GOLDEN DRUM

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BUDDHISM AND EDUCATION

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editorial

BUDDHISM AND EDUCATION

In the summer of 1968, in step with students throughout Europe, we occupied our university's main administrative building. The pretext for our two weeks of bombastic speeches and destructive partying—for it all added up to little more than that—was a rumour that the university authorities were keeping files on us: files which represented a gross breach of privacy, files which would perhaps be of interest to even higher authorities: the people who ran 'the system', files which—were they to fall into the wrong hands—would doubtless cut short our careers in the international revolutionary struggle (or, more likely, in the media, education, and the social services). The roots of my scepticism over the whole business lay partly in an inability to take clenched-fist salutes very seriously from those whom I knew to be lacking in political conviction, partly in the inferior quality of the Moroccan grass that was circulating throughout the siege, and partly in a nagging conviction that any files on me, and *ergo* on the rest of us, could hardly add up to very much. After all, what had any of us *done*? What authentically subversive, or even original, thoughts did we nurse in our breasts? Who or what did we think we were?

Perhaps I am being unfair. One of the occupation's ringleaders eventually surfaced as an ultra left-wing member of Parliament. But the rest seem to have vanished without trace. And having recently watched Danny Cohn-Bendit discussing football on French television, having heard that a key figure in the American student movement of the sixties went on to make a fortune running 'singles bars' in the USA, I now feel even more sure than I did then that most of us had managed to receive a conventionally good education without becoming the sort of conscious, directed, and engaged individuals whose files might have been worth the keeping. In some cases, that part of our education lay in wait, certainly beyond the portals of academia.

Why should things be otherwise? Society needs social workers, doctors, lawyers, soldiers, carpenters, clerks, and builders more obviously and tangibly than it needs individual thinkers, artists, and prophets. While the highly exported British public school system may have sought to create a breed of heroes morally and socially equipped to rule an empire; and while there have been a few experiments where honest attempts have been made to create a new balance between the three 'R's and 'preparation for life', main-line education has always been expected to concentrate on training citizens in useful skills—or in the basic aptitudes and attitudes onto which such skills may be grafted—rather than on preparing individuals for lives rooted in original thought, heightened sensitivity, and unbounded creativity.

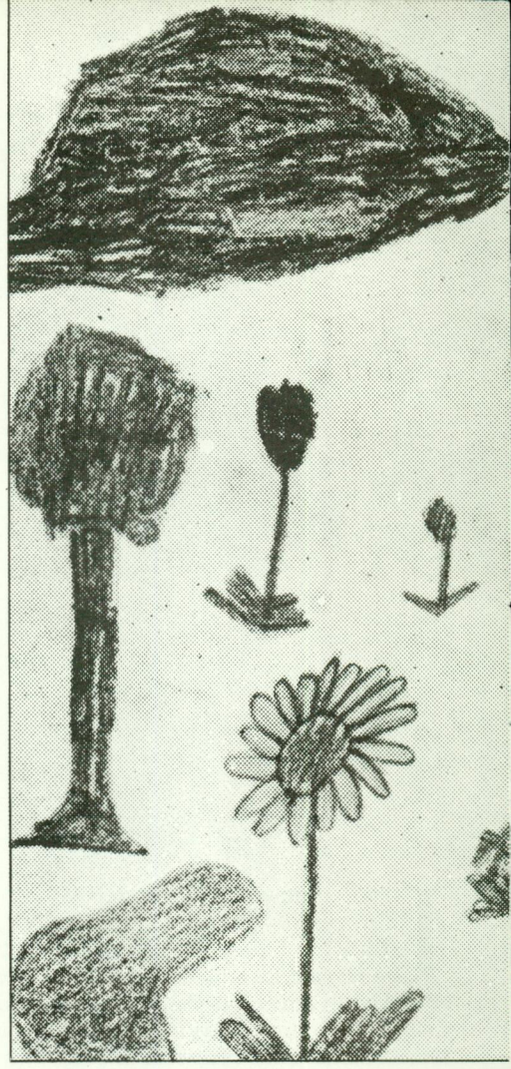
What a shame, though, and what a terrible waste of an opportunity. All those years—the 'best of one's life'—almost frittered away in the guzzling of information, in cramming and swatting for exams and assessments, and in learning to cope, or not cope, with authority. One can't help wondering whether education, like youth, might be wasted on the young. What would many of us older, wiser mortals give to spend even a year, let alone ten or fifteen of them, in the company of books, the great, and all the ideas and insights that their words enshrine? And what might we have made of our lives had our teachers been gifted with the power to ignite a ravenous hunger for truth and values in us, or to bestow upon us some intuition of our mysterious and awesome potential as human beings?

Of course some readers (not too few, I hope) will immediately object: 'Not so. There *was* one teacher who took an interest in me. He treated me like a friend. He gave me a book—or passed on an idea, or set an example—that changed the course of my entire life.' If you were so blessed then you are very close to understanding the kind of contribution that Buddhism could make in the field of education. For while Buddhist schools and colleges may still be a long way off in the West, the two central principles upon which they will surely be run are already clearly available to anyone who wishes to practise them. They are, firstly, respect for the individual, and, secondly, friendship.

A Buddhist education, surely, would be one in which young people are helped to realize that they have the potential to become truly and perfectly themselves, and that their lives could be the arenas of experience, effort, and moral choice in which the adventure of complete unfoldment is played out. It would be one in which they are encouraged to believe that the further development of civilization, as such, requires of them that they aspire to make the fullest use, not only of their talents, but of their qualities, their virtues, and their genius.

The teachers in such a 'system' of education would be people who are themselves excited by the opportunities that life provides. They would be able to see and befriend their pupils as individuals, rather than as faces in a class, and would know how to communicate with children in such a way as to draw out ever more of their true individuality. Above all they would be able to bestow, through their love, their care, and their example, all the confidence and courage that a life, well and thoroughly lived, must surely demand.

Nagabodhi



REVEALING
THE SPRITUAL DIMENSION

Karunavira believes that Buddhist teachers can bring the flavour of the Dharma into the classroom

Educational methods and practices have been the subject of a debate as old as history itself, one to which most of the world's great thinkers have contributed. Drawing on my experience as a primary school teacher, I want to explore the light that Buddhism has shone on good classroom practice.

It is over fourteen years since I nervously waited for my first class of London children to burst into the room. I was an idealistic young teacher bent on changing the world—from the children up. When I resigned as deputy headteacher of a beautiful Sussex school three years ago I was a Buddhist, still idealistic about changing the world, but with a clearer idea of how to go about it. I did not leave teaching because I was a Buddhist; teaching is very much in line with Right Livelihood. I reluctantly left teaching for a period to give more emphasis to my needs: to go on longer retreats, to study and work with other Buddhists. Now I combine part-time teaching with work at the Brighton Buddhist Centre.

When I first stumbled across the FWBO I found that it affirmed my vision of what education could and should be. For me education was an exciting process of direct investigation, observation, and reflection, and of *growth* based on these experiences. It had to do with getting down to ground level, investigating, for example, a crumbling wall or a local supermarket, drawing elements from it, painting and modelling it, measuring and describing it, writing factually and imaginatively about it, developing skills and ideas to communicate all this to others. As I became more involved in Buddhism I noticed that the underlying principle of starting from one's actual experience was common to both. The sort of education I was moving away from, consisting of ladling facts and figures into the heads of children, was more in line with the old religious model I had been raised on. I was trying to develop a more creative vision of education, but it was not until I encountered Buddhism that I realized that this vision was part of a much broader understanding of how people best grow and develop.

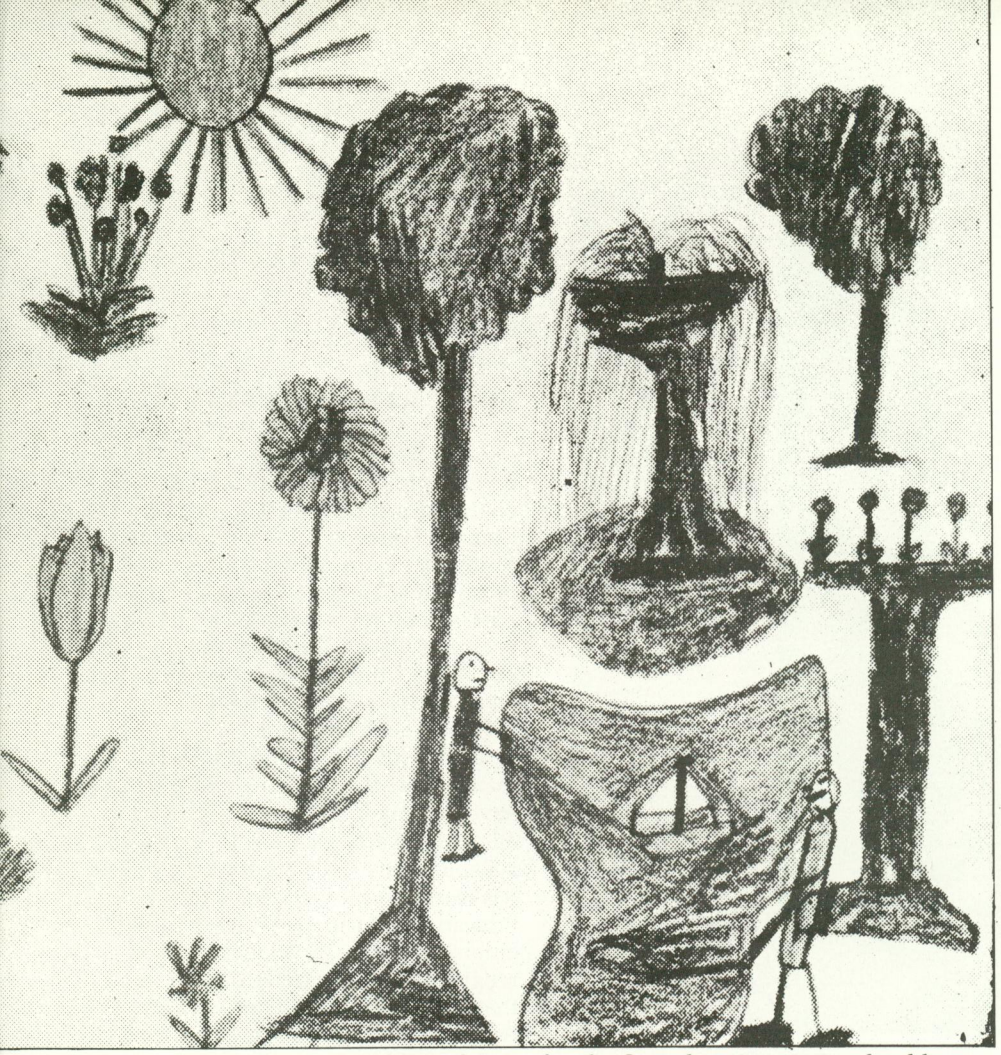
During my training I visited many schools where I could see how well an approach tied to direct experience worked, be it in the development of mathematical or artistic skills, or in the appreciation of fine books or religious and moral values. From this practical base a wider sense of the world and of its mysteries and wonders could proceed on safe foundations. Flights of fantasy and imagination are nourished by senses exercised in seeing, feeling, and hearing, by senses that are valued by the education process and which are therefore valued more in themselves. Within a year of starting work I was reaping the benefits of this style, enjoying working with difficult children in a creative way, and seeing how quickly skills and concepts could be meaningfully developed if based on first-hand experience.

There is a commonly held mis-understanding that Buddhism is a religion for heady intellectuals. But the Buddha urged his followers to test his teachings against their own experience. Buddhism emphasizes the need to reflect on and meditate with its teachings, to make these teachings resonate with one's own experience and thus make them more deeply one's own. Good primary classroom practice begins with a similar principle. The skills and concepts which you wish a child to acquire are most readily and fully assimilated if they resonate with the child's actual world, with things, places, and people that they can hear, see, and touch.

Why is there this seeming convergence of principles in Buddhism and good primary school practice? An examination of three dangers common to both may shed some light.

Firstly comes the danger of making assumptions and premature interpretations. Teaching has shown me again and again how wrong understandings quickly multiply from assumptions and poor interpretation. I have, for example, assumed that a class knows what a wood or a forest is like. The children have assumed that they know as well, because they have done a project about them, seen good videos about them, read books, and looked at the tree in the school playground. Actually standing in a deep wood in Suffolk with a group of awe-inspired ten-year-olds on an autumn day, I soon realized that very few of them had any idea of what trees could be like. A follow-up project was very enthusiastically taken up. When I mentioned words like 'oak', 'roots', or 'bough', the children and I had an experience in common related to it.

The message here is that one's own



experience is valuable and can be used to evaluate other people's ideas and views. As adults too, learning to trust our own experience discourages premature judgements based on hearsay or stereotyped preconception; it encourages empathy and compassion. It means that we must really look, really listen. The Buddhist practice of awareness stresses the integration of body, feelings, emotions, and thoughts. It is very important that the first level, of sensory inputs, is not undervalued and therefore underdeveloped. What message are we giving our children if their education is mostly based on what someone else said in a book or via a lens?

The second danger is of alienation and loss of motivation. Good classroom practice not only encourages an interactive dynamic between the child and the world but also offers an integrated curriculum in which the various subjects are felt to interweave and overlap. Thus skills and concepts gained in maths lessons can be experienced as useful in understanding trees, buildings, or one's own body. Artistic, literary, and scientific skills and concepts are all useful, and a creative mixture of them all can be planned so that they are not alienated from each other or from the child's experience of the world. Skills and concepts are thus experienced as tools that can give shape to the mystery that confronts the enquiring mind.

