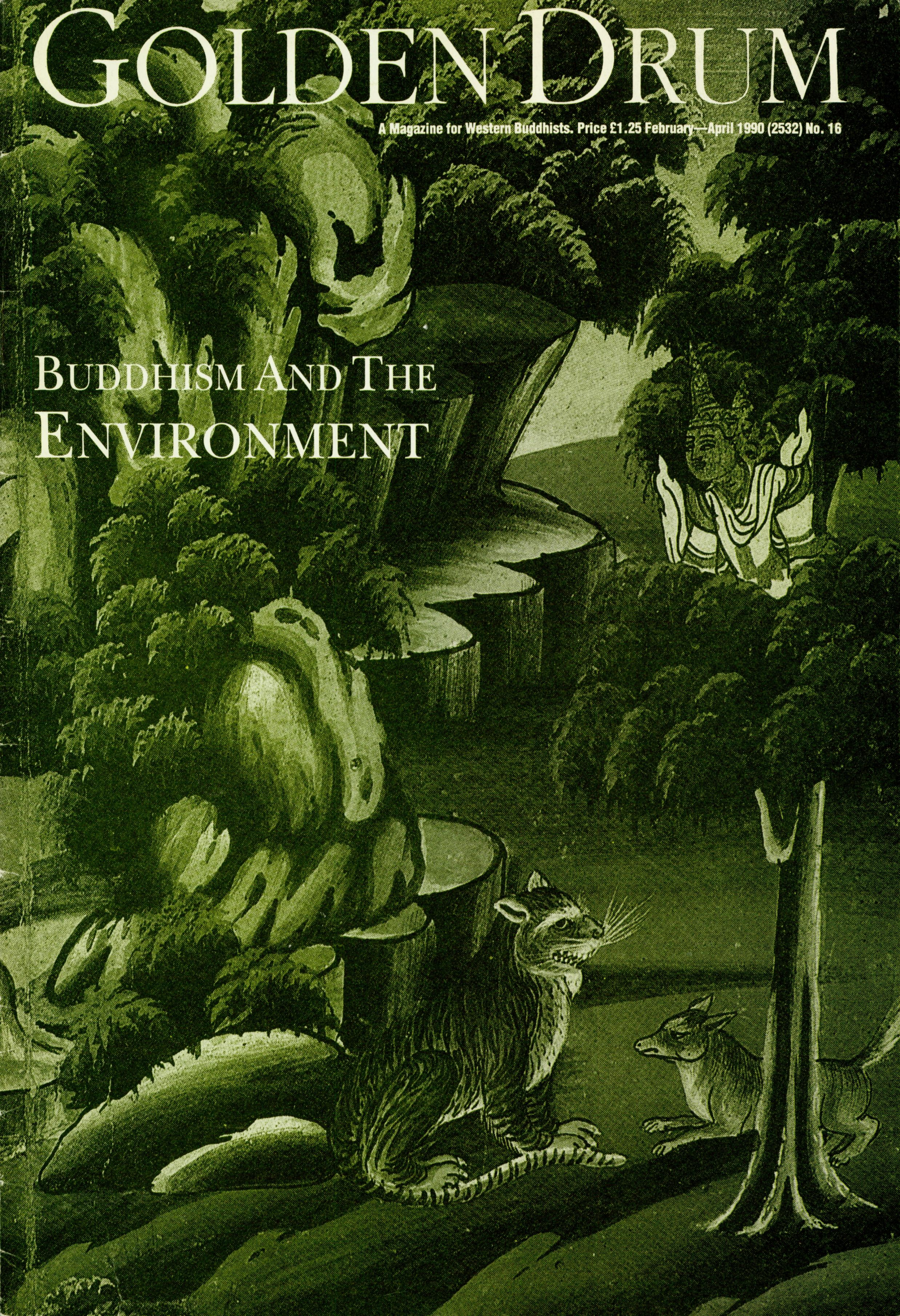


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BUDDHISM AND THE ENVIRONMENT



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Editor Nagabodhi
Editorial Assistance Shantavira
News Chris Pauling
Book Reviews Tejananda
Outlook Advayachitta
Design Paramabodhi
Printing Aldgate Press, 84b Whitechapel
High Street, London E1

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

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The cover illustration, depicting the Buddha in a former life as a tree spirit, is taken from a 19th century Burmese painting.

BUDDHISM AND THE ENVIRONMENT

It is not uncommon for the traveller in foreign lands to find himself being held to account for all the sins—past and present—of his native country: 'Why are you creating so many problems for the European common market?' 'Why did you collaborate with Hitler over the division of Czechoslovakia?' 'Why don't you take a tougher line over South Africa?' Usually one can only shrug regretfully and point out that one was not yet born when the named injustice was perpetrated, or remind one's interrogator that a simple vote every few years offers little opportunity for direct participation in the details of political life.

Last year, however, I found myself in the daunting position of having to answer for an entire hemisphere. From beneath their floppy sun-hats, once sun-loving Australians and New Zealanders wanted to know what I and my friends up there in the north were doing about the malignant hole in the ozone layer that was wallowing right above our heads, and the increase in melanomas it was believed to be spawning. This time I couldn't get out of it quite so easily by blaming the politicians or other forces beyond my control. After all, back home I drove a car; I sometimes used an aerosol spray to create artwork for this magazine; and had I not laughed indecorously when a brother Order member, while attempting to 'defrost' the refrigerator with a carving knife, had succeeded only in rupturing the coolant pipes, thus launching billowing clouds of CFCs into the atmosphere? I was part of the problem.

Few issues have provided such a graphic demonstration of the principle of interconnectedness as has the increasingly featured 'environmental crisis'. While the scientists may still be arguing about the extent of the problem, and the speed with which things are rushing downhill, they have left us in little or no doubt that a crisis is looming, that it is global, and that it will only be averted (assuming that we are not already too late) if the human inhabitants of our planet can wake up to the harm they are doing and make some very radical changes. The future, it seems, will either be 'green'—suffused with a high level of ecological awareness—or it will be very black indeed.

It is a strange and happy quirk of fate that, just when our understanding of the world's sickness has confronted us with the demand for an unprecedented level of international co-operation, the mistrusts and fixed polarities of the cold war seem to be on the wane. Such political and macro-economic solutions as may be devised now stand a better chance of being effectively implemented (though only assuming that the old European communist countries manage to avoid the descent into anarchy). Moreover, no longer able to project our own shadows onto 'evil empires' across the sea, it is just possible that we citizens of the industrialized nations will find

ourselves more psychologically free, if no more willing, to face up to the demons of greed, hatred, and delusion in our own hearts and minds.

Although the problems we must now address are more truly 'global' than any that have arisen before, their solution ultimately depends upon the active and conscious participation of each single one of us. Governments can pass laws—to ban the hunting of whales or elephants, to preserve sections of rain forest, to limit industrial pollution, but such laws are often hard to enforce, easy to circumvent or ignore, and usually desperately unpopular. Market forces might send the price of diminishing natural resources ever higher, but manufacturers can always pass on the costs to the consumers—who can, in turn, agitate for the higher wages required to maintain their accustomed lifestyles.

Landmark books such as *Silent Spring* and *Small is Beautiful* appeared around two decades ago. I certainly have vivid memories of scary work-canteen conversations about the state of the Earth from back in 1970. But it has only been in the past four or five years that so-called 'green' issues have lost their cranky image and really started to register somewhere near the foreground of popular consciousness. Governments, the media, and pressure groups are now trying harder than ever before to inform the public about the steps they must take to ease their planet's plight. But this is no easy task. It will require a daunting degree of imagination for most people to grasp that their own little household and fashion purchases, or their energy consumption habits, have a significant effect on the world's entire eco-system.

—Which is where Buddhism—or perhaps I should say the world's Buddhists—have a role to play. If we are to see the shifts of habit, expectation, and lifestyle that are required to make the world a better and safer place, then in every part of the world, in every place of work, and in every household, someone is going to have to set a clear and definite example.

The Buddha taught that all phenomena are interconnected; he taught that our actions have consequences far beyond those which we can easily and immediately perceive. He urged his followers to develop a sense of harmony with all life, and to act with generosity and loving kindness towards their fellow creatures. And he encouraged them to live simply, being content with little. Collectively, we Buddhists have been contemplating and working with teachings such as these for millennia. Individually, we may be relatively new to them, but trying to take them seriously and practise them nevertheless. Surely, if anyone should be well equipped to provide a lead, then it is us. For the sake of our own practice, and for the sake of the Earth, we cannot afford to shirk our duty.

Nagabodhi



A BUDDHIST LIFE IS A GREEN LIFE

Chris Pauling explains how a well known Buddhist teaching holds the key to environmental consciousness

Buddhism has something fundamental to say on the environmental issue, because it addresses the basic human attitudes that lie at the heart of our planet's problems.

The root cause of our problems—personal *and* planetary—is our view of ourselves as separate, isolated individuals, walled off from the universe around us. This view leads us to see selfishness as necessary. It leads us to put narrow limits on what we see as our responsibility. And it leads us to live a life that is out of harmony with the universe, so that *we* suffer, and the world suffers with us.

But the Dharma tells us that this view of ourselves is mistaken. Our idea of separate selfhood is a delusion, and a profoundly damaging delusion. We are all part of each other and the world we inhabit, and whenever we harm another being or injure our environment, what we are hurting is ourselves.

Buddhism exists to help us break out of the prison of isolated selfhood and wake up to the true nature of reality—to help us become Enlightened. The Enlightened person is fully aware that everything in the universe is interconnected, not just as an intellectual concept, but in every fibre of their being. Such a person will inevitably live in harmony with the world around them. They will no more willingly hurt another being or desecrate the environment—no matter how far away the damage takes place—than they will willingly hurt themselves. In a world of Enlightened beings there could be no environmental problem.

This is not to suggest that the answer to the world's problems is for everyone to become Enlightened—at least not immediately. Our problems are urgent, and something more practical is needed in the short term.

But Buddhism is above all a practical tradition. It recognizes that for most of us the state of 'Final, Unsurpassed Enlightenment' is still a long way off. And it offers us ways in which we can invite some degree of Enlightenment to take root in the midst of our delusion, gradually altering the way we think and feel, and—more important from a purely practical point of view—immediately changing the way we act, so that the effect we have on the world around us becomes more like that of an Enlightened being.

In the short term Buddhism helps us live a more harmonious life in two main ways. Firstly, it offers us a vision of what it means to be a human being that is very different from the one our society trains us to accept—a vision in which life is a spiritual quest rather than a fight for survival or material goods. Simply changing our image of ourselves in this way does not add up to Enlightenment, but it helps. We may not be able to transcend our egotism in one bound, but we can quite quickly refine our image of ourselves so that we judge our richness by what we *are* rather than by what we own or consume.

And this change is vital. The only real answer to our planet's problems is for all of us—all those who enjoy the affluent life-style of mainstream culture in the West—to own and consume much, much less. Our most important environmental problems are the result of the sheer level of economic activity in our societies. The greenhouse effect, for example, is mainly due to CO₂ from the burning of coal, oil, and gas—the fuels that power our economic machine. We have no large-scale alternatives to these fuels except nuclear power, which is not an option many people will relish. The prosperity that we largely take for granted is based on making major changes to the composition of our planet's atmosphere, and hoping that future generations will find some way of dealing with the problems we cause.

But as long as we see ourselves as essentially material beings, judging the richness of our lives by our material 'standard of living', we will never willingly give up even a little of this prosperity. Before we can persuade people to let go of the myth of economic growth as the way to human happiness we need to put something in its place—something spiritual rather than physical.

As well as giving us a vision of what it means to be a human being that makes a return to a sustainable life-style possible, Buddhism also offers a set of practical guide-lines to help us live in concord with our surroundings. As a way of moving towards Enlightenment the Dharma encourages us to behave *as though we were already* Enlightened—as though we were already fully aware of the interconnectedness of all things in the universe, down to the very depths of our being. To help us do this it provides a set of norms which describe the way an

Enlightened being would behave, which Buddhists undertake to observe as training principles. We may not become fully Enlightened tomorrow, next week, or next year. But if we make the decision to work towards Enlightenment by living according to the Buddhist precepts, our behaviour will immediately become more like that of an Enlightened person, and our life will become more in harmony with our environment.

