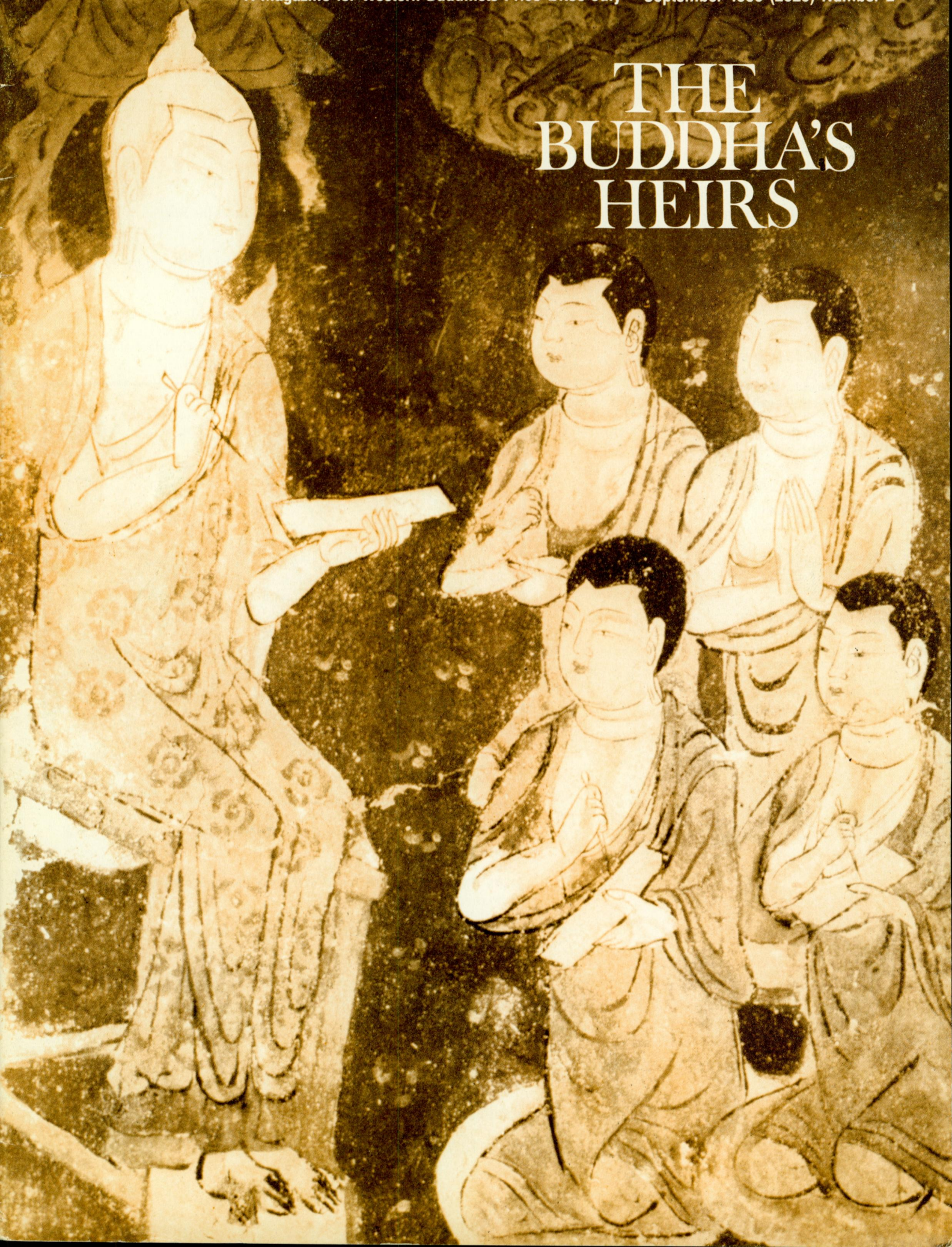


# GOLDEN DRUM

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## THE BUDDHA'S HEIRS



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# AN EVER-WIDENING CIRCLE

On the first Sunday of every month, at precisely seven o'clock in the evening, two hundred and eighty men and women around the world take their places for a special session of meditation. Some sit alone in remote cottages, caravans or even caves; others repair to a quiet room in the house, taking leave of their families for an hour or so; others sit with large companies of their fellows, in the beautiful, spacious shrine rooms where much of their time is spent teaching people to meditate and introducing them to Buddhism. The meditation takes place amid the bustle of towns like London, Utrecht, Poona, Seattle, Penang, Auckland, Sydney, and in the rural peace of North Wales, New Hampshire, Tuscany, and Western Maharashtra. Some enjoy suburban comfort while others suffer shanty-town squalor. They are European, Indian, American, Malaysian, Australian . . . The lists continue: such is the scope and the range of this unique company.

In their minds they recite names, pausing a while, to contemplate a close friend . . . a distant memory . . . a photograph once seen . . . a voice heard on tape . . . a letter-report in *Shabda*, their monthly newsletter: 'Abhaya . . . Chandrabodhi . . . Jayadeva . . . Manjuvajra . . . Siladitya . . .' They pause and move on, pause and move on, developing and directing feelings of friendship and appreciation, of warmth, of love. These are their brothers and sisters in the spiritual life, their companions in the Western Buddhist Order. For an hour the Order comes as close as it ever comes to 'experiencing itself', as a unity, on its highest level.

