

GOLDEN DRUM

A Magazine for Western Buddhists. Price £1.25 August—October 1990 (2533) No. 18



BUDDHISM AND DEATH

GOLDEN DRUM

AUGUST—OCTOBER 1990 (2533)

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

© Windhorse Publications 1990

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

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

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

DATA PROTECTION ACT

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

Advertising rates: Full page £80, 1/2-page £45, 1/4-page £25, 1/8-page £15. Booking deadline for issue 19: 26th September; artwork by 9th October. Discounts are available for series bookings. Inserts charged at £40.00 per 1000. Bookings and fuller details: 354 Crookesmoor Road, Sheffield, S10 1BH. ☎ 0742 684775

- 3 **Editorial**
- 4 **In The Cremation Ground** Why do Buddhists like to think about death?
- 6 **A Beautiful Challenge** Living with the HIV virus
- 8 **What Happens When We Die?** Buddhist views of death and rebirth
- 10 **Opening the Heart** When somebody dies, others have to cope with the pain
- 12 **How The Buddha Faced Death** An account of the Buddha's last days
- 13 **Book Reviews:** *Who Dies?* and *Healing into Life and Death, The Wheel of Life and Death*, and *Zen Tradition and Transition*
- 16 **Outlook** Trends and Developments in the Buddhist and non-Buddhist world
- 18 **Around the World** Recent events around the FWBO

THE LITTLE APOCALYPSE

I've never been much of a praying man. But I did go through something of a religious phase between the ages of six and eight. At night, snug in bed, I would trouble God—whom I experienced as a kindly, understanding sort of chap—with a few minutes of pillow talk. I'd tell him about the day's events, share a few of my hopes and fears, and then sign off with the words: 'Please let me live forever'. I would add this appeal as casually as I could, in the hope that he might, just as casually, feel moved to oblige. Who could say? Perhaps nobody had ever asked him so nicely before.

It was not that I actually feared death, or even knew much about it. But it did seem bewildering, to a consciousness so busy with the adventure of emerging, that the time available might be short, and it seemed only sensible to test whether or not the odd exception might be made. Obviously, the utter inevitability of death had not quite struck me. Indeed, it is only now I come to think of it that I realize that I don't remember how I first came to hear about death. Like most Westerners above a certain age, I do remember where I was and what I was doing when John F. Kennedy was shot. But I cannot for the life of me remember where I was and what I was doing when I first heard about death itself.

But then, I managed to live for twenty-eight years before seeing a dead body (and then only because a few of us were exploring the possibility of buying a 'chapel of rest' and turning it into the FWBO's new London Centre). By contrast, I had spent just two hours in India when I saw a corpse being carried along the road. For many Westerners, death is an improper, unmentionable mystery, shrouded in darkness, formality, platitude, and euphemism. Reluctant to think about death ourselves, it is not something we talk about in front of the children. We prefer to keep it out of our minds, even to the extent of avoiding any mention of the well-known illnesses that can bring it about.

We feel this way because death is a mystery, because it separates us from the people we love when we are the bereaved, and because it separates us from life—which is all that we really know anything about—when we are the one who dies. From the only point of view that we have, which has been formed, nourished, and developed in and by life, death is absurd and unfathomable; in fact, it is nothing short of an outrage. And it is frightening. It is so frightening that, for many people, the most desirable attribute of a religion is that it should offer some comfort and a great deal of hope in its face.

Buddhism has much to say about death. And although

much of what it says has to do with 'rebirth', and thus some form of 'survival' after death—which may bring hope to some—much of what it has to say has nothing to do with comfort or hope at all. Quite simply, Buddhist teachers, of every school and sect, have always gone to considerable lengths to remind us that death is ever approaching, that life is finite and actually rather short.

This well-documented preoccupation with death has probably played a large part in giving Buddhism its gloomy, fatalistic image. And yet, as Buddhism sees it, there is nothing gloomy about death at all. It is death, after all that gives our lives shape and meaning. It is our awareness of death that allows us to see life as an *opportunity*.

Would you buy a book if you noticed that the last few pages were missing? Would you enjoy a play that did not have a beginning, a middle, and a proper ending? (Actually, there was a fad in England for such plays and films during the sixties, but it never took root.) Why do musicologists devote their lives to 'reconstructing' the unwritten final movements of Mahler's Tenth Symphony or Mozart's Requiem?

Surely, it is only when a work of art is complete that we are able to appreciate it as a *whole*—and thus as a work of art. It is the presence of an ending that turns a potentially arbitrary sequence of events into a creative accomplishment, that tells us that this, and only this, is how the artist confronted and resolved all the problems of content and form that his material posed.

The myth of the apocalypse is embraced by most human societies. Whether heralded by the last trump or a three minute warning, the sudden and dramatic end of the world is (psychologically speaking) an enormously *attractive* notion. Because, if such a thing could be relied upon, then human life, human history, and our own small contributions to them, would become dignified with new meaning.

So why should we fear the little apocalypse of our own end? Because our lives must have an end as well as a beginning they too are invested with the potentiality for meaning—though what that meaning is will be very much up to us. But unless we are actively aware that the endeavour of life has certain boundaries and limits, then there will be little perspective, little discrimination, and very little passion. The more firmly we can face and embrace the knowledge that we will die one day, then the more vigorously will we confront the material of our lives knowing that it is the stuff of a creative enterprise. Out of it we may even make works of art.

Nagabodhi



IN THE CREMATION GROUND

Buddhists of all schools find it helpful to keep death in mind. Vessantara explains why.

Ghoom is a small village crouched on a frequently mist-shrouded ridge, 7,500 feet up in the foothills of the Himalayas. I was there last February, visiting the monastery of the late Dhardo Rimpoche. As I was exploring the dusty nooks of the old monastery, someone rushed in, picked up a conch-shell horn, went out onto the steps and began blowing it. I guessed what that sound sailing into the mist signified: a funeral procession was passing, making its way to the cremation ground on the hillside below the monastery.

I and a friend decided to attend the cremation. We arrived to find a group of about thirty Gurkha men beginning to build a funeral pyre. They were cutting up logs, which were damp from the mist, and placing them in an open structure which looked a little like a small

bandstand: circular, with pillars supporting a roof surmounted by a seated Buddha figure.

I felt a little uneasy about being there. Meditation on death, including meditation in cremation grounds, is a highly-recommended Buddhist practice. I wanted to use the occasion to accustom myself more to the fact of death, of universal impermanence. I was there for a serious purpose. However, I wasn't sure how the Gurkhas would feel, but when I asked a young man if they minded us staying, his reply was a casual 'No problem'.

The pyre of damp logs grew, supplemented by a couple of old car tyres. The men joked as they worked. One man who was chopping twigs with a kukri—the fearsome Gurkha knife—playfully mimed cutting the throats of his companions; there were smiles all round.

Eventually the pyre was finished, and the men added incense, to mitigate the effects of the tyres. They carried the body from a low building where it had lain, removed the coffin, and hefted the corpse on the pyre. Then they gathered in a circle, and we were invited to join them. From my new vantage point I could see that the deceased was an old man, of the typically wiry Gurkha build. He was dressed in cheap clothes—none of the men looked as if they had much money.

Four men took burning brands and circumambulated the body three times, then they plunged them into the damp wood. It took some time for the fire to take hold, but eventually there was a good blaze.

From being outsiders, my friend and I gradually became guests of honour. Someone appeared with metal cups of sweet milk tea, which we were offered. We were then ushered to the best seats—a log laid on the ground within three feet of the pyre.

The wind was blowing down from Kanchenjunga, and we all huddled around the fire for warmth. I sat in the midst of the crowd, warming my hands

by the fire, chatting with the Gurkhas, amongst whom were several children. It was a merry blaze, and welcome. A friendly and convivial occasion. As I stretched my hands to the fire again and again, it seemed like the most natural thing in the world.

And yet, part of my mind insisted, it was incongruous to be happily warming myself when, within touching distance, the body of an old man was being consumed by the flames. Between mouthfuls of tea, I could watch the skull blackening, note how the flesh on the limbs was being burnt away to the bone. Ghosts from my Western Christian upbringing kept whispering to me in the wind. This was Death I was facing, the great mystery, the fear of all fears.

I consulted my body and feelings for my 'gut reaction'. 'No', they replied, 'what is happening is simply natural, another part of life, something very human and ordinary, just like drinking tea, joking with friends, or sheltering from a cold wind'. With that awareness, I felt a fear fall away from me, a fear of whose existence I had hardly been aware.

There has always been a strong tradition of meditation on death in Buddhism. In recent months I feel I have been living out a meditation on death: the Gurkha cremation being swiftly followed by the deaths of my father and Dhardo Rimpoche, whom I had gone to India to visit. Practising meditation on death over the years has stood me in good stead, enabling me to respond positively to these events. I now understand more clearly than before why Buddhism has developed meditations on death, and how useful contemplating death can be, especially for Westerners.

All schools of Buddhism employ meditations on death. It is understood that it is a practice with strong emotional effects, so there are different 'strengths' of practice prescribed for people of different capabilities. The gentlest is meditation on the fact of impermanence. You simply reflect on how everything changes: on all levels from the atomic to the cosmic, nothing stays still, everything is in flux, in process of transformation. Everything comes into existence in dependence upon certain conditions, and when those conditions cease, the phenomenon disappears. This is true for an atom, a flower, a human being, or a galaxy.

This meditation helps us to see things as they really are. We tend to see life in terms of 'things'. We generalize from our experience, abstract from it, and then treat our categories as if they were real. This process is strongly reinforced by language, which gives us fixed nouns as the building blocks for our thinking process. So I think of myself as 'Vessantara', and hang onto this concept stubbornly. I have fixed ideas about what I am like, and what I want. This tendency leads me to develop fixed habits and fixed ideas in an attempt to keep my

behaviour in conformity with my stereotyped picture of myself.

Meditation on impermanence helps you escape from the prison of fixed views. It shows you that everything in the universe is a constant flux, a process of becoming. It changes your view of how you 'exist'. You experience yourself and the world as much freer, less predictable, more mysterious, even magical. You stop fighting the process of change, and begin trying to channel the process in positive directions. Change then becomes positive transformation.

You start to hold life very lightly. Meditating on impermanence is a traditional Buddhist antidote to craving and attachment. You can really only hope to control and possess something which is unchanging. If life is chameleon-like, a stream of flickering phenomena, then ultimately it is ungraspable. So you begin to see that craving, trying to hold onto things to gain security from them, is a strategy doomed to failure from the start. There is nothing to get hold of. Ultimately things are like water, flowing through your fingers as you try to grasp it.

Beyond meditation on universal impermanence is meditation specifically on death. You contemplate the fact of death, and that you will die. Some Buddhist schools have taken this to its limits. In the Theravada tradition we find a meditation on the ten stages of decomposition of a corpse. These ten stages of the decay of a dead body can be visualized imaginatively, or seen with the naked eye in an actual cremation ground. This practice is strong medicine, but it is the remedy for a very powerful disease. Whilst we can all manage to contemplate impermanence to a degree, and begin to see everything more as process, it is very hard to apply this understanding to our own bodies. As a French abbé once put it: *'Nous mourrons tous, moi aussi peut-être'*.

Buddhism sees this identification with the body as extremely limiting, for it knows that consciousness has infinite capacity. Our minds can experience limitless freedom. However, our consciousness has become fixated, hypnotized, by the physical body. In this way it becomes narrowed down, confined to experience from one point in time and space—the point occupied by the body. So identified does the consciousness become with the body that one feels that the death of the body will be the end of everything. Hence this consciousness, which could be boundless, sovereign, and free, cowers behind the barricades of flesh and bone, fearful of being 'untimely wrenched' from it. Meditation on death encourages us to stop identifying ourselves with our physical existence, and to open up the possibility of freedom. It also reminds us that life does not last, and it is a matter of urgency for us to set out on the quest for freedom.

Buddhist tantra is much concerned with death. It surrounds you with

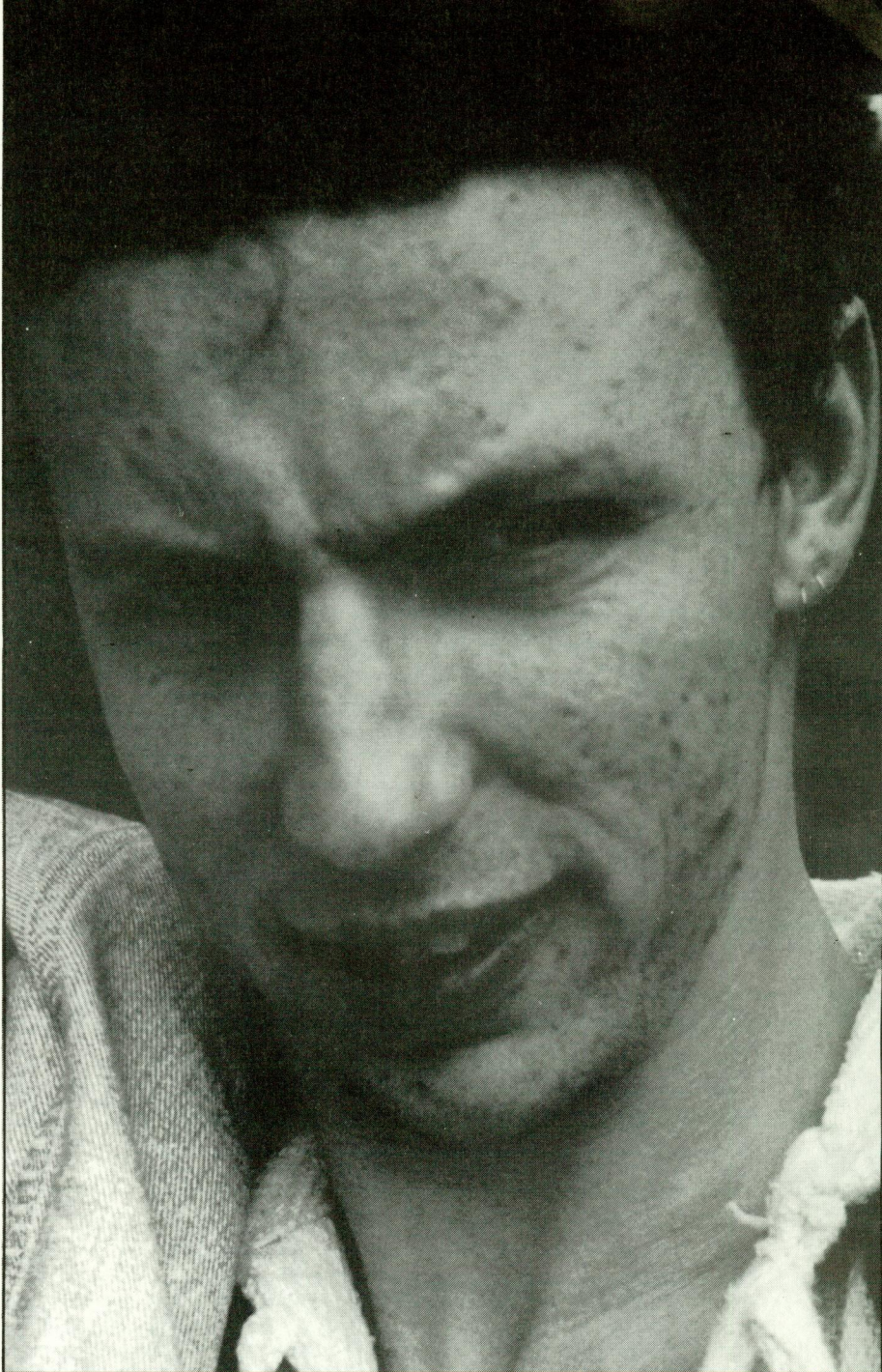
reminders of death, and things made from bone: skull cups, thighbone trumpets, and rosaries. However, it is absolutely not morbid or lugubrious. It is ecstatic and relishes freedom. It sees death as a symbol of the death of all limitation. It sees literal death as a great opportunity for the tantric practitioner who has trained in meditation. Buddhism believes in rebirth. However, usually at death ordinary people are not able to be sufficiently conscious of what they are experiencing, and are reborn in accord with the nature of their previous actions. Tantric meditators aim to go through the death process conscious and in control, enabling them to choose their own future destiny.