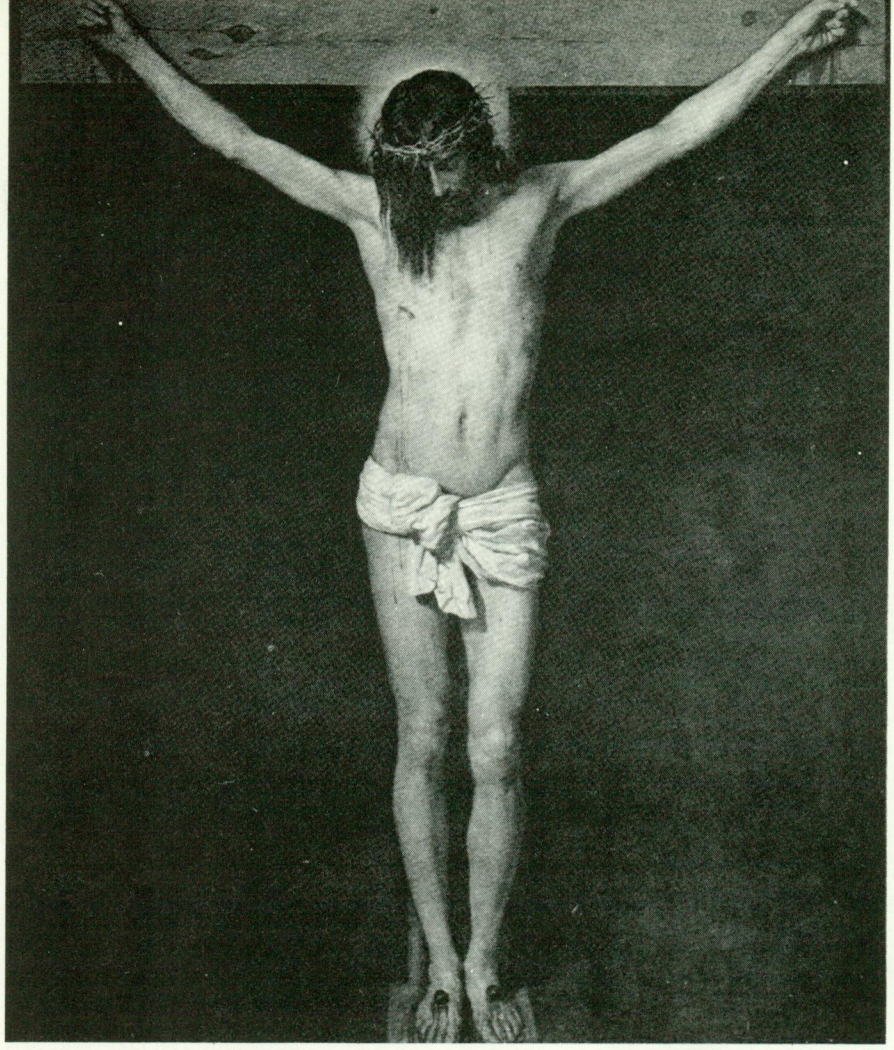
Today, the tendency to compartmentalize things and people results in an atomized society in which openness, trust, and generosity are often limited at best to the introverted cell of the nuclear family. Our education system should support the idea of interrelatedness so that necessary specialization at later dates does not lead to an overall narrowness. Children have a fantastic appetite for inquiry but if their schools make them jump through unrelated intellectual hoops, learn rules of thumb, or acquire facts in a way that is divorced from actual inquiry, then the appetite will wane.

Lastly comes the danger of failing to take into account our individual starting point. Working with children on projects that are based on direct experience enables individual talents and levels of skills to be more easily managed. Skills and concepts used as tools to understand *experience* will be deployed at a naturally appropriate level, and progress is assured. Conversely, asking children to practise a skill or concept divorced from actual inquiry, or unrelated to their world, is not only likely to lead to an alienated idea about the skill or concept but may not so readily be in accord with the child's ability. Experience of success is vital to the child's motivation; inappropriate tasks can seriously hamper a child's progress.

For the Buddhist practitioner a similar principle holds true. Teachings and practices are most readily grasped if they spring from, or are informed by, our own experience. We need to take full stock of who and 'where' we are—and let this awareness resonate with who and where we would like to be.

The most specific way in which Buddhism influences my teaching is in the area of moral and religious education. Buddhism stresses practices which develop positive emotions like confidence, generosity, kindness, openness, and clarity. Religious and moral education starts with teachers and parents who embody these qualities. Children pick up a great deal—from dirty lolly-pop sticks to refined ideas and values. If a school's ethos is soundly based on kindness and awareness, the children will pick up these qualities. It is a long time before children need concern themselves with 'religion', and when this time does arise it is best met with as much direct experiential input as possible: visits by religious full-timers who can talk about their lives, hopes, and fears, visits to churches and religious sites of interest and to museums where holy books of great beauty are kept. Approached in the correct way, the great spiritual teachings of the world can be protected from the utilitarian claw, their beauty both in content and presentation valued for its own special sake. If this is done, then, when the child becomes an adult, his or her inquiring mind will be primed to seek out a path. Then the chance for a truly spiritual life is possible.

Thus at the primary school level, and I suspect beyond, there is no need for specific teaching of religious doctrine (whether Christian or Buddhist). Rather there is a need to reveal the spiritual dimension in all its breadth and fascination in as imaginative a way as possible. There is also a crucial need to present children with an ethos—at home and at school—which is perfumed with clarity and kindness. Children need to see teachers talking to each other with respect and warmth; they need to experience good communication themselves from the teachers. If this 'hidden curriculum' is informed by the teachers' practice of meditation and friendship the children will be able to absorb a rich moral education based almost entirely on direct experience. Thus the most important element in children's religious and moral education is the extent to which their teachers practise a religious and moral life.



Some of that boring Jesus stuff?

A Parent's View

Padmavati considers the kind of religious education her children are getting. Could it be better?

The other day my youngest daughter came home from school saying that it had been a really bad day. 'We've been doing more of that Jesus stuff—really boring!' According to her personal wall chart, alongside her favourite film star, Tom Cruise, is her worst lesson, 'Life of Jesus'. For her, this is what constitutes religious education (RE), and her attitude seem to be typical of that of many other children.

As a Buddhist and mother of three I have not on the whole been favourably impressed by the religious education my children have received at school. Neither it seems have they. For them, RE is a rather boring and irrelevant lesson, to be endured rather than enjoyed.

The quality of RE teaching seems to depend to a great extent on the teacher and his or her interest in and enthusiasm for the subject. Rarely under secondary school age is a teacher specially qualified to teach it, and the content of any lesson is dependent largely on the teacher's personal interpretation of the syllabus. For the lower age groups RE seems usually to consist of Sunday-school type moral stories of 'good' deeds done by 'good' people or, as in my daughter's case, of reading extracts from the Bible and copying out or answering questions on the story of Jesus. Teachers fall back on this format because they are not trained to teach RE and have too little confidence to do anything more imaginative. By secondary school age the approach seems to be based around a broader syllabus. Pupils look at religions other than Christianity and explore moral and social issues, albeit in a fairly limited way until sixth form age.

By law (the 1944 Education Act), maintained schools in England and Wales have to provide religious education for all pupils in accordance with an agreed syllabus, and a daily act of worship. This has recently been restated by the 1988 Education Reform Act with increased emphasis on the Christian content of religious education (reflecting 'the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian') and the daily act of collective worship (which 'shall be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'). A school can apply for exemption from the Christian requirement for worship; in addition a teacher can choose not to teach it, and parents can elect to withdraw their child from attendance. In principle these riders sound fine. In practice it is not such a simple matter. Even if my children have found RE and school assembly boring they have preferred attendance to being singled out from their fellow pupils as different. So the final choice has been left to them.

Both in deciding which school to send the children to and in considering whether to withdraw them from RE and assembly, Saddhaloka (my husband) and I chose rather to counterbalance any possible adverse effects by ensuring that our children were aware of the alternatives—by presenting them with the Buddhist point of view, by example, discussion, and enjoyable celebrations of Buddhist festivals, by teaching them to think and question for themselves, and by helping them to lead an ethically sound life.

The Education Reform Act led us to be concerned to keep a close eye on developments. Saddhaloka has recently been invited to attend meetings of the local SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education), a statutory body which has been established to advise the local Education Authority on such matters as the teaching of RE, the choice of materials, and the provision of training for teachers. Membership of the Council consists of representatives from (i) The

Church of England, (ii) Teachers' Unions, (iii) officers of the LEA, and (iv) such Christian and other religious denominations as are present in the area. This means that Buddhists and other faiths share a single vote with all other Christian denominations apart from the Church of England and so have very limited influence. However, it does provide a valuable opportunity to express an alternative viewpoint and also to monitor closely just how the Act is being implemented. Saddhaloka has actually been quite encouraged by the undogmatic attitudes and approach of most of the educationists and teachers, and by their genuine concern to guarantee education rather than indoctrination.

Between them my children have now attended four different schools, exemplifying different approaches to RE. At primary school, assembly was held twice a week with the traditional format of announcements, hymn, and short prayer or quiet time—all fairly low key. When asked about RE lessons the children were a bit vague. The subject seemed to be approached through such things as topic work (for example exploring ancient places of worship in Norfolk). The exception was the winter term when they were fed an excessive diet of Christmas. With a move of house they attended two other schools: a first school (4–8-year-olds) where RE was presented through hymns, prayers, moral stories, and occasionally colourful celebrations of festivals. The middle school (9–12) has close links with the local church: the vicar attends school festivals and the school holds services in the church at Christian festival times. There is a daily assembly and RE is quite formal, limited, and (depending on the teacher) un-imaginative. Alternatives to Christianity are only explored at a later stage, the quality of presentation varying with the interest and enthusiasm of the teacher.

At the secondary school which the oldest two now attend, although the syllabus itself is still biased towards Christianity, it is interpreted quite broadly. Such topics as 'What is superstition?' and 'Why do people need religion?' are looked at, and other religions and cultures, ancient and modern, are explored. The teacher concerned has chosen to interpret the wording of the the Education Reform Act as liberally as possible. Interestingly, the children no longer find the subject boring.

Perhaps other religions have something to say

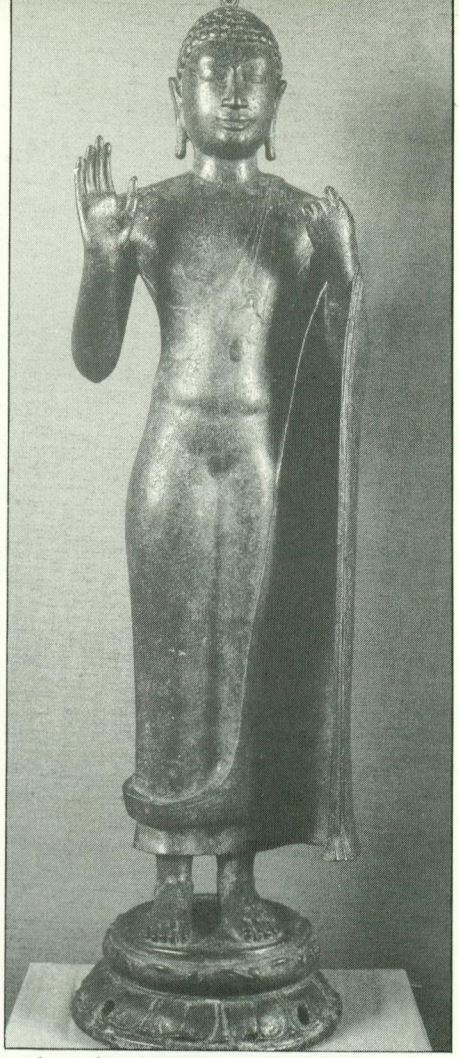
Although I have so far no objections to the content of RE lessons at this school I have been concerned about the Reform Act's emphasis on the Christian bias of the 'daily act of collective worship'. After discussion with teachers and others I have recently withdrawn my thirteen-year-old son, at his own request, from this assembly. I was encouraged in this decision by the discovery that the head of RE, herself a practising Christian, had exercised her own right of withdrawal after hearing a particularly dogmatic talk from a visiting C of E vicar!

Buddhist parents who are concerned about the quality of their children's religious education can involve themselves with their PTA or be elected to the Board of Govenors of their children's school. How the Act is interpreted depends on the particular heads, govenors, and teachers, and parents *can* make their voice heard if they feel it is being interpreted too narrowly or rigidly.

What sort of religious education, if any, would I like for my children? I once felt that schools would do better to exclude religious education from the curriculum, and assembly from the timetable altogether, but recent reading and discussion have changed my mind. What I feel are really needed are better training and resources for the teaching of RE so that it can be presented in a way that is helpful and meaningful for the children's development as mature individuals.

The school assembly, instead of being a compromise between a mini Christian service and a forum for pep talks and announcements, could be an opportunity to encourage the children's sense of awareness, imagination, and wonder about themselves and the world they live in. It could be an opportunity to provide elements that are not there in the rest of the curriculum, such as bringing the school together as a community, thus increasing the children's awareness of and sensitivity to others, at the same time helping them to recognize a more 'spiritual' dimension of experience which is not aligned to any particular religious tradition as if it were the norm. This would need sensitive and skilled handling and would entail training, careful thought, and preparation.

According to the Plowden Report (1967), 'Children should not be confused by being taught to doubt before faith is established'. I would say that children, and indeed adults, cannot develop faith



without first learning to think and question. Faith in the Buddhist sense is founded on confidence and trust based on experience. I would therefore like to see religious education helping children to think for themselves, and stimulating them to question and be critical in the most positive sense.

I would like to see religious education that is not biased towards any particular belief, which explores religious and ideological issues and beliefs and their effects on the individual and society. I would like to see it helping to develop an understanding of different faiths and ideologies which lead to respect and tolerance. I would like to see an ethical sense being fostered which does not depend on external rules and injunctions but which is developed internally through understanding, empathy, and experience. Finally, I would like to see religious education helping children to extend their awareness of themselves and others and recognizing their potential to develop as human beings in a situation where 'spiritual', as opposed to materialistic, values are affirmed as necessary and central.

I would like to think that with more skilled, sensitive, and properly trained RE teachers this would be possible. Many children can be put off anything to do with religion by unimaginative and limited teaching. Perhaps the comment, on his pupil assessment form, of the pupil of an RE teacher friend can give us food for thought: 'I don't like RE much. It's OK. I think the world would be a better place if people didn't take religion so seriously!'

Manjushri, an embodiment of Transcendental Wisdom

THE CLOSING OF THE WESTERN MIND

The triumph of Western liberal education is 'value relativism'. Kulananda wonders how it will get along with Buddhism

You could be anywhere in the Western world. You have just led a session of the *metta- bhavana* practice at an introductory class at the local FWBO centre. Everyone has appreciated your efforts to encourage them to cultivate feelings of warmth, goodwill, and friendliness to all living beings. But during the question-and-answer session at the end of the class the stock question arises: 'Surely all religions are ultimately the same. Aren't they all, after all, heading in the same direction, toward the same ultimate truth?'

This situation arises again and again and, for Order members who are new to teaching meditation, represents one of the first hurdles on the path to becoming a good Dharma teacher: how do you break the cultural taboo against the idea of real differences in certainty and belief whilst at the same time not appearing to be merely intolerant.

