawa

THE BODHICHARYAVATARA DOWN UNDER

As our last issue was going to press, Nagabodhi was returning from a ten week trip to the USA, New Zealand, and Australia.

The tour was first envisaged during the Order convention in 1987, when Achala, chairman of our Wellington Centre, invited Nagabodhi to give some talks and lead a study seminar on Shantideva's *Bodhicharyavatara* under his Centre's auspices. Before long, the centres in Auckland and Sydney had been added to the itinerary, and the trip was on.

Taking advantage of the 'stop-over' system, Nagabodhi's first call was in San Francisco, where Arnie Kotler had just published his book, *Jai Bhim! Dispatches from a Peaceful Revolution*, under the Parallax Press imprint. For five lively days, Arnie—still in the grip of a virus contracted during a recent trip to India with Thich Nhat Hanh—took charge of Nagabodhi as he progressed from one engagement to another: talks and discussions at the San Francisco Zen Center and the Berkeley Vipassana Center, a book-signing in Palo Alto, a visit to Great Tradition book distributors, a meditation class, discussion with the FWBO's own fledgling local sangha, and a number of less formal meetings with some old and new friends.

Within two days of arriving in New Zealand, Nagabodhi was in the beautiful sea-side meadows and forests of Huia, just north of Auckland, taking part in an 'Australasian' Order Event. With twenty-one Dharmacharis and Dharmacharinis attending, this was the largest ever gathering of Order members 'down under', and testified dramatically to the health and continuing growth of a region that now contains four FWBO centres.

Flying down to Wellington the night the Order Event ended, Nagabodhi was able to spend a couple of days sightseeing, meeting Friends, and giving his first public talk in the country's capital city, before proceeding to 'Ngatiawa Camp' for the study seminar.

Twenty-nine people attended the six day seminar at Ngatiawa, thirty more attended a two weekend event at Huia; ten women gathered for a weekend seminar in Sydney, and fourteen men from Sydney attended a four day seminar in the countryside north of the city in St Albans. FWBO study groups rarely exceed twelve people, and the optimum is considered to be far less, so there were few precedents for the kind of groups that Nagabodhi found himself leading. Furthermore, except in the case of the women's seminar in Sydney, the plan was to give at least an introduction to Shantideva's text in its entirety! This was a tall order, but—perhaps to everyone's surprise—it actually did seem possible to maintain a relaxed and interactive flow of questions and answers and general discussion.

The seminars were much appreciated; not just because they afforded an inspiring—and for some a first—glimpse of the Bodhisattva: one whose entire energies are geared towards the attainment of Enlightenment for the sake of all beings. They also provided a number of people with a rare chance to meet a senior Order member from England, where the FWBO began, and one who had been fortunate enough to live with Sangharakshita, the Movement's founder, for the past three years.

Nagabodhi gave fifteen talks during the tour. Although most of these were public affairs—general introductory talks on Buddhism and the FWBO—it is probably fair to say that he most enjoyed giving the more 'in-house' talks: on his life at Padmaloka Community with Sangharakshita, an 'unexpurgated' history of the FWBO, and some sessions in which he offered his hosts some first impressions of their centres.

A major feature of the New Zealand visit was a round of newspaper and TV interviews. Like Devamitra, the FWBO's 'Convenor of Mitras' who had paid his first call on Australasia some months earlier, Nagabodhi was to discover that his visit would be treated as if it were of minor *national* interest!

Reflecting on this on his last night in Auckland, Nagabodhi suggested that such a story would not even make the pages of a local newspaper in the UK or the USA. The Buddhists in New Zealand, with its population of only three million, or in Australia, with just sixteen million, therefore have a number of extraordinary opportunities. Firstly, it should be relatively easy to get the Dharma reasonably well known, and even understood, throughout the land. Secondly, it is not unlikely that prominent people in the arts, in politics, and so on, should come to hear of the Dharma and even practise it. And this could mean that, with the sovereign status of these countries acting as a kind of amplifier, the Dharma could even begin to play a significant role on the world stage. This added up to quite a responsibility, but Nagabodhi left Australasia convinced that the FWBO there is in a position to face the challenge, and to make good use of it.