A few weeks after the Gurkha cremation I was back in England, attending another cremation. My father had died of a bone cancer, and I had flown back to be with my family and attend the cremation. The contrast with Ghoom was striking. Though my father's family and friends made it a very human occasion, I felt we managed to do so despite the environment and ceremonial rather than because of it. In Britain death has to be wrapped in black coats and long faces, and hidden away.

It was all symbolized for me at the crematorium by the smooth way in which the curtains glided closed on my father's coffin. This low-key tiptoeing around death, whilst it may aim to make the whole experience as little upsetting as possible, is somehow very disquieting. It is based on a deep-seated fear, which un confronted, causes more psychological damage than meeting the whole experience head on.

Western Buddhists, using meditation on death to overcome their own fears, have a great deal to offer to our society. It may be some time before we develop to the point where we can seize death as a spiritual opportunity. In the meantime it will be a good start, and will alleviate a huge amount of suffering, if we can just help people in Europe, America, and Australia to recapture a human feeling of death as something natural, part of life.

Along with all its other benefits, meditating on death gives us a sense of perspective. After all, our death is the only worldly event upon which we can definitely rely. To acknowledge it gives us a solid foundation on which to build our life, and our view of our place in the universe. Death is a touchstone by which to judge what is important in life. In that sense it is a friend, a counsellor to be welcomed. It taught me a great deal as I sipped my tea on the misty hillside of Ghoom. It has spoken wisely to Buddhist meditators through the ages. Those who have gone to meet it, and befriended it in meditation, have found that at last, after teaching them all it can, it has vanished like a mirage, to leave only an infinite freedom, an expanded awareness, which knows neither birth nor death.



A BEAUTIFUL CHALLENGE

For three years, Amritavajra has been living with the knowledge that he is 'HIV Positive'. How?

About two-and-a-half years ago I went for what is known as an AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) test. The two weeks spent waiting for the results to come through seemed to last for ever. Each night I had nightmarish dreams in which I was diagnosed as terminally ill, and I swung between believing that I had been infected and believing that it couldn't possibly happen to me. During the last few days before I received the

result, however, I was convinced that I had come into contact with the HIV (Human Immuno-deficiency Virus) virus. Nevertheless, when the result came back 'positive' I was devastated. For the first week or so I was completely numb. Life seemed to be flat and two-dimensional. Then the tears came. I was convinced I was going to die.

At that time I was alone in a new city, living in a cheap bed-sitting room, estranged from my parents and family and without any friends. It was the only time in my life when I have seriously considered suicide. Now, however, two-and-a-half years later, I am still healthy and I am happier than ever. My life is rich, varied, and on the whole is becoming more and more deeply satisfying. A lot of my happiness comes from my practice of Buddhism. It is through practising the Dharma that I am learning to accept the fact that one day I will become seriously ill and die. Paradoxically, since my diagnosis, I have become more truly alive.

I can't be exactly sure when I became

infected with the virus, but it must have been between five and seven years ago. At that point in my life I was an angry and confused young man, and my experience of life was pretty terrible. I was drinking heavily and using all kinds of drugs to help me escape from the meaninglessness of my existence. One of the drugs I experimented with was heroin. At this time no one had ever heard of AIDS—except as an ugly rumour—and nobody I knew took any notice of it. I guess that is why I was so reckless in my behaviour; I had no idea of the consequences. At that time no one did.

About two years later (1985–6), AIDS exploded into media consciousness. All the newspapers carried stories about a 'deadly killer disease'. It was a period of paranoia and grossly uninformed prejudice. I was acutely aware that I may have come into contact with the virus and decided to go for a test. I was twenty-four years old. By this time I had come across the Dharma, and my drug and alcohol abuse had fallen away—to be replaced by a daily meditation practice and a full-time degree course in Literature and Philosophy.

Nevertheless, it has not been easy. Looking back at the first year after my diagnosis, I had an incredibly difficult time. I felt painfully alone and unable to communicate my experience to anybody. In that first year I asked to become a mitra and moved into the community at the Bristol Buddhist Centre.

It was during this initial period after my diagnosis that I decided to Go For Refuge and ask for ordination. I had quite some insight into the First Noble Truth. For the first time in my life I was intensely confronted by the fact of my mortality. Of course I already knew that I was going to die, but I had never really *felt* it except on the rare occasion. At this time I could feel nothing else. I couldn't stop thinking about the fact that I would eventually get ill and die. This feeling permeated all the different aspects of my life, from catching a bus to college to eating a meal at home. It would manifest in different ways, such as an increased awareness of old people and of the large numbers of the sick and handicapped. I was also acutely aware of my body and my health. As soon as I woke up in the morning my first thought was, 'Am I still well?'. Every time I had a cold I thought that this was the beginning of the end, or every time I had a mouth ulcer I was worried that it may be oral cancer. I was acutely aware of how frail our human bodies are, and how easily they become damaged and sick. I looked around in amazement at how much people, especially young people, take their health for granted. I had been given a unique insight into the 'human condition', but it

was both scary and painful because I felt vulnerable and isolated.

In my heart I felt that the only thing I could do was to Go For Refuge to the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. I could quite clearly see the Truth of impermanence at work, and I could also see the futility of other forms of refuge, so it felt quite natural to want to ask for ordination and take my practice of Buddhism much further. It was the only thing which made sense and offered me the opportunity to respond creatively to my situation. I felt that if I could respond creatively and take control it would benefit me enormously by improving the quality of my life, and by taking responsibility I would not fall into the passive role of the victim. It can be extremely undermining to your confidence and life direction to be faced with a potentially terminal illness. There is a strength to be drawn upon if one has an overall direction and context for one's life which can carry one through even apparently insurmountable difficulties. My direction comes from my Buddhist practice and my attempts to move towards the Enlightened state. Even if I do not reach my goal by the time I die it does not really matter: what seems important now is the question of how I have lived my life. Some people live very long lives and some people live very short lives, but what is most important is *how* they live their lives. 'Live beautifully' is an ancient Zen maxim.

The practice of meditation has played a very important part in my coming to terms with my diagnosis. Meditation is about making direct changes to one's being and, in my experience, is the most effective means of self-transformation. Meditation has helped me enormously by making me become stronger and more accepting of myself. Through my meditation practice I have learnt to relax more deeply and to work with my fear and anxiety. Since I have been diagnosed I have developed great faith in the efficacy of meditation practice, and would unreservedly recommend it to anyone who is facing a life-threatening illness. Meditation has played a large part in helping me come to terms with the fact that I have become infected with a potentially lethal disease.

Another important factor which enables me to cope with my diagnosis is my friendships. AIDS and HIV infection can be a very isolating disease. Many people in the modern world are lonely and are starved of deep and effective communication with others, but when you are diagnosed with a disease like HIV you are forced to become aware of exactly how isolated you actually are. Because the disease is still a very taboo subject in large areas of society, it is very

easy to feel ostracized and alienated from the community. To some extent I have managed to deal with these feelings of isolation and intense aloneness by forming deep and satisfying friendships. And it is my experience that these friendships can only form to the extent that you share the same vision and are committed to that vision. This is the case in the sangha, where friendship, especially spiritual friendship, is presented as the guiding principle of spiritual development. I don't think it is possible ever to over-estimate the importance of friendship. Without it I feel I would have given up a long time ago. Real friendship is both nourishing and healing. Happiness is impossible without it. My friends help me on all sorts of levels, from asking me how I am, to taking an active interest in my health, and coming down to the hospital with me when I go for a check-up. Perhaps the most important way in which my friends help is simply by asking me how I am—and having the care and attention to listen to my answer.

Recently a friend of mine died of AIDS. I was not there, but by all accounts it was a difficult death. He was in a lot of pain right up to the end. From what I heard, it seems that he was not ready to die, not ready to let go, but was being forcibly 'evicted' from his body. One of the benefits of being HIV antibody positive is that I can see the importance of preparation for death. None of us is immune from death, so we are faced with the choice either to respond creatively to death, or to attempt to ignore its inevitability. We can ignore it to the extent that we ignore ourselves and value ignorance, or we can respond creatively by practising the Dharma and living a truly spiritual life.

The beauty of living with HIV and AIDS is that it is a challenge. When faced with a potentially painful and terminal disease one has to grow spiritually in order to be able to cope with it. I see many others whose coping tactics are based on a refusal to accept that there is something wrong. This is not a healthy stance because it is based on a lie; it always results in pain and confusion. I am extremely grateful that I have had the good fortune to come across the Dharma at a time when I was receptive and needed it most. I am grateful that there is a sangha which is supportive and encourages me in my struggle to come to terms with my condition. At the end of the day, however, I am no different to any of you. We are all in the same situation, in that each and every one of us will have to face our death at some point in the future. Being infected with HIV only means that I have had to come to terms with death sooner than perhaps some of you.

‘What will happen when I die?’ is one of the most important questions a human being can ask. To find an answer is to discover a deeper meaning to life. To know that there is at least a part of oneself that survives death would provide a much wider perspective on existence, a perspective that could radically transform the way we lived our life.

On one level, the answer is simple. At some time, our complex bio-physical organism will break down. The breathing will stop, the heartbeat will cease, and gradually our body temperature will fall. After a while, the body will go stiff and start to decay. Eventually it will be burned or buried. And, for the materialist, that will be that! But perhaps there is more to us than just our physical bodies. Perhaps there is something that survives the death of the physical body, a ‘soul’. If so, what is its nature?

The view of the Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition is that the soul of the individual comes into being at conception. It lives but one

unconsciously, by our own efforts, or by the influence of our environment. Thus, at the end of our life, the set of views and tendencies with which we started may be substantially altered. The ‘person’ who dies could be quite different from the ‘person’ who was born. Then, although the body dies, that bundle of tendencies survives and, after a certain period of time—some say that it is instantaneous and some say the period is many years—‘creates’ for itself a new body.

A crucial element of this teaching, which distinguishes it from those held by Hindus and some heretical Christian sects, is that the element of the individual that precedes birth and survives death is not a fixed and permanent entity. The habitual tendencies—the patterns developed and modified by actions in the course of this life—are passed onto the next, and nothing else. There is no fixed *core* that can be called a ‘soul’ or an ‘I’. The ‘I’ that we experience is actually our awareness of this complex set of habitual tendencies which have formed themselves into a sort of knot. Until Enlightenment is reached



8

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE DIE?

Is Death an end, a beginning, or just another stage on the path? Manjuvajra offers some Buddhist views.

short life on this earth, and then, after divine judgement, is awarded eternal happiness in heaven, or eternal suffering in hell.

According to the Buddhist view, what happens to an individual after death is closely linked to the way he or she has acted in life. Rebirth and *karma* (action) are usually spoken of together. According to the Buddha’s understanding we are born into a particular type of body with a particular perception of the world because of deep-seated tendencies—inherited from our previous existence—to experience reality in a particular way. These tendencies manifest as our conscious world-view develops. Whenever we act in conformity with such a tendency we strengthen it. When we oppose our inherited tendency we will weaken it, and may thus alter our viewpoint on reality. Our views can therefore be modified, either consciously or

the knot always exists, but its constituent contents can change. It is this ‘knot’ that passes from one life to the next.

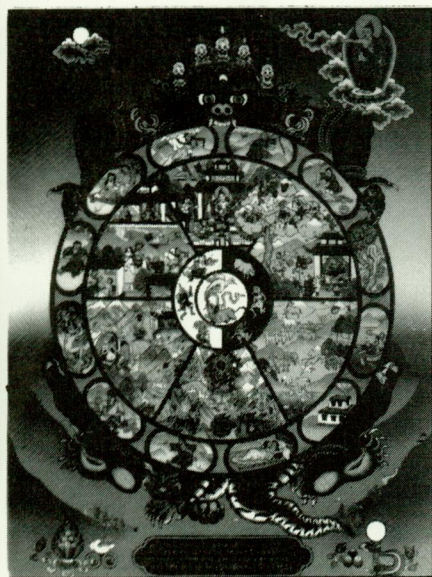
In the scriptures of the three main branches of Buddhism there are many references to the principle of rebirth. In the earliest Pali scriptures, the Buddha speaks of his recollection of his own previous births on the eve of his Enlightenment, and of his ability to see the arising and passing away of other beings. On a number of occasions Ananda asked the Buddha where a certain person who had died would be reborn, and the Buddha was able to answer. In the Sanskrit scriptures of the Mahayana there are numerous references to the number of lifetimes that a Bodhisattva traverses on the path to perfect Enlightenment. There we also find predictions of the Enlightenment of Bodhisattvas in some far distant future lifetime. In both the Mahayana and the Vajrayana scriptures there are

many references to groups of individuals being born together again and again.

In Tibetan Buddhism we find the tradition of the *tulku*, the rebirth of a particular spiritual teacher. The abbots of monasteries are often considered to be reborn in this way, and once an abbot dies his regent governs the monastery until the new incarnation is discovered—usually by finding a child, born at the right time, who can select religious implements owned by the old abbot from a collection of similar objects. Also in the Tibetan tradition we find meditation practices that prepare the practitioner for the journey through the *bardo*, the intermediate period between one birth and the next.