Buddhism is significantly different from Christianity. They are not both heading in the same direction. And yet, these days, to assert that view with any conviction will usually provoke accusations of narrowness and intolerance. As a decent and kindly meditation teacher one is naturally expected to subscribe to the commonly held view that all perceived differences between people and ideas are merely manifestations of different perspectives: no one is right and no one is wrong. *To think that you are right is the only wrong.*

Professor Allan Bloom, an American university teacher of many years experience, has written at length about such issues in his book, *The Closing of the American Mind**. Professor Bloom has very clear ideas about the task facing a university teacher. As he puts it: 'Attention to the young, knowing what their hungers are and what they can digest, is the essence of the craft. One must spy out and elicit those hungers. For there is no real education which does not respond to felt need; anything else acquired is trifling display.... Most students will be content with what our present considers relevant; others will have a spirit of enthusiasm that subsides as family and ambition provide them with other objects of interest; a small number will spend their lives in an effort to be autonomous.... Without their presence ... no society—no matter how rich or comfortable, no matter how technically adept or full of tender sentiments—can be called civilized.'

Professor Bloom has a very high ideal for university education. He sees it in terms of encouraging the dormant individuality of his students, and this individuality requires the formation of judgements: the discrimination of right from wrong, truth from falsehood. Striving to live by the truth—this, for Bloom, is the heart of true autonomy. And yet, in his experience of the contemporary American campus, almost all students believe, or say that they believe, that truth is only relative. Whether they are theists or atheists, to the Left or the Right, whether they intend to become scientists, humanists, professionals, or businessmen, be they rich or poor, they are all unified in their *relativism.*

These attitudes are not confined to American university campuses. They are increasingly endemic to the whole modern world. The belief seems to be that relativism in the face of conflicting claims to truth, various ways of life, and kinds of human being, is the great insight of our times. Those holding strong beliefs

are perceived to be the only real social danger.

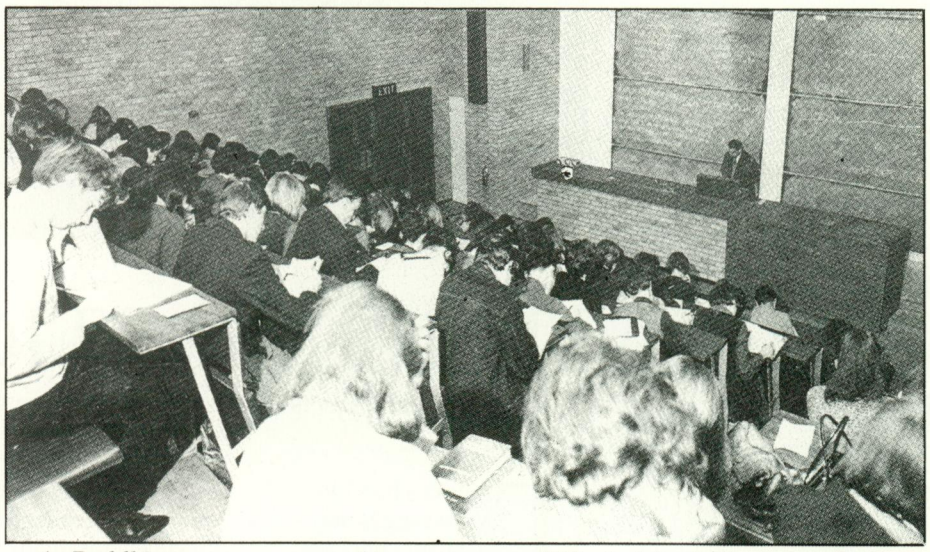
When their relativism is challenged his students respond with disbelief and indignation tinged with fear, for the danger they have been taught to fear from absolutism is not error but intolerance. Relativism is seen to be necessary to 'openness', and openness is the virtue, the only virtue, which the modern world is willing to sanctify. The study of history and of culture is seen to indicate that the world was mad in the past: men always thought they were *right*—and that led to wars, persecution, slavery, xenophobia, racism, and chauvinism. The point, it is now believed, is not to correct the mistakes of the past and really be right; rather it is not to think you are right at all.

Confronted by such bland relativism, Bloom poses questions to his students, designed to expose the conflicting claims of different value systems and to make them think. 'If you had been a British administrator in India, would you have let the natives under your governance burn the widow at the funeral of a man who had died?'. Openness born of relativism provides his students with no means of addressing this sort of problem. Openness is the only virtue with which they have been inculcated. They lack the framework of values by means of which such questions could be addressed.

Bloom knows that we are likely to bring what are only our prejudices to the judgement of what is alien to us. Avoiding that, he avers, is one of the main purposes of education. But trying to prevent it by removing the authority of our capacity to reason is to render ineffective the instrument that can correct our prejudices. True openness is rooted in a real desire to *know*, and thus in an awareness of one's current ignorance. To deny the possibility of knowing good from bad is actually to suppress true openness. It allows us to avoid a confrontation with our moral ignorance and leaves unchallenged our own prejudices.

The process of the gradual subordination of the principle of fact to value-judgement in its metaphysical, scientific, and moral dimensions is concisely traced by Bloom in his book, and although one may have some hesitations concerning his underlying political agenda, the tale he has to tell repays close study.

All unified in their relativism?



As Buddhists we are concerned to develop Perfect Vision—knowledge and vision of things as they really are. Perfect Vision,—*Bodhi*, Enlightenment,—is not achieved overnight. It is the culmination of a long process of replacing 'wrong view' (*micchaditthi*) with 'right view' (*sammaditthi*), discriminating true from false, right from wrong, good from bad, in all areas of our life. Buddhism recognizes that to know the truth is not a simple matter. Ultimately only an Enlightened being, a Buddha, can really know the existential truth of every situation. But between us and Enlightenment there lies a path, the Dharma, which reliably leads in the direction of truth.

This path is marked by degrees. Some attitudes, actions, and beliefs accord more nearly with the goal than do others, and we should feel free to use the faculty of reason to distinguish between them. Seeing Enlightenment as the highest possibility for human beings, Buddhism looks into the individual human psyche and at the wider human situation and proclaims a system of values that is universally valid. All beings seek the cessation of suffering which Enlightenment represents, and all beings will benefit by moving closer to, rather than away from, that goal. It is by this light that Buddhists make moral and metaphysical judgements.

In taking our stand upon the absolute and universal value of Enlightenment we Buddhists would seem, necessarily, to be putting ourselves at odds with a major ideological current in the modern world. We believe that, even though it might be very difficult, it is vitally important that we seek to develop clarity concerning questions of value: right and wrong, good and bad. This process, indeed, lies at the very heart of the Buddhist spiritual life and it could very well be an important gift that modern Buddhists now have to offer the rather bewildered world we live in.

This being the case we need to be resolute and outspoken. We should take a firm stand against woolly thinking and confusion—confusion which leads so easily to those forms of injustice which wear kindly, liberal masks. We need to speak out against value-denying pseudo-egalitarianism which, in denying the pertinence of judgements of difference, reduces all human thought and activity to a single plane of indifferent valuelessness. We need to be on our guard against the all-pervasive manifestations of the doctrines of relativism with which so much of modern thinking is saturated.

Accurate judgements of value are very hard to make. To make them we need to be wise. What we require of our education system is that it should dedicate itself to the long and hard task of the cultivation of wisdom. And yet it seems to be heading full pelt in the opposite direction, teaching either forms of highly specialized materialism or, in the liberal arts and humanities, a value denying nihilism. In the face of this onslaught it is the task of modern Buddhists to assert positive, spiritual values.

*The Closing of the American Mind by Allan Bloom, Published by Penguin.

Lohagaon boy's hostel

EDUCATION IN ACTION

Lokamitra takes us on a tour of the educational projects that Bahujan Hitay is providing in India.

Trailokya Bauddha Mahasangha and Bahujan Hitay are currently running twenty kindergartens, eight hostels for secondary school children, a number of adult literacy classes, study classes for school-going children, and a range of cultural and sports activities.

The kindergartens are usually situated in slums where living conditions are very primitive, with many people living in a single room, often with no electricity or water—to say nothing of sanitation. Most of the children come from under-privileged or so-called 'backward' communities; their parents are likely to have had little or no education, and most will be engaged in poorly paid, physically exhausting, labouring work. In such conditions children rarely get any encouragement in their education. At primary school, unable to compete with children from more privileged backgrounds, they easily give up and drop out.

Our kindergartens are situated in the localities where the children live, allowing teachers—who are trained at workshops run by Bahujan Hitay—to communicate with parents and follow up the children quite easily. After two years at kindergarten the children have much more confidence. Seeing this, and other benefits, many parents begin to appreciate the importance of education and thus encourage their children more—which means that the children start primary school with much more likelihood of staying on.

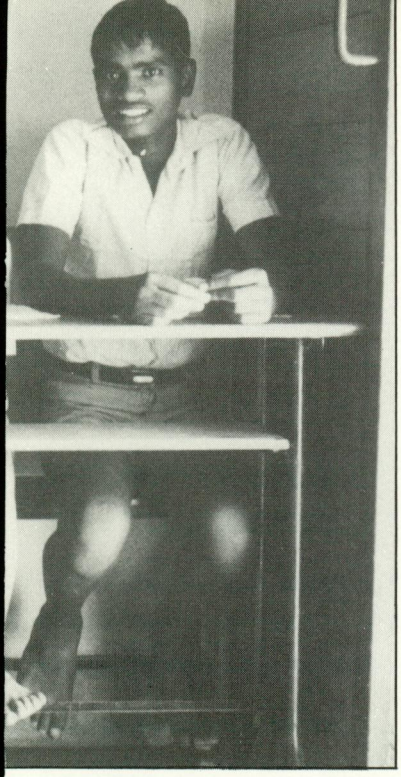
The adult literacy classes emerged partly out of Bahujan Hitay's health work. There is an established correlation between the literacy of the mother and the health of the child. Children of illiterate mothers are more likely to die young, or to suffer from ill health.

'Study classes' are arranged to help children who do attend school. The Indian education system is so designed that, without outside tuition, it is very difficult to get through the exams. Children in the slums usually do not have any money to spend on such classes. Moreover, in poor areas it is a very common sight in the evenings to see boys and girls crowded around the street lights, reading. They have to do this because there may be no electricity in their homes, or because their entire family lives in just one room, or because the father is drunk, making it impossible for them to concentrate.

The need for cultural (painting, drama, singing, dancing, making music) and sports activities should be obvious given the overcrowded slum conditions and the limitations of most free schooling.

The hostels project represents our most ambitious entry so far into the field of education. These hostels are situated close to urban secondary schools, and cater largely for village children who otherwise would find it hard to continue their education. The reasons for this could be caste prejudice in the village, the fact that poor parents are obliged to send children out to work, or because there is no school nearby. Some urban children are taken in as well when the home conditions are very difficult.

Our first hostel opened its doors in 1984, on land that had been donated to us. Two years earlier we had started our health and educational work in the slums of Dapodi, Poona, and we were looking for effective ways to extend our social work. Naturally we had to take into account certain constraints: there were very few Dharmacharis free to guide the work; we had little experience in the social and educational field, and a paucity of management skills. We were also reluctant to divert energy from our directly Buddhist activities since they were, and still are, the basis of everything else that we do. We were especially interested in the area of education because, socially, it offers the most important means of change—giving access to knowledge



and culture, and to more satisfying and better paid employment.

Dr Ambedkar, the chief source of inspiration for most Indian Buddhists, urged his followers to make all possible use of whatever educational facilities were available. He founded the People's Education Society with its objective of providing education to the socially deprived masses. From the outset he made clear his view that there should be a 'Dharmic' dimension to education by naming the Society's first colleges Siddharth College and Milind College.

So far there are eight hostels: seven for boys and one for girls. (Although the difficulties involved are much greater than running boys' hostels, we are keen to start more girls' hostels and are preparing to do so.) These hostels cater for Buddhist children as well as for those from the so-called Scheduled Castes and Tribes, and from other backward communities. Although they are fairly easy to administer they provide a valuable social service and have become very much appreciated by the Buddhist community at large. There are two main factors behind their success. Firstly, they are run by people who are practising the Dharma 'effectively' themselves, Secondly, they are supported by local Buddhists—many of whom come along to Dharma classes—who are pleased to get a chance to help the hostel children.

The hostels firstly function as supportive environments where children can live in order to attend and benefit from local schools. Most rural children lag behind in English, maths, and science, so the wardens and local Friends help them with extra tuition. In some hostels, sports activities—yoga exercises and karate—are taught. We hope to arrange some kind of physical exercise in every hostel.

Cultural activities have always played an important part in hostel life. Drama and musical activities come naturally to most children, and ours are no exception. Especially popular are songs dealing with Dr Ambedkar's struggle to emancipate himself and his followers from the abomination of Untouchability, and his final Refuge in the Three Jewels. Songs and plays dealing with the Buddha's nonviolence and compassion, and his intolerance of caste and superstition, are equally popular.

Last year we conducted a training course for hostel wardens in the teaching of arts and crafts activities. Although such activities are appreciated by the children, time is a constraint. There is great emphasis on passing exams in India, and this is very naturally what most parents and children will see as the prime purpose of schooling. Without paper qualifications the avenues of social change are effectively closed. Consequently it is quite easy to go through school learning things by rote, without developing an interest in, or any understanding of, one's immediate environment or the world in which one lives. Our wardens and parents have now come to realize that arts and crafts activities can actually help children with their studies. The enjoyment of this extra-curricular education arouses an interest in the wider world, which carries over into their more formal studies.

Lack of confidence is the greatest psychological wound inflicted by the caste system on those who come from its base. With a home background of little if any literacy and an educational background of (generally) poor rural primary education, it is quite easy for these children to become severely crippled by their lack of confidence soon after they start secondary school. The extra tuition given by local Friends is very important. But if the children can excel in non-academic educational activities as well, then the confidence they gain enables them to make more of an effort in their school studies. At least it will mean that their educational experience has not just reinforced their generally negative social experience; they stand a better chance of becoming less resentful and more creative.

By offering residential and other facilities against a background of Buddhist ideals and practice, our hostels carry the process of education into areas of ethical practice, community life, and individual responsibility. Such developments naturally depend very much upon our wardens, who need to be mature, experienced, and very steady in their Refuge to the Three Jewels. At present most of our wardens are young and still at the training stage, but we are slowly gaining the necessary experience.