The first—and most important—of these training principles is to refrain from harming other living beings, and instead to engage in acts of loving-kindness. This precept is basic to the Buddhist approach to life, and it is also basic to any solution to the world's environmental problems. It encourages us to soften our usual antagonism towards what is foreign to ourselves, and instead develop an attitude of caring, nurturing concern for the world around us.

Traditionally the Dharma encourages us to cultivate this attitude mainly towards other sentient beings—human and animal—starting with those near to us, then extending our goodwill to the global and even cosmic plane. But loving-kindness does not confine itself even to what we normally recognize as sentient beings. It is a basic attitude of heart which expresses itself in our relationship with *everything* that lies outside the boundaries of the self. We express it by caring for and nurturing our friends, our colleagues, our garden, our local countryside, its wildlife—and our planet. It is an attitude that springs from a deep reverence for the entire universe, from realizing that the world we live in is an astonishing miracle, and from seeing every part of it as holy.

At the practical level this precept has one clear implication for our everyday behaviour which could have far-reaching



Greed, hatred, and delusion: the heart of the Wheel of Life



**La
doppia vita
di un
aperitivo**

(The Double Life of an Aperitif)

Taste the double life of Cinzano. The first sip - at home or in your favourite bar - and you enjoy Cinzano's sharp, refreshing taste. Then - as you drain your glass, you meet Cinzano's second personality. It leads you far away from the familiar world. Intrigue. A castle with guards in medieval costume. Flight accompanied by lady in black with bottle - could be red or white but always Cinzano.



CINZANO

A taste of the good life?

effects: that we should be vegetarian. If we are trying to develop and express loving-kindness towards other beings—including animals—we might do well to start by doing them the favour of not eating them. And if enough people made this gesture of goodwill towards their fellow beings this would bring important environmental benefits.

It takes much more agricultural land to supply an individual's food needs through animal as compared to vegetable foods. If affluent Westerners opted for a vegetarian diet this would release an enormous amount of grain to feed the less fortunate. It would reduce the pressure to develop wilderness regions like the Amazon rain-forests. It would mean that land now used for agriculture could be farmed less intensively, or even returned to the wild. It would mean less chemical fertilizers polluting our waters, less greenhouse CO₂ released from the energy-intensive manufacture of nitrates, and less herbicides, fungicides, and insecticides sprayed on our land. To limit ourselves to a vegetarian diet is one of the most significant contributions we can make to solving our planet's problems.

The second of the Buddhist training principles asks us to refrain from taking

anything which is not freely given to us, and instead to cultivate and express an attitude of open-handed generosity. Taking the not-given covers not only outright theft but all forms of exploitation. It includes all use of power—political, economic, or personal—from which we get benefits at the expense of others.

The first and second precepts go hand in hand. To the extent that our basic response to our environment is not one of cherishing and caring, it is usually one of antagonism and exploitation, in which we feel justified in using whatever lies outside the boundaries of the self for our own purposes, simply because it is within our power to do so.

One of the most shockingly graphic examples of this combination of antagonism and exploitation is the slaughter of whales for profit. Today whaling seems like a throwback to an older, grosser, more brutal vision of mankind—but a vision which still lingers, and still exerts its effects. Much of human history is a story of violent exploitation, in which groups and individuals have competed to exercise their power, using subtle methods when these would suffice, using bloody

violence when all else failed.

Of course we *have* moved on. Today most of us find it unacceptable to use violence to enforce our wishes—at least where human beings are concerned. Now we play the game by more civilized rules. But taking the not-given still largely underlies our political and economic systems.

It is this attitude which leads people to destroy a rain-forest for their own benefit, stealing it from the people and animals who already live there because they have no power to resist. It is this attitude which leads people to feel justified in exploiting animals for economic ends, often in ways which are horribly cruel, because they are more intelligent than their victims. It is this attitude which leads businesses and governments to discharge poisons into oceans which—if they belong to anybody—belong to all the beings on our planet, and especially to those that live in them.

The use of power is so much a part of our history that to many people the suggestion that we should cease to take the not-given seems too radical to be taken seriously. And it is radical. It asks us to make a clean break with our bloody past, and move on to another level of consciousness. It asks us to take the next step in our evolution.

We take this step as individuals—societies are an expression of the individuals that make them up. One way we can do this is to practise the opposite of exploitation, generosity. If we really care about our environment we will have many opportunities to be generous. A return to a sustainable way of life will mean sacrifices—real sacrifices, that hurt. But we can approach this gradually. We might start by going without that second car, or trading down the first car for a smaller, more economical model. We might give away a larger proportion of our income to a worthwhile cause. We might give up a job for an organization which we know harms the environment, and take a drop in income as a result.

We can also be more generous with our time. One of the personal bonuses of adopting a simpler life is that we need to spend less of our life earning a living. This leaves us with time and energy we can put to better use—perhaps working for a charity or pressure group, or helping to spread the Dharma, as well as just enjoying our precious human life.

Enjoying our precious human life is also what the third precept—to refrain

from sexual misconduct, and instead cultivate stillness, simplicity, and contentment—is all about. The precept is not asking us to give up sex, it is asking us to be content with our present sexual situation, and not indulge in useless sexual craving.

Sexual desire can be seen as the epitome of all craving, but craving can also take many other forms—junk food, tobacco, alcohol, and all the many forms of ‘entertainment’, are just a few of the things it can latch on to. Craving is a treadmill that keeps us running so hard we never experience the real joy of life. It is this treadmill that drives the consumer society, and all the environmental damage it causes.

Overcoming craving and achieving contentment are two sides of a coin. We crave because we are not content. We are not content because we crave. Somehow we must break the circle. One way Buddhists do this is to take themselves away from the objects of their craving for a while, perhaps by going on solitary retreat, perhaps by attending a meditation retreat with other people. Often our immediate reaction to a much simpler life is a feeling of emptiness, boredom, and sadness. This is the feeling we are trying to hide by running on the treadmill. But usually this feeling passes surprisingly quickly, giving way to a sense of deep contentment, and a deep joy in simple, genuine things. Once experienced, this contentment is so much more enjoyable than our normal, hectic state of mind that we begin to see craving for the deadly trap it is, and even when we return to our normal life it loses much of its power.

Everyone with an interest in environmental issues should try this for themselves. Learning to go beyond craving can be the key to a new, environmentally friendly way of life, a way of life in which we do not seek our pleasure from junk food in CFC-rich packaging or the latest consumer toys, but instead take delight in those things that will not cost the Earth—in friendship, community, and meaningful, craftsmanlike work; in a gentle appreciation of our planet's beauty; and in a sense of the sheer gladness of living.

The fourth precept is to refrain from false speech, and instead to cultivate truthful communication. It asks us to be honest—with others, and with ourselves. As human beings our capacity for self-deception is enormous. So is our

capacity for laying blame at others' doors, while ignoring our own share of responsibility. But the world we live in is the manifestation of the motivations of *everyone* that lives in it. To understand its problems we need to understand these motivations—with sympathy—and to do this we need to start by understanding ourselves. Then can we begin to do something about *our* part of the problem, and help others do the same.

We need to be honest with ourselves about our own goals and priorities. If what we really hope for from life is a conventionally comfortable life-style we need to acknowledge this, without attaching blame.—Who would not prefer prosperity to the alternative? But we also need to be aware of the implications of such a life. And if we find that our underlying drives conflict with our ideals we need to admit this too, so that we can begin consciously to decide on our priorities in the light of what we know about ourselves. Then we can decide how far we can honestly put our ideals into practice, and make the hard choices between our immediate self-interest and what we believe in from a position of awareness.

This need for awareness is the principle behind the last of the five precepts, to refrain from clouding the mind with alcohol or other drugs, and instead to cultivate mindfulness. This advice against drinking often gets an unfavourable response from Westerners, partly because alcohol has become so much a part of our social life, and partly because of the joyless attitudes associated with the traditional temperance movement.

Most Buddhists—in the West at least—do not understand this precept to mean they should *never* drink. The point is to develop and maintain awareness. But reducing our alcohol consumption could have global—as well as personal—benefits. Alcohol is big business, and the industry it supports wastes resources which could be put to better use. In Britain, for example, a high proportion of the best grain-growing land is devoted to producing barley for the brewing industry.

But if the issue of drinking is important, the wider issue of awareness is vital. One aspect of mindfulness is clear, calm, attention to the here-and-now. The development of this quality of mind is the key to going beyond boredom and anxiety, and taking delight in the

moment-by-moment act of living. It is the key to finding happiness within the simpler life that would make a sustainable economy possible.

Another aspect of mindfulness is constant awareness of our purpose in being on this planet, and of the ideals that guide our actions. Everything we do has wider consequences, but it takes effort to stay aware of this fact. It takes effort to be aware that every time we use a car rather than a bicycle or public transport we are contributing to the greenhouse effect. It takes effort to be aware every time we eat meat that we are condoning cruelty, and putting another nail in the coffin of the Earth's rain-forests. It takes effort to be aware every time we go shopping of the environmental damage caused by those not-strictly-necessary things we buy, and to consider whether we might be able to live without them.

It also takes a major effort of awareness to look beyond the humdrum routine of our lives to the great issues beyond, and to see that we ourselves have an important part to play in the saga of our age. We tend to think that heroic tasks are reserved for characters in fantasy novels. But the situation we face is just as dramatic and clear cut as any myth. The earth and mankind face catastrophe. To avert disaster we need to forge a new kind of society, and we ourselves need to become a new kind of people. This is the great task facing our generation. It will require heroes willing to rise above petty personal concerns and act from a much wider, more noble perspective. It will require courage, strength, sacrifice, and personal change. The temptation will always be to back away from the challenge and opt for comfort and security. But the fate of the world quite literally depends upon our response.



EXPLORING THE LIGHT GREEN LINE

Windhorse Trading is changing its image—and its stock



Windhorse Trading was founded in 1981 to raise money to fund FWBO projects. It has been a considerable success. Twenty-three men currently work full time for the business in Cambridge and Norwich. In the last three years alone profits from the sale of jewellery, accessories, stationery, and toys have released £90,000 to projects such as the Padmaloka and Guhyaloka retreat centres, Dharma activities in India, and the upkeep of the Office of the Western Buddhist Order. Now Windhorse Trading is about to 'go green'—that is, take a more assertively environmentally conscious stance. Nagabodhi talked to Vajraketu, the business's manager, about this development.

How did the 'green initiative' come about?

Some time ago we realized that we were not altogether happy with much of what we were selling. It was not that we were

thinking explicitly that we'd like to sell more 'green' products but it seemed a pity that we couldn't feel happier about what we were selling. Today, about twenty percent of our turnover comes from bags and wallets that we overtly market as alternatives to leather, while on the jewellery side we don't use shell and coral. But we have always known that that is only a start. The giftware business is influenced not by real needs but by the vagaries of fashion, and we have always felt some discomfort in that what we sell, while not being ethically negative, is hardly ethically positive, or necessary. In the overall context of what we are trying to do, of course, these objections have never been strong enough to stop us doing it, but there's nevertheless been a feeling that what we're selling is not really contributing much to the world.

How would you describe that overall context?

While, obviously, there are serious ethical limits to what we would and wouldn't do

to make money, we consider that, overall, supporting the FWBO's work financially is doing more good than perhaps the mild harm we might be doing, for example, by selling things made out of plastic, or which use up the world's resources without particularly contributing anything. If it were a strict matter of choice between running a business which sells wonderfully ethically positive products, but which doesn't make any money, or one which sells ethically neutral products and which does make money, we would go for the latter, because we consider that the needs of the Movement overrule the problems that arise out of selling things which are ethically neutral. Another element is that there are twenty-three people here working together in a relatively selfless way, linked by the common ideal of helping the growth of Buddhism. That is quite significant in itself.

But the green initiative arose out of this feeling of discomfort. That was why we put more energy into the non-leather bags and wallets a couple of years ago. The more recent decision to go 'green' arose when a member of our team, Nick Wallis, tried to make us more aware of environmental matters. This was before green issues became quite as widely publicized as they now are. When environmental matters began to attract so much publicity, we realized that here was a way of sorting out our discomfort without closing the business altogether.

So to what extent are you taking advantage of a trend to do something you want to do, and to what extent do you see yourselves as leaders in that trend?