What actually happens when we die? A fascinating account of the dying process is to be found in the *Bardo Thodol*—or *Tibetan Book of the Dead*. This describes the entire process of death, the period in the intermediate state, and eventual rebirth.

At the moment of death, the text explains, a blinding experience of clear light fills our consciousness. This ‘vision of Reality’ offers us an opportunity to free ourselves



Tibetan Wheel of Life



The realm of human beings, from the Tibetan Wheel of Life

craving and yet never satisfied. A life dominated by aggressive competitiveness will lead to rebirth in a realm of warring gods.

The principle that habitual activities can create a world is of course observable within this life, at least on the psychological level. A generous person develops an openness and expansiveness in his or her nature, while continuous miserly actions give rise to a closed and defensive personality. But Buddhism takes this principle beyond the level of psychology and applies it to the individual as he or she passes from one physical existence to the next.

Broadly speaking, a being can be reborn in one of six realms: the human realm, the realm of the gods, that of animals, hungry ghosts, titans, or denizens of hell. In none of these realms is life eternal: the principle of impermanence holds true for them all. The worlds of gods and humans are said to be happy, but the remaining four are said to be painful. To be reborn as a human being is considered to be the ideal so far as spiritual life is concerned; the gods are far too happy to go searching for the highest happiness, while those in hell are too preoccupied and weakened by their suffering to raise themselves higher.

The Buddhist principle of rebirth can be summarized thus: Our actions in this life modify the unconscious tendency-patterns inherited from our previous life. We experience these tendencies as a sense of self which survives the death of the physical body. After a certain period of time these tendencies manifest in a new form by combining with physical factors. The process of life, death, and rebirth continues unendingly.

This is the framework in which the spiritual life is lived. The individual thus tries to bring conscious awareness to deeper and deeper levels of the mind, thereby liberating himself from the dominance of unconscious tendencies and the fixed experience of selfhood that they produce. By loosening the knot of unconscious tendencies we can become free; the unending cycle of rebirths comes not exactly to an end, but dissolves into an experience of Reality which is beyond space and time.

from the tendencies that will otherwise lead to rebirth. If the light is too much for us, we then become conscious that we are separated from the physical body and now exist in an immaterial 'mind body'—rather like the body experienced in dreams. Next come a series of brilliant visions, rich in light, sound, and beautifully peaceful forms of Buddhas. If our consciousness remains with the peaceful forms of Buddhas—and we are able to recognize them as the liberated nature of our own mind—then we will be drawn on until we come, once again, face to face with Reality. If we fail to 'recognize' these peaceful Buddhas and become attracted by the relatively dull visions of rebirth in the six 'realms' of existence, a new phase unfolds. The attraction of the dull lights reflects the domination of the tendencies—some positive and some negative—that will eventually lead to rebirth.

Next come a variety of visions, many of which are of a terrifying nature. They are terrifying because Reality is frightening to those who are strongly attached to a fixed way of being. However, even

in this phase, liberation is possible. We have only to realize that these visions are a distortion of Reality caused by habitual tendencies. After a series of visions in which the unconscious tendencies take an ever stronger hold over our mind, we start to move toward the place of rebirth, and eventually see our parents copulating. If one is attracted to the female, one will be reborn male; if one is drawn to the male, then one will be reborn female. As we try to squeeze between the two parents we fall into unconsciousness and enter the womb. After a period of time we are reborn—but in what sort of state?

Since our future birth is determined by the tendencies that are established or strengthened in the course of this life, the way we act in this life is directly responsible for the type of life that we will experience in the future. The correspondence between an act and its effect on the individual's future birth is therefore of crucial importance. Buddhist ethics is based on this correspondence. A good—or 'skilful'—act is one that gives rise to a happy future birth; unskilful actions

lead to a painful future birth. Through our actions in this life we literally create the worlds in which we are to be born.

Normally, it seems, beings are born in very much the same sort of world, and state, as that in which they died. The habits and tendencies associated with the previous life are generally strong enough to ensure that they will 'choose' to return to a similar way of being. For human beings, however, who are able to exercise a high degree of choice during their life, the situation can be quite complex. Some people seem to act rather like animals, having little self-consciousness and being interested only in sleep, food, and sex. Such people may well be on their way to an animal rebirth. Others may be refining and purifying their being and, as a result of developing new tendencies, may be reborn in the higher realms of the *devas*, or 'gods'. A life dominated by acts of cruel violence and blatant disregard of the fundamental empathy between human beings could lead to rebirth in a hell realm. If a strong neurotic tendency is indulged continuously, then that person could be reborn as a 'hungry ghost', always



OPENING THE HEART

Whenever somebody dies, others are left with the loss and the grief. Parami wonders what Buddhism—and Buddhists—can offer.

The first member of the Western Buddhist Order to die was Vangisa. That was in early 1981. At his funeral I was surprised to hear several Order members confessing that Vangisa's was the first funeral they had ever attended and that this was the

first time they had ever seen a dead body or suffered a bereavement. My own experience was very different. Growing up in an Irish-Catholic working-class family, in a district of Glasgow populated mainly by families from the same background, I had attended funerals from a very early age.

Death was something which happened quite often in our community and was collectively witnessed by all the members of the community—as were births, marriages, and the other rituals which marked significant events in our lives. A death would be honoured by the neighbours visiting to say the Rosary (a cycle of prayers) and pray for the soul of the dead and for the lives of those who were left behind. The children would come along too. The first dead body I

remember seeing—and touching—was that of our local parish priest when I was about three. My family, like the rest of the parish, went along to the church where his body was laid out in state and filed round the open coffin to pay our last respects. I was held up to look.

Between that time and the time of Vangisa's death I must have attended over twenty funerals, including those of my parents, all the close members of my family, and a number of very good friends. On talking about this I realized that for many people in the modern West death is an unfamiliar and taboo subject, too morbid to be discussed. Of course death can be seen all the time at the cinema and on television, but the treatment there usually skims the surface, both overstating it (one person is killed every four minutes on television) and depriving it of any honest emotional weight.

In recent years many Order members, mitras, and Friends have suffered bereavements. The 'Parinirvana Day' festival—the anniversary of the Buddha's own death, and a time when we think particularly of friends and relatives whom we have lost—has taken on more significance as death becomes a factor in more people's lives. These days we talk about death and bereavement more often, discussing our need for adequate rituals to help with the grieving process, and learning how to support those who are coming to terms with the death of a loved one.

In 1986 I was deeply shocked to hear of the death of an old friend from AIDS. Although I had not seen him for many years, I often thought of him, and had assumed that I would see him again. He had been great fun and always in the absolute bloom of health. He had come down with pneumonia and died within a few days—before I had even heard that he was ill. This was the first AIDS death involving someone I knew personally, and I started to read as much as I could about AIDS. After a while I decided I would like somehow to get involved, and became a volunteer at the 'Terence Higgins Trust', a charity which offers information, advice, and help on AIDS, ARC, and HIV.

Through volunteering there I came to know a great many people who were coming to terms with life-threatening illnesses. Often I was inspired by the courage and directness with which they

faced up to this process, and indeed by the humour and lightness that many of them brought to the task. I was also often in pain. Sometimes it seemed too cruel; I wanted to run away, stop answering the telephone, stop looking into the eyes of young men who had just been diagnosed HIV positive and were still reeling from the shock. They had come to the Trust to find a safe place where they could talk and become less numb—and so start to feel the fear and anger. I knew, however, that if I ran I would really be running from my own pain, my own fears, my own sense of bewilderment and loss. And I knew that I could not keep running.

In 1988, Henry, a college friend, told me that he too had 'full blown' AIDS, as did his lover Derek. Over the next year, until Henry's death in September 1989 and Derek's that November, I spent a lot of time with them both, something for which I am very grateful. My friendship with Henry, which had been good, went even deeper and had a profound effect on my life. As he came to terms with his own death, he helped me come to terms with all the loss in my past, and in a small way to face the fact that I too will die—something which I had been managing to ignore, even with all those bereavements in my early life. I suppose I had not been able or ready to face impermanence then. I was too young and there were just too many deaths; there never seemed to be enough time to recover from one death before another occurred. The accumulated effect had been one of numbness, a freezing of the heart. Through years of meditating, opening my heart in the *metta bhavana* practice and in my visualization practice, the ice had started to groan and shudder. It was when I sat with Henry in his room in the London Hospital, and with him and Derek in their room at the 'Lighthouse' day after day last summer and autumn, that the thaw really began.

Through people I met thanks to Henry and Derek I began to facilitate a meditation class at the London Lighthouse (a centre which runs support groups and classes for people facing the challenge of AIDS) and to conduct an occasional relaxation session with someone in the residential unit there. It is worth emphasizing that many of the people with whom I meditate are not dying—no more nor less than the rest of us. They have been diagnosed as 'HIV antibody positive' but are well, or they

may have have Kaposi's Sarcoma or some opportunistic infection; but they do have life, and they are very concerned with the quality of that life. The difference is that they are also aware of death and impermanence in a way that most of us are just not privileged to be; and this colours how they live their life. It also colours how I live mine. It helps me put into practice the teaching I have long known as a Buddhist: 'All conditioned things are impermanent. With Mindfulness strive.'

In the last year I have also spent time sitting at the beds of people who were dying. Sometimes I would talk them through a relaxation or meditation exercise to try and help alleviate the pain, or to help them focus their minds and find some calm. That is very difficult to do when someone's pain is severe, and I soon learned that I could not enter the room with an agenda of helping—in the sense of being able to make things better or having some magic formula to give. All I could really do was open my heart and listen, be as authentic as possible, and stay as in touch with myself as I could. If I was not, there would be a barrier between myself and the person I was with. If I could remain open and allow whatever happened to happen, our hearts would seem to touch, and a wonderful atmosphere of peace and acceptance could grow.

If I am ever asked how my Buddhism helps me in this situation I find it difficult to answer. It is very much a two-way process. My practice as a Buddhist and my understanding of the Dharma gives me a framework to work within, and helps me find ways to open my heart. But that is not the whole story. I have met many Buddhists who find death hard to look at and who become awkward and fearful when faced with bereavement, and I have met many non-Buddhists with open hearts and a wonderful capacity to be with someone when they really need them. I know that all I can offer is myself—but that 'self' has been formed by thirteen years of meditation practice and Dharma study. I also know that my contact with the dying, and my contact with those who are very much alive but consciously and courageously facing life-threatening illnesses, is part of the formation of my self, and has a profound and positive effect on my meditation practice and my understanding of the Dharma. I would not wish it otherwise.



HOW THE BUDDHA FACED DEATH

The Buddha's mind was beyond life and death. But his body, like all conditioned things, was doomed to die. Tejananda gives an account of his final days.

12

Decay is inherent in all conditioned things. Strive diligently'. These were the last words of the Buddha, immediately before his *Parinibbana*—that is, his death. The words imply, among many other things, that even Buddhas have to die in the end, just like everyone else.

But *did* the Buddha die 'just like everyone else'? The events leading up to his death are recorded in the Pali Canon in more detail than those of any other period of his life after his Enlightenment. Clearly, the Buddha's early followers thought that his death, and the way that he died, was a very important part of his life—even a very important part of his teaching. And Buddhists through the ages have agreed with this judgement: the way the Buddha died tells us a great deal about him, about his teaching, about Enlightenment—and about ourselves.

The story of the events leading up to the Buddha's death is told in the *Maha Parinibbana Sutta*. The Buddha was eighty years old, and very frail. In spite of this, he was

engaged in a vigorous and gruelling 'Dhamma tour', travelling with his faithful attendant Ananda to various places where his monastic and lay-followers were living, and teaching the Dhamma, just as he had been doing for the last forty-five years. When he reached a place called Beluva, near the city of Vesali, he decided to stay there for the rainy season retreat; but, perhaps because of the sudden change in the weather, he fell seriously ill: 'he had sharp pains, as though he were about to die. But the Master, mindful and aware, bore them without complaint'.

The Buddha might well have died then and there. But he thought 'it would not be right for me to pass away without addressing the disciples', and so, exerting a strong effort of will, he managed to recover. He was fully aware, though, that death was very close, and did not attempt to hide the fact either from himself, or from Ananda: 'My journey is drawing to its close,' he said. 'Just as a worn-out carriage, Ananda, can only be kept going with

the help of bits of rope, so, I think, this body can only be kept going by bandaging it up'. He added (and this was the tenor of much of his final teaching) that his followers should not take refuge in any impermanent things, doomed to loss, decay, and death, but 'hold fast as a refuge to the Dhamma'.

Taking leave for the last time of his disciples in Vesali—a place much loved by him—the Buddha started with Ananda on his final tour. Far from being miserable at the constant physical pain that he was now experiencing, or wrapped up in fears about his coming death, the Buddha was as outward-going and concerned for others' needs as he ever had been. He visited a large number of towns and villages, exhorting and teaching his followers, clarifying the monastic rule, accepting new disciples, and saying farewell to old ones. Finally, reaching a village called Pava, he took what was to be his last meal, provided for him by Chunda the local smith. The food gave him severe dysentery.

The Buddha knew that death was now imminent. Gathering his last strength, he set out with Ananda and some other monks on what was to be his final journey, to Kusinara. Resting by a river, he was still able to find the energy to express his compassion in teaching the Dhamma to a young man from Kusinara (a follower of his own former teacher, Alara Kalama) who, going for refuge to him, became the Buddha's last personal lay-disciple. The Buddha also took care to ensure that, after he had died, Ananda would go and comfort Chunda the smith, ensuring him that no blame attached to him for providing the food which led to the Buddha's death.

Crossing the river, and reaching a beautiful grove of flowering sal trees, the Buddha's physical strength finally gave out, and he lay down on a robe spread out by Ananda between two of the trees. Still he gave further teachings to his disciples gathered around, and spoke to Ananda about the arrangements for his funeral: Ananda and the other monks were not to concern themselves with it at all, but

undistractedly to practise the Dhamma and realize Enlightenment for themselves. But he described in detail how the lay-followers would carry out the funeral.

This seems to have been too much for Ananda to bear, and he went away in tears. The Buddha called him back and said 'Enough, Ananda! Do not grieve so! Have I not already told you that it is in the very nature of all things most near and dear to us that we must separate ourselves from them? Anything which is born carries within itself the inherent necessity of dissolution. For a long time, Ananda, you have been very near to me by acts, words, and thoughts of love, kind and good, love that never varies and is beyond all measure. You have done well, Ananda! Keep on endeavouring and you will soon be free from taints'; and he continued to rejoice in Ananda's merits at length.