The Australasian Order Event

A MORE EFFECTIVE MOVEMENT

The quaintly named town of Oswaldtwistle in Lancashire—a cluster of stone-built houses nestling beneath the West Pennine moorlands—may seem an unlikely site for the administrative centre of a worldwide movement. But for the last year, since the establishment of the *Office of the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order*, it has been precisely that.

The visitor to Oswaldtwistle will not see a tinted-glass office block bearing the name of the FWBO. The Office of the FWBO as it now exists is just the first, tentative step towards some form of central administrative machinery for a movement which in many ways has been an excellent example of the dictum *small is beautiful*.

In the legal and administrative sense there is no such body as the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order. Each individual FWBO centre is autonomous: each has its own legal structure, its own officers, and its own income. The FWBO has no centralized administrative structure, and no managerial hierarchy. For the first twenty-one years of its existence it has survived—indeed thrived—without either.

To some people this slightly anarchic state of affairs will seem admirable. To others it will seem simply unworkable. But whatever its merits there is no doubt that the FWBO's loose knit structure can create difficulties when it comes to co-ordinating the activities of the Movement as a whole, or to organizing and financing initiatives which are beyond the scope and resources of any one centre.

One of the ways the FWBO has been co-ordinated as a unified movement is through the meetings of the chairmen of the various centres, which take place four times a year. But between these meetings someone must make sure that decisions are executed, that business is moving forward, and that no items are forgotten or overlooked.

This is now the role of the fledgling *Office of the FWBO*. The work of the Office is overseen by an executive composed of several chairmen, but at the moment it is carried out by one man—Pramodana, the chairman of the Lancashire Buddhist Centre, and until recently one of the mainstays of an Oswaldtwistle window cleaning co-operative. According to Pramodana the job is very varied, and the areas of responsibility keep expanding all the time.

One of the major difficulties facing the FWBO at the moment is the need for central funding to finance Movement-wide activities. Pramodana hopes to spend an increasing amount of his time planning and co-ordinating fundraising efforts. He also hopes to build up a body of knowledge in matters like British Charity Law which affect many centres, preventing duplication of effort by providing a central resource.

But an essential part of Pramodana's day to day work centres on organizing and administering a range of meetings and events: chairmen's meetings, the International Annual General Meeting of chairmen, and the FWBO Day festival. Looking after the meetings involves more than writing minutes and mailing agendas—for example this year's international gathering of Chairmen entailed arranging the visits of three Chairmen from India. This year was the first time that Pramodana had taken responsibility for the FWBO Day festival. In future he hopes to keep the same team of helpers together, to improve the festival from year to year, and make sure it is financially self-supporting.

Describing his hopes for the FWBO's new co-ordinating body, Pramodana writes: 'I am, at present, working part time on this which is obviously unsatisfactory. These areas of responsibility, outlined above, are vital to the unity and efficiency of the Movement. As expertise and knowledge are acquired I hope that the Office of the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order will contribute to the growth and spread of the Movement for the benefit of all.'

POWERFUL THEMES

Just what does Going for Refuge to the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha really mean? And how does one do it? In what sense are these 'Three Jewels' *Refuges*? Why should people want to join an Order? Do we really need an Order to be able to lead an effective spiritual life?

These and related questions are common themes and topics of discussion at Padmaloka—and themes which can have a powerful effect on the men who visit the Norfolk retreat centre.

At the annual spring National Mitra Retreat for men, twelve mitras were moved enough by the light cast on these issues to request ordination as members of the Western Buddhist Order. This brings the total number of European men who have asked for ordination to 118, an increase in the number of those seeking to take this major step by about 30 in the last year.

'What is the Order?' was the theme of the Going for Refuge Retreat in April—one of a series of events for mitras who have asked for ordination, which aim to help future Order members towards a clear-sighted and effective comittment to spiritual ideals. Subhuti and Aloka each gave a series of six talks, Subhuti clarifying many of the principles underlying the Western Buddhist Order, and Aloka giving a colourfu' account of the figures visualized in the Going for Refuge and Prostration Practice.

On the May Bank Holiday Men's Event—entitled 'The Taste of Freedom'—Ratnaprabha, Abhaya, and Kamalashila looked at another aspect of the meaning of ordination, in their talks on the ten ethical precepts undertaken by members of the Order.