I would not describe us as leaders. If you take the perjorative tinge out of 'taking advantage', I'd say we are taking advantage of a trend to solve the problem. But if we could run a business which could make money and promote ethically positive products we'd be even happier because, obviously, that would be more in keeping with Buddhist principles—and it would also be a more overt statement to the world.

What is your 'green' business plan?

We have started with a shop in Norwich, which has a 'green' section. The shop is a gift shop, so even in the green section the items are largely gift-orientated. The principle criterion we use is that our products should be alternatives to less positive products. For example, we sell recycled glassware, and we sell wooden

toys made from renewable sources, as alternatives to plastic toys.

Obviously we have had many discussions about what we can and can't sell. If we were to take what is called the 'dark green line', there would be very little that we could sell, because people don't actually need very much. They need to eat, they need a roof over their heads, they need basic clothing; they don't need anything else. So we decided quite early that we would adopt a 'light green' position which is that, if people are going to continue to consume, then it is better that they consume things which do not use up the world's resources or damage the world's environment. Items which fall into these categories only use renewable resources, or use resources where the alternative harms the environment.

After the shop in Norwich, the next step will be to open a wholly green shop, which we hope to do in Cambridge in the spring. That will stock more household items like everlasting light bulbs, rechargeable batteries, and unbleached coffee filters, dish-cloths, and tampons. Assuming the shop in Cambridge works out, we would hope to open other shops in collaboration with other FWBO centres in Britain, where we would provide the capital and the expertise, and they would organize the labour.

Of course, our principal business has always been selling to the giftware market wholesale, so we are now

beginning to introduce more green products, and our hope is slowly to 'green' the entire Windhorse wholesale range.

There is a lot of concern that the developing countries are major problem areas in the ecological battle. In that you buy much of your stock from the Philippines and Taiwan, do you think that you could have a benign influence in this respect?

I would never claim that we are taking a lead in the green movement, and the level of impact we could have on our own is minimal. But I do believe that we are part of a much bigger movement. Some parts of that movement are very well organized, and in a better position than us to make a difference. If, say, the general attitude to wooden products shifted so that people stopped buying hardwoods and only bought softwoods from managed forests, that would clearly have an impact in countries that produce wooden products. When enough people take these issues into consideration then commercial considerations will push the producer nations, if nothing else does, in a better direction.

But could Windhorse Trading at least bring some more green awareness into the FWBO?

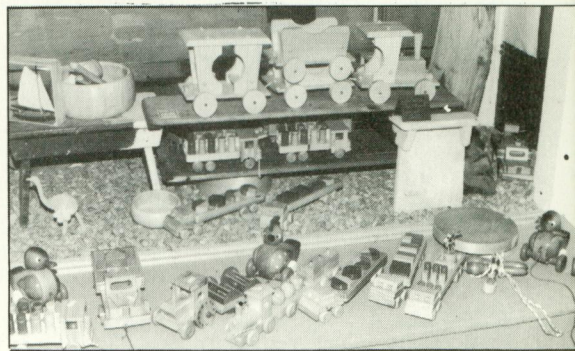
Well, that's exactly what's happened to us. I feel I've learnt a tremendous amount about environmental issues in the last months because I've had to look into them in relation to the shop. This has made me much more conscious of wasteful practices and dubious processes. These days I make more effort to turn lights out, and I don't have such deep baths because my awareness has extended into these areas. Two months ago I wasn't conscious of the amount of bleaching that goes on in order to make things white. This is an extremely harmful and unnecessary process that runs across a lot of products. Then again, I discovered that most of the batteries we use contain certain chemicals which are unnecessary and harmful. Yet there are batteries which are a little more expensive but which fulfil the same function and are not harmful. The fact that we can put these things in a green shop and, where possible, place cards with explanatory notes beside them so as to bring these matters to people's attention, excites me.

So the green element could soon become a substantial pillar of the business, and of its overall purpose?

I think if we came to a crossroads where it was a choice between giving up a line which made money, and changing it for something which didn't, we might have to back off, but I think that our own satisfaction with what we are doing would be boosted tremendously by being involved in green products. So we are going to explore it vigorously.

But surely a time is coming when green issues will be so important that an FWBO funded by a business that isn't entirely caught up with the green revolution would be too great a contradiction.

I definitely see our existence in transitory terms. A Buddhist world, or at least a world strongly influenced by Buddhist values, would not need a Windhorse Trading at all! But for the time being I feel that expounding Buddhist values is of more value to the world than taking an extreme position in green matters.



—Which are just one aspect of the world's problems?

Surely, the best way of tackling the macro-environmental problem is to tackle the fundamental ethos by which people lead their lives, and the best way of doing that is by expounding Buddhist values. I don't trust capitalism enough to allow market forces to sort out the environment. We need a radical shift in values, and that is what the FWBO is trying to achieve.

But meanwhile you're happy to be a part of the capitalist world, being guided by market forces in a positive direction?

Yes, because we're not going to be able to expound Buddhism, and spread Buddhist values, unless we can fund that work. I am prepared to make certain compromises at this stage. A point may well come when the Movement will be strong enough not to have to make those compromises. And at that point, if Windhorse has not already greened, we'll close it down.





INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY AND THE GREENHOUSE EFFECT

Apathy or Action? Pru Birch thinks we can save the world. Here's how...

These days, we hear a lot about the 'greenhouse effect', in reference to an atmospheric phenomenon that is possibly contributing to global warming. When the sun's rays enter the earth's atmosphere they do so as visible light that is able to pass through most of the gases present. The surface of the earth is thus warmed by the sun's energy and excess heat is radiated back into the atmosphere and some of it on out into space. The heat from the earth, however, is unable to pass through certain 'greenhouse' gases. A blanket

effect is created and the heat gets redirected back to the earth's surface with a resultant global warming.

The main greenhouse gas is carbon dioxide (CO₂), with the levels being higher now than they have been for millions of years. If current rates of emission continue, these levels could be doubled by the year 2050. CO₂ is predominantly a by-product of the combustion of fossil fuels—coal, oil, gas, etc. It is also released with the burning of trees. Destruction of the Amazon rain-forest at the rate of a football field a second is thought to have contributed 10% of global CO₂

output in 1988.

Methane is also a powerful greenhouse gas and is produced from such sources as rice paddies, rotting garbage, and the digestive processes of sheep and cattle. Clearly, vegetarianism goes further than the simple avoidance of unnecessary killing. It also helps to reduce the number of animals being bred to support the meat industry. This in turn reduces the amount of methane in the atmosphere and helps to preserve the environmental balance for all sentient beings.

Chlorofluorocarbon (CFC) is the third major greenhouse

gas to be aware of. These artificial products are 10,000 times more efficient at trapping heat than CO₂, and have devastating effects on the ozone layer. Their environmental impact cannot be overestimated, and if you are attempting to observe Buddhist precepts and to develop loving kindness by practising the *metta bhavana* meditation, for instance, then it is vital to remain conscious of their destructive potential. They can, to a large degree, be eliminated from our lives.

So what is the position of the individual amongst all this?

Clearly there are two main options: the option of inertia, apathy, and helpless despair; and the more courageous confrontative, adaptive option. With the former we see evidence of a peculiarly human capacity to deny things that seem too big for our consciousness to embrace. In response we carry on as if nothing is changing, nothing is under threat, but with an ever-increasing sense of powerlessness. This attitude is, in itself, as much of a threat to the survival of the planet as are the ecological concerns themselves. However, global communication is such these days that it is difficult to maintain this limited insular consciousness. As we see satellite pictures of the destruction of rain-forest in South America alongside others showing us the effect that this has on weather patterns elsewhere in the world, it becomes increasingly difficult to remain ignorant of the planet as a whole or of the interconnectedness of all things. We may find this shift in awareness overwhelming and threatening to our sense of personal security, but to remain blind to what is happening is tantamount to participating in a slow rite of global suicide.

One thing we must avoid,

however, is being content to settle for a generalized awareness of interconnectedness, a kind of soft and fuzzy 'greeny' consciousness. We must try, in however small a way, to execute a turning about within ourselves and develop our love and compassion towards the planet as an expression of our concern for the welfare of all life forms—and then ensure that our actions follow our good intentions. The planet needs more than platitudes and high ideals, it needs real, concrete responses that may sometimes involve a significant sacrifice of personal comforts.

To deepen this understanding we can recall the story from the *Gandhavyuha Sutra* of the young prince Sudhana who finds Vairocana's tower in the course of his travels. The Bodhisattva Maitreya appears and delivers a long discourse on the bodhichitta (the 'will to Enlightenment') before opening the tower so that Sudhana may enter. Inside he discovers a beautiful, awe-inspiring sight of precious things that are infinite in extent, and he then realizes that there are an infinite number of other Vairocana towers, all full of precious things with a Sudhana standing in each one. He thus realizes, in this beautiful way, the infinite interconnectedness of all things and the relationship of this to the arising of the bodhichitta.

In our own small way we can translate this story into our immediate lives as we try to work creatively to heal the environment.

Most of us respond to situations only when the results of our actions directly affect our personal comforts. We develop a kind of 'retrospective' awareness which is generated by a selfish desire to resist change rather

than by any genuine sense of loving-kindness. This is particularly pertinent when considering environmental matters. We might stop using CFCs if there is a chance of dying of skin cancer, but rarely is the wider context considered.

What we need to develop, individually and collectively, is an awareness that extends far beyond immediate concerns, the kind of awareness that Sudhana points us towards. We have to develop a 'prospective' awareness that encourages us to change with foresight *before* we cause damage, rather than as a palliative knee-jerk response after the harm is done. The world is changing and we need to be able to change with it. Not because we are told to, or because we are forced to, but because we care enough to want to. The arising of this pre-emptive, creative, adaptive awareness, inspired by a deep sense of loving-kindness, is essential if the world is to survive with any grace. If we can each of us accept our individual responsibility and learn to dance interactively with the environment, then surely there is the potential for creative adaptation on a global scale to take place.

Here are some of the things we can do to lessen the greenhouse effect:

- Don't use aerosols labelled as containing chlorofluorocarbons, fluorocarbons, or CFC propellants. Use 'ozone friendly' aerosols such as those with hydrocarbon propellants, or choose brands which use roll-on or pump spray containers.
- Reconsider before investing in a home or car with an air-conditioning unit. They contain CFCs.
- Avoid buying products that are packaged in containers made from blown foam. CFCs are commonly used in their production.
- If you get rid of an old refrigerator, get the CFCs recycled.
- Consider before you use the car. Petrol is a fossil fuel that produces CO₂. Use public transport where possible, or walk or cycle.
- Keep your car well tuned to keep its energy efficiency at an optimum level.
- Think about converting to gaseous fuels such as CNG or LPG (where available). These fuels generate fewer greenhouse gases than petrol.
- Woodburning stoves are better than open fires, and energy efficient heaters are best of all.
- Use pine and other plantation timbers for building or fuel, instead of timbers from tropical rain-forests, which need to be conserved.
- Plant more trees, as they absorb carbon dioxide in the photosynthesis process.
- Conserve all power diligently. Insulate your home and hot water system. Make sure your hot water is set no hotter than necessary.
- Convert to night storage water heating if you can.
- Have short showers instead of baths.
- Draw curtains to prevent heat loss through windows and only heat rooms in use.
- Check the energy efficiency rating of electrical appliances before you buy them.
- Turn off unnecessary lights and electrical appliances.
- If you're looking to buy a house, try to buy one designed to take advantage of heat from the sun.
- Advocate and adhere to vegetarianism.
- Support conservation groups fighting for the preservation of native forests in all countries.
- Recycle all paper, aluminium, and glass that you can.
- Have a compost heap for all food waste.
- Buy refined motor oil.

- Take your own bag to the supermarket or shop and avoid accumulating plastic carrier bags. Many plastics are based on oil and therefore their production contributes to the greenhouse effect. In addition, many of them take up to four hundred years to break down.
- Lobby politicians to take all possible steps to avoid damaging the environment more than the bare minimum.
- Extend your awareness beyond immediate comforts and be prepared to accept a lower material standard of living for the sake of a higher quality of life that faces up to moral issues on a global scale.