The hostels are still quite new, and as most students joined when they were about ten years old, few have yet reached matriculation. Of those who have, some have stayed with the hostels so that they can continue their education further. In time we intend to provide facilities for those who want to continue their studies right through college. For those who do not want to pursue their school education further, we plan to create a residential training institute in Dapodi which will run courses in a wide range of subjects from carpentry and welding to short-hand typing and computer programming. This will be open to others but priority will be given to those who have been to our hostels.

We have recently been offered a couple of actual schools and are thinking of taking them on. One is already doing very well, even though its classes are held in small, dark cowsheds—used by the cows at night. It caters largely for Buddhist, Scheduled Caste, and Scheduled Tribe children. We would like to run it, but we are presently debating whether we have the strength and ability to do so. If we do take on this and other schools (and I am certain that we will be running schools eventually) our initial aim will not be to change the education system, but to make the school effective within it—and then gradually to extend the educational facilities to provide a more complete education.

We do not teach the Dharma as such in our institutions, except on a voluntary basis. What, then, is their connection with the Dharma? Firstly, they are all planned, developed, and surpervised by members of the Order. Secondly they are actually run by members of the Order or by those training to become such. They are also actively supported by local Friends who attend Dharma classes. The efforts that these adults are making to develop themselves—especially in the spheres of ethical practice, thinking for themselves, and helping others—do communicate to the students. As far as the development of true individuality is concerned, it is this experience and contact which provides the most effective education.

Afternote:

Much of the educational work being carried out by Bahujan Hitay is funded by The Karuna Trust. The Trust has also provided funds for the People's Education Society, and the Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Cultural Institute in Kalimpong. If you would like to know more about, or support the Karuna Trust, their address is on the back of this magazine.

Dapodi kindergarten

A Glimpse Of The Light

In this account, adapted from the 1989 Aid For India/Karuna Trust Newsletter, Manjusvara describes his first visit to a unique and magical school.

Manjusvara, Dhardo Rimpoche and Jampel Khalden (December 1989)

At last I was there! The cheerful yellow and red Tibetan gateway told me that I had arrived at Dhardo Rimpoche's 'Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Cultural Institute School' for Tibetan refugees. White prayer-flags fluttered in the gentle breeze. Stretching beyond the school buildings, away from the noise and clutter of Kalimpong, were the rolling foothiils and deep valleys, the last throws of the great Himalayas.

Dhardo Rimpoche once said, 'If you are not sure what to do next in your life, then do something for other people.' His own life illustrated this maxim perfectly. Although a prestigious lama, he left his monastery in Bodh-Gaya in 1954 and settled in Kalimpong to do what he could to help the Tibetan refugees who were then pouring across the Indian border in flight from the Chinese invasion. He devoted the rest of life to the school he founded on an uneven patch of ground on the edge of town.

It was here that he and Sangharakshita became good friends. Sangharakshita spent fourteen years in Kalimpong, teaching and writing at his Triyana Vardhana Vihara. Dhardo Rimpoche gave him a number of Tantric initiations, and also gave him the Bodhisattva ordination. Ever since Lokamitra and Surata paid a visit in 1977, many members and Friends of the Western Buddhist Order had been including a pilgrimage to the ITBCI school as an essential element in their travels around India—partly out of interest, but largely out of gratitude for the debt they felt they owed its extraordinary founder-director. On one such visit, in 1982, Nagabodhi made the alarming discovery that the school was entirely dependent upon what were at that time the entirely random and occasional donations being made by members of the FWBO.

I first came to know about the ITBCI School in 1985, when I was part of an Aid For India (now Karuna Trust) appeal team committed to raising the funds that would save the school from closure. For two months we 'worked' the streets of London doing our best to explain why we thought the school was worth saving.

In order to gain government support, all Tibetan refugee schools must teach the standard Indian curriculum. This is fair enough, so far as it goes, but it takes no account of the students' own unique cultural heritage and needs. At the expense of his school's eligibility for grants, Dhardo Rimpoche decided to give his pupils something more: a modern secular education *plus* a thorough grounding in traditional Tibetan studies and culture. They would learn to read and write in Tibetan, play Tibetan music on Tibetan instruments, dance in Tibetan costumes they made by themselves, develop an appreciation of their religion, and form an appreciation of their own folklore. Through his five- to fifteen-year-old pupils, Dhardo hoped to preserve the seeds of a threatened culture. While saving the children from all the ill-effects of cultural alienation, he would also be preserving something of the grass-roots culture of a land whose gifts to the world had hardly been acknowledged, and certainly

not yet explored.

Clearly the formula was a successful one. Nobody who had visited the school had failed to notice the extra-ordinarily happy atmosphere of the place. Although the children came from poor families, and had little in the way of facilities—no proper play area, little equipment, too few rooms to accommodate all the classes—they rushed about the place filling the air with laughter and happiness. And it was also clear that they loved their headmaster!

Dhardo Rimpoche was even smaller than I had expected, perhaps no more than five feet tall. Although seventy-four and occasionally troubled with ill health, he conveyed a sense of deep strength. His mind seemed agile and fresh. Before he spoke he would screw up his eyes in concentration as if lost for words, although, really, he was reflecting carefully upon my questions. More than anything his answers displayed the deepest concern and compassion for the world about him. Being with him, I realized, was like being gently wrapped in a warm cloak of kindness.

The school's 200 children come from Kalimpong itself, as well as from further afield. Most are Tibetans, but some are Sherpas who also speak the Tibetan language. Because Kalimpong is close to Tibet, the school is able to help any refugees who still occasionally cross the border into India. Ex-pupils have gone on to study and work in places as far away as Japan and Switzerland.

What, I wondered, could Tibetan culture teach the world at large? 'I particularly feel it can teach nonviolence and compassion,' Dhardo explained, 'It is very important that we teach these things to children. If, for example, you see small children playing with insects, tearing their wings or hitting them with sticks, you must explain that this is hurting the insects. They should learn that they don't have to hurt insects in order to enjoy themselves in the playground. It makes me very sad to read in newspapers and magazines that so many people in the West are turning to drugs as a means of escape. They must feel a great emptiness in their hearts that they should try and fill them in this way.' He continued: 'People feel that life is short. Because of this, instead of working for others, they just try to acquire wealth for themselves. But if we live in this way we become isolated. Our lives become like bubbles on the surface of the water. But people can be inspired by action. If they see that something is happening they start to give.'

Dhardo explained how he had started the school with virtually nothing. Things had built up very gradually indeed. People would give a few rupees, allowing him to buy some paper or pencils. Then, when they saw that he was doing something useful with their money, they helped the school to grow: 'If you work hard in the right way it will spread like light.'

The light of Dhardo's work had obviously spread very effectively indeed. Our Aid For India appeals brought in enough money to pay for the erection of two major

buildings, housing classrooms, boarding facilities, and staff quarters. The school's running costs—which included enough funds to guarantee good wages for a full complement of staff would be met out of a lump sum invested for the purpose. The school was now safe.

After all his years of experience with children, would he have any advice to give to parents of children in the West?

'Yes. They should teach their children that actions have consequences. And they should teach them to respect their elders. ... We should always respect our first teacher, the person who taught us our ABC and 123, for this person gave us our entry into all the richness and beauty of human culture.'

In the balmy night air I stood in the courtyard with Jampel Khalden, the school's secretary and eventual successor to Dhardo Rimpoche as director. Jampel has been with Dhardo Rimpoche since 1956, when he and his younger brother fled Tibet. In his will Dhardo Rimpoche has described Jampel as his 'beloved adopted son'. We were looking at the new block of classrooms and dormitories that Aid For India's support was making possible. When complete these structures would mean that every class would have its own room. Also, the girls boarding at the school would have good, draught-free accommodation. As we spoke, Jampel kept a proud but rigorous eye on the building's progress, making sure that the builders' work was up to standard. He had participated in the design and execution of the beautiful traditional sculptures which would soon decorate the new building, reminding the children of their ancient traditions.

From time to time I noticed the yellow beam of a flashlight dancing off the interior walls. Suddenly the shadowy image of Dhardo Rimpoche appeared, stepping carefully between the builders' materials. As he peered at each new detail of the day's work he made faint murmuring sounds of approval. According to Jampel, Rimpoche made this little inspection each evening after dinner. My heart filled with delight to think that we had been able to help this wonderful man, who had devoted his life to the welfare of others.

THE GREAT THIRTEENTH

Path of the Bodhisattva Warrior: The Life and Teachings of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama
Compiled and translated by Glenn H. Mullin, edited by Christine Cox
Published by Snow Lion
pp. 387, paperback
price £9.95

Glenn Mullin has already translated teachings of many of the Dalai Lamas. With this volume he gives us the life and teachings of one of the greatest of them all—the Thirteenth. Apart from the Fifth, the Thirteenth is the only Dalai Lama to have been given the epithet 'Great' because, like the 'Great Fifth', the 'Great Thirteenth' combined a deep spirituality with strong and humane governance of Tibet.

The Thirteenth Dalai Lama was born in 1874 and died in 1933. Mr Mullin shows us in a short biography at the beginning of the book that this was a critical period in Tibetan history. The three great superpowers of the age—Britain, Russia, and China—were competing for supremacy in Asia, with Tibet regarded by them all as a convenient pawn in their 'games of empire'. It was the Great Thirteenth's task to preserve Tibet's independence. In this he won great successes, but perhaps ultimately failed—mainly on account of Britain's refusal to recognize the independent status of Tibet. This was a cause of some frustration to the Great Thirteenth and reading of these issues so many years later one can only share that frustration.

Apart from the external pressures facing the country the Great Thirteenth also had to contend with the factionalism, intrigue, and corruption of his own people, especially of those in positions of governmental and ecclesiastical power (a fact which may surprise those who tend to over-idealize Tibet and the Tibetans). We find for example that at the age of 24, shortly after his empowerment to rule the country, he was himself the target of an assassination attempt through a combination of black magic and poison!

But far from bowing to the pressures surrounding him, the Great Thirteenth waged a war against the corruption of his age. He was a completely fearless man with a vision of what Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism could really be and should become. In many ways this 'war' was successful, at least during his lifetime. He improved the standard of the administration—making it more caring and compassionate. He also managed to improve the standard of monastic training and discipline. Indeed, during his lifetime, something of a renaissance took place in Tibetan Buddhism. This was a far from easy task and the Great Thirteenth had a reputation for a fiery and aggressive temperament. Such qualities might seem out of place in a Dalai Lama, but as Mr Mullin tells us, 'those who knew him well saw it as a skilful means for effectively motivating a conservative and slow moving society.'(p.92f.)

No doubt the Great Thirteenth's vision was generated through the long years of intensive spiritual training that he underwent from his childhood. Mr Mullin gives us a glimpse of the thousands of texts studied, initiations received, and rituals and meditations performed, all conducted within the 'aura' of spiritual friendship, as the Great Thirteenth's loving appreciation of his Gurus reveals.

As well as being ultimately responsible for ruling his country, the Great Thirteenth (like all the Dalai Lamas) was a great spiritual teacher. Judging by the teachings assembled here he must have been a wonderful teacher indeed, able to express his immense learning and insight with clarity and emotional force. In the longest section of the book 'Sermons at the Great Prayer Festival' we join an assembly of incarnate lamas, monks, nuns, and lay people to listen to his discourses.

Mr Mullin has selected eleven of these discourses, in which the Great Thirteenth takes us in detail through a traditional set of preliminaries to the practice of meditation. The way in which he describes these preliminaries shows how such apparently simple practices can become meditations of an exalted nature. The simple act of cleaning the room before meditation is linked with reflections to generate the attainment of the Buddha's *dharmakaya* (Wisdom Body) and *rupakaya* (Form Body)(p.141).

The Great Thirteenth has much else to say on the Buddhist life in general. The sermons have a certain extempore quality to them, and it is impossible in a short review to do justice to the many aspects of Buddhist practice that are referred to. Certain themes, however, arise again and again, such as the importance of compassion: 'In brief we should sacrifice our petty self-interests and should cultivate a deeper sense of universal responsibility, otherwise how else can we accomplish spiritual purposes.'(p.128)

Another great theme is that of the correct balancing of meditation and study. After criticizing those who believe that meditation alone is enough to gain Enlightenment, the Great Thirteenth tells us that without studying the Buddhist scriptures we will remain vague, unclear, and uncertain about our goal. Meditation without the support of study is like 'shooting an arrow in the darkness at a target one cannot see.'(p.128f.)

We also get a taste of the refreshing, down-to-earth directness of his approach. While expounding the loftiest of Buddhist teachings, he can suddenly say, 'Our distaste for samsaric (worldly) distractions should be as intense as our dislike for a pain in the kidneys,' or, 'If you carry some type of religious title, be sure that you are equal to it.'(p.104)

There are many more aspects to the Great Thirteenth's genius. We encounter the most extraordinary of these in the section entitled 'The Most Secret Cycle of the Mystical Mandala of Hayagriva'. These are texts based upon the 'Pure Visionary' tradition of the Great Fifth Dalai Lama. They give us a privileged glimpse into a remarkable visionary world. They also make it very clear that though the Great Thirteenth was, like all the Dalai Lamas, a member of the Gelugpa school, he was also deeply involved with the earliest school of Tibetan Buddhism, the Nyingmapa.

Glenn Mullin has given us the life and teachings of a man who really lived the Buddhist life and who did all he could to enable others to do likewise. It seems fitting to end with some advice from the man himself: 'To have the opportunity to study ... under the guidance of a qualified teacher is extremely rare. If we have the opportunity to do so, we should appreciate it and apply ourselves joyously. As an external sign of this joy wear a happy face with a big smile rather than a pious, self-righteous, sober mask. Too many people seem to confuse spirituality with self-righteousness. The spiritual path is a happy experience. Reflect on this happiness.'(p.170)

Padmavajra

ENTERING INTRINSIC AWARENESS

Self-Liberation Through Seeing with Naked Awareness
Translated with Introduction and Notes by John Myrdhin Reynolds (Vajranatha)
Published by Station Hill Press
pp. 170, paperback
price £11.95

In the mid sixties it was still possible, if you were lucky, to buy one of the few remaining copies of *The Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation*, a handsome hardback volume produced by Oxford University Press. This was Dr Evans-Wentz's 1954 edition of a teaching from the Dzogchen ('Great Perfection') tradition of the Vajrayana, belonging to the same cycle of *termas* as *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*. Station Hill Press has now published a new translation of the same text by Vajranatha (John Myrdhin Reynolds).