In June Aloka returned to Padmaloka to lead a nine day seminar on the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*. Aloka is an artist and illustrator with a strong interest in the visual, symbolic language of Tantric Buddhism, and his connection with this aspect of the text brought it vividly to life for many of the participants.

A BUDDHIST SCHOOL?

When the Buddha advised his followers to practise Right Livelihood he certainly did not mean that they should all work in vegetarian restaurants or wholefood co-operatives! He meant that they should support themselves in ways which do no damage to themselves or others, or—much better—in ways which are positively helpful to the beings of our planet.

Western Buddhists have found many ways of responding to this challenge, and can be found practising Right Livelihood in a wide range of jobs and professions: as doctors, nurses, psychiatrists, social workers, architects, engineers, designers, builders, and gardeners, to name just a few. But Buddhism places special emphasis on helping others with their development as individuals. Education is—or should be—about the development of the individual, and it is therefore not suprising that many Buddhists work as teachers or lecturers within existing education systems.

But many Buddhists working in education find the constraints imposed by traditional views and structures highly frustrating. Is there then a case for specifically *Buddhist* schools? Annette Matthews, a mitra from Cambridge who has experience of running a nursery school, thinks there is—especially for children of nursery school age.

Annette feels there is a need for nursery schools with a specifically Buddhist input, where children are seen as individuals, where individuality is allowed and encouraged, and where the development of the child is given prime importance—and she would like to set up such a school. She sees this is a way in which Buddhists could have a powerful positive effect on the community, and at the same time establish a very rewarding form of Right Livelihood.

If anyone feels that they might like to join Annette in such a venture—or if you would just like to air your views—please contact Annette Matthews at 41 St Andrews Road, Cambridge, CB4 1DH, UK.

Aikido demonstration at the Manchester festival

. . . IN LARGE NUMBERS

Manchester Town Hall lies at the heart of one of the largest cities in the north of England. It is an impressive building: built in the 1870s in grand gothic style, at a time when this area was the affluent power-house of the industrial world; its rooms and corridors cover nearly two acres of ground. With its great oak-panelled chambers containing portraits of severe, but no doubt well-meaning, men of office, it breathes an air of Victorian England. Nowadays the Town Hall is an administrative building, work place for many.

It was in this rather improbable setting that the Manchester Buddhist Centre, with help from the centres at Leeds and Accrington, held Manchester's second public Buddha Day festival.

Local advertising in the press plus widespread distribution of posters brought an estimated five hundred people away from the busy shopping centre into an altogether different world—into the world of the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.

Those curious members of the public who, following the arrows, found their way up the wide stairs, might have been pleasantly surprised to see three of the usually sombre though magnificent chambers festooned with coloured flags and streamers. Wandering around, they would have discovered a rich assortment of books about Buddhism, and displays introducing them—through words and photographs—to the FWBO, to the Manchester Centre, and to Aid For India. They might also have treated themselves to some refreshments from the vegan food stall, taken in a talk on Western Buddhism or a demonstration of Aikido, or sat to watch a video about Taraloka, Guhyaloka, or Sangharakshita in interview.

Those whose interest had been stimulated were able to join one of the bands of people who walked along considerable lengths of corridor to the 'meditation room' where, in a forty-minute session, they were introduced to the mindfulness of breathing or *metta bhavana* meditation practices. And if their imagination had been fired they might even have stayed on into the evening, to see a large number of Buddhists from all over northern Britain come together to perform puja before a magnificent shrine.

One can never know what people take away with them after an occasion of this kind. For some, perhaps, it all seemed strange and incomprehensible—simply too different from their own worlds. Others will remember their experience of meditation, and begin to meditate at home. A few will come along to classes at the Centre, and of them a few, perhaps, will take up the practice of the Dharma for themselves. A major public festival like this is an exercise in planting seeds for the future—but it is also an opportunity for Buddhists to follow the Buddha's advice and 'gather together in large numbers'.

ON SCOTTISH SCREENS

Buddhism has recently been receiving an unusual amount of attention on Scotland's TV screens.