TREADING SOFTLY ON THIS EARTH

Sue Fitzsymonds describes an ecologically sound life—on a Permaculture farm in Queensland



12 **T**his morning, after the initial flurry of activity required to set children off to school on bicycles, I meditated on the front veranda of our house. The veranda faces north-east so it is sunny in the mornings and sheltered from the prevailing south-westerly winds. The house was designed that way, aligned on the land to provide warmth and shelter in winter and coolness and shade in summer. It means we don't need to use any energy on heating and cooling.

After meditating I watered the garden. It is now three months since we moved into our house and we are just starting to eat our own produce. My sister, Frances, has been planting out fruit trees, so they need watering too. They will only need it for a few weeks though; after that the thick mulch of hay we have given them will keep the soil moist, and provide them with nutrients. That is important because our water supply is limited, gravity fed from tanks we have installed.

By 9.30 I was quickly sorting our 'rubbish'. I use the inverted commas because we either re-use most of our

refuse or take it to 'Wastebusters', our local recycling depot. By 10 o'clock I had taken a solar-heated shower and was cycling to work in the office of the Crystal Waters Community Co-operative.

By now you are probably wondering how all this got into *Golden Drum*! I'm Sue, a mitra from the Sydney Buddhist Centre, and I live at a place in Queensland called 'Crystal Waters Permaculture Village'. The project covers 259 hectares of land, of which just 20% is used for 83 one-acre residential plots, along with the Village and Visitors Areas. A very important word in our title is the word 'village'. A village traditionally offers social benefits that are hard to find in urban Australia. At Crystal Waters we are trying to create a situation where community members are able to support each other, make decisions together, and earn an ethical living in the place where they live.

But what, you may be wondering, is 'permaculture'. Permaculture (*Permanent Agriculture*) is a way of designing farms, towns, backyards, (even retreat centres)

Sue surrounded by farm produce

which create a sustainable environment for those who live there. 'Sustainable' means that it is able to perpetuate itself, that it doesn't constantly need external input to keep it going. This is different from a conventional system which relies on additional energy input from outside. A farmer, for instance, brings into his farm fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, machinery, and fuel to produce a crop. All these things involve depleting resources elsewhere. It also more than likely means that much more energy is consumed in production than is taken out in produce.

Whether created in the country or in the town, in the tropics, or in a temperate region, a permaculture system is carefully designed to create ecological stability and conserve natural resources. An orchard, for example, is designed so that the hardiest plants form windbreaks for others. Instead of constant applications of fertilizer, plants that are naturally high in nitrogen are grown intermixed with the other trees. Some plants are grown simply for their ability to produce mulch. The aim is to create in an orchard the checks

and balances found in a natural forest. Once in place it will supply food indefinitely with low maintenance. If poultry were kept in the orchard, for example, they would control pests by eating fallen fruit and also provide both fertilizer and eggs.

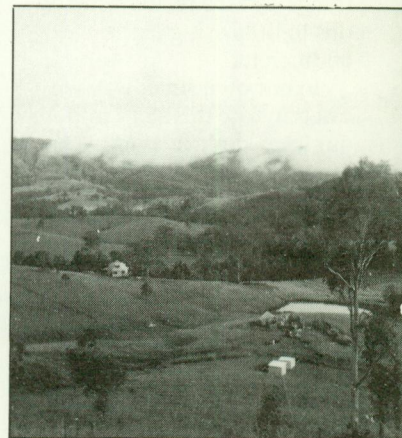
It may be hard to see what this has to do with Buddhism, but for me there is a strong connection. The natural world not only provides us with beautiful surroundings but also supplies some of our more basic requirements such as food and air. If the natural world is not protected it has an adverse, and sometimes disastrous, effect on other living beings. Consequently, for me, skilful action means practising a life-style that does not add to the destruction of the natural world.

As Sangharakshita tells us in *The Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path*:

'The moral life becomes a question of acting from what is best within us; acting from our deepest understanding and insight, our widest and most comprehensive love and compassion.'

As a Westerner I believe this requires an awareness of the consequences of my life-style on others. So much of what we take for granted, 'essentials' such as electricity, petrol, and paper, are produced and/or used in an environmentally damaging way. Their true cost includes the displacement of native people, the destruction of animal habitats, desertification, pollution, the greenhouse effect, and the depletion of natural resources.

Consequently I have chosen to live somewhere where I can 'tread softly on this earth' because it is the most practical way I know to care for all living beings.



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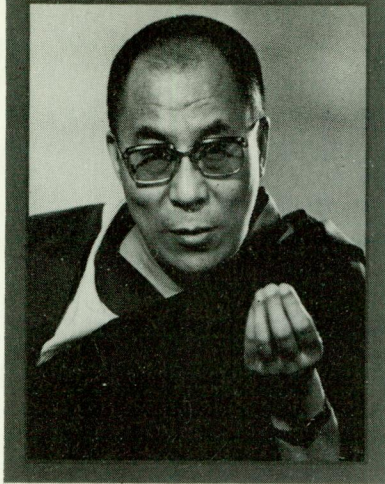
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SUBLIME CRITIQUE



Transcendent Wisdom: A commentary on the Ninth Chapter of Shantideva's Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life

by H.H. the Dalai Lama
Translated, edited, and
annotated by B. Alan Wallace
Published by Snow Lion
pp. 146, paperback
price £6.95

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Shantideva was something of a 'night-bird'. Tradition tells us that he preferred to practise at night-time, with the result that his fellow monks at Nalanda thought him an idler, practised only in the 'three realizations' of eating, sleeping, and defecating. Thus the *Bodhicharyavatara* was born—for it was in response to an attempted humiliation by his critics that Shantideva created this famous poem outlining the practice of the Bodhisattva. Reciting the stanzas publicly in the open air, Shantideva reached the ninth 'chapter', which deals with *prajna*, or wisdom, and gradually rose from the earth, his voice still clearly audible but his body receding into the blue sky, never to be seen in Nalanda again.

Over the succeeding centuries the *Bodhicharyavatara* has remained one of the most popular texts on the Bodhisattva ideal, and is still actively studied and revered amongst many Tibetan Buddhist groups, as well as within the FWBO. The publication, then, of a new translation of the wisdom chapter from the original language, by B. Alan Wallace, together with a commentary by none less than the present Dalai Lama, is of some interest.

Although there is little doubt that to Shantideva this chapter was the necessary climax of his sublime poetic introduction to the spiritual life, responses to this book amongst potential buyers will probably be mixed. While one

would hope that all would see it as the exposition of the profound Wisdom of emptiness, some will greet it as another chance to engage in the dialectic of 'Buddhist philosophy', while for others it will be enough that the commentary is by the Dalai Lama. By others still, who prefer to read only the earlier chapters, it may be seen as an arid exercise in mental gymnastics.

With these thoughts in mind, I think it reasonable to expect any new translation and commentary to serve two functions. It should make the content of the chapter clear to the reader, and it should make it relevant—the former function somewhat necessarily devolving upon the translator, and the latter upon the commentator. Now to a modern audience the clarity of this chapter is necessarily restricted since, speaking to specialists, Shantideva made a concise presentation of the Prasangika Madhyamaka view-point, referring to issues and ideas, traditional arguments and analyses, that were more than familiar to his audience, and would have needed little, if any, expansion. Not so for us, of course, but in spite of this Mr Wallace brings this difficult chapter to life, and greatly improves upon other available translations from the Sanskrit.

Appearing in the same year as his award of the Nobel Peace Prize, the commentary gives us the opportunity not just to reflect upon his work for peace, but also to assess once more the Dalai Lama's abilities as a Dharma teacher. Clearly he is a master of the traditional exposition of Dharma as practised in the educational hierarchy of Tibetan Buddhism, and we could say that, of its type, this commentary is an excellent example. But, I should point out straight away that it was originally delivered to a group of Tibetan monks, i.e. to another audience of specialists. Few Westerners were present, and so the commentary proceeds at a rate and in a style which at times is as laconic and, for the

untutored, as opaque as the original verses which it seeks to illumine. Mr Wallace tries to offset this with helpful notes, but the result still leaves one feeling like an outsider listening as Shantideva vanishes into the sky. My overall impression is that the greatest use of this commentary will be made by experienced Dharma students, who have already acquired a substantial understanding of the philosophical issues of Shantideva's time; otherwise the commentary itself requires a sub-commentary.

I cannot pass over without comment one instance in which more careful editing would have improved the Dalai Lama's presentation. The very first pages of commentary (pp.15-16) leave one unsure whether the Dalai Lama thinks that it is necessary to practise the first five perfections. Considerable re-reading is needed before one can ascertain that he does think it so. On a different tack altogether, his characterization of the Tantra as 'more private guidance in the subtle mysteries' given 'to disciples of increasing purity, ability, and rarity' can only make one wonder at the indiscriminate fashion in which Tantric initiations are handed out freely to all comers by certain lamas.

The commentary then is very demanding, although largely clear in itself, and within the limits indicated offers much needed clarification of Shantideva's verses. Of particular interest is the Dalai Lama's discussion of the validity and origin of the Mahayana canon, the difference between the two 'vehicles', and his assessment of the attainments of modern Vipassana teachers in Burma (pp.45-50); but in my view the sections dealing with the *pudgala*- and *dharmanairatmya* ('personal- and phenomenal identitylessness') are the highlight of the commentary, excelling the others in simplicity and relevance to practice.

One regrets the tendency in the commentary to descend into what I would term 'Gelug-speak', the technical

vocabulary and diction increasingly favoured by proponents and translators of the Gelug view-point. Even though the attempt to develop a language adequate to the concepts of Buddhist discourse is necessary and admirable, one must always beware falling into jargon, which can be as inaccessible to the reader as the original.

While the commentary proper offers little that is new in substance or expression, the most exciting aspect of this book appears in the notes provided by the editor in which he attempts to bring the critique offered by Shantideva into focus upon modern scientific world-views. While, in the past, editors would have added footnotes linking Shantideva's refutation of the existence of 'God' (vv. 118-125) to theology, Mr Wallace can instead link his refutation of atoms to modern views of the nature of the atom and the universe. That this is possible at all reflects the interesting fact that, judging from the critical direction of much of this chapter, a substantial portion of Shantideva's non-Buddhist opponents were materialists, believing in the independent existence of an objective world of matter. To his credit, Mr Wallace makes no simplistic identity between the atomic theory of medieval India and that of our technological culture, and clearly identifies where, and where not, Shantideva's critique hits home.* My own view is that such critical synthesis represents a more profound translation of the Dharma into a modern idiom than the translation of words, and is to be applauded.

This book then offers a reliable and stimulating exposition of a difficult passage of the *Bodhicharyavatara* for advanced students. Despite my criticisms I am pleased to see such a study published and the authors are to be congratulated.

Sthiramati

*One notes with interest the present editor's book *Choosing Reality: A Contemplative View of Physics and the Mind*, published in the same year.

THE QUEST FOR THE HISTORICAL BUDDHA

The Historical Buddha: The Times, Life and Teachings of the Founder of Buddhism

by H.W. Schumann
Translated from the German
by M. O'C Walshe
Published by Arkana
pp.274, paperback
price £5.99

Lives of the Buddha have tended to fall into one of two very general categories. Firstly, there are 'religious' biographies; non-critical works, such as Ashvaghosha's great Sanskrit poem the *Buddhacharita*, and innumerable later examples, which simply expound the Buddha's life as it is known to Buddhist tradition. Secondly—a Western scholarly development—there are critical or historical Lives: books by Trevor Ling and Michael Carrithers, both entitled *The Buddha*, being important recent examples published in the UK.

The title of H.W. Schumann's newly translated book, *The Historical Buddha*, suggests to which of these categories it belongs. The author outlines his approach in the Preface: 'The book deals with the demythologized person of the great sage, with the age in which he lived and with the political and social conditions which made his mission possible and permitted its success'. This, as he points out, is a more viable approach now than it may have been thirty years ago: 'The age of the Buddha ... (having) been placed in a new light as a result of recent detailed (Indological) investigations' (p.ix).