After this, a non-Buddhist wandering mendicant arrived, wanting to see the Buddha. Ananda tried to dissuade him, but the Buddha insisted on talking to him and teaching him and, having converted him to the Dhamma, accepted him as his final *bhikkhu* follower then and there.

The end was now very near; after dealing with one or two practical points concerning monastic discipline, and making absolutely sure that none of the *bhikkhus* present had any doubts remaining about the Dhamma, or questions left unresolved, the Buddha uttered his final exhortation, 'Decay is inherent in all conditioned things. Strive diligently!' He then calmly entered meditation (*jhana*) and in that exalted state he died.

The way the Buddha died tells us a great deal about him, his teaching, Enlightenment, and ourselves. Perhaps the points do not need to be laboured: we only need to look at our own feelings about death, and compare them with the Buddha's response. Even if we are *not* yet Enlightened, there is no doubt that the more we take the Buddha's noble example—and especially his final words—to heart, the more fully, acceptingly, and creatively we will be able to face the fact of our own, inevitable, death.



HEALING INTO LIFE & DEATH

STEPHEN LEVINE

Author of "Who Dies?"

APPROACHING DEATH

Who Dies? and Healing into Life and Death

by Stephen Levine
Published by Gateway
pp. 317 & 290 respectively
paperback, both priced £7.95

These two books are personal accounts of the author's experience of working with dying people, in hospitals, hospices, at home, and on retreat. They are as much an account of the effect of his work on himself as they are of how we can, and need to, develop sensitive and honest ways of helping terminally ill people approach their death with acceptance and a sense of completion. Levine is insistent throughout that when writing or reading about death, and the fears and resistance that death arouses, we are writing or reading about ourselves.

Healing into Life and Death is the sequel to *Who Dies?*. It is concerned with the question of why some of the author's patients recovered from what were sometimes the final stages of a cancer which had had no prognosis of recovery

at all. However, it is not a presentation of some miraculous technique with which to stave off death. The author offers guide-lines which he has seen leading to a sense of wholeness and completion in the dying person. That completion may include physical death but is no less a worthwhile completion for that; as he points out, a long-pained mind may be healed though the body may die. In Levine's perspective death in itself is not to be regarded as a failure; on the contrary, a life lived in hiding from *acknowledgement* of death and of the darker, less acceptable sides of one's own life is the real failure. *Healing into Life and Death* includes descriptions of meditation exercises which the author has developed in his work. They are intended for use with the terminally ill, but may also be of use in coming to terms with other less life-threatening illnesses.

From a more specifically Buddhist viewpoint, much could be said about the content of these books. The author draws on his knowledge of

much basic Buddhist teaching as well as teachings from other Eastern traditions. He explores his own and his patients' experience of suffering and describes the ways which he has found to broaden that experience towards a more general understanding of *dukkha*, and through that to the possibility of developing a sense of connectedness and solidarity with the rest of humanity. He stresses the opportunities he has had to bring his awareness of death into his life. Daily contact with death brings him into daily contact with impermanence, another characteristic of existence stressed in Buddhist teaching. The meditation exercises which he describes are derived in large part from Buddhist techniques for the development of loving-kindness and the mindfulness of body, thoughts, and feelings.

These are not, however, books written by a Buddhist about Buddhism, nor are they intended exclusively for Buddhists. The author presents his experience and reflections without particularly linking them to Buddhism at all. For a Buddhist reader this may be irksome. Why not let the Dharma have some credit? However, some reflection suggests that, given the purpose of these books, no particular insistence on Buddhism is either needed or appropriate. Levine stresses, on several occasions in both books, that he has had to avoid the temptation to push his own preferred approach on to his patients. He uses Christian as well as Buddhist terminology, seemingly on the basis of, 'if it increases contentment and clarity then use it'. On occasion, however, one wonders why he chooses to use Christian terms when he has had to redefine them in a way which is very different from their normal usage. I would place in this category his use of the word *grace* which he describes as 'karmic ... not

a gift from on high but an actualization of our birthright'; and of *mercy*: 'not in the context of Lord have mercy on me, not as a begging for a removal of punishment, but as a quality of non-injury, of kindness ... a quality of mind'.

However, even given the author's deliberately non-sectarian approach, there seem to be instances when he does use Buddhist terminology very loosely, in ways which may lead, for example, to the confusion of psychological wholeness with spiritual or even transcendental experience. The chapter 'Love is the Bridge' is particularly liable to this. Terms such as 'pure being', 'oneness of being', and 'the whisper of underlying suchness' should perhaps be reserved for the higher levels of consciousness and insight which they try to describe, rather than being used as indiscriminate synonyms for loving-kindness.

A suggestion. The author's style lacks the clarity and precision of the well-known *On Death and Dying* by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, and does not sustain the emotional engagement achieved by May Sarton in her novel *A Reckoning*, about one woman's personal journey through dying. These books, if read together with Stephen Levine's, however, would provide a rich and thought-provoking field for further exploration of death and life.

In our present-day society, the approach of death is too often left unacknowledged, even between friends and partners of long standing, leaving the survivor to cope alone with unasked questions, unexpressed appreciation, and unexplored fears. The experience offered by Stephen Levine in these books is much needed by all of us, not just by those working professionally with the terminally ill.

Kulaprabha

KOANS FOR WESTERN ZEN

Zen Tradition and Transition: An overview of Zen in the modern world

edited by Kenneth Kraft
Published by Rider
pp. 230, paperback
price £5.95

This book consists of a hotchpotch of ten essays, sitting uneasily side by side and ranging from a moving autobiographical piece by a Zen monk to reflections on Zen practice in North America, via some rather academic meanderings about Zen poetry, and statistics on the number of priests, temples, etc. in modern Japan.

14 One recurring theme, particularly in those essays which were written from the standpoint of the practitioner rather than the academic, is the centrality of the relationship between the Master and the disciple. This relationship is vital in all forms of Buddhism, but is of crucial importance in traditional Japanese Zen, where it is based on an absolute trust in the Master, extending to the point where immediate obedience is expected with no room for questioning.

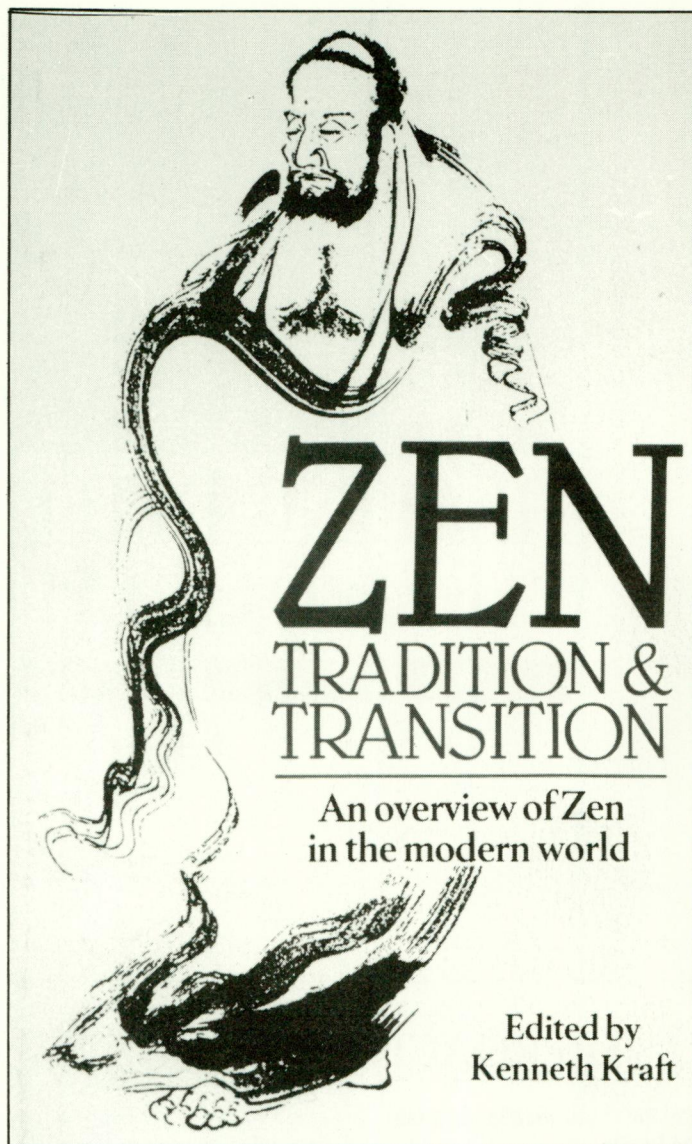
This trust is movingly explored in the first piece, which is by Morinaga Soko, a present day Japanese Roshi, who recounts his own admittance into the practice of Zen. At the end of the Second World War, when he was a young man who had lost his parents, his land, and his faith in all he had encountered, he presented himself before Zuigan Roshi, formerly the head abbot of a major temple but now retired. Zuigan, after listening patiently to the young man's tale, said 'Zen training is impossible if you don't trust your teacher. Can you trust me? If you can I'll take you on just as you are. If you can't it would be a waste of time, and

you'd be better off going home.' The young man stayed and '... realized that trusting meant to trust without a murmur of dissent. I must say "Yes, yes!" to everything, I was told.' In the case of Morinaga Soko, as the disciple of a revered and spiritually advanced Zen master, this approach paid dividends, and he concludes with a resounding reaffirmation of Hakuin's three essentials of Zen practice: a great root of faith (in one's teacher and the tradition he represents), a great ball of doubt (inasmuch as one is aware of one's own lack of insight), and a fierce tenacity of purpose.

This unquestioning obedience and trust, whatever its benefits in a traditional Japanese context, does not easily lend itself to adoption in the West. As the final essay (on 'Problems of Authority in Western Zen') explores, there have been times, in the West at least, where both teacher and student have been too spiritually and psychologically immature to make such an approach work.

This seems particularly to have been a problem when the first generation of Western-born teachers took over from the Japanese teachers who had introduced them to the Dharma. It led to situations in which teachers had 'taken advantage of their office, and imposed their personal sexual desires on male and female students'. It has also led to at least one case, not mentioned directly in the book, of a western-born Roshi whose followers removed all financial matters from his hands in order to curb an increasingly extravagant life-style.

However, all is by no means gloomy. A certain common sense and maturity has begun to reassert itself. As one author in this book says, 'A healthy scepticism need not



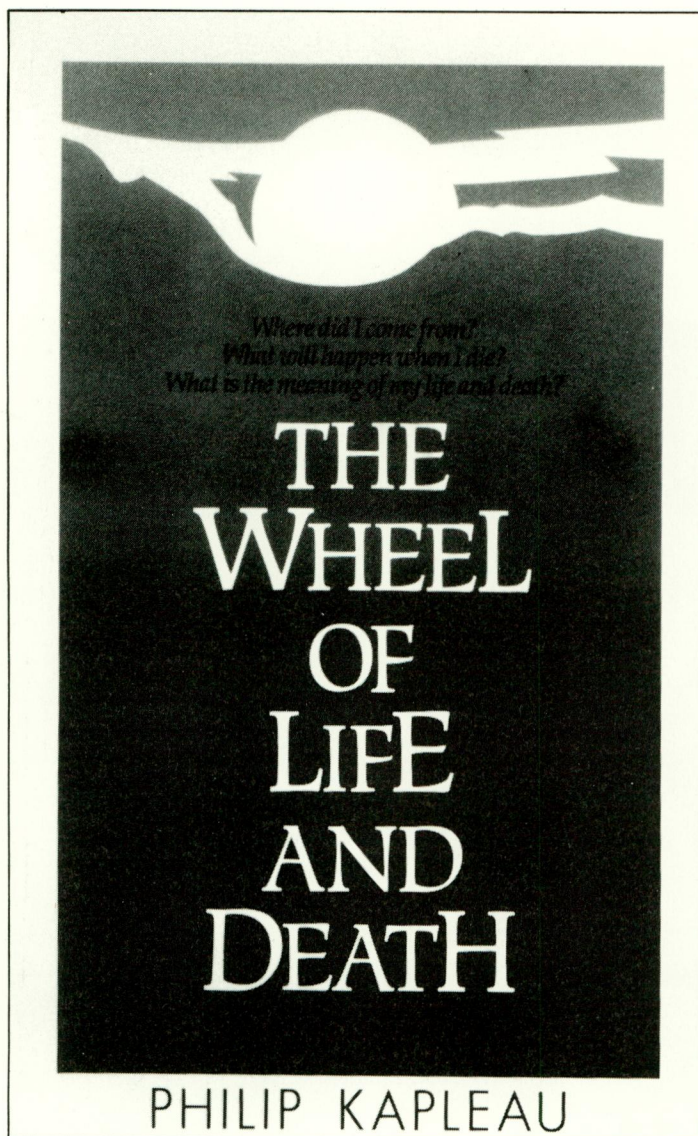
be corrosive of essential trust and wholehearted practice. Students will not feel a need to question credentials if they are deepening their insight under severe and compassionate guidance. However, if they ... repeatedly find themselves in situations of moral and psychological ambiguity with their teacher, they should simply exercise their normal critical faculties.' In other words, the teacher is there to help, and not simply to allow the students to abdicate all responsibility for their actions.

Of course, there is no infallible way in which the unenlightened can recognize the Enlightened, but perhaps Samu Sunim's comment can be borne in mind. He says: 'Korean Zen, unlike its Japanese counterpart, has always maintained a strong attitude and discipline in morality as a prerequisite'. So perhaps we will not go too far wrong if, in addition to our intuition, we also apply our normal critical faculty and an insistence on ethical practice as

criteria which must be fulfilled before we are able truly and wholeheartedly to put our trust in a teacher. Developing this trust is vital if we are to practise that which we have been taught; otherwise we are unlikely to experience those benefits of practise which will, in turn, further deepen our faith in the Dharma—and in the teacher who has presented it to us.

The book also contains a commentary on Hakuin's *Song of Meditation*; an essay on Zen koans which introduces the (rather dubious) idea of using Western koans such as 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me'; a good introduction by Philip Kapleau to Zen interviews; a debunking of the historicity of the story of Hui Neng (I still prefer the mythical version), and much more. This is not a book to be read uncritically (what is?) but it gives much cause for reflection, and some inspiration.

Virachitta



ZEN AND THE ART OF DYING

The Wheel of Life and Death

by Philip Kapleau
Published by Rider
pp. 395, paperback
price £8.95

This book is certain to appear on the bookshelves of many readers of *Golden Drum*, partly because of the distinguished reputation of its author, a leading figure in the American Zen tradition, and partly because of the growing popularity of books on death and dying.