Just browsing through, one soon sees that this is a very different translation. In fact unless one knew, it would be hard to detect, from the diction and style, that it was the same text. More careful study reveals that it is not so much an alternative reading as a corrective version. It sets out not only to provide a more accurate rendering but also to point out the serious errors in both translation and commentary of the earlier book.

With the benefit of his experience of Dzogchen practice and the expert guidance of Dzogchen teachers such as Professor Namkhai Norbu and the late Dudjom Rimpoche, Vajranatha is well qualified to do this. Another advantage he has over Dr Evans-Wentz is that he understands Tibetan. The Doctor had to rely on others for translation. The two lamas who translated for him, because of their predominantly Gelugpa education, were unlikely, according to Vajranatha, to have much acquaintance with the Dzogchen teaching.

While acknowledging Evans-Wentz's good intentions, Vajranatha is at pains to establish that his edition is quite misleading, and devotes the first of two appendices to refuting what he sees as Evans-Wentz's distorting Theosophical and Vedantist slant on the original material.

The Tibetan term for the 'Naked Awareness' of the title is *Rig-pa* (*vidya* in Sanskrit) which signifies Enlightened Consciousness. Dr Evans-Wentz's chief mistake, according to Vajranatha, was to interpret this term, misleadingly translated as 'the One Mind', as a sort of metaphysical entity. In Dzogchen the term indicates a mode of dynamic Awareness, free of all obscurations, which sees beyond the duality of one and many.

To make the reading easier, Vajranatha divides the text into twenty-eight sections. It is followed by a very helpful running commentary, written in a style accessible to the general reader. A second appendix gives in full a corrected version of the Tibetan text from which the translator worked. There are also some useful notes amplifying points made in the introduction, commentary, and appendices.

The heart of the text consists of verses explaining the method of entering into the Primordial State of Intrinsic Awareness. In Dzogchen this stage of introduction is indispensable to the process of self-liberation. The disciple has to be introduced to this state by a teacher who has himself realized it. Having been introduced, he must then maintain himself in the state of liberation. In the opening section Padmasambhava declares that his teaching is a 'Direct Introduction to the State of Intrinsic Awareness' and, later, that it is an 'exceedingly powerful method for entering into the practice'.

Although the teaching is an exalted one, there is a certain matter-of-factness about its delivery which could be misinterpreted by anyone favouring a laid-back approach to the spiritual life (e.g. 'Since there is nothing upon which to meditate [while in the primordial state], there is no need to meditate.') In his commentary Vajranatha vigorously dispels any idea that Dzogchen is a kind of spiritual easy option, demanding little of the disciple. He points out that although it is often said that all sentient beings are in reality Buddhas, nevertheless they 'have become' ordinary deluded sentient beings as a result of obscuring views and emotions. Padmasambhava uses the simile of sesame seed and oil or milk and butter. If the seed is not pressed, no oil. If the milk is not churned, no butter.

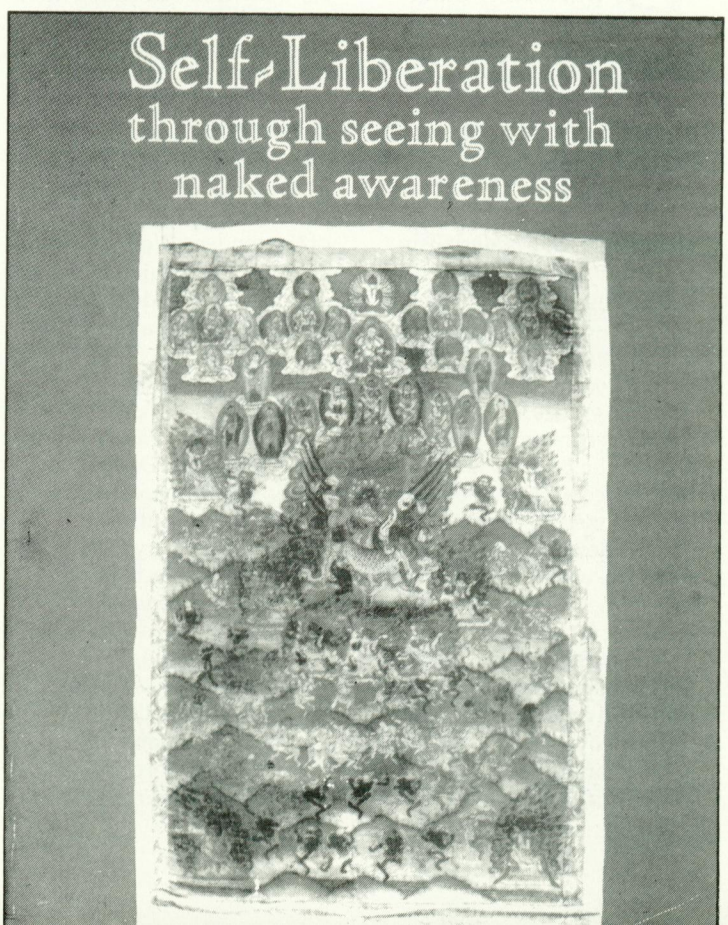
Readers coming to this work with no previous knowledge of Buddhist meditation need to be aware of the distinction made in Dzogchen between 'meditation' and 'contemplation'. Meditation in Dzogchen has a narrower denotation than it does in the wider Buddhist tradition, referring only to *samatha* practices, which lead to *dhyana* or meditative absorption. In other Buddhist systems 'meditation' also comprises *vipassana* or Insight practices, designed to lead to self-liberation. In Dzogchen this is referred to as the state of contemplation.

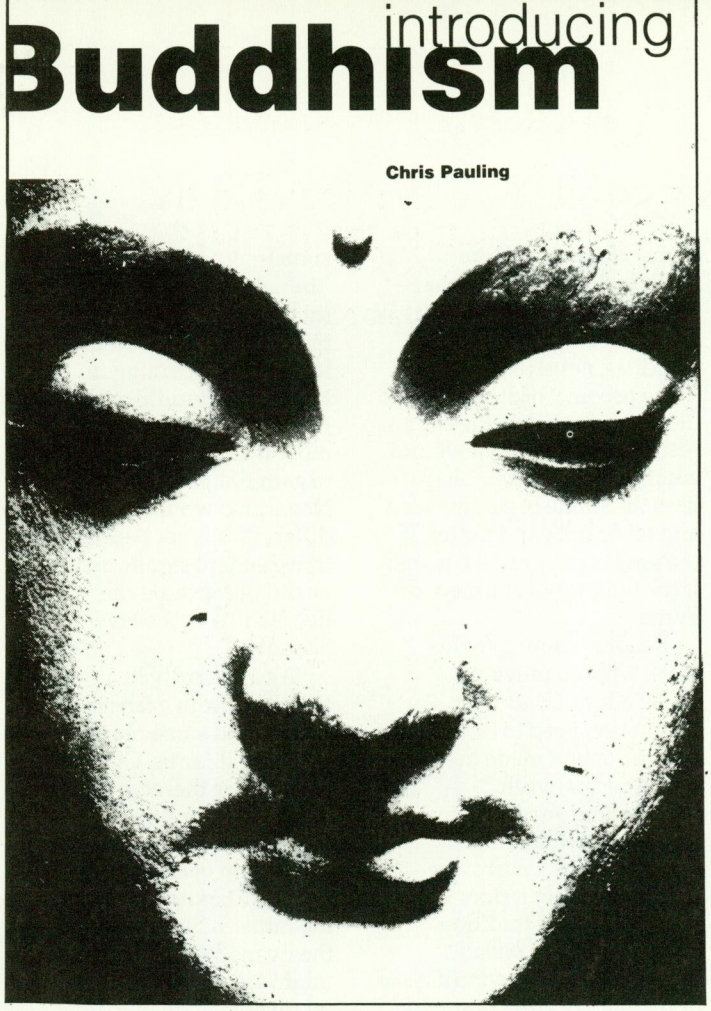
A passage in a footnote to the introduction referring to *bodhichitta* stands out to be questioned. Having observed that in the Dzogchen Tantras the Primordial State is sometimes called *bodhichitta*, 'the enlightened nature of mind', Vajranatha says that the term *bodhichitta* has a much less exalted meaning in Mahayana Buddhism. He reduces it in that context to no more than a resolute intention to gain Enlightenment. Nagarjuna would surely beg to differ. Was it not because of its transcendent significance that he did not include the Bodhichitta in the Five Skandhas?

We are hardly in a position to benefit from a *terma* until we have found someone to decipher it for us. Our gratitude is therefore due to Vajranatha for presenting us with this new, more accurate, translation of an invaluable text. Readers accustomed to the rather biblical rhythms of the Evans-Wentz version might take time to adjust to the relatively flat delivery of Vajranatha's, but sense here is more important than sound.

It is a text to return to periodically, in response to Padmasambhava's exhortation to 'look at your own mind, observing it again and again'. As we reflect on them, the words sink in and work on us. A teaching such as this, like great poetry, 'communicates before it is understood'.

Abhaya





BUDDHISM IN A NUTSHELL

Introducing Buddhism
by Chris Pauling
Published by Windhorse
pp.47, paperback
price £1.95

Readers of *Golden Drum* know Chris Pauling as a member of the magazine's editorial team. Here he brings his experience as a Western Buddhist to the feat of putting Buddhism in a nutshell.

The booklet is addressed to the Western reader disillusioned by materialism and traditional religion, presenting Buddhism as a 'very old—but very radical—alternative.... a way of rediscovering the human and spiritual values so lacking in the bleak consumerism of our times'. The Buddha is introduced as one who became disillusioned by the emptiness of a life devoted to material pleasure, who left home determined to find a deeper meaning for existence.

The presentation of the Buddha's teaching and its historical development which follows covers an astonishing amount of ground. Traditional formulations are used as a framework for an introduction which seeks always to pinpoint 'what Buddhism is all about', the essence which underlies its many cultural forms. Many common misconceptions are briefly clarified, from 'suffering' to 'Enlightenment', from *vipassana* meditation to Tantric initiation.

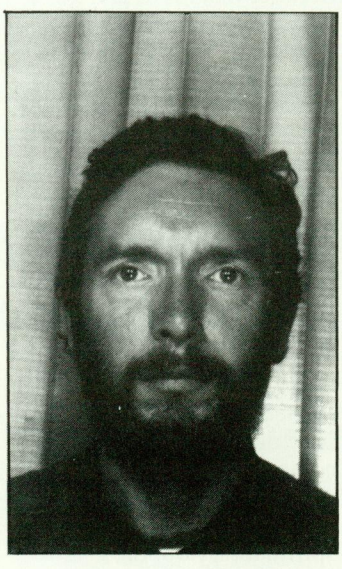
Chris Pauling's down-to-earth approach has a compelling force, particularly in his exploration of Buddhist ethics as applied to the stresses of the modern Western lifestyle. He is quick to anticipate misunderstandings and careful to avoid technical terms and jargon (both traditional and 'FWBO'), using language with a contemporary air—the Buddha as a 'trailblazer', the Dharma as a 'blueprint', the precepts as 'benchmarks'. But, as he observes, 'the very nature of Buddhism seems to lie outside the categories in which we Westerners are used to thinking'. Language conditions thought; it follows that for a new way of thinking, a new language is required, hence Sangharakshita's coinage of terms like 'Higher Evolution' and 'True Individual'. The balance of familiar vocabulary and new definitions seems about right here, seasoned with lively use of colloquial phrases.

The reader is kept alert to the limitations of language; the 'armchair Buddhist' is urged that reading and intellectual understanding are not enough. It is a little surprising, therefore, to find no mention of the devotional aspect of Buddhism. Coming from a background of Western rationalism and constrained by the idea that worship implies God, many newcomers to Buddhism find it hard to understand the role of devotion to the Three Jewels in engaging our emotions in spiritual practice; that worship is intrinsic to Buddhism, not a cultural trapping, needs to be explained.

The rational Westerner has a special need for a *feeling* for Buddhism to balance the *idea* of it. Obviously, in a short booklet, there is room for only a little of both, but, while focusing on clarifying ideas, Chris Pauling evokes the feeling of Buddhism through the image of liberation which pervades the booklet: freedom from the prison of our fixed views, from our slavery to craving and habit. 'The whole of Buddhism can be seen as an attempt to persuade us to expand our vision of who and what we are.'

This taste of freedom will refresh the jaded palate of the consumer, and should whet the appetite for more.