Dr Schumann relates the Buddha's biography 'in its earliest known form', which means in practice that he relies almost exclusively on the Pali canon and its commentaries. The structure of the book arises from the nature of the biographical material that can be gleaned from these sources: Siddhattha Gotama's youth, enlightenment, and the first twenty or so years of his mission as Buddha are covered in some detail, and in chronological order. After this, the Pali canon gives little clue

as to chronology until just before the *parinirvana*. Dr Schumann fills the gap with chapters outlining 'The Doctrine, the Order, the Laity' and 'Gotama—Psychological Aspects', before passing on to the final events in the Buddha's life.

One of the most appealing features of the book is that he surrounds this material with a lot of interesting and useful detail from other sources. Starting with an evocation of the physical setting of the Buddha's career (obviously partly based on his own experience of India), he then describes the sociological and political background. Throughout the rest of the book, at appropriate points, he brings in further details which add colour and reality to our perception of the Buddha, as a historical figure. Thus, when Gotama leaves home to become a mendicant, the author gives a brief but very clear outline of the contemporary vedic and non-vedic (or anti-vedic) religious movements. He also describes, (with helpful illustrations, maps, and diagrams) the physical and archaeological settings of all of the major events in the Buddha's life.

All of this adds up to a readable and informative introduction to the Buddha and his times. However, aspects of Dr Schumann's approach do give rise to certain questions and reservations. As noted above, he sets out to present a historical and 'demythologized' picture of the Buddha. To this end, he omits all material from the Pali canon which he regards as 'legendary', on the a priori assumption that such material is not historical.

At first consideration this would seem to be an obvious scholarly approach. The historicity of 'supernatural' events, after all, cannot be established. But one wonders whether, in omitting major elements of what the Buddhist tradition has always regarded as the Buddha's biography, the author is in fact providing the reader with a less complete and accurate picture of what the Buddha was and how he

experienced the world. Perhaps an approach outlining the mythology, while making a critical distinction between 'legend' and 'history', would actually give a clearer and less problematic view of the Buddha.

The quest for the historical Buddha, as undertaken by Dr Schumann, does give rise to its own problems. In places, 'historical' interpretations based on very slim evidence give the impression that the author is creating his own 'demythologized mythology'! For example, in discussing Siddhattha's period under Alara Kalama, he writes:

'Alara's business ability is easier to recognize. The fact that he offered a joint share in the running of his school to Siddhattha can have only one explanation: he considered that this son of a raja, who had recently had a conversation with King Bimbisara, must have close connections at the Magadhan court, and hoped through him to gain the king's patronage for his school...' (p.48).

This is pure speculation, and should have been presented as such; most readers can probably come up with at least one alternative 'explanation' for Alara's offer—and probably one which involves making fewer unwarranted assumptions.

More seriously, the author has, in effect, demythologized the enlightenment itself. Rather than presenting this in the terms in which the Pali canon speaks of it, he declares that it 'deserves psychological analysis' (!) Accordingly, he interprets it as 'a happy condition, lasting several hours, of extreme mental clarity, which activated all the intellectual abilities and focused them...', a 'synthetic' process 'in which accepted opinions and fresh insights combined ... to form a new truth and doctrine (*dhamma*)' and 'a new system of thought' (pp. 56-7).

By presenting the Buddha as merely a great thinker, Dr Schumann actually falsifies the historical record that the Pali canon contains, in the interests of 'demythologizing' it. And having deprived the

enlightenment of any 'transcendental' value, other problems of interpretation inevitably follow; for example, he is quite unable to explain satisfactorily why enlightenment (if it is only 'knowledge' in the cognitive sense) involves emancipation from suffering and rebirth.

It is a pity that the author interposes himself continually in this kind of way between the reader and the fascinating material that he is dealing with. When he refrains from crass interpretations ('Throughout the forty-five years of ... missionary activity we can observe Gotama swinging between introversion and extroversion' (p.195)), he is more than capable of presenting a lucid and reliable picture of history or doctrine (viz. his excellent outline of the non-contradiction between the teachings of rebirth and *anatta* (pp. 135-144)).

This is a book that can be recommended, then, but only with reservation: it needs to be read very critically. If the reader already has a reasonable understanding of the contents of the Pali canon, and is unlikely to be misled by Dr Schumann's demythologizing idiosyncrasies, the considerable background detail which he provides is of much interest and certainly should bring greater immediacy to the reader's appreciation of the historical Buddha.

Tejananda

15

The Historical Buddha



H. W. Schumann



The Taste of Freedom Sangharakshita

16

ONE TASTE...

The Taste of Freedom

by Sangharakshita
Published by Windhorse
pp. 93, paperback
price £3.50

When new to Buddhism, I remember looking for a book to help me discover 'what Buddhism really is'. Opening this new publication of three edited talks by Sangharakshita—neat, slim, and easy to read—I think maybe this is the book I had wanted. *The Taste of Freedom* starts promisingly: 'What is Buddhism?'. Sangharakshita replies with the Buddha's famous similes of the eight things which are true of the ocean, as of his *Dharma-Vinaya*. These being 'strange and wonderful', Sangharakshita vividly reminds us of the wonders of the spiritual life, and of the importance of remembering (if we can't always know) the pleasures of spiritual practice.

The book is not simply for

newcomers, however, and there follows a gentle foray into the joys of Buddhist doctrine. The sixth 'strange and wonderful thing', Freedom, is also the eleventh of the twelve 'positive *nidanas*'. Since this is preceded (in the eighth *nidana*) by Insight, we see that the experience of true Freedom also involves experience of the Transcendental, and necessitates breaking the first three Fetters (described unconventionally as habit, superficiality, and vagueness). The technical content is down to earth yet buoyant; often amusing while serious—such as when the reader discovers that the Georges and Marys of this world are simply habits that certain streams of consciousness have got into!

If the tone of the first talk is inspirational—moving from ocean depths to infinite skies—the second one anticipates some of the difficulties we may encounter. In 'The Path of Regular Steps and the Path of

Irregular Steps' Sangharakshita's prodding irony describes the problems inherent in Western approaches to understanding Buddhism and he shows the importance of making a 'radical change' from irregular to regular steps, by traversing the 'great Path' of morality, meditation, and wisdom.

The final talk (given in 1975) is 'Enlightenment as Experience and as Non-experience'. This tackles a particular reason for our propensity to 'irregular steps': neurotic craving for (spiritual) experience, as distinct from genuine aspiration. A fascinating gallop through Western religious history shows why Westerners initially approached Buddhism 'either as a system of ethics or as a particular kind of religious sentiment, that is, ... as an experience'. With a head-on charge at the miseries of modern life, Sangharakshita then exposes more immediate reasons for an unhealthy craving for experience. If this talk is best understood in the context of post-sixties heart-searching, its conclusions look to universally relevant approaches to spiritual practice.

These talks provide a useful introduction to the valuable terminology which Sangharakshita has developed for the exposition of Buddhism in the West, e.g. 'True Individual' (for *arya pudgala*), as well as a quick and easy reference for doctrines such as no-self (*anatta*) and cessation (*nirodha*). They also give some introduction to the forms which Western Buddhism has adopted, and a key to the major emphasis of Sangharakshita's teaching: the act of Going for Refuge. A frank and evocative introduction by Nagabodhi fills out the 'historical' perspective on Sangharakshita and the FWBO in the context of Western Buddhism as a whole.

Elizabeth English

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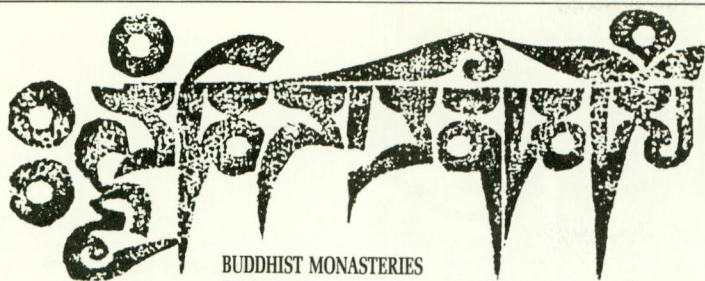
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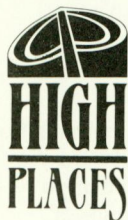
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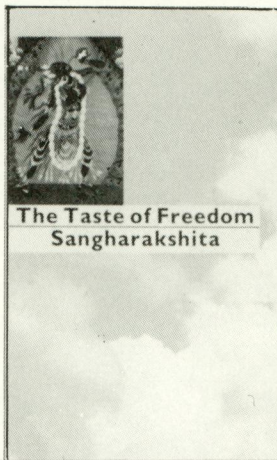
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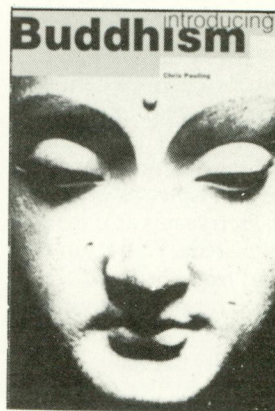
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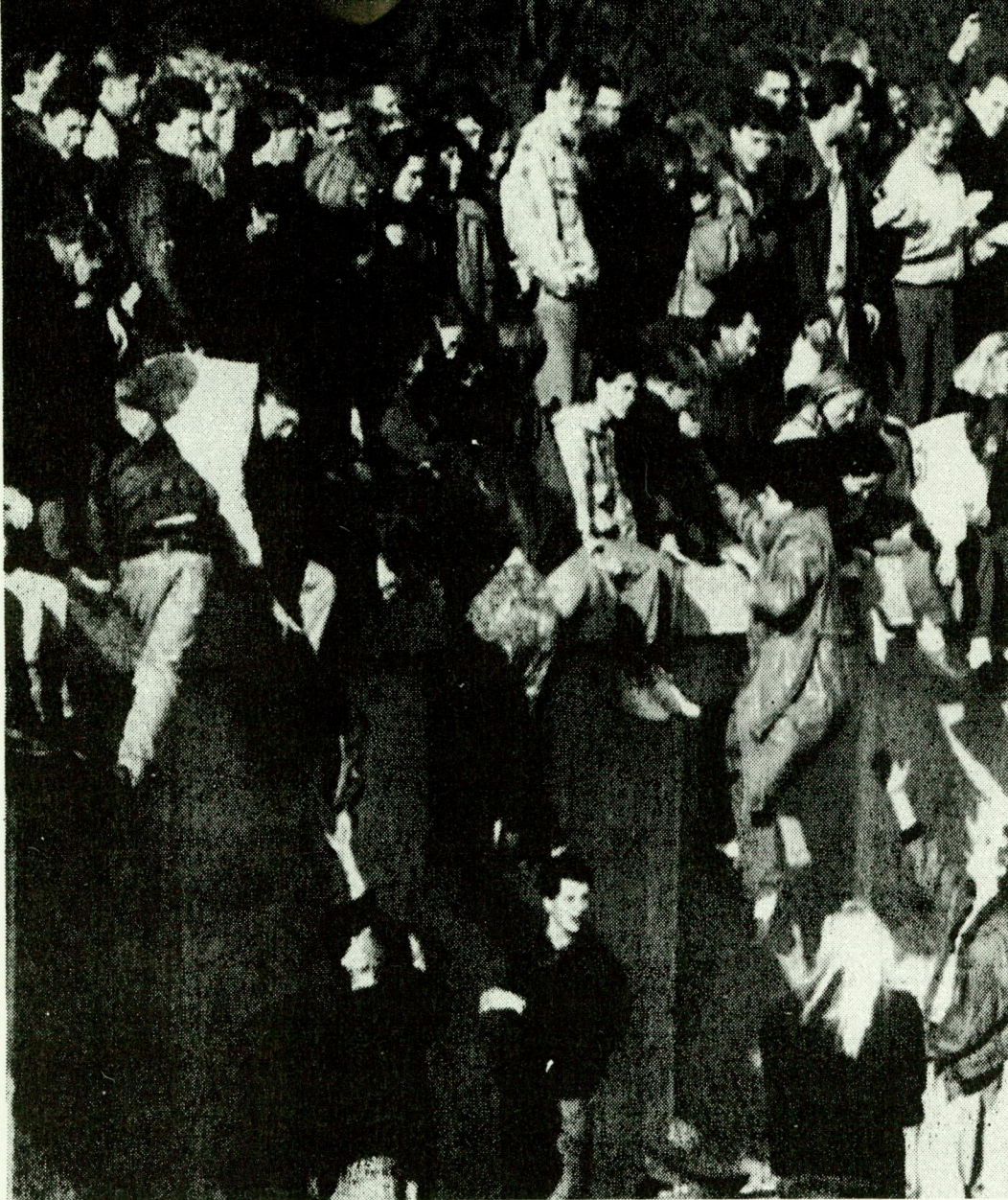
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Celebrations near Checkpoint Charlie

IN SEARCH OF THE IDEAL SOCIETY

The Berlin Wall is down. In Eastern Europe communist regimes have been crumbling—in Romania falling with violent swiftness. Generally it seems as if the communist ideal is beginning to retreat from the world, to the joy of those who have had to live with the oppression and barbarity of totalitarian communist practice. It is good to be able to share the joy of these liberated people, and to wish them well in their task of economic, social, and political reconstruction. There is still a long way to go, and the process of reconstruction will be a difficult and dangerous one—during which a reaction could easily be precipitated.