In the past few months two Scottish Buddhists have appeared on BBC Scotland's *High Spirits*, and a third appearance is in the pipeline.

High Spirits is a late night discussion programme which, although having a strongly Christian emphasis, also features brief comment by people with other beliefs.

In the first programme in the series—on prayer—Glasgow mitra Graeme Stevens gave a concise explanation of how meditation practice enables individuals to 'intervene' creatively in their own lives.

In a more recent edition, broadcast on 18 June, the matter under discussion was 'The Body', and between displays of Christian aerobics and a demonstration of make-up for Pentecostalists, Susiddhi expounded the Buddha's vision of the Middle Way—the desirability of neither abusing nor exalting the body. His explanation, illustrated by a complete history of the Buddha's life, was delivered in less than one minute.

Tejamitra is also due to make an appearance on a future edition of *High Spirits*, which may have been broadcast by the time this magazine goes on sale.

Following the success of her appearances on STV's *Morning Call*—reported in our last issue—Kulaprabha has now been invited to appear on its longer (and later) cousin, *Evening Call*. This will give her the opportunity to make a series of brief reflections on philosophical and religious matters, one each night for a week. There is a normally a large audience for *Evening Call*, which has been running for some years and is usually broadcast at around 10.30 at night.

BRAVE WORDS ON THE AIR

'For Muslims to get upset because they feel their religion has been blasphemed is self-contradictory. I really cannot feel that genuinely religious feeling can be disturbed in this way, and result in the demand for somebody's death. Is this how you show your devotion to your religion? What sort of religion is this that inculcates this sort of attitude?'

These outspoken comments from Sangharakshita caused an almost audible intake of breath in the studios of BBC Radio Four—plus some murmurs of approval. Surely many thinking people share these views. But few are bold enough to express them on national radio.

Sangharakshita was speaking as a guest on *Midweek*, an excellent hour-long chat show hosted by Libby Purves, which is broadcast at 9 a.m every Wednesday. On 5 July he was sharing the air-waves with the by now almost venerable disc jockey and pop pundit John Peel, plus two less well known guests.

Sangharakshita had little to say on the subject of John Peel's musical interests—'I am afraid my taste is almost exclusively classical'—but when his turn came to be interviewed he was given the opportunity to talk about many aspects of his life, his work, and his spiritual vision.

He described his childhood, and how he was immobilized on doctors orders between the ages of eight and eleven because of a mystery heart condition—which later, apparently, vanished. He described how this led him to begin reading voraciously, starting with all 61 volumes of the *Children's Encyclopedia*—several times—and progressing by stages through an interest in philosophy and mysticism to the religions of the East, and, eventually, by the age of sixteen, to Buddhism.

He described how, when he first encountered the teachings of Buddhism, he realized that *this* was the truth, that this was what he had always believed. And he described how this realization led him, a few years later, to adopt the robe and bowl of the Buddhist monk.

Asked whether he found it exhilarating to be accepted as a monk, Sangharakshita replied that he had indeed done so, for several years, but that later he began to have reservations about viewing the Buddhist life in purely monastic terms. Now he saw genuine commitment to Buddhist ideals as being much more important than a monastic lifestyle.

Briefly he touched on the problem of Untouchability in India; on the conversion to Buddhism of the Untouchables' leader, Dr Ambedkar; and on the work of the TBMSG among the 'new Buddhist' former Untouchables.

Conversation then turned to the problems of living a spiritual life in a thoroughly materialistic country like Britain, to the lack of any real spiritual values in modern society, and to the need for Buddhists to do something about this sorry state of affairs.

If Buddhists want to change society, how then should they vote? Sangharakshita replied that he was out of sympathy with all mainstream parties, but that many people in the FWBO supported the Green Party. At least one FWBO community had helped to sponsor a Green candidate in the recent elections.

It was at this point that Ms Purves steered the conversation to the question of blasphemy and the Salman Rushdie affair. Could blasphemy have a positive, cathartic effect? And should a religion not be able to tolerate criticism? Sangharakshita noted that as a spiritual tradition without a personal god, Buddhism had no concept of blasphemy. The Buddha had advised his followers not to get upset if he or his teachings were criticized, but to listen carefully and sort the wheat from the chaff.