Karen Stout



Chris Pauling

ALSO RECEIVED:

The Principal Teachings of Buddhism
Tsongkapa
Mahayana Sutra and Tantra Press

Dependent Arising and Emptiness
Elizabeth Napper
Wisdom

Voices from the Circle
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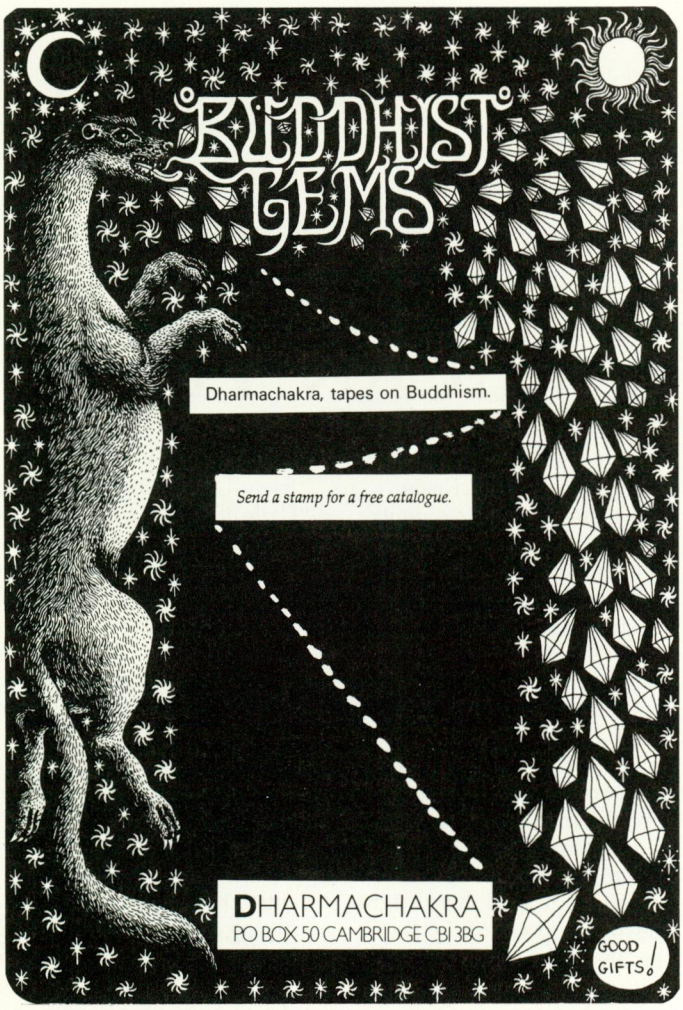

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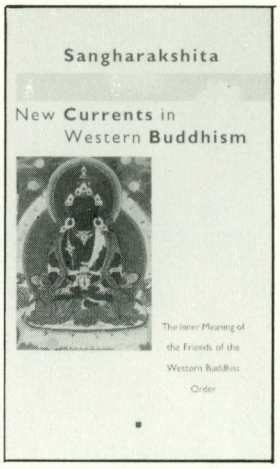

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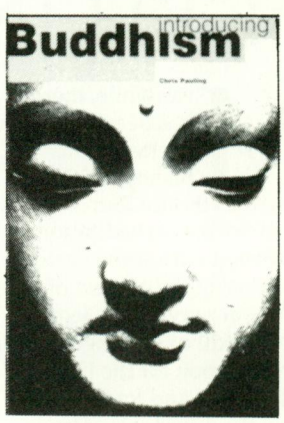

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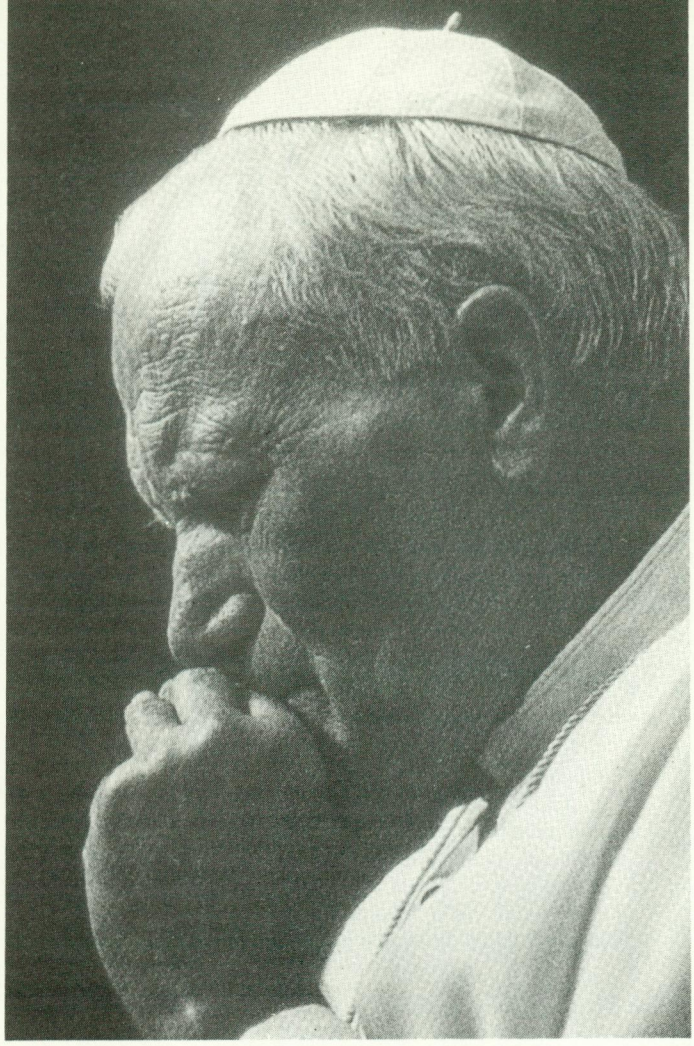

VATICAN VISIT

In November a small delegation from the European Buddhist Union visited the Vatican, at the invitation of the 'Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue' of the Roman Catholic Church. Whilst there they participated in 'exploratory talks', and also briefly met Pope John Paul.

The group comprised Stephen Hodge (President), Rosie Findheisen (Vice-President), Bruno Portigliatti, Jacques Martin, and other representatives of Buddhist groups in Europe.

In the first of two meetings, representatives of the Council explained their purpose to their guests. Expressing an interest in genuine dialogue, they spoke of their desire for an informed understanding of Buddhism. They were also interested to discover what common ground there might be for co-operation. At the second meeting the EBU's representatives raised several matters of concern. Of these, the most important were: that some of the Vatican's advisors on Buddhism do not appear to be particularly reliable or friendly to Buddhism; that the Catholics' own two-tier system of priesthood and laity tends to make them underestimate the role of Buddhists who are not monks or nuns; that the Catholic Church still tends to see Western Buddhists as appendages of Eastern schools of Buddhism rather than as independent, and tend to talk therefore with Eastern monks and nuns rather than with Western Buddhists.

The meeting was very much a preliminary one, giving the two parties a chance to get to know each other and work out a basis for further dialogue. In Stephen Hodge's opinion, however, this meeting was symptomatic of a growing recognition of Buddhism in the

SETTLING DIFFERENCES

Meanwhile, there has been published a letter to the bishops of the Roman Catholic Church on the use of 'forms of meditation associated with some Eastern religions' in the context of Christian prayer. The letter is from Cardinal Ratzinger, of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and has been given the approval of Pope John Paul. In his letter the Cardinal discusses the correct forms of Christian prayer (from a Roman Catholic point of view) and outlines some 'erroneous ways of praying'. Whilst allowing that 'genuine practices of meditation which come from the Christian East and from the great non-Christian religions' could help a person to achieve 'an interior peace' as a preliminary to properly Christian prayer, he criticizes attempts at harmonizing Christian prayer with 'Eastern techniques' in order to try to 'generate spiritual experiences' or 'superior knowledge'. He also criticizes the use of a 'negative theology' which confuses what he sees as aspects of a Buddhist theory of an 'absolute' with a particular conception of the Christian God, and which thus ignores crucial aspects of Christian dogma.

Non-Buddhists may indeed find Buddhist tranquillity meditation helpful in their attempts to cultivate 'an interior peace'. But the Cardinal does well to point out that one can get extremely confused when one starts to mix Buddhist *Insight* meditation with non-Buddhist meditations that involve belief in 'God'—a belief which stands in direct opposition to the doctrines of Buddhism. He is quite correct in questioning such syncretism. The Cardinal has other pertinent points to make. For example, he stresses the importance of 'love' and working in the world in contrast to the 'spiritual privatism' of seeking spiritual experiences through the use of impersonal techniques. He also stresses the 'personal and communitarian' nature of genuine Christian prayer. It is not clear whether he thinks that genuine Buddhist meditation is a form of 'spiritual privatism'. However he does not appear to be particularly well-informed about Buddhism, for he seems to imply that its aim involves 'the personal self ... being dissolved or disappearing into the sea of the Absolute'. This is *not* in fact the aim of Buddhism. Moreover, Buddhist spiritual practice must involve love and compassion. It involves working on oneself, but it also involves working in the world. Perhaps these points could be a basis for dialogue next time the EBU meets with the Vatican.

CORRECTION

In our last issue, the Dalai Lama was described as 'the spiritual head of the Tibetan Gelugpa Order' (*Dalai Lama's Peace Prize*). As Ngawang Tsering points out in a letter to us, this is not the case. 'The first Dalai Lama, Gedun Drub (13911474) was of course one of the disciples of Tsongkhapa, but it was Gyaltsab Je, his chief disciple, who became Gaden Thirpa, the successor to Tsongkhapa, hence spiritual head of the Gelugpa. Since then the spiritual head of the Gelugpa is known as Gaden Thripa, and is selected from the learned Geshes of the main Gelugpa monsateries.'

In a footnote Ngawang Tsering adds: 'For an emanation of Avalokitesvara, the protector of all beings, a Nobel Prize is certainly insignificant, but in this period of spiritual degeneration, people's awareness of the higher qualities of mind is appreciable.'

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A MAJOR LANDMARK: THE DAPODI COMPLEX

Until recently Buddhism was all but extinct in India, its original homeland. But in the last few decades a remarkable revival has taken place. The latest landmark in this resurgence is the opening of a major new building complex—the Dhammachakra Pravartan Mahavihar—in the Dapodi district of the Maharashtran city of Poona.

The Buddhist revival in India was sparked off by one man. On 14 October 1956, Dr B R Ambedkar—the undisputed leader of India's ex-'Untouchables'—publicly renounced Hinduism and embraced Buddhism. This action set off a wave of mass-conversions among his people, as a result of which there are now some 9,000,000 new Buddhists in India, mainly in the state of Maharashtra. But shortly after his public conversion Dr Ambedkar died, leaving the ex-'Untouchables' with no clear leader, and all too often with little real contact with Buddhism.

Sangharakshita was asked by Dr Ambedkar to advise on the mass conversion movement, and for many years while living on the Indo-Tibetan border he paid regular visits to Maharashtra to teach the Dharma. When Sangharakshita returned to Britain he was forced to devote less time to India's new Buddhists. But in 1978, Lokamitra—one of Sangharakshita's Western followers—went to India to continue his work. And with remarkable success. Today TBMSG (the Indian wing of the FWBO) is a dynamic spiritual and social force, and very much in the forefront of the Buddhist revival in India.

But TBMSG has never been rich, and it has usually operated out of premises which would be thought wholly inadequate by Western standards. In 1982 TBMSG was given a large plot of land in Dapodi for a new centre. Then came seven years of legal and planning problems. But in late 1988 work did eventually start on a major complex to house the headquarters of TBMSG and its social work wing, Bahujan Hitay, as well as to provide educational and cultural facilities, and—not least—a very beautiful shrine-room. (Money for the social welfare aspects of the complex was raised largely from the British public by Aid For India. Funds for the shrine building were donated by Buddhists from around the world.)

The new complex will provide a focal point for Buddhists from all over India. Its official opening on 10 March 1990 was an important step forward for the Dharma in India, and was marked by a major public celebration attended by some 20,000 people.

A number of members of the Western Buddhist Order as well as other sympathizers travelled from the West to take part in the celebrations. Among them was Manjusvara, who works at the Oxford offices of the Karuna Trust, the 'successor' to Aid For India. He sent us the following report:

I had just come back from Calcutta, and didn't really know what to expect as I made my way to Dapodi. The train was crowded, but no more than usual for a Saturday evening. At Dapodi an unusually large number of people got off. There was an air of excitement, and a look of anticipation on the people's faces. Walking from the station I found Dapodi bazaar decorated with colourful flags and banners, and pictures of the Buddha and Dr Ambedkar filled the sky.

But none of this prepared me for what I found when I arrived at the open ground in front of Jeevak, the Bahujan Hitay Health Centre. Normally it is a ragged waste, where goats and chickens scavenge among the rubbish, while children from the surrounding slums play endless games of cricket. Today it was a sea of people—some 20,000 of them I was later told—all making their way towards the Mahavihar.

When I had last seen it a few weeks earlier the building had still been girdled in bamboo scaffolding, as the construction workers scrambled to get it finished in time for the opening celebrations. Now it was breathtakingly beautiful. It had been draped with hundreds of white electric lights, and as dusk fell it took on the appearance of a giant birthday cake—fitting perhaps for Dr Ambedkar's centenary year. The site—stretching down to the river which marks its boundary—had been cleared of building debris and given some basic landscaping. In the entrance a stage had been set up for the night's celebrations. On the platform, along with two Ministers of State from the Government of Maharashtra who had offered valuable assistance to the project, were a number of familiar faces from the FWBO/TBMSG—Dharmacharis Vimalakirti, Bodhidhamma, Chandrabodhi, Maitreyanatha, Lokamitra, Subhuti, and others—a reminder that the success of this project is the result of much hard work by Buddhists from both East and West.

As I drew close the air was filled with the sound of music—no Buddhist programme in India is complete without its 'muktavishkar', or cultural activities. The songs were in Marathi, but a few words were unmistakable: Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha, Dr Ambedkar, and Bhante Sangharakshita. As I looked at the thousands of people listening with delight to the music I found myself thinking of Sangharakshita's many journeys down from the Himalayas to keep alive the

... few of the well wishers

The Mahavihar complex

flame lit by Dr Ambedkar—and of how the smiles on these people's faces were the direct result of these efforts.

In his address Lokamitra pointed out that when he arrived in Poona in 1978, Sangharakshita suggested that one of the first things he might put his mind to was setting up a fitting centre, or vihara, for the new Buddhists. This had taken rather longer than either of them had expected. At times it had seemed that the land in Dapodi—generously donated by the Bharathe family—would be lost forever in a host of legal and planning problems. But at last the vihara had been built. And the TBMSG had come a long way from its early days, when classes were held in a garage in Poona belonging to a Christian lady—but only on Sundays when the owner drove her car to church!

The new and long-awaited building is to be much more than a vihara as this word is usually understood. It is a complex which will house a number of complementary activities—some purely 'spiritual', others with more obviously social goals. In this way the Dhammachakra Pravartan Mahavihar embodies the spirit of Dr Ambedkar's vision—for he saw that his 'Peaceful Revolution' required a new kind of Buddhist, fully committed to spiritual practice and ideals, but also fully engaged in the world, and wholeheartedly fighting against social injustice and oppression.