While Leninist communism may be on the wane in Eastern Europe, elsewhere it is still dominant. Yet many commentators are already talking about the end of communism; even the editor

of a magazine such as 'Marxism Today' has written about the end of socialism. In America Francis Fukuyama, a policy maker for the State Department, has proposed that we are coming to what he provocatively calls 'the end of history', that is, the end of the ideological development of humankind as Western liberal industrial democracies become the norm throughout the world.

No matter how much one may rejoice to witness the ending of corrupt regimes, whether communist or non-communist, the prospect that Fukuyama lays before us is a bleak one indeed. He actually admits that it will be a 'sad time' with little to inspire people but 'the satisfaction of sophisticated consumer demands'. Whilst liberal industrial democracies, very importantly, do allow more political and religious freedom to their citizens, they neverthe-

less have grave faults—faults which undermine people's ability to live a truly human existence, and which make treading the path of spiritual development much more difficult than it otherwise might be.

Liberal industrial democracies encourage and thrive on individualism, the opposite extreme to the enforced collectivism of authoritarian communist creeds. One could perhaps outline individualism as the pursuit of self-interest, with little recognition of the importance of ties and responsibilities to other people. It also involves the pursuit of material satisfactions, without awareness of the spiritual or ethical aspects of being human. The apotheosis of individualism is the 'consumer society' in which being human is reduced to being a consumer, isolated in the privacy of one's own

home, one's human relationships replaced by the vicarious enjoyment of the impoverished relationships of characters in television soap operas.

From a Buddhist point of view both state collectivism and unbridled free-market individualism are recognized as flawed. The first robs people of spiritual and political freedom, forcing them to conform; the second isolates and dehumanizes them, eroding their collective life and denying their spiritual potential. The tragedy of modern thought is that no adequate resolution of the individualism/collectivism dichotomy has been achieved. Within Buddhism the dichotomy can be overcome, because the spiritual development of the individual, that is the development of true individuality and wholeness, is recognized as proceeding hand in hand with the cultivation of regard for other people, of interconnectedness, of ethics, and of profound friendships—the 'sangha', or spiritual community, being the network of such friendships.

To what extent the dichotomy might be overcome outside the spiritual community, and outside the practice of Buddhism, is an open question. Hopefully as Buddhism becomes more widely known and practised it could provide the basis for a more general resolution of this modern dilemma, so that the political freedom of liberal democracies can be complemented by spiritual freedom, the impoverished materialistic humanism of liberalism superseded by the rich, spiritual humanism of Buddhism. Without such a resolution it is difficult to envisage much alternative to the barrenness of consumer society except perhaps a reaction from authoritarian creeds, with all the dangers that that would entail.

RUSHDIE AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Whilst the communist form of authoritarianism is crumbling, another form appears to be growing yet stronger. In December, 'Muslims around Britain ... unanimously voted to uphold the death sentence issued against the author Salman Rushdie'. Although the figure was disputed, an estimated one thousand mosques in Britain took part in a 'Day of Muslim Solidarity'.

It would appear that Rushdie's death sentence is not so much for the so-called 'crime' of blasphemy as for that of 'apostasy'—abandoning his Muslim religious faith. So Muslims are not free to abandon their religion without risking sentence of death. Whether there is actually a basis for this in the Koran depends upon how you interpret certain of its 'sura'. Nevertheless it would appear that many Muslims believe that there can be no such thing

as real religious freedom, and that for a Muslim to renounce his or her religion is a crime punishable by death. It is as if these Muslims would like to construct a religious 'Berlin Wall' in the hearts of individual people, a wall through which they may not escape to spiritual freedom.

Muslims are often scathing about liberalism, for they recognize its shortcomings. Their response frequently seems to be a return to a rigid fundamentalism imposed by force. Behind this one can detect the authoritarian nature of theistic religion, with its conception of the highest reality being a god who punishes disbelief and disobedience—rather like a communist dictator torturing dissidents. It will be very sad if, as communism retreats, its mantle is assumed by theistic religions trying to combat the individualistic shortcomings of liberalism with authoritarian shortcomings of their own.

VIOLENCE AGAINST BOMBAY'S BUDDHISTS

Some readers may remember a past issue of *Golden Drum* in which we reported on the conflicts between Indian Buddhists and an aggressive section of the Hindu community over the publication of Dr Ambedkar's controversial book, *Riddles in Hinduism*. Last October fresh conflicts broke out in Bombay.

The trouble started when a Hindu government official ordered the demolition of a small Buddhist temple in a slum locality. Matters came to a head when members of a militant Hindu group took the law into their own hands and destroyed one of the walls of the temple. The offended Buddhists of the area demonstrated against this action, only to find themselves attacked by the militant Hindus.

When the police arrived to quell the fighting they opened fire, causing the deaths of three Buddhists, none of

whom was involved in the fighting. One was a teenage girl. Some newspapers reported that the police took the side of the Hindus in the fighting.

For several days the Buddhist localities of Bombay were tense and fearful, as sporadic fighting broke out between Buddhists and Hindus. Matters seemed likely to get worse when a militant Hindu leader threatened, on the front page of a local paper, that if the Buddhist community got in the way of the Hindus they really would have to 'go for refuge to the Buddha'.

Luckily the announcement of the general election intervened, and the conflict was put aside, at least for the time being. But such incidents are a tragic reminder of the discrimination, hatred, and even violence faced by the Buddhist community in India.

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DALAI LAMA'S PEACE PRIZE

The Dalai Lama, the exiled ruler of Tibet, and spiritual head of the Tibetan Gelugpa Order, has received the Nobel Peace Prize. Hopefully this will help to bring more publicity to the Tibetan people's suppression by the Chinese, a suppression that has usually been too easily forgotten in the West, due to the demands of 'realpolitik'. Whether this award will result in any improvement in the Chinese treatment of the Tibetans is difficult to envisage; more likely this will only happen when the current regime in China steps down.

While this is a time for rejoicing in the Dalai Lama's merits, and in the wisdom of

the Nobel Prize adjudicators, it is perhaps worth pondering for a moment on the appropriateness of a 'prize' for the Dalai Lama, who is, after all, traditionally held by Tibetans to be a manifestation of Avalokiteshvara, the Bodhisattva of compassion. Even so exalted a prize could almost be seen to be beneath his dignity—especially when one considers that the prize is named after a man who was associated with the manufacture of armaments. Despite these misgivings it is excellent to see the Dalai Lama's qualities internationally recognized in some manner, and one can only hope that the Tibetans will benefit from it.

THE THOUGHT OF DR AMBEDKAR



Dr Ambedkar

The Education Department of the State Government of Maharashtra is currently publishing the collected works of Dr Ambedkar. So far six volumes have been produced, and already fresh aspects of the wide range of Dr Ambedkar's thought are

coming to light, including writings on such diverse subjects as politics, religion, economics, Untouchability—and of course Buddhism.

One of the most interesting volumes to appear recently was a selection of essays on Untouchability. This included an essay on Christianity's accommodation with Untouchability and a well documented account of Mahatma Gandhi's attitude to the Untouchables, which seriously undermines the myth that Gandhi was a champion of the Untouchables' cause.

The Government of Maharashtra deserves to be congratulated for undertaking such an ambitious and important publishing project, and Vasant Moon—the compiler of the many volumes—also deserves praise for the hard work he has put into the initiative.



'Jeevak' – Health and Community Centre

A NEW CHARITY FOR THE NINETIES

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Aid For India celebrates its tenth anniversary this year, but it is not expected to last long into the 1990s. If AFI has some claim to having been the Buddhist charity of the 1980s, it will be its sister charity, the Karuna Trust, that will be trying to make its mark on the next decade.

AFI was established in 1980 to help the ex-Untouchable communities of India by funding the welfare work of the TBMSG (the Indian branch of the FWBO). This is still an important part of the charity's work, but in the last ten years it has expanded its remit to include funding other organizations working for the ex-Untouchables, and to helping Tibetan refugees in the Himalayan regions of northern India. To expand its activities further—beyond the borders of India—AFI needs a change of identity. It was to accommodate this wider vision that the Karuna Trust was set up in 1987. Now all existing AFI supporters are gradually being asked to transfer their support to the new charity, and all future fund-raising will be in the name of the Karuna Trust.

AFI has achieved a lot. It now has more than six thousand supporters in Britain

who make regular gifts to the charity. Thanks to the generosity of these people, and of Buddhist individuals and organizations around the world—as well as grants from the British Government—its income has risen each year, reaching £380,000 for the two sister charities in 1989. It owes this success very largely to the dedication of a small full-time staff who receive only a basic level of financial support, to the unselfish efforts of its voluntary fund-raisers, and not least to the hard work of the Order members and mitras in India who make sure that the money raised is put to the best possible use.

Over the last ten years AFI has funded a variety of health, social, and community projects for the benefit of some of India's neediest people. A major aspect of its work has been to provide money for the building of city hostels for the children of ex-Untouchable families from rural villages. Untouchability is officially outlawed in India, but attitudes and prejudices which have built up over thousands of years may take generations to disappear. In the cities the caste system is already weakened, but in the villages—where most ex-Untouch-

ables live—it is very much alive. Ex-Untouchable children in these villages find it impossible to get a decent education, because of the attitudes of teachers and fellow pupils alike. By allowing these children to attend city schools where Untouchability is not an issue, AFI makes it possible for them to receive a real education—the key to their own progress as individuals, and to the progress of their communities.

So far hostels have been built in the Lohagoan district of Poona (1985), and in Wardha (1988). In 1989 construction started on a further two hostels, one at Poona to house sixty girls aged 11 to 18, and another at Ahmedabad to house sixty boys. Both are expected to be completed in 1990. This year work will begin on two more purpose-built hostels to replace temporary facilities at Secunderabad and Aurangabad, both of which should be ready in 1991.

Money has also been provided for education and health work in the slums of Poona, for the building of a health and community centre at Dapodi in Poona, completed in 1985, and for the Dapodi Cultural Centre, a

large complex which will be opened with a major public ceremony in March.

This new Dapodi complex will also house the headquarters of TBMSG and Bahujan Hitay. Bahujan Hitay—the name means 'for the welfare of the many'—is the social work wing of the TBMSG, and the organization that is responsible for running most of the AFI-funded initiatives among India's ex-Untouchables.

But AFI has not limited its financial help to Bahujan Hitay. In Kalimpong, near the Indo-Tibetan border, 1989 saw the completion of a new building for a school run by the ITBCI (Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Cultural Institute), which was paid for by AFI. The aim of this school is to help keep the Tibetan culture alive among the children of Tibetan refugees. Because it allocates half its syllabus to Tibetan subjects it receives no money from the Indian Government, and AFI takes sole responsibility for its running costs.

In the last two years AFI has also provided money for drought relief in Tibetan refugee settlements in Karnataka, for the People's Education Society (founded by Dr Ambedkar), as well as for the Centre for Development

Studies and Activities, and the Centre for Learning Resources, both in Poona.

AFI's non-Buddhist supporters understandably see a difference between social and 'religious' projects, and are often anxious that their money should be used in ways they regard as having direct practical relevance. For this reason AFI makes a clear distinction in its fund-raising between money earmarked for social and Dharmic work, and most of its resources go towards projects that are not specifically Buddhist.