The first section, which comprises an anthology of writings on death, makes very enjoyable reading. Here poetry, psychology, philosophy, anthropology, history, and biography are cleverly interwoven to give a rich and pleasing introduction to the subject. References to the

Dharma, however, receive a disappointingly superficial treatment—which is not helped by poor indexing. For example, the five *skandhas* receive only scant attention (pp.36–7) and do not even appear in the index.

For me, the highlight of this first section is a series of short, pithy Zen stories which have that special flavour unique to the writings of this tradition. One such story concerns Zen Master Taji (1889–1953), who, as he approached death, was brought a present of his favourite cake by a senior disciple:

With a wan smile the dying master accepted a piece of the cake. ... As he grew weaker, his disciples enquired whether he had any final words for them.

'Yes,' the master replied.
The disciples leaned

forward eagerly so as not to miss a word. 'Please tell us!'

'My, but this cake is delicious!' And with that he slipped away.

The second section, 'Dying', the longest of the book, is quite different and provides, together with the five Supplements at the end, what may be described as a reference manual on dying. Roshi Kapleau, drawing extensively on edited 'workshop' extracts, covers an encyclopaedic range of subjects, from suicide and euthanasia to how to conduct a funeral service. Again, a charge of superficiality could be levelled at this section, with many topics being covered in insufficient depth. But despite this much of the text is very well written. The short section 'What is Meditation?', for example, is particularly clear and pleasing to read.

The group of chapters comprising the final two sections, 'Karma' and 'Rebirth', provides a valuable discussion on these two important and interrelated topics. The text, which again leans heavily on 'workshop' extracts, introduces the reader to these difficult concepts in a clear and accessible way. Section Three contains a discussion on the nature of karma and how 'bad' karma can be prevented or changed, together with comments on the idea of 'collective karma' and the 'interconnectedness of all life'. In the fourth section a number of arguments are presented which, according to the author, make 'The Case for Rebirth'.

Whilst finding these final sections thought-provoking, I did feel uneasy at the apparent tendency to 'blame' karma for everything that happens to one, and to view the inexplicable problems experienced in this life as invariably the consequence of bad actions in previous lives. I would have been happier if the author had made a clearer reference to possible alternative explanations by discussing the doctrine of the five *niyamas*, which show that karma is only one of five possible kinds of conditioning factor for effects experienced. (He does actually mention one of them, *bija-niyama*, on a couple of occasions.)

Given that karma is not the only possible explanation for the difficulties and suffering

that people experience, it would be helpful to see more stress being laid on the importance of interpreting such experiences with an open, compassionate mind. The problem with regarding karma as the *only* possible cause of present suffering is that it can give rise to a (perhaps unconscious) tendency to dismiss people in difficult or unfortunate circumstances, because they are 'only suffering the just deserts of their own past evil actions'. So if, for example, a person is born physically disabled, or into a socially outcast family, the Buddhist perspective is that they should only be treated with non-judgemental compassion and concern, and never with the kind of harsh dismissiveness which is endemic in Hinduism because of exactly this view of karma.

My main criticisms of this book are that the quality and style of writing is quite variable, and that it sometimes seems over-researched and under-experienced. The author's note at the end of the book seems to confirm a suspicion that it was a collective effort, rather than the

Satyapala

Also Received

A Policy of Kindness

The Dalai Lama
Snow Lion

Feminine Ground—Essays on Women and Tibet

ed. Janice D. Wills
Snow Lion

Inevitable Grace

Piero Ferrucci
Crucible

The Faith to Doubt—Glimpses of Buddhist Uncertainty

Stephen Batchelor
Parallax Press

Encounters with Buddhism

ed. S. Dhammika
Buddhist Research Society

AGAINST THE GRAIN

John Gummer, Britain's Minister of Agriculture and a member of the Church of England's General Synod, is becoming publicly concerned about the growth of vegetarianism, which he has recently denounced as 'wholly unnatural'. Speaking to the International Meat Trade Association, he said: 'The Bible tells us that we are masters of the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field, and we very properly eat them.' Mr Gummer is tired of reading about the 10% of the British population who are vegetarian, and wants to 'read more about the sensible 90% who are still eating meat'.

One can only hope that the coming years will see an even higher percentage of people becoming so wholly unnatural as to take fuller note of the ethical and other consequences of eating meat. If some of them take up the blasphemous activity of vegetarianism as a result, the Minister and the International Meat Trade Association could have even more worries on their plate.



Healthy, natural food?

16

OPENING THE FLOODGATES?

On 14 October 1956, 400,000 ex-Untouchable Hindus converted to Buddhism. Over the following months and years, several million more followed their example. Buddhism offered not only an immediate escape from the stigma of Untouchability, but also a practical path to dignity, self-respect, and new life; it was the key to a peaceful revolution in which the FWBO—Trailokya Bauddha Mahasangha Sahayak Gana as it is known in India—is playing an active part.

What many people do not realize is that the conversions involved some considerable risk of hardship. On the eve of the first ceremony, the Indian government announced that

any ex-Untouchables converting to Buddhism would forfeit their right to the 15% reserved allocation of places in higher education and central government service that their leader, Dr B.R. Ambedkar, had won for them during his political career. Only in Maharashtra, Ambedkar's own state, and the heartland of the conversion movement, would this essential form of 'positive discrimination' apply to Buddhists.

This move has generally been viewed as a bid by conservative Hindu forces to cripple the conversion movement at birth. Had Dr Ambedkar not died so soon after the first conversions, he

would have doubtless used his influence to see the ruling overthrown. Instead, it has stood intact for thirty-four years, and has done much to reduce the impact and growth of the conversion movement. Had the reservations policy been extended to Buddhists throughout India, many more of the country's 80,000,000 ex-Untouchables would have converted by now.

This year marks the centenary of Dr Ambedkar's birth, and the most dramatic development so far has been the Indian government's announcement that the reservations policy is indeed to be extended so as to include all ex-Untouchable Buddhists. Speaking on television some

weeks ago, Prime Minister Vishwanath Pratap Sing acknowledged that this move could have a profound effect on Indian society, where the forces of Hindu fundamentalism are stronger, and more vociferous, than they have been for decades. He is to be applauded for taking this courageous—if long overdue—step.

Assuming that parliament gives its blessing to the extension of the reservations policy, it will be interesting to see how the wider Buddhist world responds to the wave of conversions that will inevitably follow. One can only hope that it will act more promptly and generously than it has done in the past.

EMOTIONAL HARM AND PUNITIVE DAMAGES

An interesting legal case is currently awaiting review by the United States Supreme Court.

In 1974, when in her teens, Robyn George took up the practices of the Hare Krishna movement. When she encountered opposition from her parents, she left home and went to live at the local temple of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. She remained there for a year before returning to her parents' home.

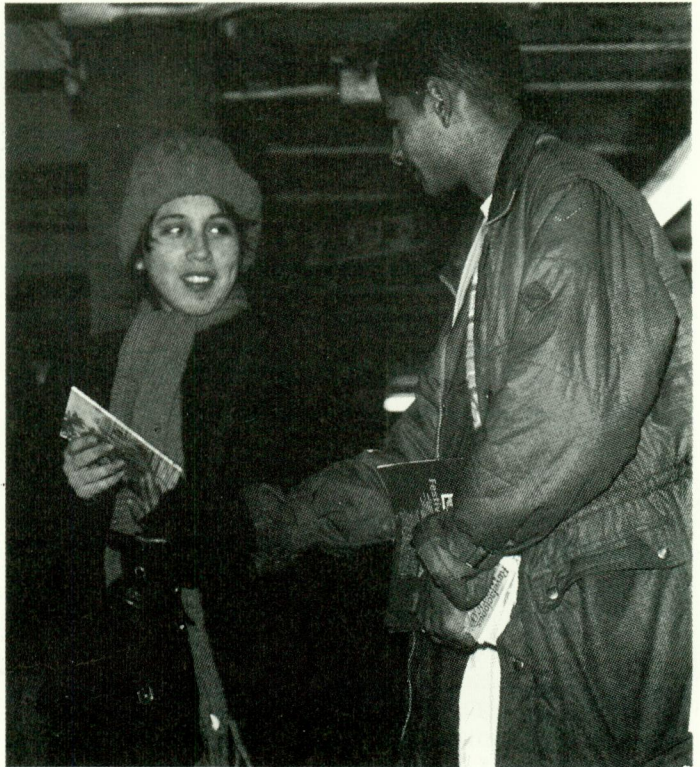
In 1977, Ms George and her parents instituted legal proceedings against the Society for 'false imprisonment' and 'brainwashing'. The case culminated in 1983 with an extraordinary punitive award of \$32,000,000—more than enough to bankrupt the entire Krishna movement. Last year the case reached a court of appeal which overturned most of the charges but still awarded \$5,000,000 damages for 'emotional harm', and placed several of the Society's temples under receivership—so that their sale might cover the cost of damages.

The verdict and damages have aroused fierce controversy in the US, and have been seen by many

religious groups, including the American Council of Churches, as a serious—and unconstitutional—threat to religious freedom. By forcing the closure of temples, the damages could directly inhibit many people's practice of their chosen religion. The Society's followers are presently holding a continuous vigil outside the National Archives where the American Constitution is kept.

As well as focusing attention on the state's power to curb religious freedom in this way, this case—with its rather vague verdict of 'emotional harm'—gives rise to a number of important questions.

It often happens that bitterness and strife are precipitated when one member of a family changes as a result of taking up a religious practice of which other family members disapprove. Even in these days of increasingly high divorce rates, the disintegration of families through religious conflict can excite strong feelings. The belief that some 'cult' has enticed away one's children can intensify those feelings enormously. Emotive but vague terms such as 'brainwashing' are soon flying around, usually confusing a complex and difficult issue,



The Krishna people—an endangered species?

and leaving a number of questions unanswered, or ignored.

Are the ties of a family and its traditional beliefs really more important than the freedom of an individual to follow the religion or philosophy he or she believes to be true? At what age is one able to make an informed, free choice in the matter of religious belief and practice? How should this affect religious education—whether given by the Hare Krishna movement to a teenager at one of its temples, or by an

established church to a five-year-old in a state run school?

How does one distinguish between *encouragement* to follow a particular religion, through the teaching of its ideals and practices, and *enticement* to join a group for some ulterior motive, through subtle and coercive indoctrination? The answer to this has surely to do with the motivation and actions of the people immediately involved, and should not be dependent upon whether or not the religion in question is simply different from one's own.

FAMILY CRISIS

Statistical surveys indicate that the British pattern of marriage and family life is in crisis. The divorce rate is climbing to cover over a third of all marriages, with second and even third divorces becoming more frequent. These days, many people simply choose to 'live together', this arrangement bringing no more, or less, stability than the legally—and divinely—sanctioned institution of

marriage. Single-parent families are becoming more common, and by the end of the decade as many as one in two children could be reaching maturity without having lived continuously with both parents. Many people find these statistics alarming, and are seeking a return to traditional patterns, perhaps by tightening divorce laws.

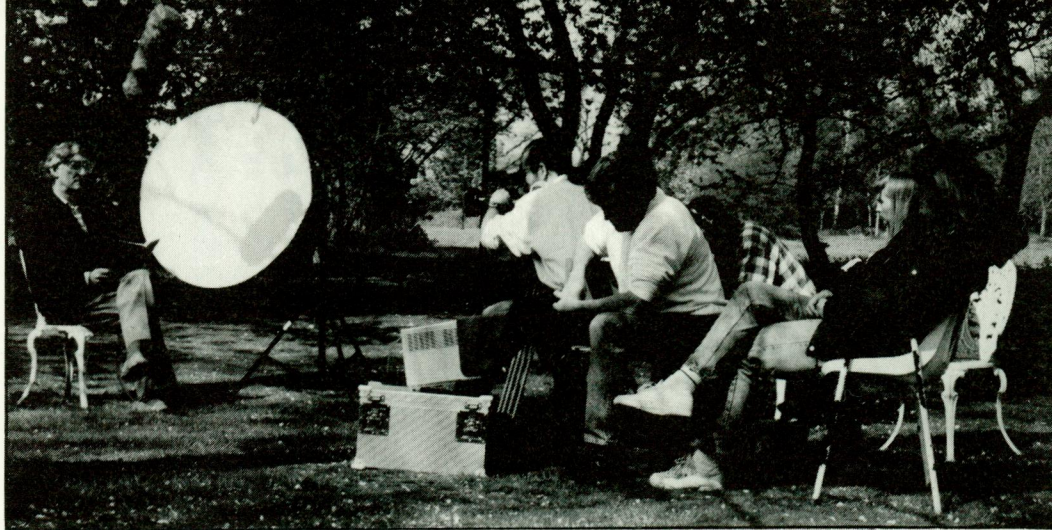
It is difficult to see much merit in bolstering up the family through these means.

The nuclear family is, by its very nature, a transitional form between the older, extended family, and the contemporary fragmented arrangements. Maybe there is little that can or should be done to arrest these developments, which have been brought about by factors such as geographical and social mobility, economic and ideological individualism, and the increasing lack of credibility attached to the Christian values which

underpinned marriage and the family in the West.

What are really required are some healthy alternative forms of communal life. These would allow adults and children a wider circle of emotionally supportive relationships than those provided by the nuclear family. It is difficult to see this happening, however, without the rise of a new, less individualistic social and religious ethic.

Filming at Padmaloka for Wesak TV series



SANGHARAKSHITA DIARY

In early April Sangharakshita travelled to the impressive Manchester Town Hall for the annual celebrations to mark the founding of the FWBO and the WBO. During the FWBO celebrations on 7 April he was interviewed for a BBC World Service broadcast. As part of the WBO celebrations the following day he delivered a paper entitled 'My Relation to the Order', which has recently been published (at £1.95 from Windhorse Publications).

By the middle of April Sangharakshita was back again at Padmaloka, where from the

13th to 16th he led study on the 'Confession' section from the *Sutra of Golden Light* for a group of mitras from Germany.

Then it was back up north, this time for a holiday in the Peak District with Paramartha. During this time he stayed with Nagabodhi in the Windhorse Publications community in Sheffield, besides visiting York and the ruins of Rievaulx Abbey. Rievaulx was the Cistercian abbey of which Aelred of Rievaulx was abbot, and Aelred's book *Spiritual Friendship* is one which

Sangharakshita admires, and on which he hopes one day to lead study.