He then went on to explain how 'therapeutic blasphemy' could be a useful, even necessary, spiritual practice for some people. Many people who had suffered a repressive religious upbringing harboured a great deal of resentment, and needed to blaspheme to get this off their chest—and at the same time to free themselves from the fear of an authoritarian God. Such people might actually *need* to insult the Pope, or Jesus, or God. 'I hope that God can take it,' he said.

Sangharakshita then said he found it hard to understand the attitude of many Muslims to Salman Rushdie's book—and at this point he gave voice to the uncompromising statements reported at the beginning of this article.

John Peel—who had earlier said that any pop music that didn't offend *someone* was 'unwholesome'—was obviously impressed by the idea of therapeutic blasphemy. 'I suspect that most of the things I like would come under this general heading,' he said. Could Sangharakshita have found another follower? Perhaps. But he will almost certainly have done a great deal to swell *Midweek's* postbag over the coming days and weeks.

OUT OF THE DEPTHS

At the end of May the Brighton Buddhist Centre Baroque Players took the latest step forward in their career, when they appeared on BBC's *South Today* local TV news programme, playing and singing a Purcell song in one of the South Coast's less likely musical venues—the Brighton Sewers.

Brighton's sewers are a spacious, well-built example of Victorian art, and the town is apparently keen to promote them as a tourist attraction during the Brighton Festival. According to Brighton Buddhist Centre chairman Yashodeva, who sings with the group, the sewers are dark, damp, and smelly—but acoustically brilliant. On the whole the musicians enjoyed their media appearance, although some were distracted by the novelty of playing with wet feet.

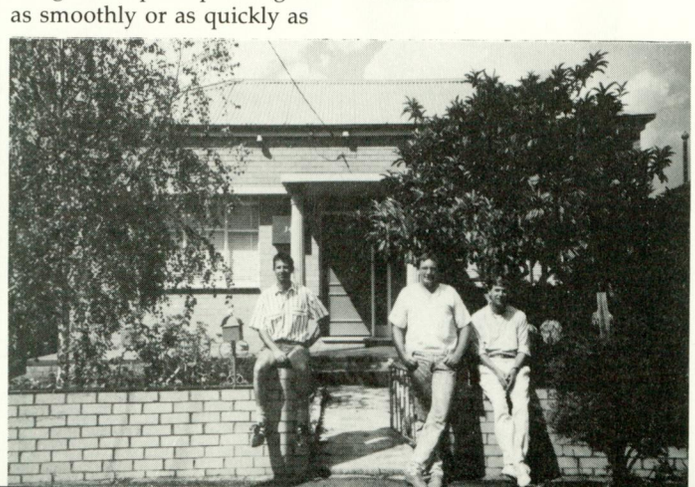
MELBOURNE BREAKTHROUGH

It is just over two years since Buddhadasa, Gunapala, and Paul Kennelly climbed into their newly acquired Holden Kingswood and aimed its prow towards Victoria. Having spent time at our centre in Wellington, New Zealand and—just briefly—in Sydney, their plan was to initiate activities in Melbourne.

From the outset, priorities were clear: to take stock of the situation in a town where Buddhism was already well represented, to secure the material base by establishing some lucrative form of Right Livelihood project, and to set up a residential community. Classes and courses would follow once these foundations were firmly established.

As is often the case in life, things have perhaps not gone as smoothly or as quickly as the pioneers might have hoped. The unprovoked—and uncompensated—destruction of the Holden Kingswood was just one of the setbacks that the team, now supplemented by Guhyavajra, have sustained.

Now, however, according to Guhyavajra, things are definitely looking up. As well as a number of old and new Friends, there are now three Order members and three mitras living in Melbourne. Money is no longer a problem, and Buddhadasa has just completed the formalities associated with the purchase of a good-sized house not far from the centre of the city. This house will serve as a men's community, but is big enough to provide basic facilities for classes and courses.



Gunapala, Guhyavajra, and Buddhadasa (l to r) outside their new home

119 Roman Road
Bethnal Green
London E2 0QN
01 981 1407
fax 01 981 7998

are you the type?