But the division between spreading the Dharma and doing socially useful work is often artificial. The Dharma is the driving force behind the peaceful revolution among the ex-Untouchables. For thousands of years India's Untouchables have been regarded as lower than animals, and condemned to perform only the most degrading jobs. Higher caste Hindus see them as having a literally polluting effect. They will not touch them—hence the name. They will not drink where they have drunk, and they will not touch what they have touched. Inevitably these

attitudes have had an effect on the way the Untouchables see themselves.

The Dharma frees the ex-Untouchables from their traditional Hinduism, a religion that institutionalizes their supposed inferiority. It provides an essential new sense of personal dignity and self-reliance. And it fosters the deep feelings of social responsibility, solidarity, and service that fuel the work of Bahujan Hitay, and the self-help efforts of the whole new-Buddhist community.

Despite the sharp division it makes between money for 'practical' and Dharmic purposes, AFI has been able to provide some help for more specifically Buddhist projects in India. Last year work started on a new shrine building for the Bhaja retreat centre, due for completion in 1990. In the future it is hoped that money will be available for building some more regional retreat centres to allow many more of India's new Buddhists to experience the full effects of practising the Dharma for a while in congenial surroundings, away from the poverty and overcrowding of their everyday

lives.

The Karuna Trust enters the 1990s with most of its reserves already spoken for, and with the launch of a major new fund-raising campaign. Money is needed to expand the hostels programme—the construction of six hostels is only the beginning—to expand educational and health work in Poona and beyond, to build regional retreat centres, and to set up livelihood schemes to generate funds for running all these projects from within India itself.

Karuna also wants to build up resources for new projects outside India. One possibility, which has recently been the

subject of lively discussion among Order members and mitras, is for work in Britain with people with drug and alcohol dependency problems. Buddhism has some unique insights to offer on the nature of dependency, and on the ways we can free ourselves from its grip. Such a project would allow Buddhists to bring these insights to bear on an important, growing area of human suffering. If you are interested in helping to make this idea a reality—or if you are interested in helping the Karuna Trust in any way—please contact the Karuna office at the address shown on the back of this magazine.



TBMSG CELEBRATES THE NEW YEAR

Diwali, the traditional new year, is a colourful holiday period in India. Taking advantage of these holidays the TBMSG organizes retreats all over Maharashtra and beyond. This year retreats were held in Saddhamma Pradeep (our retreat centre near Poona), Aurangabad, Kolhapur, Bombay, Dapodi, Sholapur, and in India's capital, Delhi. A total of 700 to 800 people attended our retreats during this period.

The largest retreat was organized by the Wardha Centre. The 370 people who attended from all over the Vidharba spent a happy and lively five days in the delightful surroundings of a tourist camp opposite Mahatma Gandhi's famous Sevagram Ashram, just outside Wardha.

A highlight of the retreat was a lecture by Vimalakirti—who had recently returned from the Western Buddhist Order Convention in England

—in which he recounted his impressions of the Buddhist movement in Britain, and what he had learned from his visit.

Some of the most enthusiastic participants at the retreat came from Nagpur, where Dr Ambedkar initiated

the conversion movement to Buddhism, and a city which is therefore of great significance to Indian Buddhists. The TBMSG has only recently expanded its work to Nagpur, and Vivekaratna is the only Order member working full time in the city, but our

activities there have met with the approval of an enthusiastic group of young men. Meditation and Buddhism classes are held in various parts of the city, and already a boys' hostel and a sports and arts centre have been established.



Wardha retreat: some of the participants!



LOKAMITRA IN THE FAR EAST

Last October Lokamitra spent ten days in Taiwan, at the invitation of the Chinese Young Buddhist Association. Lokamitra has been one of the main driving forces behind the establishment of the FWBO's Indian wing, the TBMSG, and he was invited to Taiwan to tell local Buddhists about the revival of Buddhism in India and the work of the TBMSG, as well as to raise funds for Dharma activities in India.

On his way to Taiwan Lokamitra paid a two-day visit to Singapore as the guest of the Buddha Dhamma Mandala Society and the Buddhist Library, who had invited him to give a series of lectures the previous year. His hosts take a lot of interest in the work of the TBMSG in India, and in the approach of the FWBO in the West, and were happy to welcome him again to Singapore. During his stay he gave a talk, and showed a video—called *The Peaceful Revolution*—on the work of the TBMSG. Above all he was able to renew contact with friends from his previous visit who—on the evidence of their warmth and generosity—obviously feel a strong link with the TBMSG/FWBO.

One new contact he made was a Tamil—most Buddhists in Singapore are Chinese—who said that the majority of Singapore's sizeable Tamil population were previously Untouchables, but that in their new home they were completely free from caste restrictions. Although most are still Hindus, many are sympathetic to Buddhism and regard Dr Ambedkar—the leader of India's Untouchables, whose conversion to Buddhism began the Buddhist revival in India—as an important source of inspir-

ation. In 1956, at the death of Dr Ambedkar, many had gathered together for a ceremony to express their sorrow.

Lokamitra arrived in Taiwan on 14 October, the 33rd anniversary of Dr Ambedkar's conversion to Buddhism. That evening the anniversary was celebrated for what must be the first time in Taiwan, with the help of a large birthday cake. This was the start of a hectic ten-day tour of the island, during which Lokamitra visited viharas and Buddhist groups, gave talks, showed slides, and met many, many people. Everywhere he found a great deal of interest in the work of Dr Ambedkar in bringing Buddhism back to the land of its birth, and in the faith of his followers—some of the most socially deprived people in India—in the Dharma as the most effective means of personal and social transformation.

Lokamitra was very pleased to see something of the vitality of Buddhism in Taiwan. He met two bhikshus who had spent between ten and twenty years meditating alone before teaching, and heard of many similar cases. There is much serious study, and Buddhist texts are easily available, retreats are popular with many lay people, and generosity is practised very, very lavishly.

Inevitably there instances of misuse. Sometimes money is spent extravagantly, in a way that seems inconsistent with the ideals of Buddhism. Some monasteries are so rich they seem not to know what to do with their money. But Chinese Buddhists have a strong tradition of social action, particularly in looking

Lokamitra with Buddhist friends in Taiwan

after the old and sick, and Lokamitra met many Buddhists involved in some form of humanitarian work.

One of the most striking examples of the generosity and social awareness of Taiwan's Buddhists is the Tz'u-Chi Buddhist General Hospital in Hualien, a poor mountainous region on the east coast of Taiwan. In 1966 a nun called Cheng Yen had been visiting a hospital near her temple. She noticed a pool of blood on the floor, and learned that a woman suffering a miscarriage had been refused admission because she could not pay the equivalent of 200 US dollars demanded by the hospital. From then on Cheng Yen devoted her life to helping the poor. Now abbess of Ching Ssu Temple, she and her nuns have spent over twenty years raising money to help the poorer inhabitants of Hualien, and for the construction of a massive hospital with the most modern equipment, meanwhile supporting themselves entirely by manual work.

Tz'u-Chi Hospital is now open. It cost 20 million US dollars to build—an impressive testimony to the generosity of Taiwan's Buddhists. Now nobody is turned away for lack of money, and those who cannot afford to pay are treated free of charge. Not only are the patients given excellent treatment, they are also given psychological and spiritual support by the nuns. During his visit Lokamitra was impressed by the positive, caring atmosphere in the hospital.

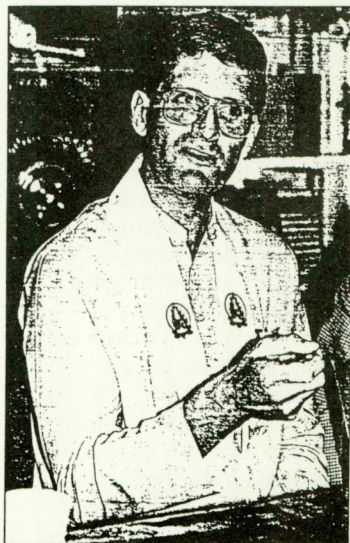
But if Lokamitra was impressed by Cheng Yen's achievement, Cheng Yen was also impressed by what she learned of TBMSG. In a letter from Taiwan to *Golden Drum*, Miss Joy H.L. Wang writes: 'Master Cheng Yen listened what Dhammachari Lokamitra showed about TBMSG's activities in India, she is deeply moved by this Buddhist organization and she assured that Tz'u-Chi Buddhist General Hospital will furnish the training opportunities to girls working in Bahujan-Hitay [the social welfare wing of TBMSG] in nursing and also a free medical treatment from Taiwan to India in future.'

Clearly Taiwanese

Buddhism, with its tradition of generosity and social concern, has a lot to offer the Buddhist world, both spiritually and otherwise. But to be more effective Lokamitra thinks it must make more effort to communicate with non-Chinese speaking people. This view was very much shared by his main hosts, whose enthusiasm for TBMSG's work in India seemed to know no bounds. Highly respected by Buddhists all over the island, they tirelessly led Lokamitra everywhere, losing sleep and missing meals in their concern to make the visit a success.

And indeed the visit *was* a success—much more so than Lokamitra or his hosts had dared to hope. Many people in Taiwan are now aware of their Indian brothers and sisters in the Dharma, and have made it clear that they want to help. Taiwanese Buddhists donated around 20,000 US dollars to support TBMSG's work, indicating that this was just a start, and that they hope to be able to do more for India's Buddhists in future. The funds raised during Lokamitra's tour will go towards setting up a retreat centre between Wardha and Nagpur, the most active Buddhist area in India, where TBMSG's activities are expanding fast.

On his first evening in Taiwan, Lokamitra's host, hearing about Sangharakshita, realized that this must be the same Sangharakshita pictured on the front of a book on Buddhist meditation inspired by Yogi Chen—his own teacher, and a man who is highly regarded in Taiwan. He felt that he must have some karmic link with Lokamitra. After spending ten days with his host, Lokamitra felt the same.



「印度佛
華期間除了一
北舉行兩場幻
印度佛教的現
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講、透過游
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以下便是
細印度佛教
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Amoghachitta with retreatants and cooks at Pulchowk

FIRST FWBO RETREAT IN NEPAL

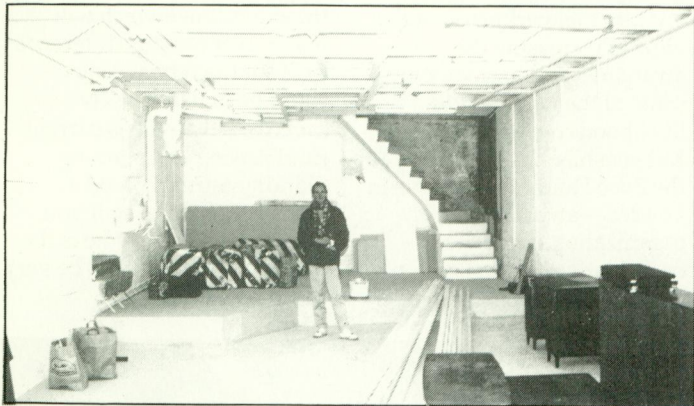
FWBO activities in Nepal began in 1986, when Amoghachitta and Bodhananda started offering meditation classes for the many travellers who pass through Kathmandu each year. Since then their activities have expanded, and the team has been joined by Jinapalita. Classes and talks are held in a

large hotel room in Thamel, the main tourist area of Kathmandu, and attract visitors from many countries. As well as holding classes for Western visitors, Amoghachitta has also been teaching meditation to about twenty Nepalese 'born Buddhists' at the local Young Men's

Buddhist Association.

Recently the team held their first residential retreat at Pulchowk—a Newari monastery built in the sixth century and recently renovated by the local Buddhists. The monastery is set on a small hill with views of the Kathmandu valley, and afforded a perfect setting for the four-day retreat. Excellent vegetarian food was prepared by local Buddhist sherpas, and the twelve participants, from Australia, Scandinavia, Germany, Austria, and England, combined introductory talks, meditation, and ritual with time for relaxation and reflection. Now that regular meditation courses, Dharma courses, and talks are held in Kathmandu every year during the tourist season (October to April) the address of Kathmandu Buddhist Centre appears on our back cover for the first time.

A CENTRE FOR STOCKHOLM



Early in 1990 the FWBO in Sweden will take a major step forward with the opening of its first public centre in Stockholm.