His holiday over, on 23 April Sangharakshita returned to Padmaloka for the making of a series of five short television programmes in celebration of Wesak, as part of a BBC religious series called *Five to Eleven*. In each programme Kulananda spoke briefly about the significance of Wesak, and Sangharakshita read one of his poems. The programmes were transmitted over five days during Wesak week.

After the filming Sangharakshita travelled back to London, where he joined the Buddha Day (Wesak) celebrations being held at the London Buddhist Centre. The celebrations included the launch of his new book, *New Currents in Western Buddhism*. Also on the literary front, Sangharakshita has recently written an introduction to his forthcoming book, *Learning to Walk*. This is an account of his early years, and will be published in September by Windhorse.

At the time of writing, Sangharakshita has spent the past four Sunday evenings meeting with all the Order members in the East London region. Each evening, besides leading a period of meditation and the Sevenfold Puja, he has been conducting lengthy question-and-answer sessions. Two more such evenings have been scheduled.

Although Sangharakshita is still in semi-retreat, he has managed to see many people over recent months, including visitors from the USA, New Zealand, and India.

18

GUHYALOKA '90

This year there were a number of changes in the annual men's ordination retreat at Guhyaloka in Spain. The length of the retreat was increased from three to four months, substantially increasing the time spent away from 'normal' concerns. And although there were sixteen men preparing for ordination the Order team was deliberately kept small; this made for good communication among the team, and also—no bad thing—meant that others had to do more of the work.

But not the least of the innovations was the introduction of traditional style robes. This was an attempt to get completely away from the trivia of fashion (including the fashion of non-fashion) by adopting clothing whose primary association was with the Dharma, rather than with any attempt to impress others, however subtly. It was also felt that the use of uniform but simple and aesthetic clothing

might help increase the spirit of brotherliness among the retreatants. A special robing ceremony was composed and all, in great seriousness, donned the robes in the first week of the retreat. This ceremony was kept far away from the ordination ceremony itself to avoid any danger of repeating the muddle found in some parts of the Buddhist world, where the act of donning a robe can be confused with the making of a total commitment to Buddhist ideals.

The style of the robes was traditional but the colour—a rich blue—was not. Although the robes were an experiment made in the very special context of an ordination retreat this colour was chosen with great care and an eye on wider issues. The decision to step outside the reds, yellows, and browns of other traditions was an attempt to avoid any pigeon-holing into the two limiting camps of the Hinayana and Mahayana.

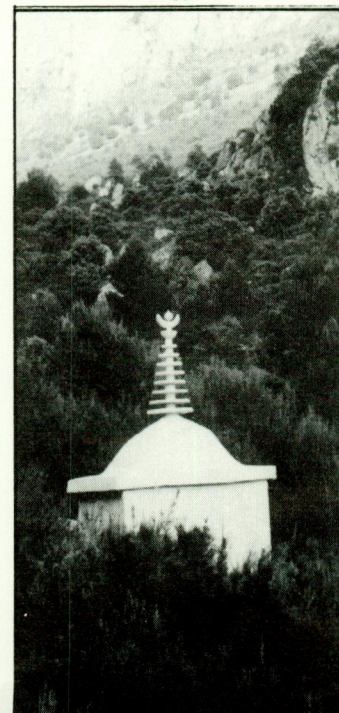
Members of the WBO are first and foremost simply practitioners of the Dharma, not followers of any one strand of the tradition, and so the colour of the Dharma Jewel was chosen to express this fact.

Overall this experiment seemed to be a success. But it must be stressed that it was only an experiment. Whether it will be repeated, and under what circumstances, remains to be seen.

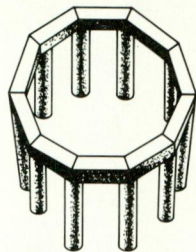
Another important feature of the retreat was the construction of a fifteen-foot high stupa in the valley. Each stage of the construction was marked by a ritual ceremony and contemplation of the significance of the stage in question. Each retreatant after his private ordination spent almost the whole of the following twenty-four hours at the stupa. At the end of the ordinations the stupa was ceremonially sealed.

Subhuti, Padmavajra, and Mokshapriya were active in composing pujas for use during the various phases of the retreat and to mark special occasions. Of particular note were the Confession Puja and

a beautiful Going for Refuge Puja. By not adopting wholesale some of the highly developed and complex rituals used in other traditions the FWBO has perhaps missed some of the richness which such ritual can bring to the expression of devotion to Buddhist ideals. It is to be hoped that this retreat marks the start of an overdue examination of the under-developed areas of ritual and liturgy.



The stupa at Guhyaloka



SILA ACCOUNTANCY SERVICES

45 SOUTH PARADE SUMMERTOWN OXFORD OX2 7JL TEL: 0865 311323

A Right Livelihood accountancy practice run by experienced F.W.B.O. accountants. Though only established in March 1990 we are expanding fast. If you have a problem or need advice on:

- BOOKKEEPING
- TAX
- VAT
- PAYROLLS
- DEEDS OF COVENANT
- INVESTMENTS
- MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS
- CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY TAX SCHEMES

Call John Nielsen Hall or Shantiprabha on
0865 311323

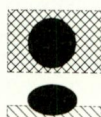
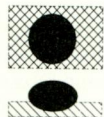
ACCOMMODATION
at the Old Red Lion, Castle Acre,
Norfolk, PE32 2AG
Tel: 0760 755557

Conservation village. Priory and castle remains. Wholefood/vegetarian meals; self-catering unit OR sole occupancy. Sleeps 20. Working and performance spaces. Conditions flexible, terms negotiable

TEXTILE TOUCH

(Marlies Hyman)

Flat 2
22 Florence Road
Brighton BN1 6DJ
☎ 0273 562608



Professionally Handmade

MEDITATION CUSHIONS, MATS AND ADJUSTERS

Available in many different colours

Stuffed with natural Vegetable Fibre/Kapok

Please write or telephone for more information



Announcing The Opening Of

SCHUMACHER COLLEGE

A NEW INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR STUDIES
INFORMED BY SPIRITUAL AND ECOLOGICAL
VALUES

If you wish to combine your vacation or short sabbatical with serious study in the company of eminent scholars and kindred spirits, what better place to go than Schumacher College, opening in January 1991. The College has as its campus a medieval manor house in the grounds of Dartington Hall, Devon, close to Dartmoor, the sea and the historic market town of Totnes. Scholars-in-Residence, chosen for the significance and originality of their work and their accomplishment as communicators, are assisted by resident faculty and visiting lecturers. Scholars include:

January 13 - February 15

JAMES LOVELOCK
THE HEALTH OF GAIA

February 24 - March 22

HELENA NORBERG-HODGE
ANCIENT WISDOM AND THE
POST-INDUSTRIAL AGE

March 29 - April 12

HAZEL HENDERSON
LIFE BEYOND ECONOMICS

April 14 - May 17

RUPERT SHELDRAKE
THE REBIRTH OF NATURE

May 19 - June 21

JONATHON PORRITT
GREEN HERITAGE: TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE
FUTURE

June 23 - July 26

VICTOR PAPANEK
DESIGN FOR THE REAL WORLD

September 8 - October 11

THEODORE ROSZAK
EARTH, SOUL AND IMAGINATION

October 13 - November 15

REB ANDERSON
THE ZEN OF RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS

November 17 - December 20

MANFRED MAX NEEF
ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS

These extended courses explore themes in depth. They also offer opportunities for a period of reflection and renewal. The College offers a unique opportunity for study and an active retreat in a community setting.

For full details please write to:

**The Administrator, Schumacher College,
The Old Postern, Dartington,
Devon, England, TQ9 6EA, England
Tel: (0803) 865934 · Fax: (0803) 865551**



THE GREATLY PRECIOUS GURU OF DHARSENDO

Dhardo Rimpoche was a teacher and close friend of Sangharakshita, who has come to be honoured almost as the spiritual grandfather of the Western Buddhist Order. In the last issue of this magazine we reported his death in Kalimpong, India, on 23 March. In this issue, Suvajra gives a fuller appreciation of Dhardo Rimpoche, and an account of the last days of his life.

The Venerable Dhardo Rimpoche was a high-ranking *tulku*, or reincarnate lama, of the Tibetan Gelugpa School, but he led a life which was substantially different from that of most other *tulkus* of his standing. Educated in the great monasteries of central Tibet, he was an outstanding scholar, but his government work caused him to leave Tibet several years before Chinese oppression forced his fellow lamas to follow him into exile. His remarkable prescience in foreseeing the consequences of the Chinese occupation of Tibet led him—long before the main Tibetan exodus occurred—to set up a unique school for Tibetan refugees in

Kalimpong, India, a project that occupied most of the last three decades of his life.

In Kalimpong Dhardo Rimpoche was well known for his work with the school rather than as a learned Geshe, a high-ranking lama, and a teacher capable of passing on the highest initiations. For nearly thirty years, since his retirement from Bodh Gaya Monastery, Rimpoche rarely acted as a lama in the formal sense except to conduct occasional small ceremonies and blessings. But still he kept up his tantric commitments, and practised his meditations for many hours each day.

However from about 1978 onwards Rimpoche began to receive a trickle of visitors from the Western Buddhist Order—a trickle which later grew into a steady stream. People associated with the FWBO and TBMSG came to Kalimpong from snowy Sweden and baking Australia, from the Bombay slums and from affluent England, and all with one purpose in mind—to visit Dhardo Rimpoche. Some asked him for instruction in

meditation. Some gave gifts of money to support his work. In time Rimpoche's school began to receive quite substantial funding from his Western students, and grew into a substantial and beautiful institute. The people of Kalimpong began to realize that here in their midst was a very capable and respected lama whom, by degrees, they had come to overlook.

Sadly by the time the people of Kalimpong woke up to Dhardo Rimpoche's true worth it was almost too late. By the beginning of 1990 Rimpoche was already close to his 73rd year, and his health was now weakening. According to tradition his 73rd year, which began with Losar, the Tibetan New Year in February, was to be his most difficult. He therefore planned to go on pilgrimage to all the holy places of Nepal to build *punna* (merit) before the Tibetan year began.

On 16 January he left for Nepal, taking with him all his personal money. While in Nepal he visited every place of pilgrimage—even the most

inaccessible. He donated money for the two great Kathmandu stupas to be whitewashed, and for the façades of all the temples he visited to be repainted. He gave a small donation to each Gelug monk in all the monasteries he visited, and gave one rupee to every beggar he met on his way.

This generosity became too much for the young son of his secretary, who was accompanying him. He confronted Rimpoche, saying, 'Rimpoche, how many beggars are there in the world—can you give to them all?' Rimpoche replied 'You just don't know. Let me use the money'. Often he was asked to give initiations, blessings, and teachings whilst on pilgrimage—which made him feel very happy that others were taking the Dharma so seriously, and that he could assist them.

Having stayed in Nepal a week longer than he intended, Rimpoche hastened back to Kalimpong to see several visiting members of the Western Buddhist Order who

Dhardo Rimpoche on pilgrimage in Nepal early this year.

were waiting for him. Early on the morning after his return he collapsed from a stroke, and for the next few weeks he was seriously ill. Eventually he began to recover strength and could move about only with help from others. After several more weeks his strength increased, his appetite returned, and he was able to get about almost unaided. According to his Western doctor he was on the road to recovery. But his Tibetan doctor was not so sure—one very important pulse was seriously abnormal—and he waited in attendance, prescribing medicines.

Rimpoche was in very good spirits during his last two days. He had spent his time putting things in order: labelling rare books in his library, performing special pujas, storing away unneeded blankets, renewing old and worn out silks, and rearranging scroll paintings. On the final morning he woke up after a very sound night's sleep and announced, 'I've decided! Fold away all the extra blankets.' His attendants, taking this as a bad sign, objected; but no, Rimpoche was insistent—he had decided they would not be needed. That day his pulses were all normal, and Rimpoche, appreciating the beauty of Kalimpong, announced that his mind felt very calm and peaceful. People thought that surely he had fully recovered now.

In the early evening, very much against the objections of Jampel, his secretary, Rimpoche vigorously performed two exceptionally long pujas, both connected with death. Then he asked Jampel to write a letter to Subhuti and Lokamitra—it was urgent—saying how sorry he was not to have seen them when they visited the previous day. This done he told Jampel to ask all the questions he had never asked before. Nothing could be more important than this.

Jampel fetched a tape recorder and began to ask all the questions he wanted answered, including how Rimpoche's funeral was to be

conducted, who was to officiate, and which pujas were to be performed. When asked whether there would be another Dhardo Tulku, Rimpoche insisted that he was not of a mind to leave indications as to where he would be reborn. If he had the power to direct his rebirth then he would be born in suitable circumstances. If he did not have this power, but left indications about his rebirth, then someone else would be incorrectly recognized as the tulku—which would be much worse than his not being found.

However Jampel was insistent and kept pressing the point, until finally Rimpoche said that if there were to be another recognized tulku, then it would have to be he, Jampel, who made the recognition. Any child recognized as the tulku would have to have the very same quality of working continually for others as had Dhardo Rimpoche himself, and the secretary—and no one else—would have to recognize him, since it was he who knew him best. Rimpoche, as always, spoke with great care on this subject.

However Rimpoche was more concerned about his school and its future than any rebirth. He had worked for much of his adult life to make sure that Tibetan children could be given a thorough grounding in all aspects of Tibetan culture—including reading, writing, dancing, painting, and history—without which it would be hard for them to make complete sense of the Dharma as communicated in its Tibetan form. Rimpoche was very concerned that the school should continue its work, and that members of the WBO/TBM should still visit and support it.

Having answered all his secretary's questions, and satisfied that what needed to be done was done, Rimpoche settled down to sleep. He woke a couple of hours later to pass urine. As he lay down again, just before his head touched the pillow, he made a slight noise—uh!—and his head flopped down. The attending secretary and his wife were alarmed, and not being able to

wake him called for the doctor, who found that Rimpoche's pulse was fading fast.

A few minutes later the doctor pronounced Rimpoche dead—but still inside his body completing his *sadhana*. His attendants therefore should not disturb him, but should look out for some white and red fluid leaving his nostrils, which would indicate that his meditations were completed, and that he had left his body. Jampel and his wife kept watch and, sure enough, some five hours later they noticed the fluids dribble from the nose. Then, very quickly, Rimpoche's face changed to that of a dead man.

Throughout his life Dhardo Rimpoche had a keen awareness of the fragility of human existence. His mindfulness of this fact always led him to complete what he had started, and this was well illustrated in the last few days of his life. It would be tempting to suggest that he actually knew the time of his death, and much of what has been recounted points to this. But whether this was so, or

whether he only knew intuitively that his life-force was running out, his preparations for death led him to the point where he was able to leave with a very clear conscience. What was important to Rimpoche was that he should be free of unfulfilled responsibilities at the end of his life, and in a state which allowed him to die with a mind pervaded by clarity and calm.