One or two new team members required to work in lively, energetic women's right-livelihood business. Typing essential. Contact Anne, Elaine or Esther.

windhorse
typesetters

The CHERRY ORCHARD
vegetarian restaurant
241 GLOBE ROAD E2. 01·980 6678

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

'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–Fri 12–3; 6.30–10.30
Sat 12–10.30. Closed Sun & Mon
4 minutes from Bethnal Green tube

1. The chance to relax and meditate
2. Stimulating Dharma talks and study
3. A community of senior Order Members
4. The support of friends in the Sangha
5. The beauty of the Norfolk Broads
6. Delicious food

... ADDS UP TO

6

GOOD REASONS FOR COMING TO PADMALOKA

For our current programme write to: The Retreat Organiser, Lesingham House, Surlingham, Norfolk NR14 7AL or phone 050 88 8112.

Padmaloka
BUDDHIST RETREAT CENTRE FOR MEN

tārāloka
BUDDHIST RETREAT CENTRE FOR WOMEN

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

INTENSIVE MEDITATION RETREATS
STUDY SEMINARS
WORKING RETREATS

WEEKEND EVENTS...
YOGA/MASSAGE
DANCE/PAINTING

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

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

NOTICE BOARD

BRITAIN

Sep 22-24	Women's Yoga Weekend, Taraloka Retreat Centre. (Serious beginners to intermediate.)
Oct 14-15	Weekend Meditation Workshop, Cambridge Buddhist Centre
Oct 21	Open Day, Taraloka Retreat Centre. 1-4pm. All welcome
Oct 27-29	Men's Event, Padmaloka Retreat Centre—'Creating Ritual'. Weekend Workshops will explore the theme of creative ritual in puja
Nov 2-9	Study Seminar on The Sutra of Hui Neng, led by Sanghadevi. Taraloka Retreat Centre. (Women mitras only)
Nov 9-13	Karuna Trust—Global Partnership 89. A major event promoting the work of British voluntary agencies. Display, exhibition, and video on the Trust's work in India
Nov 11-13	Cambridge Centre Weekend Retreat, Water Hall Retreat Centre
Nov 10-12	Women's Introduction to Meditation and Buddhism Weekend. Taraloka Retreat Centre. (For newcomers)
Nov 14	Sangha Day Celebration, Cambridge Centre
Nov 19-20	Massage workshop, Cambridge Centre
Dec 17-Jan 7	Men's Winter Retreat, Padmaloka Retreat Centre—'Entering the Cremation Ground.' (One, two, or three weeks)

GERMANY

Oct 14-28	Autumn Retreat in beautiful, secluded hill country in central Germany. Open to all
Oct 21-28	Study Seminar, led by Abhaya (in English). In beautiful country setting
Nov 11	Sangha Day Festival. Open to Friends

AUSTRIA

Nov 3-8	Austrian Retreat, under auspices of FWBO Germany. In Alpine foothills. Open to all. Information from: Buddhistiches Zentreum Scheibbs, Ginselberg 12, 3272 Scheibbs/Neustift, Austria

NETHERLANDS

Oct 13-16	Three Day Retreat led by Vajragita. All welcome. In Rhenen
Nov 3-5	Study Weekend with Abhaya. At Utrecht Centre. For regulars and mitras

NEW ZEALAND

Jan 4-14	Open Summer Retreat, at Kiwanis Camp, Huia. (minimum stay, 5 nights) Information from Auckland Buddhist Centre

This is not a complete list of FWBO events. Unless specified otherwise, information about these—or any other—events can be obtained from the relevant Centre or Retreat Centre, whose address and telephone number can be found on the back of this magazine. All FWBO centres run regular classes on meditation and Buddhism, plus a range of other events such as retreats, meditation workshops, study groups, talks, celebrations, Yoga, massage, Ta'i Chi, and more.