The FWBO began activities in Sweden in 1980, when Sona left England with a view to starting a centre in Stockholm. For eight years he led meditation and Dharma classes in rented rooms, and later in a mitra's house in the Stockholm suburbs. Most years an annual summer retreat was also held at Stenfors in southern Sweden.

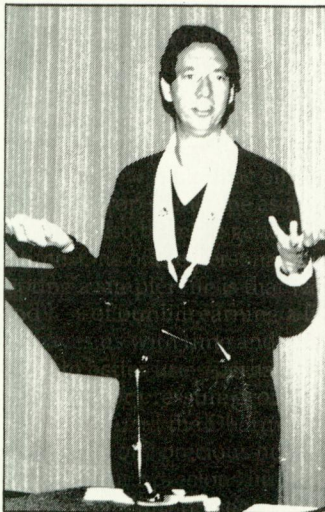
But although his efforts to take the Dharma to Sweden met with some success—several Swedish Friends became mitras, and two mitras were eventually ordained, Dhirananda in 1982 and Viryabodhi in 1989—Sona found himself struggling against financial difficulties and an apparent general lack

of interest in Buddhism. In spring 1988 Sangharakshita asked him to join the Padmaloka ordination team, and he left Sweden to return to England. Dhirananda took over as Chairman, although working full-time as a doctor.

But Swedish interest in Buddhism blossomed in the wake of the Dalai Lama's visit to Stockholm in autumn 1988. To help Dhirananda cope with this surge of enthusiasm, last February Sona visited Stockholm for a month, along with Ratnaprabha and Ulrika (a Swedish mitra now living in Norwich). A number of introductory days were held during their visit, followed up by study groups, a meditation course, and a weekend retreat. Then Dhirananda took a sabbatical half year off work, and last summer he led the first Swedish summer retreat for several years, on the east

coast island of Gotland.

Last autumn Sona paid another visit to Stockholm, along with Viryabodhi, who currently lives in London. During their stay Dhirananda completed negotiations for a lease on a conveniently located premises in central Stockholm, to house the first public centre of the FWBO in Sweden. This consists of a large room which will be divided to form a reception area and shrine-room, plus two smaller rooms for an office and a library, the whole occupying about 120 square metres. The day the contract was signed Sona, Viryabodhi, and several mitras and Friends were able to start work on the alterations and decorations. A public opening for the new centre is planned for some time in February.



Sona

FESTIVE SEASON IN MANCHESTER

It is impossible even for the most committed Buddhist to spend the weeks before Christmas in a British city and not be aware that for most people the year's great festive season has arrived.

Manchester's Buddhists made the most of the event: in Stockport, a town that today merges with the Manchester metropolis, a team from the Manchester Centre opened a Christmas charity shop in collaboration with Windhorse Trading, donating all profits to Aid For India and the Manchester Centre.

Meanwhile a team from the Taraloka women's retreat centre spent a month in Manchester decorating shop windows with cheerful robins, Father Christmases, and lanterns, to raise funds for the next stage of Taraloka's development.

The height of the Buddhist festivities came on Sangha Day, the full moon day of November. After a shared meal, three children performed a short play based on the Jataka tale 'The Hare and the Moon' to the general delight, not to say hilarity—things did not always go quite to plan—of the hundred or so people present. This was followed by the debut of the Centre's own band, playing music that ranged from South American swing—with dancing from the enthusiastic audience—through a piece for the classical guitar specially written for the occasion, to a tongue-in-cheek song with the refrain 'It's never too late to meditate...'. The band rounded off their performance with devotional music, setting the mood for the puja which followed.

The shrine-room was full to overflowing for the sevenfold puja. Doors were left open for people to come and go. Several children were present, some remaining in the shrine-room, others playing in an adjacent room. The atmosphere reminded at least one person of the feeling at large gatherings in India. It seemed that a new kind of festive celebration had come into being in Manchester, as the city's Buddhists rejoiced in their spiritual community.

SANGHARAKSHITA DIARY

After returning from Germany in September Sangharakshita spent two weeks at Padmaloka catching up with the voluminous mail that had been held there for him, and following up administrative matters with members of his secretariat. He also worked with Ratnaprabha on the production of two different tape recordings. They recorded Sangharakshita reading the whole of his book *Human Enlightenment*, and also recorded him reading all of what he has translated thus far of *The Dhammapada*. Both sets are available from Dharma-chakra Tapes, PO Box 50, Cambridge, CB1 3BG.

Taking advantage of being in the East Anglian region Sangharakshita paid a visit to Cambridge where he lunched with members of the Windhorse Trading team, one of the FWBO's larger Right Livelihood businesses, at their new premises just outside the town. He also spent a good part of the day browsing in some of Cambridge's well-stocked bookshops and concluded his visit with dinner in the company of a number of local Dharmacharis at one of the FWBO men's communities in the town.

Leaving Padmaloka,

Sangharakshita moved back to London where he resumed his semi-retreat in his flat adjoining the London Buddhist Centre, spending the time mainly reading and reflecting. In October he gave an interview to Denis Sibley of the Buddhist Hospice Trust, who is gathering information for a forthcoming book provisionally entitled *Right Dying*.

Sangharakshita called by Padmaloka briefly in early November, over the course of the Men's National Order Weekend which was held there, and spent another fortnight there in the latter part of December—again catching up with his mail and attending to a few administrative matters. Whilst at Padmaloka he held consultations with Subhuti on matters concerning the pre-ordination process and met also with Lokamitra who was in England on a short visit from India.

Sangharakshita asks that those who wish to write to him send their letters to Padmaloka and not directly to him in London where he is in semi-retreat and does not have the secretarial assistance necessary for dealing with his mail.

RETREAT CENTRE NEWS



'Festive Flair'—happy and international

The team at Vajraloka, our men's meditation centre in North Wales, has helped many people make their meditation work. Now they are helping to make work meditation. Kamalashila and Vajradaka have recently been taking their meditation skills out into the workplace, with a view to increasing the awareness and harmony in some of the FWBO's right livelihood co-operatives. Kamalashila has spent time at the Pure Land Co-operative in London—an umbrella organization for all the co-operatives in the London Buddhist Centre mandala—

and at Hockneys restaurant in Croydon. Vajradaka has paid a working visit to Hockneys.

The conversion of Vajraloka's once derelict lower barn into a purpose built kitchen and lounge is now nearly complete. With more helpers and a little more cash the extension—which will make an enormous difference to life at the retreat centre—could be in use in a few months. Nityajyoti is currently fund-raising and running working retreats based at nearby Vajrakuta, so if you can help in any way he is the man to contact—it will be very much appreciated.



Subhuti introduces Sahaja's public ordination ceremony during the Padmaloka Winter Retreat

Building work has also been going on at Taraloka, our women's retreat centre in Shropshire, where a new spacious lounge has recently been brought into use. Money for this and other improvements is being generated by Festive Flair—a team of women who have been decorating shop windows for the Christmas season in several British towns and cities. Ratnashuri describes the Festive Flair team—led by Vidyavati and Kulanandi—as 'a happy international bunch'.

Taraloka's annual open day was a lively event that generated a lot of local interest. The event was covered in the local press, and Sanghadevi was interviewed on local radio.

At Padmaloka in Norfolk there were ten 'Going for Refuge' retreats last year. These continue to be well attended, and Chittapala reports that 'their warmth and friendliness indicates a deepening understanding and practice of sangha amongst those preparing for ordination'.

The Padmaloka team has also been experimenting with a new type of interactive weekend men's event, of which there will be more in 1990. About fifty people attended the first such event—called *Creating Ritual*—which consisted of a number of workshops on the theme of devotion, expressed through drama, masks, poetry, painting, and chanting. The event only scratched the surface, but gave many people the opportunity to discover new ways of expressing their personal connections with the ideals of Buddhism.



Taking a rest from work on the lower barn

EVOLUTION IN NORWICH

Every autumn for the last few years various FWBO charities have taken advantage of the annual Christmas consumer spending spree by setting up temporary shops selling giftware supplied by Windhorse Trading, the FWBO's Cambridge-based right-livelihood wholesale business. This autumn Windhorse went one step further by opening its first permanent shop, which will be run jointly by Windhorse and the Norwich Buddhist Centre.

The new shop—called *Evolution*—is sited in Bridewell Alley, a historic street in the old walled city of Norwich. It sells the normal Windhorse range of products, and also has a separate 'green' section selling environmentally friendly gifts, including cruelty-free cosmetics, recycled paper goods, recycled glassware, and toys and puzzles made with wood from renewable sources. (An interview with Vajraketu, the manager of Windhorse trading, on the 'greening' of the Windhorse product range appears elsewhere in this issue of *Golden Drum*.)

Writing from Norwich, William Burdett, who helps run the new shop, reports that the reaction to the 'green' products has been very favourable, both in terms of sales and customer feedback—so favourable that he is already talking of the possibility of a separate 'green shop' in the future.

The Norwich shop is a significant new departure for Windhorse Trading, not only because it is its first permanent retail outlet, providing an opportunity to test the response to its new green products, but also because it represents something of an experiment in co-operation between Windhorse and an autonomous Buddhist Centre. Windhorse Trading provided the capital and the initial guidance and expertise needed to set up the shop, but the labour to run the new business has been provided by the Norwich Centre. At the moment the shop is run by a team of three mitras with help from other Norwich sangha members.

Vajraketu is optimistic that this form of organization will provide a sound basis for the success of the Norwich shop, and for similar shops in other cities. Windhorse can provide capital, experience, and confidence—without which many Centres would not be able to get such a business off the ground. But a team-based right-livelihood business also needs to give scope for creativity and initiative, and although Windhorse technically 'owns' the Norwich shop, Vajraketu feels that the mitras who manage it will have plenty of responsibility for managing what could be effectively their own enterprise within the larger framework of Windhorse Trading.

Vajraketu sees the mitras running the Norwich shop as essentially working for Windhorse. And it is part of Windhorse's philosophy to give its workers as much autonomy and scope for personal initiative as possible. The Windhorse warehouse in Cambridge—to take one example—is already run as a separate, autonomous unit. Vajraketu sees no difference between this and the situation of the Norwich shop—or any other shop which may be set up in future.

The mitras who run the Norwich shop have already taken more responsibility for running the business than was expected so early in its life. When the shop was set up last October there was a definite

plan for how much of the management should be done from Cambridge and how much from Norwich, and for a phased transfer of responsibility as the Norwich team gained in experience and confidence. But the team have learned so fast that the structures set up to help them have had to be changed. Already more of the buying and stock control is being handled from Norwich than was envisaged, and the Windhorse worker who had planned to spend one or two days a week at the shop to give guidance has been free to get on with other things.

Meanwhile the Norwich team is also gaining experience at the retail end of the business which could provide a valuable input to Windhorse—and Vajraketu intends to take advantage of this by inviting some of them to accompany him to the next major buying fair.

Hopefully other centres will follow the example of Norwich and set up their own shops in partnership with Windhorse Trading. Vajraketu is also open to the possibility of some form of franchise agreement for centres that would prefer to technically 'own' their own shop. But he sees definite advantages for the Movement as a whole in the form of partnership being pioneered in Norwich, as this will foster co-operation and cohesion, creating strong links between geographically separate parts of the FWBO.

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The Evolution team

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Where to find us

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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
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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
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
Water Hall Retreat Centre, Great Ashfield, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, IP31 3HP. Tel: 0359 42130
Vajraloka Meditation Centre, Tyn-y-Ddol, Treddol, Nr Corwen, Clwyd, LL21 0EN. Tel: 0490-81 406
Guhyaloka Retreat Centre (Spain), c/o Lesingham House, Surlingham, Norwich, NR14 7AL. Tel: 050-88 8112
The Office of the Western Buddhist Order, Padmaloka, Lesingham House, Surlingham, Norwich, NR14 7AL. Tel: 05088 310
Karuna Trust, 186 Cowley Road, Oxford, OX4 1UE. Tel: 0865 728794
Dharmachakra Tapes, P.O. Box 50, Cambridge, CB1 3BG

FWBO Germany, Postfach 110263, 4300 Essen 11, W. Germany. Tel: 0201 668299
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FWBO Netherlands, P.O. Box 1559, 3500 BN Utrecht, Netherlands
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Kathmandu Buddhist Centre (October-April), PO Box 4429, Hotel Asia, Thamel, Kathmandu, Nepal

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