Dhardo Rimpoche's life was devoted to two things: his own practice of the Dharma, and working for others. These two requirements of the spiritual life do not always co-exist in harmony. Often they seem to pull in quite different directions. Working within this tension is what it means to engage in the Bodhisattva career. Rimpoche spent his whole life doing this, and if anyone succeeded in resolving these two pulls it was he. A substantial part of his activity clearly bears the mark of the Bodhisattva. May his life be an inspiration to all.

Suvajra

21

NEWS FROM TBMSG

This year for the first time TBMSG celebrated the anniversary of the Buddha's Enlightenment at the historic *Diksha Bhumi* in Nagpur—the site where in 1956 the ex-Untouchable's leader Dr Ambedkar first converted to Buddhism, along with 400,000 of his followers. The celebration, consisting of lectures, meditation, and puja, was conducted in the hall of a massive stupa being constructed on the site.

In Poona thousands of people visited the new Dapodi Vihara to celebrate the festival. The opening of this impressive new building—its full name is the Dhammachakra Pravartan Mahavihar—was reported in the last edition of *Golden Drum*.

But if the new vihara is rapidly becoming a centre of devotion on festival days, it is also beginning to fulfil some of the many other uses for which

it was intended. One of these is the accommodation of the activities of an educational institute to study and develop the writings and work of Dr Ambedkar—the Dr Ambedkar Jnanamandir. On 28 and 29 April the Vihara played host to a seminar organized under the auspices of this organization, on the subject of 'Dr Ambedkar, Buddhism, and Secularism'.

This was the first of a series of seminars planned to examine Dr Ambedkar's thinking in various fields. Participants included L.R. Balley, a senior member of the Ambedkarite Movement from the Punjab, Mr K.N. Kadam, previously Deputy Director of Social Welfare in the Government of Maharashtra, Dr Madgulkar, a prominent local academic, and Lokamitra, who presented a paper to the seminar.

THE MOVEMENT CELEBRATES



Talks on FWBO Day

Manchester Town Hall is a splendid, cavernous, ornate Victorian neo-Gothic building, situated in the prosperous financial centre of the city. In these rather unlikely surroundings the FWBO celebrated its 23rd anniversary, and the Western Buddhist Order its 22nd, on the weekend of the 7–8 April. This was the first time such a national festival had been held outside London, so the event was at least a minor landmark in the history of the Movement.

On Saturday 7 April hundreds of Order members, mitras, and Friends from all over Britain and the world came together to celebrate FWBO Day. But in the imposing surroundings we seemed at times to be rather a small—if dedicated—band of Dharma followers. And indeed the few hundreds who did gather for the occasion were only a small fraction of the people actually involved with the Movement. Perhaps the reason for the relatively small turnout was that the event was held in the north of England—a part of the country that many southerners fear to visit, perhaps imagining that those ‘dark satanic mills’ still exist.

But those who did make their way to the splendours of Manchester’s Town Hall enjoyed what Ratnaguna describes as ‘the best ever FWBO Day in the history of the Movement’. The advance publicity promised an event ‘larger than ever before, with free crèche, performing arts, workshops, three talks, a café with splendid food, and a spectacular festive puja.’ And

—numbers aside—the event delivered precisely what it promised.

Yashodeva and his baroque ensemble from Brighton entertained with songs by Purcell, Handel, et al., and James Philips from Birmingham gave a classical guitar recital. And in case anyone was beginning to think that baroque and classical music were compulsory listening in the FWBO, Sahaja and Grant Baxter from Manchester—‘The Cosmic Brotherhood’—electrified the audience with a session of free jazz improvisation.

For those who preferred more active participation Bodhivajra led a voice workshop, and the Vajraloka team conducted a series of meditation workshops throughout the day. Several videos about the Movement were shown on a large screen—for many people the film of the opening of the Mahavihara at Dapodi was the high point of the event, reducing not a few to tears of joy.

If someone who knew nothing about the FWBO had strayed accidentally into Manchester Town Hall that Saturday, they might have found it hard to believe that this was the anniversary of a single Buddhist movement, so diverse were the activities and the age, style, and dress of the people present. But if this hypothetical stranger had stayed to listen to the afternoon’s three talks they would quickly have realized that the FWBO is a unified Movement, by virtue of its principles and practices.

The urban ‘Buddhist Centre’, the single-sex residential community, and the team based ‘Right-Livelihood’ business are three of the most distinctive features of the FWBO’s approach to Buddhist practice in the West. And in the grand surroundings of the ‘Great Hall’, against the backdrop of Holman Hunt’s Pre-Raphaelite murals, Saddhaloka, Ratnaguna, and Kulananda spoke about these three aspects of the Movement.

Each speaker drew on a considerable reservoir of experience. And each stressed a major, important theme. Saddhaloka underlined the need for FWBO centres to be places of spiritual practice as well as centres of education. Ratnaguna stressed the fundamental importance of spiritual friendship in the spiritual life; pointing out how the Western over-emphasis on the sexual relationship has undermined other important relationships, including friendships, he explained the role of the single sex community in restoring some degree of balance. Kulananda spoke of the need for frequent, highly explicit reminders that work should be seen as a spiritual practice if this awareness is to survive in the hurly-burly of the work-place.

The day finished with a Sevenfold Puja performed around a central shrine based on the mandala of the Five Buddhas.

The following day about 140 members of the Western Buddhist Order celebrated WBO Day in rather quieter, more concentrated style. After an opening meditation Kamalashila gave a thoughtful and challenging talk called *The*

Death of the Order, in which he spoke of the strengths and weaknesses of the Order as it is today, and of what needs to be done if it is to survive and flourish in the coming decades. According to Ratnaguna this was an inspiring but at the same time very sobering talk: ‘The Western Buddhist Order can offer the world so much; but there is so much to be done.’

After lunch Sangharakshita delighted the audience by reading his paper, ‘My Relation to the Order’. In the course of this he spoke candidly about himself, and about his concern for every Order member. Again, to quote Ratnaguna: ‘It is not often that we are given such a glimpse of Sangharakshita these days, and it was much appreciated by all present.’

Before the final puja the assembled Order members were given an unscheduled treat in the shape of Suvajra, literally just returned from Kalimpong where he had taken part in the funeral ceremonies for Dhardo Rimpoche. Suvajra gave a moving account of Rimpoche’s last days, and of the funeral itself. Although only a few Order members have met Dhardo Rimpoche, most feel a strong connection with him because of his close relationship with Sangharakshita. (See *The Greatly Precious Guru of Dhardsendo*, Suvajra’s appreciation of Dhardo Rimpoche, elsewhere in this magazine.) Dhardo Rimpoche had said that he considered all of Sangharakshita’s disciples as his disciples, and this is felt in a very real way by many members of the Order.

STUPA APPEAL

Before he died in March this year, Dhardo Rimpoche undertook a one month pilgrimage to Nepal. As reported elsewhere in this magazine (see *The Greatly Precious Guru of Dhardsendo*) he visited every pilgrimage site in the country, donated money to each temple he visited, and gave a gift to each beggar he met along the way.

This October Darryl Cowley—who works for the Karuna Trust in Oxford—will be visiting Nepal to retrace some of Rimpoche’s last footsteps

before trekking into the Annapurna region to undertake a sponsored climb up the 20,000-foot Mount Chulu East. Money raised will be used to construct a stupa in India as a memorial to Dhardo Rimpoche. At least £5,000 is needed.

If you would like to support this effort please contact Darryl Cowley at the Karuna Trust—address and phone number on the back of this magazine—or in the evenings telephone 0865 58768.

VAJRALOKA

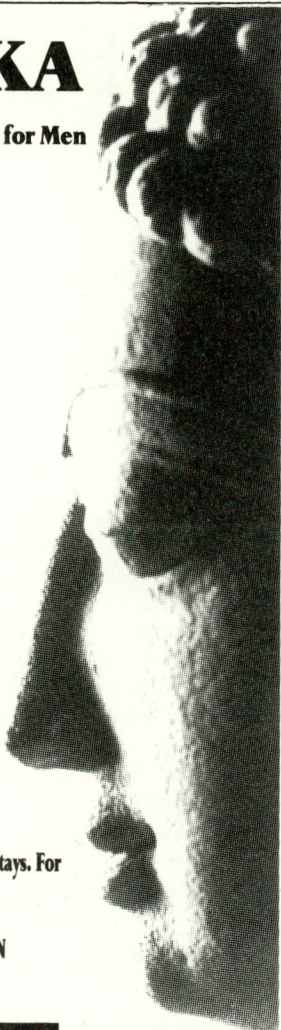
Buddhist Meditation Retreat Centre for Men

Dedicated to the
practice and
teaching of
meditation.
Come to us
for a change!

See our programme for details of short and long stays. For more information and bookings contact:

Tyn-y-ddol, Treddol, Near Corwen, Chwyd LL21 0EN

phone 0490 81 406



Hymalayan Buddhist Posters



Our Hymalayan Buddhist Posters are made in Nepal with paper made from the Daphnea plant. This shrub grows in the Hymalayas at altitudes over 7,000 feet.

When the Daphnea is about 7-10 years old the bark is stripped and used to produce paper. It then regenerates and can be harvested again the following year.

The Daphnea needs the shade of a forest canopy. This gives the whole forest an economic value and helps ensure its survival.

Natural forest-based chemicals are used in the small scale hill production of paper. The Daphnea bark is made into a pulp, seived, pressed and sun-dried.

Traditional Buddhist designs are then printed on the resulting paper using hand-carved wooden blocks. Any gold colour is painted on by hand.

Chris Evans, a trained forester, is helping the Nepalese to develop permaculture methods. These aim to develop permanent, sustainable agricultural and related living systems. Chris has been instrumental in setting up the export of this range of posters to us.



- ☆ There are 5 themes to the poster designs: 1. Buddha 2. Dragon 3. Mandala 4. Goddess 5. Philosopher
- ☆ For each theme there are several designs
- ☆ Two sizes -- Small or Large
- ☆ Small Posters Price....£3.50
- ☆ Large Posters Price....£6.00
- ☆ Packing & Postage.....£1.50

Name _____	Size	No.	Cost
Address _____	1. Buddha		
_____	2. Dragon		
_____	3. Mandala		
_____	4. Goddess		
_____	5. Philosopher		
Fill out this form and send with a cheque or P. O. to: Green Earth Trading Company 203 College Road, Norwich, Norfolk			P & P £1.50 Total _____

FIRST GIRLS' HOSTEL

The opening on 13 May of the Bahujan Hitay's first hostel for girls has been described as a breakthrough for women's education in India.

The new hostel cost £104,000. Up to now, all of Bahujan Hitay's projects have been funded by the Karuna Trust. In this case, however, The Karuna grant was supplemented by a contribution of £52,000 from the British government's Overseas Development Organization.

Bahujan Hitay's hostels are unique in catering largely for children of former 'Untouchables'—the poorest section of Indian society. The cost of running the hostel is £13.50 per girl per month, of which 30p is paid by the families—if they can afford it. Facilities include dormitories, study rooms, a library, kitchen,

and recreation areas which are used for dance, music, and drama.

Bahujan Hitay, which is the 'social wing' of our Movement in India, already has eight residential hostels up and running—all so far for boys—staffed by teams of Indian wardens and volunteers. The hostels are residential, purpose-built buildings which allow rural children to attend city schools where their 'Untouchability' is not an issue. They also provide vital back-up to schooling, such as study classes, one-to-one tutoring, and personal guidance—all essential for children from impoverished, illiterate backgrounds. There are also recreational activities—the karate classes are immensely popular, and something of an event in the locality, with whole families

turning out to watch and shout encouragement!

About 70% of Indian women are illiterate—partly because of parents' reservations about sending a daughter away from home for education. Karuna recognizes that it is vital to overcome the difficulties women face because of their inferior social status, and the traditional suspicions related to the education of women, which add to the disadvantages they experience as a legacy of 'Untouchability'. (Traditionally 'Untouchables' were considered too polluting even to touch, let alone to receive education.)

The children in our hostels help with cooking and cleaning, and run their own study classes and entertainments through various committees under the

supervision of the warden. Each committee is headed by a minister, like the Minister for Education (homework!) and the Minister for Agriculture (food!). The pride the hostel children take in their new home, and the ambitions of some of them to work for the uplift of the 'ex-Untouchable' communities when they have finished their education, is a testament to the success of the hostel system.

By overcoming malnutrition, shyness, and the ingrained sense of inferiority which is the legacy of an 'Untouchable' background, the new hostel will help 'ex-Untouchable' girls share in these benefits, allowing them to live healthily and happily, to achieve top grades at the local school, and perhaps even to continue studies at college.

If you would like to know more about the work of Bahujan Hitay and the Karuna Trust, contact Darryl Cowley at the Trust's Oxford office. Their phone number is on the back of this magazine.

24



SAUERLAND RETREAT CENTRE

After seven years of holding retreats in a succession of rented houses, FWBO Germany now has its own retreat centre. This is a large hostel-type building (it accommodates up to fifty people), previously used mainly for school groups spending a week in the outdoors.

The facilities are fairly basic, but according to Dharmapriya the best thing about the new retreat centre is its location. The house is ten kilometres from the nearest village down a forest road. It is situated in wooded hill country in the southern part of the Sauerland, in the middle of West Germany. The autumn colours here rival those of Canada or New England, and the quiet is never disturbed by the neighbours—half a kilometre away—but only by low-flying military jets. And although the retreat centre is

isolated by West German standards, it is only about three hours drive from the FWBO Centre in Essen, and just as close to many other densely populated areas.

The shrine-room of the new centre—housed in an outbuilding that once served as a ping-pong hut—was renovated during a retreat this spring, and the next phase of the improvements will be to winterize this building, and to bring an old bathroom back into service. In the longer term, as well as a number of other improvements to the physical fabric of the buildings, Dharmapriya hopes to see a small community living permanently on the site.

Earlier this year FWBO Germany also purchased its centre premises in Essen, which had been rented for the past seven years.

Wesak Celebration in Stockholm

STOCKHOLM: A 'QUAINT LITTLE GROUP'

In the last edition of *Golden Drum* we reported the opening of the FWBO's first permanent centre in Sweden. Writing from Stockholm, Lisbet Hvarfner reports that time and space in the centre is rapidly being filled by meditation courses, a Yoga course, daytime and evening Dharma courses, and other activities.