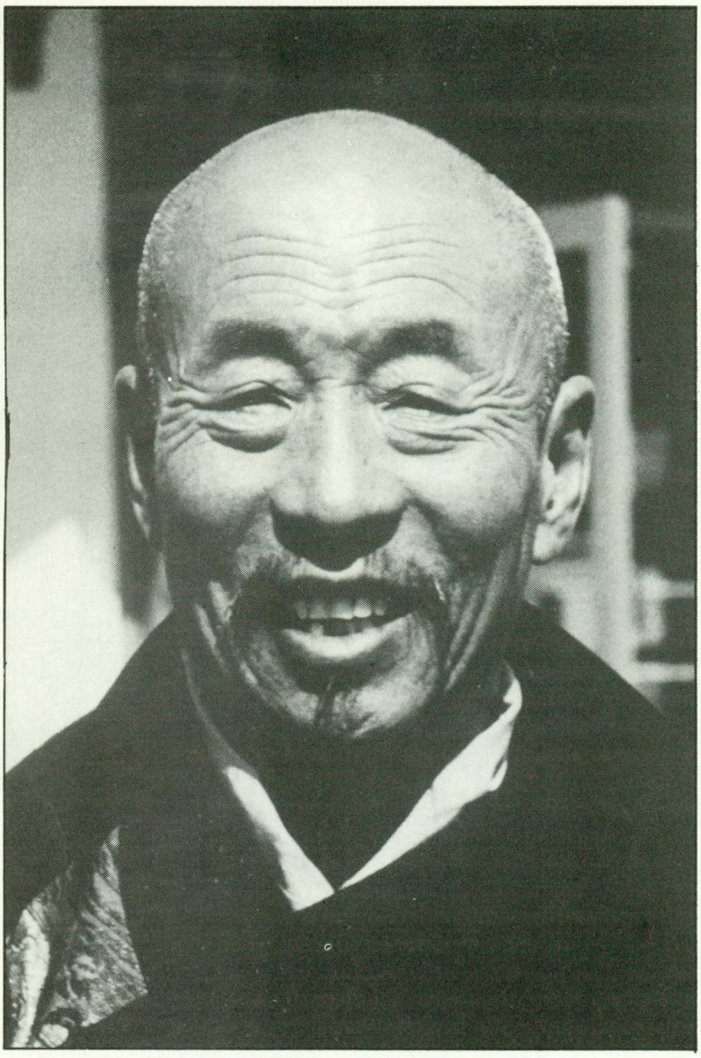
Thus the complex will house the offices of Bahujan Hitay, TBMSG's social work wing, providing a central headquarters to co-ordinate its activities all over India, as well as a residential centre for trainees. It will house an educational institute, the Dr Ambedkar Jnanamandin, which will run a research library specializing in Buddhism and Dr Ambedkar, and organize seminars and lectures. It will house the Ashvagosha Cultural Centre—and since the building includes a purpose-built amphitheatre, and is constructed 'on stilts' to provide a large covered area, it offers plenty of scope for cultural events.

The shrine building itself is near the river, at the rear of the complex, linked to the rest of the building by a covered walkway. Its white, glass-filled walls and ceiling give it a light and airy atmosphere. Eloquent in its simplicity and grace, it provides a peaceful haven from the hurly-burly of life in the surrounding slums. Throughout the opening celebrations a steady stream of people made their way up to this, the heart of the whole complex, to proudly place simple offerings on the shrine.

Lokamitra and Bodhidharma at the commmemorative plaque

Through my work with the Karuna Trust I have spent many hours with the ex-'Untouchable' Buddhists of India, and have come to love the dignity and fortitude they display amid the harsh realities of the slums that many of them still inhabit. I found it very moving to share their celebration. The beauty of the building, the joy of the music, the pride of the speeches, all were fitting testimony to their practice of the Dharma.

I take back to England an image that for me captures all the joy of that wonderful warm March evening. I had climbed up high onto the roof of the vihara, and I looked out across the many thousands of people spread out below me. To the left and right sat the men in their sparkling white shirts. Between them were the ladies in their colourful saris, an explosion of colour in a sea of white. It looked for all the world as though a vast garland of flowers had blossomed from the dust and dirt of Dapodi.



DHARDO RIMPOCHE

On Saturday 27 March Dhardo Rimpoche died in Kalimpong, India, at the age of seventy-three. Dhardo Rimpoche was a teacher and close friend of Sangharakshita. He is highly respected within the FWBO, where his unpretentious goodness, service for others, clear foresight, and breadth of vision are seen as setting an excellent example for Western Buddhists.

Dhardo Rimpoche was considered to be the twelfth tulku (reincarnate lama) in an illustrious Nyingmapa lineage which originated in Dhardsendo on the border between China and Tibet. The previous tulku—the eleventh—was adopted by the Dalai Lama's Gelugpa sect, becoming the abbot of Drepung, the largest college-monastery in Tibet. As the chief negotiator with China and Britain during the troubles of 1910–11, when China invaded Tibet and the Dalai Lama fled to India, the eleventh Dhardo Rimpoche was instrumental in preserving Tibetan independence—and Tibetan Buddhism—into the twentieth century.

The most recent Dhardo Rimpoche was himself born in Dhardsendo. Until the age of nine he was educated in a monastery near his home. Then he was taken to central Tibet, and enthroned with much ceremony at Drepung. A brilliant scholar, he attained the rank of Geshe, and in his year was widely recognized as an outstanding competitor in the annual debates held for the most accomplished students to be awarded this title.

In 1947 the government of Ladakh asked Dhardo Rimpoche to become abbot of a new monastery they were sponsoring at Bodh-Gaya in India, the site of the Buddha's Enlightenment. He felt that he could not refuse this request. It was in Bodh-Gaya that he caught his first glimpse of a yellow-robed monk with a white face—an event which he later said caused a strange feeling to come over him. He has also said that he wondered at the time whether a white man could possibly understand the Dharma!

But Dhardo Rimpoche's curiosity on this point was soon satisfied. Later that year the two men met in Kalimpong on the Indo-Tibetan border—and found that they understood each other very well. The white-faced monk was Sangharakshita, who became Rimpoche's main disciple and closest friend.

When China invaded Tibet in 1951 Dhardo Rimpoche realized that this spelt the end of Tibetan independence, and of Tibetan Buddhism on its home soil. He decided not to return to Tibet, but instead to do what he could to preserve the Dharma, by helping to keep the Tibetan culture alive long enough to allow it to communicate its message to the rest of the world. To do this he set up a school in Kalimpong to train Tibetan refugees in Hindi and English, as well as in the culture of the Tibet they had left behind.

When the Chinese made their move against Tibetan Buddhism in 1959, and many lamas, monks, and lay Tibetans fled to India, it was the people Dhardo Rimpoche had trained who negotiated with the Indians to make sure that the refugees and their culture survived—for example by securing refugee camps in cool places, where the dispossessed highlanders would not suffer from the diseases of the hot Indian plains. This sort of clear foresight was highly typical of Dardo Rimpoche.

Also characteristic was Dhardo Rimpoche's total lack of pretension, and his complete immunity to the subtle arrogance which can accompany spiritual attainment. As a high ranking lama he was treated with the utmost reverence by other Tibetans—people would literally prostrate at his feet. But he never allowed this to affect his attitude towards either himself or other people.

He also remained completely unaffected by the attractions of prestige or power. Never a man to hide the truth for his own benefit, he was outspoken to a degree which sometimes caused him difficulties. In 1962 he took a vow never to accept any post which involved politics or power. (The present Dalai Lama repeatedly asked Dhardo Rimpoche to accept important positions, but because of his vow Rimpoche has always refused. The requests only stopped when he frankly explained the reason for his refusal.)

Dhardo Rimpoche's lack of pretension extended even to his status as a tulku, and to the Tibetan honorific 'Rimpoche' which goes with this status. (Rimpoche means roughly 'precious one', and could be said to indicate someone in whom the Bodhisattva spirit has to some extent arisen.) To quote his words to an Order member who visited him in Kalimpong: 'Once I was *called* Rimpoche. Then I began to act like a Rimpoche. Now I *am* a Rimpoche. Meditate every day and you can become a Rimpoche.'

This is typical of Dhardo Rimpoche's advice to those who made the long journey to Kalimpong to meet him (meditate every day, do something to help others, think less about yourself): uncomplicated but straight to the point. And his actions, like his words, were chosen for effectiveness rather than glamour. Dhardo Rimpoche never visited the West, and unlike some of his fellow lamas his name is not well known here. But for all that he has played a major part in saving the Tibetan Dharma from oblivion, and in spreading it to the West.

Unobtrusive action is said to be the hallmark of the Bodhisattva. And Sangharakshita has said that of all the many remarkable people he has met in his eventful life, Dhardo Rimpoche is the one who most clearly embodied the Bodhisattva spirit.

(A fuller appreciation of Dhardo Rimpoche will appear in the next issue of *Golden Drum*.)

BACK IN THE USSR

Not long ago the idea of members of the Western Buddhist Order openly travelling to Estonia and Leningrad to lead retreats, give public lectures, and hold discussions would have been unthinkable. But in the opening days of the new decade Kamalashila (the founder of 'Vajraloka', our meditation centre in North Wales) and Finnish Order member Sarvamitra could set out to do just that.

The visit began with a boat trip across the Bay of Finland to Tallin, the capital of the Baltic Republic of Estonia. (As we have reported in previous issues, Sarvamitra had already established contact with a group of Buddhists in Estonia, and held several retreats there.) Within a few hours of arriving the two Order members found themselves leading a non-residential retreat in a 'temple'—a slightly tumble-down wooden building—in the suburbs of Tallin.

The retreat—which lasted three days, and was attended by about thirty people—was followed by a talk at Tallin University. Sarvamitra introduced the evening with a few words on the FWBO and the concept of Sangha. Kamalashila then discussed the difference between Buddhist cultures and Buddhism itself, as well as the Noble Eightfold Path. This was followed by a lively question-and-answer session—Kamalashila describes the audience of one hundred as 'vocal, sympathetic, interested, and intelligent'.

After a final evening session at the temple (which attracted the attention of the local press) Kamalashila and Sarvamitra boarded the 5.30 a.m internal flight for Leningrad—a 'very basic aircraft, like an old-style coach inside.' (The forty minute flight cost the price of a few cups of tea.) That evening they were treated to a reception attended by about thirty people, at which discussion centred on the future of Buddhism in the Soviet Union, traditional and 'Western' approaches to Buddhism, and—perhaps suprisingly—Dr Ambedkar. (Russian Buddhists take a great deal of interest in the Buddhist movement among India's ex-'Untouchables'—perhaps an indication that although many Russians are disillusioned with state communism they have not lost their deep concern for the socially disadvantaged.)

The Dharma is not new to Leningrad. The Tibetan Gelugpa school built a temple in the city at the beginning of the century, when Buddhism was a lively and growing religion in Russia. The Tibetan-style building was completed just prior to the Revolution—when the lama in charge was shot and the monks sent to Siberia. Now the authorities have promised to hand the temple back to the newly registered Leningrad Buddhist Association.

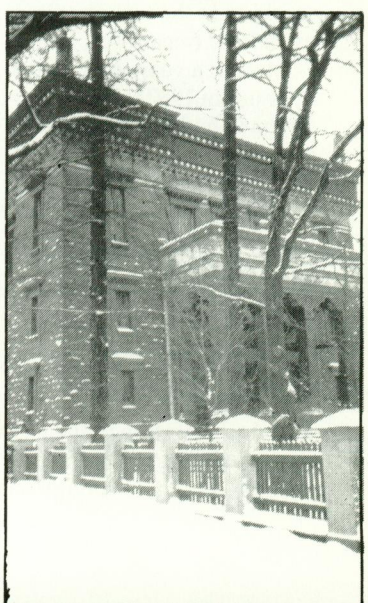
Some Buddhism did survive the Russian Revolution—just. Two Gelugpa monasteries still exist in Buryatria, near Lake Baykal. Many Buddhists both in Leningrad and in Tallin have Mongolian teachers, and have made the long trip to Buryatria. (A real pilgrimage: the journey takes a week by a succession of short local flights.) Because of this Mongolian connection most Russian Buddhists follow the Gelugpa school, but in Leningrad several other approaches to the Dharma can also be found. Recently Joseph Goldstein (an American Vipassana teacher) has visited, as have several other Theravadin teachers, and—we hear—some Kagyu lamas.

But contact with Buddhist teachers and practitioners remains a problem for many of Leningrad's Buddhists, and Kamalashila's visit was much appreciated. During his stay he conducted a three-day retreat—a Vajraloka-style 'meditation workshop'—in the outskirts of a village north of Leningrad. He also found time to visit the Buddhist temple, and to show a video on Sangharakshita's recent visit to India, which aroused much interest.

Kamalashila thinks that the prospects for Buddhism in the Soviet Union are excellent. Whatever its faults Russian Marxism has at least been a passionate and idealistic doctrine. With liberalization many Russians will seek other outlets for this idealism—outlets that Western consumerism will not be able to offer.

Now that freedom of practice is possible, Russia's Buddhists seem likely to grasp it with both hands. Many have already made great sacrifices—Kamalashila met several people who had spent time in Siberia, including one man who had returned from fifteen years in a forced labour camp. Such people have been tried in the fire, and are not likely to be deflected by the superficial attractions of consumerism now that the political climate is more favourable.

Kamalashila was very affected by the people he met in the Soviet Union, both in Estonia and Leningrad: 'It was impressive to see how excited people were at the possibility of actually doing all this, for real, out in the open. ... What is special about Russia is people's faith, a quality one doesn't expect from what seem to be Western people.'



The Tibetan temple in Leningrad

THE CHERRY ORCHARD

The Cherry Orchard Restaurant—the largest women's 'Team-Based Right Livelihood Business' in the FWBO—celebrates its tenth anniversary this year.

From humble beginnings as a small café catering mainly for the construction team building the London Buddhist Centre, the Cherry Orchard has grown into a well known restaurant—currently on a shortlist of six being considered for the *Time Out* eating awards—employing thirteen women. An integral part of the London Buddhist Centre's 'mandala', the Cherry Orchard provides a valuable arena for the spiritual growth of its team of workers, as well as a popular meeting and eating place for people working in the LBC and its associated businesses.

Within a year of its official opening in 1980 the Cherry Orchard had expanded it premises to three shopfronts, and by August 1983 a strong core of workers had developed, six of whom formed a community called Suvirya. The formation of this community was a watershed in the Cherry Orchard's history, increasing the dynamism and sense of common direction in the team. By 1984 the restaurant had become profitable enough to give money to the London Buddhist Centre, and in 1987 it began to open—with waitress service—in the evenings. The restaurant was given a new look and new furnishings, and in 1988 its image was improved even more with redecoration and a new shopfront. The following year the staff was streamlined under the direction of Ruth Hartlein, the current manager, with the result that the financial support of the team-members could be improved.

But while the Cherry Orchard was developing as a business, one of its main functions has been to provide a setting in which women could use work—and the human interactions it involves—as part of their spiritual practice. Over the years there has been more and more emphasis on team-building and communication, and the development of friendships has always been a common ideal. The team study together, spend days together, and once a year go on a team retreat together. At least ten women who have worked at the Cherry Orchard are now members of the Western Buddhist Order, and at the last London Buddhist Centre mitra ceremonies, five out of the nine new women mitras had been part of the Cherry Orchard team.

A typical day at the Cherry Orchard begins at 8.30 a.m when the day team arrive. Everyone knows her job and there is usually just about enough time to put the kettle on before starting the preparation for opening at 12. Sometimes the work goes smoothly, but things can always go wrong—equipment breaks down, a wrong delivery, a cook is taken ill—and part of the team's practice is to help each other stay calm and mindful in such situations.