Where to find us

MAIN CENTRES OF THE FRIENDS OF THE WESTERN BUDDHIST ORDER

London Buddhist Centre, 51 Roman Road, London E2 0HU. Tel: 01-981 1225

Birmingham Buddhist Centre, 135 Salisbury Road, Moseley, Birmingham, B13 8LA. Tel: 021-449 5279

Brighton Buddhist Centre, 15 Park Crescent Place, Brighton, Sussex, BN2 3HF. Tel: 0273 698420

Bristol Buddhist Centre, 9 Cromwell Road, St Andrews, Bristol, BS6 5HD. Tel: 0272 249991

Cambridge Buddhist Centre, 19 Newmarket Road, Cambridge, CB5 8EG. Tel: 0223 460252

Croydon Buddhist Centre, 96-98 High Street, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 1ND. Tel: 01-688 8624

Glasgow Buddhist Centre, 329 Sauciehall Street, Glasgow, G2 3HW. Tel: 041-333 0524

Lancashire Buddhist Centre, 301-303, Union Road, Oswaldtwistle, Accrington, Lancs, BB5 3HS. Tel: 0254 392605

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

Manchester Buddhist Centre, 538 Wilbraham Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Manchester M21 1LD. Tel: 061-860 4267

Norwich Buddhist Centre, 41a All Saints Green, Norwich, NR1 3LY. Tel: 0603 627034

West London Buddhist Centre, 7 Colville Houses, London W11 1JB. Tel: 01-727 9382

Padmaloka Retreat Centre, Lesingham House, Surlingham, Norwich, NR14 7AL. Tel: 050-88 8112

Vajraloka Meditation Centre, Tyn-y-Ddol, Trerddol, Nr Corwen, Clwyd, LL21 0EN. Tel: 0490-81 406

Rivendell Retreat Centre, Chillies Lane, High Hurstwood, Nr Uckfield, Sussex, TN22 4AA. Tel: 01-688 8624

Taraloka Women's Retreat Centre, Cornhill Farm, Bettisfield, Nr Whitchurch, Shropshire, SY13 2LV. Tel: 094875 646

The Office of the Western Buddhist Order, Padmaloka, Lesingham House, Surlingham, Norwich, NR14 7AL. Tel: 050 88 310

Karuna Trust, 186 Cowley Road, Oxford, OX4 1UE. Tel: 0865 728794

Dharmachakra Tapes P.O. Box 50, Cambridge, CB1 3BG

Helsingin Buddhalainen Keskus, PL 288, SF-00121, Helsinki 12, Finland

FWBO Germany, Postfach 110263, 4300 Essen 11, W. Germany. Tel: 0201 668299

FWBO Netherlands, P.O. Box 1559, 3500 BN Utrecht, Netherlands

Vasterlandska Buddhistordens Vanner, Hillbersvagen 5, S-126 54 Hagersten, Sweden. Tel: (Stockholm) 97 59 92

TBMSG Ahmedabad, Triyana Vardhana Vihara, Vijayanagar Society, Kankaria Road, Ahmedabad 380002, India

TBMSG Aurangabad, c/o P G Kambe Guruji, Bhim Nagar, Bhausingpura, Aurangabad 431001, India

Bhaja Retreat Centre, c/o Raja Harishchandra Road, Dapodi, Poona 411012, India

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

TBMSG Pimpri, Plot 294, Ishwarlal Chawl, Lal Bhahadur Shastri Road, Pimpri, Poona 411017, India

TBMSG Poona, Raja Harishchandra Road, Dapodi, Poona 411012, India. Tel: (Poona) 58403

TBMSG Ulhasnagar, Block A, 410/819 Subhash Hill, Ulhasnagar, Thane, 421004, India

Bahujan Hitay, Raja Harishchandra Road, Dapodi, Poona 411012, India. Tel: (Poona) 58403

FWBO Malaysia, c/o Dharmacharini Jayapushpa, 2 Jalan Tan Jit Seng, Hillside, Tanjong Bungah, 11200 Penang, Malaysia

Auckland Buddhist Centre, P.O. Box 68-453, Newton, Auckland, New Zealand. Tel: (Auckland) 789 320/892412

Wellington Buddhist Centre, P.O. Box 12-311, Wellington North, New Zealand. Tel: 04-787 940

Sydney Buddhist Centre, 806 George Street, Sydney, Australia

Aryaloka Retreat Centre, Heartwood Circle, Newmarket, New Hampshire 03857, U.S.A. Tel: 603-659 5456

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

Activites are also conducted in many other towns. Contact your local centre for details.