On 12 May all Stockholm's Buddhists came together to celebrate Wesak, the anniversary of the Buddha's Enlightenment. Some 2–300 people attended the Wesak ceremony, to which the Dalai Lama sent a representative. After these celebrations—which included a hearty meal—the assembled Buddhists walked to nearby Vasa Park for further festivities, under a banner proclaiming 'Buddhists for Peace'.

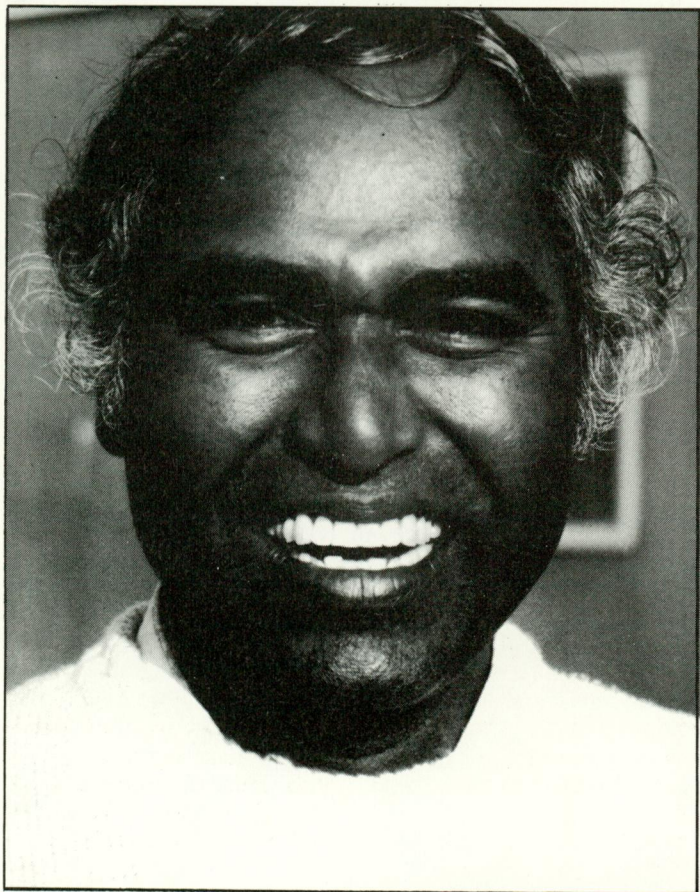
Stockholm's FWBO group had been busy day and night rehearsing a play written by

Scottish Order member Kovida, which was originally intended to be performed in British schools. The play was performed on the rickety tiles of an outdoor stage—according to Lisbet Hvarfner it was 'most enjoyable and almost professional.'

'The sun shone, Buddhist flags flapped in the breeze, the Dalai Lama's representative made a speech on peace, other groups sang and played instruments. The announcer, belonging to another Buddhist congregation, presented the FWBO as "this quaint little group with their very specific Buddhist profile—Western, yes, definitely Western, but definitely Buddhist too." (!) That is exactly what we are and steadfastly work at being! With this specification before our eyes and a centre of our own to develop in, we cannot go far wrong, can we?'



BODHIDHAMMA'S TRAVELS



Dharmachari Bodhidhamma

A very welcome visitor to England this June was Dharmachari Bodhidhamma. Bodhidhamma was ordained

during Sangharakshita's visit to India in 1982, and has been an active and prominent figure in the development of TBMSG

and Bahujan Hitay ever since. He is currently chairman of Bahujan Hitay, the social-action wing of our movement in India, which handles a variety of educational and medical projects in Maharashtra, Gujerat, and Andhra Pradesh.

Bodhidhamma passed through England on his way home from a seminar organized by INODEP, the Paris-based 'Ecumenical Institute for the Development of People', in Santo Domingo. The seminar, on 'Cultural Identity—Development—Popular Forces' was attended by twenty-nine people from around the world. Although many of them were Catholics, Bodhidhamma was often impressed by their 'secular-mindedness', and made a number of useful contacts. He himself delivered a paper entitled, 'Religion and Social Liberation—A Study of Dr Ambedkar's Movement in Maharashtra', in which he outlined Ambedkar's career and the Buddhist conversions, before examining the work of TBMSG and Bahujan Hitay. The talk was well received, but Bodhidhamma was surprised to discover how few people had heard of Dr Ambedkar, even though they were

reasonably well informed about caste and Untouchability.

Bodhidhamma spent twelve days in England, visiting Padmaloka, and centres, communities, and Right Livelihood businesses in London, Cambridge, and Croydon. He also spent time in Oxford, where the Karuna Trust—which raises most of the funds required by Bahujan Hitay—is based, and met with the charity's trustees for an exchange of information and views. In London he gave a press conference on the work of Bahujan Hitay to a number of journalists particularly concerned with development issues.

Although he has many firm friends among the Order members and mitras who have visited India, this was Bodhidhamma's first visit to the West. Adapting to our ways seemed to present few problems and, at the end of his stay, he even confessed to enjoying English food. In fact, the thought of returning to the hot spices of Maharashtran cuisine was rather frightening! Bodhidhamma had originally hoped to spend three weeks in Britain, but the pressure of work demanded an early return. He is hoping to return soon.

DAKINI

After a few teething troubles *Dakini*, the magazine of the FWBO women's sangha, is now up and running. Although the magazine was first launched in the summer of 1986, subsequent editions were rather sporadic. But now *Dakini* is being produced on a regular six-monthly basis, and the fifth edition, on the international women's sangha, is on sale this summer.

The last four issues contain articles on a wide range of subjects, from Padmashuri's account of her work with women Buddhists in India to Kulaprabha's evocative description of a journey through her native Scotland, from Dayanandi's retelling of one of the stories of the *Therigatha* to Marilyn Kennedy's account of life in a women's Buddhist community.

The most recent issue contains articles written by women in many different

countries describing the growth of their sangha and the practice of the Dharma within their particular cultural context. There is a page of short messages from women wishing to take up a correspondence with Buddhists in other countries. There is also a regular news page from *Taraloka*, the women's retreat centre in England which acts as a spiritual focus for women in the FWBO.

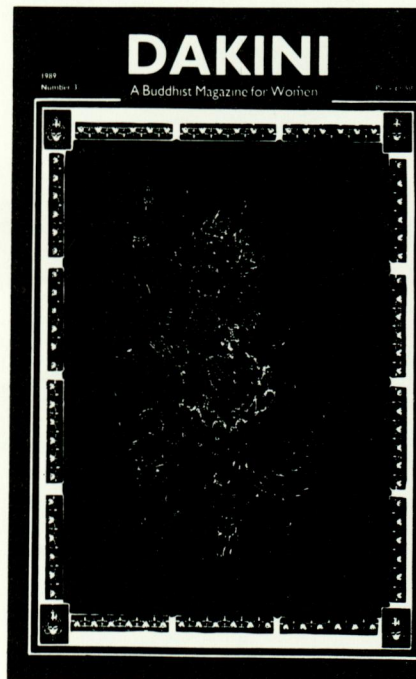
Obviously *Dakini* helps bring Buddhist women from around the world into contact, but the inspiration for the magazine goes beyond this. Through the ages little has been recorded of the particular insights, experiences, and problems of women who practise the Dharma. It hardly needs to be said that for women embarking on the spiritual quest there are different obstacles, different issues, and a different kind of conditioning to be transcended as compared to men. The experiences of women who

have begun to overcome such obstacles, who have grappled with those issues peculiar to their sex, and who have begun to overcome their peculiarly female conditioning, is therefore very valuable. The aim of *Dakini* is to bring together this kind of experience, for the help and inspiration not only of women within the FWBO, but also of women practising the Dharma within other traditions, and indeed of interested women everywhere.

Dakini has always had an 'arts' flavour with its book and film reviews, its pages of poetry, and articles of literary interest. This reflects the FWBO's attempt to bring the best of Western art into the realm of spiritual practice. *Dakini* provides a meeting ground for the Dharma and modern literary art, especially women's art. It could also become a battleground, where the plethora of 'views' which abound in the world of feminism and women's art come under scrutiny. *Dakini*

will provide an opportunity for women practising the Dharma to get to grips with these views and subject them to a 'Dharmic critique'.

Dakini is available from the Manchester Buddhist Centre address. The cost is £4 for an annual subscription (two issues) plus £1 p&p (£2 outside Britain).



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.

P a d m a l o k a
BUDDHIST RETREAT CENTRE FOR MEN

The **C H E R R Y
O R C H A R D**
vegetarian restaurant
241 GLOBE ROAD E2. 01-980 6678

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

Company

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

'Delicious sweets.'

Egon Ronay's Just a Bite

'Altogether a useful place to know about.'

City Limits

Open Tues-Fri 12-3; 6.30-10.30

Sat 12-10.30. Closed Sun & Mon

4 minutes from Bethnal Green tube

the taste of freedom...

tārāloka

BUDDHIST RETREAT CENTRE FOR WOMEN

For details see our brochure or contact:

The Secretary, Tārāloka, Cornhill Farm, Bettisfield, Nr. Whitchurch,
N. Shropshire SY13 2LV. Tel. 094 875 646

GOING ON SOLITARY RETREAT?

**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

Residential Courses at Waterhall

Waterhall is the country retreat centre in Mid-Suffolk associated with the London Buddhist Centre.

To book for events please send a £20 deposit (non-refundable if you cancel). Cheques payable to L.B.C. Retreat Centre.

London Buddhist Centre
51 Roman Road
Bethnal Green
London E2 OHU
081-981 1225

MEDITATION FOUNDATION COURSE

Mon Sep 10-Fri 14
Mon Nov 12-Fri 16
Mon Nov 26-Fri 30
Mon Dec 17-Fri 21
£150

A thorough introduction to the theory and practice of meditation. Two practices will be introduced – Ananapana Sati, or the Mindfulness of Breathing and the Metta Bhavana, or development of Universal Friendliness or Loving Kindness.



THE BODHICARYAVATARA

Fri Aug 17-Fri 24
£145 (£90 concs.)

The highly revered text by the 8th century master Shantideva is a beautiful poetic revelation of Buddhist idealism and a thorough guide to the art of spiritual development

Led by **Sagaramati**, one of our foremost study leaders, who has studied this text and many others in seminar with Sangharakshita.

THE VISIONS OF THE DAUGHTERS OF ALBION

Tues Aug 28-Sat 31
£100 (£65 concs.)

"The threading of this maze has the value of an initiation, a transformation of consciousness, exhilarating and liberating. It is not the world that is changed but ourselves."

Led by **Atula**, who has studied William Blake in depth.

PAINTING & AWARENESS COURSE

Mon Sep 17-Fri 21
£100 (£65 concs.)

Designed to break through our inhibitions to painting and open us to our innate creativity. Suitable for just about anyone. (Materials provided.)

Led by **Maitreyabandhu**, a graduate of Goldsmiths School of Art, who has led several of these enjoyable retreats.

LIVING OUR DEATH

Mon Oct 12-Fri 19
£120 (£80 concs.)

Address our need to face impermanence in life, and so begin to come to terms with death. The week will include the development of loving-kindness for others as well as ourselves, physical awareness, talking and reflecting on death and what it means to us.

Led by **Atula**, a Psychosynthesis counsellor, and **Danavira**, a bereavement counsellor and experienced retreat leader.

PEACE IN PRACTICE

Mon Oct 22-Fri 26
£150

Is it possible to live peacefully within our everyday world where there is so much violence? This course will investigate the distinctive contribution which Buddhism makes to the issue of peace, namely a tradition of non-violence and practical guidelines for living at peace with others – and with yourself.

AN INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM

Mon Oct 29-Fri Nov 2
£150

Who was the Buddha, what did he teach? What relevance have his teachings for us in the West today? This course gives a grounding in the basic principles of Buddhism.

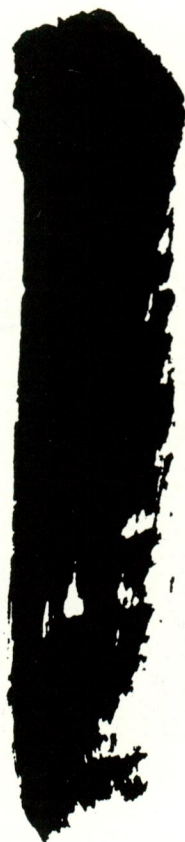
Through talks and discussion the course leader will outline various aspects of Buddhism (its ideal, its ethical teachings, and its philosophy of human relations) and how they can be applied.

YOGA AND MEDITATION WEEKEND

Nov 2-4
£60 (£40 concs.)
Book at Bodywise
081-981 6938

Take your yoga practice further while enjoying a quiet weekend in the country. The programme will include instruction in meditation.

Led by **Joan Graham**, a qualified Iyengar yoga teacher with more than six years experience.



Where to find us

MAIN CENTRES OF THE FRIENDS OF THE WESTERN BUDDHIST ORDER

London Buddhist Centre, 51 Roman Road, London E2 0HU. Tel: 081-981 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: 081-688 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: 071-727 9382

Padmaloka Retreat Centre, Lesingham House, Surlingham, Norwich, NR14 7AL. Tel: 05088 8112

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

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

Water Hall Retreat Centre, Great Ashfield, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, IP31 3HP. Tel: 0359 42130

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

Guhyaloka Retreat Centre (Spain), c/o Lesingham House, Surlingham, Norwich, NR14 7AL. Tel: 050-88 8112

The Office of the Western Buddhist Order, Padmaloka, Lesingham House, Surlingham, Norwich, NR14 7AL. Tel: 05088 310

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

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

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

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

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

Västerländska Buddhistordens Vänner, Södermannagatan 58, S-116 65 Stockholm, Sweden. Tel: 08 418849

TBMSG Ahmedabad, Triyana Vardhana Vihara, Vijayanagar Society, Kankaria Road, Ahmedabad 380002, India. Tel: 0272 50580

TBMSG Aurangabad, Bhim Nagar, Bhausingpura, Aurangabad 431001, India

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

TBMSG Bombay, 25 Bhimprerna, Tapodhan Nagar, Bandra (E), Bombay 400051, India. Tel: 022 6441156

TBMSG Pimpri, Maitreya Vihar, Gautam Nagar, Pimpri, Poona 411018, India

TBMSG Poona, Dharmachakra Pravartan Mahavihar, Raja Harishchandra Road, Dapodi, Poona 411012, India. Tel: 0212 58403

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

Bahujan Hitay, Dharmachakra Pravartan Mahavihar, Raja Harishchandra Road, Dapodi, Poona 411012, India. Tel: 0212 58403

TBMSG Wardha, Bhim Nagar, Wardha 442001, India. Tel: 07152 2178

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

TBMS 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

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