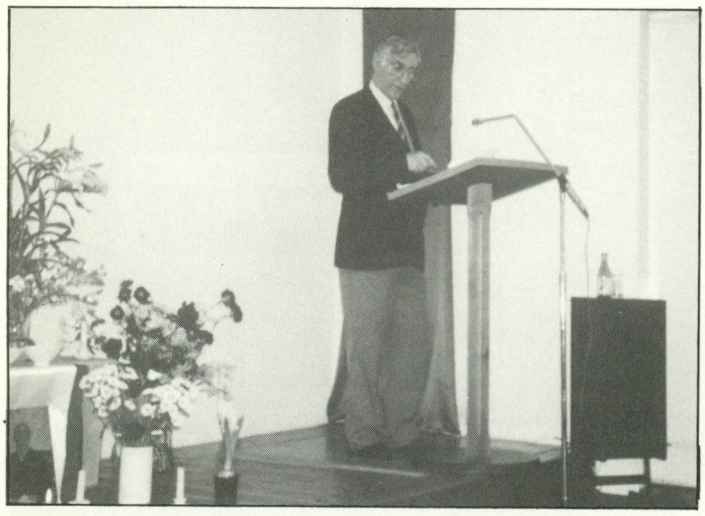
By noon there is already a queue waiting outside—about 150 customers lunch at the Cherry Orchard every day. Many are regulars who work locally, many more are from the London Buddhist Centre and other 'Right Livelihood' businesses in the area. New customers are attracted all the time as the restaurant's reputation spreads.

At 4 p.m the day team come together to 'report in', or—once a week—for a business meeting where policy decisions are made. At 4.30 the evening team arrive, and the Cherry Orchard is transformed from a busy lunchtime café to a softly lit evening restaurant where more customers—again many of them regulars—enjoy a relaxed evening out. Often it is early morning by the time the last diners have left, and the restaurant has been cleared up in preparation for the next day.

The development of the Cherry Orchard from its small beginnings has been impressive, but it has not always been easy. There have been times of disillusionment and low morale. Understaffing is a chronic problem, which in the past has resulted in team-members sometimes feeling stressed and overworked. Currently the team is under-strength, and to avoid too much strain on the staff the opening hours have been shortened—but the restaurant is losing profits as a result.

The present team has lots of potential, but most of its members are relatively inexperienced. They are actively looking for ways of directing their energies and attracting new team-members. This situation is challenging, and opens up a host of opportunities. The future holds many exciting possibilities—outside training courses to increase skills and confidence, improving staff facilities, further increasing financial support, the chance to give more *dana*, and much more.

A poetry reading in Croydon



SANGHARAKSHITA DIARY

Sangharakshita has spent most of the last few months in semi-retreat in his London flat, tucked away in a secluded wing of the men's community above the London Buddhist Centre. There he works on his literary endeavours, with pauses to converse, to visit art galleries and exhibitions, or to sit for an oil portrait being painted by mitra Alison Harper.

But two sad events have coloured the relative tranquillity of this period. On 30 January, Sangharakshita's mother died peacefully in her sleep. She was ninety-two years old, and will be remembered by all who met her as a very clear-headed and independently-minded lady. Her body was cremated at Southend Crematorium on 8 February. During the service Sangharakshita spoke a few words in remembrance.

Then, on Saturday, 24 March, Dhardo Rimpoche died in Kalimpong, India. Rimpoche was one of Sangharakshita's principal Tibetan teachers during his stay in Kalimpong, and the two men became—and remained—very close friends. A short appreciation of Dhardo Rimpoche appears elsewhere in this issue.

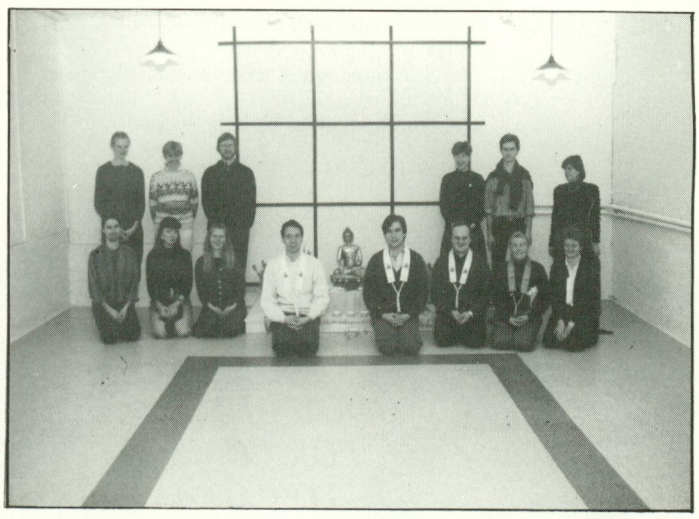
Although he has intentionally been living a quiet life, Sangharakshita has still found time for some public appearances. He has given a series of poetry readings on the theme of Friendship—at the London and Croydon Buddhist Centres, as well as in the elegant surroundings of the Brighton Pavilion and the Lord Mayor's Parlour of Manchester's impressive Town Hall. These readings were combined with the launch of his new book *The Taste of Freedom*. This looks at some basic Buddhist doctrines and how these can be applied in the West. It also points out some of the all too common attitudes which prevent Westerners from approaching these in the right spirit.

On 3 February Sangharakshita attended the Women's National Order Weekend in London, where he answered a series of questions on the theme of 'Individuality'. Later in the day he travelled to Padmaloka in Norfolk to attend the Men's National Order weekend. There he introduced Subhuti's talk—entitled 'Is there Friendship in the Order?'—and added some pertinent thoughts of his own.

A few days later, on the morning of Saturday 10 February, Sangharakshita could be heard on BBC Radio Four's 'Prayer for Today', where he gave an interview, and concluded the programme by reading from the *Karaniyametta Sutta*. Later in the month he was also interviewed by BBC Manchester for a radio religious affairs programme.

Sangharakshita continues to read all letters sent to him, and is very pleased to hear from people. However, he would like to stress that all mail be sent to his office at Padmaloka, and not directly to London.

Sona and Dhirananda (centre) with friends in the shrine-room



STOCKHOLM CENTRE OPENS

On Saturday 3 March the new Stockholm Buddhist Centre was opened. The event was attended by local Friends, several representatives of other Buddhist groups, and three Finnish Order members who flew from Helsinki for the occasion.

Dhirananda, the Chairman of FWBO Stockholm, formally opened the Centre and conducted a short dedication ceremony. He then gave a history of the FWBO in Sweden, helped by Sona, the British Order member who founded FWBO Stockholm. In the evening there was a *puja* for regular Friends, and the next day the centre hosted its first study day.

The new Centre consists of a well-proportioned shrine-room, a reception/study room, an office, a small pantry, and a room which will be used as a library. The Centre is located under a courtyard, which means that it is very quiet.

The opening of the Centre starts a new era for the FWBO in Sweden. We have been active in Stockholm for many years, but without a permanent centre our presence has not been fully appreciated. Now that we have our own premises our profile in Sweden will be much higher, and many people are likely to find it easier to relate more

NEW CENTRE FOR AUCKLAND

Auckland's Buddhists have a new Centre. After five years of searching they have bought the Gow Langsford Art Gallery—which was once a petrol station! The new Centre is located in Grey Lynn, a 'green' multicultural suburb across the road from Auckland's largest wholefood and alternative health centre. According to our correspondent, Monique Chasteau, it is a perfect location and well worth the wait. The Centre opens in early May with a week of festivities.

Meanwhile it has been an exceptionally hot summer in Auckland, and there have been a number of retreats at Kiwanis Camp—where any tendency to get too introspective can be offset by frequent swims in the sea and walks through the beautiful, waterfall-dotted Karamatua Valley.

A ten-day Order retreat was followed by a ten-day open retreat on the theme of the 'Five Spiritual Faculties'. Kiwanis Camp was also filled to bursting for the brief Auckland visit of Dharmananda. (He ran two one-day intensive workshops in both Auckland and Wellington that gave many people some new directions in meditation.) Dharmananda's workshops were followed by a women's retreat on the theme of 'Dreams and Consciousness'.

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

. . . ADDS UP TO

6

GOOD REASONS FOR COMING TO PADMALOKA

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

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For details see our brochure or contact:
The Secretary, Tārāloka, Cornhill Farm, Bettisfield, Nr. Whitchurch,
N. Shropshire SY13 2LV. Tel. 094 875 646

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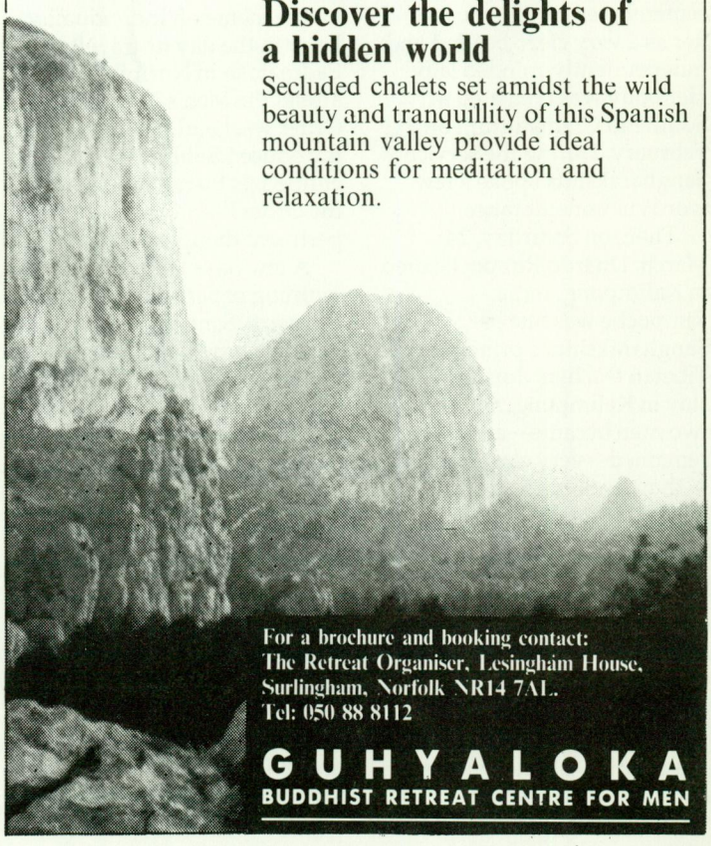
Discover the delights of a hidden world

Secluded chalets set amidst the wild beauty and tranquillity of this Spanish mountain valley provide ideal conditions for meditation and relaxation.

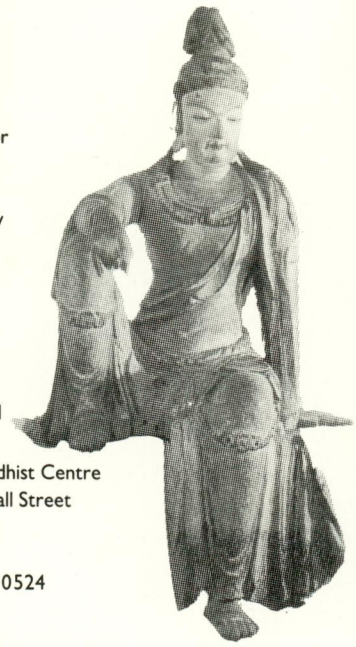


For a brochure and booking contact:
The Retreat Organiser, Lesingham House,
Surlingham, Norfolk NR14 7AL.
Tel: 050 88 8112

GUHYALOKA
BUDDHIST RETREAT CENTRE FOR MEN

The retreat will be held in Skirling House, near Biggar, in the beautiful Peebleshire countryside. It will run from 1-15 July 1990. It costs £95 per week (£75 concessions) and bookings can be made for either or both weeks. It is fully residential. Sleeping accommodation will normally be in men's or women's shared rooms. All meals will be vegetarian.

If you would like to know more about the retreat phone us on 041-333 0524. Our secretary will be pleased to speak to you.



Glasgow Buddhist Centre
329 Sauchiehall Street
Glasgow
G2 3HW
Tel: 041-333 0524

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the glasgow buddhist centre summer retreat

VAJRALOKA

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See our programme for details of short and longs stays. For more information and bookings contact:
Tyn-y-ddol, Treddol, Near Corwen, Clwyd LL21 0EN
phone 0490 81 406

The Cherry Orchard is an increasingly successful vegetarian restaurant: good food, competitive prices and an intimate night time atmosphere have made it **the** place to come and eat in the East End. We're not the only ones who say so; the good food guides and our customers agree.

However it is much more than that. It is the biggest Women's Right Livelihood business in the country, using work itself as a tool for spiritual change. The supportive atmosphere of women working and practising together challenges and encourages us to grow. At the same time we generate funds for the Dharma.

HUNGRY FOR CHANGE?

A steady increase in trade means that we are looking for three more women to join the team. Catering and business skills would be an advantage, but more important would be enthusiasm and a willingness to work and contribute to this important project. We can offer financial support and a generous retreat allowance.

Does this whet your appetite? To find out more contact:
Ruth
The Cherry Orchard
241 Globe Rd.
London E2
01-980 6678

Where to find us

MAIN CENTRES OF THE FRIENDS OF THE WESTERN BUDDHIST ORDER

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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, Trerddol, 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

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

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

Vasterlandska Buddhistordens Vanner, Hillbersvagen 5, S-126 54 Hagersten, Sweden. Tel: 08-975992

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

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

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

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

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

TBMSG Poona, Raja Harishchandra Road, Dapodi, Poona 411012, India. Tel: 0212-58403

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

Bahujan Hitay, Raja Harishchandra Road, Dapodi, Poona 411012, India. Tel: 0212-58403

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

TBMSS Sri Lanka, 10 Somananda Road, Nikepe, Dehiwala, Colombo, Sri Lanka

Auckland Buddhist Centre, P.O. Box 68-453, Newton, Auckland, New Zealand. Tel: 09-789320/892412

Wellington Buddhist Centre, P.O. Box 12-311, Wellington North, New Zealand. Tel: 04-787940

Melbourne Buddhist Centre, 34 Bishop Street, Brunswick, Victoria 3056, Australia

Sydney Buddhist Centre, 806 George Street, Sydney, Australia

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

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

Kathmandu Buddhist Centre (October–April), PO Box 4429, Hotel Asia, Thamel, Kathmandu, Nepal

Activites are also conducted in many other towns. Please contact your nearest centre for details.