The Order was founded in April 1968 when, at a ceremony in London, twelve men and women recited the traditional Buddhist formulae of 'Going for Refuge' in the presence of their teacher, Sangharakshita. He had made it clear to them that their Going for Refuge would imply a firm, life-long commitment to the ideals and principles of Buddhism — a commitment that should naturally find expression in more serious attempts to put those ideals and principles into practice. He had also made it clear that by bringing the Order into existence they would be effectively creating the proper nucleus of the movement he had established just a year before — the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order (FWBO). But he could not tell them — except in broad, allegorical terms — what

it would actually be *like* to be Order members. There were no immediate precedents, and there could be no concrete expectations. There was nothing like it in the West at all, and the *bhikkhu sangha*, the monastic spiritual community of the East, with its career scholar-monks, its inflexible rules of conduct and dress, and its sad lack of spiritual dynamism had few examples to offer.

He could give lectures about the difference between the 'group' and the 'spiritual community', or about the reasons for the decline of the *sangha* in the East, but he could not tell each new Order member what conflicts, battles and victories their Going for Refuge would bring before them. These things they would have to find out for themselves. Nor could he explain to the Buddhist world that this new Order was no eccentric concoction of his own, nor just an experimental model for a 'modified' Order appropriate to Western culture, but a sincere attempt to retrieve and restore the spiritual potency of the *sangha* itself: a return to the fundamental primacy of commitment over life-style, a return in fact to the very roots of Buddhism.

The Order has grown slowly; but the implications of Going for Refuge, or 'ordination' as our slightly inappropriate shorthand has it, have gradually become clearer — with experience, with the introduction of the 'mitra system' of training, and as the continued expansion and development of the FWBO has called on greater and deeper levels of commitment from those who have chosen to 'take the plunge'. The Order is now taking root on five continents, and the success of the FWBO in these places can only suggest that the Order itself is becoming more dynamic and adventurous all the time.

Sangharakshita rarely seems satisfied. He urges us on all the time: to a more thorough-going practice of meditation and the precepts, and to a more outward-going participation in the world: to closer bonds of friendship, and to more rigorous mutual criticism: to much finer attention to detail, and to infinitely expanded vision. His name means 'Protector of the Order'.

He will not be with us for ever, and wants above all else to leave behind a community that embodies — and is able to enact — the vision which inspired him, and which inspired the Buddha, to establish an Order in the first place. May his wish come true.

Dharmachari Nagabodhi

# HEIRS OF THE DHARMA

*Subhuti looks at the origins of the Sangha and explains how the Western Buddhist Order fits in.*

It is surprising how tenacious is the dream of a perfect society in the face of all the disharmony and strife of the day to day world. That archetype of perfect concord must be buried deep in the mind of man, forever reasserting itself regardless of circumstances.

We all have the imagination to envision a company of men — or of angels — who live together in such unity that they seem to have but one mind. Each is a unique individual free to feel and think and act as he or she pleases, yet each is so deeply in sympathy with his fellows that his feelings, thoughts, and actions harmonize effortlessly with theirs. Each delights always in the service of his friends.

For Buddhism this perfect concord is the *Arya Sangha*, the spiritual community at its highest level, consisting of all those in whom Transcendental vision has been awakened. The Enlightened consciousness that they all share carries them beyond the narrow confines of egotism so that they dwell together in a dimension of unending love and sympathy. This is the Sangha at its most pure and it is a constant source inspiration to the entire Buddhist world.

The community of all those who are trying to raise themselves to participate in that perfect brotherhood is the Sangha in its most general sense — the 'Maha' or 'Greater Sangha'. It is the worldwide community of Buddhists, all of whom have Gone for Refuge to the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, no matter what form of Buddhism they may follow.

The Maha Sangha was initiated by the Buddha himself shortly after he had gained Enlightenment. Its nucleus consisted of five of his former companions-in-asceticism, and fifty young men who had encountered his extraordinary and radiant figure whilst on an outing in the forest. They all quickly gained Enlightenment! So far as we know there was no ceremony of initiation and no one had to don any special robes. They were simply deeply impressed by the Buddha's own person, and were called by him to follow the Path which he had already trodden. He then sent them forth to teach the Dharma 'for the profit of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the welfare, the profit, the happiness of gods and men' (Vinaya Pitaka I, 21).

In this way the Sangha spread. More and more people found their lives turned upside down on meeting the Buddha or

on hearing His teachings. The impact of the Buddha's vision would lead them spontaneously to dedicate themselves to realizing the ideals which he embodied. In time this act of commitment came to be expressed in the formula of Going for Refuge to the Three Jewels. At that point of Going for Refuge they became members of the Sangha.

The Sangha which surrounded the Buddha consisted of people from all walks of life, some of whom had become wandering ascetics in the accepted tradition of the time. It is these members of the Sangha ('monks' and 'nuns') who are the principal characters in the scriptures since they had the greatest opportunity to be with the Buddha and practise his teachings. However, the 'lay-followers' also played an important part, and many of them are recorded as having gained high spiritual attainments. In the Pali texts, which are probably the earliest historical accounts of the Buddha's life and teachings, we hear the Buddha speaking of his Sangha as being equally 'illuminated' by all of his followers, be they men or women, monk or lay.

From these early beginnings the Sangha spread throughout Asia, from Afghanistan to Japan, and from Mongolia to Java. As it spread it could not maintain its original homogeneous character since the cultures within which it now functioned were so diverse and often had no contact with each other. Additionally, differences of interpretation and practice grew up between groups within the Sangha, so creating a profusion of schools and traditions. Thus the worldwide Sangha came to comprise many different groupings, each with its own form of ordination and approach to the Dharma. Even in the Buddhist cultures which have survived more or less intact into the present time, in Sri Lanka and Tibet for instance, there are several mutually exclusive ecclesiastical corporations.

Modern communications have confronted these different branches of the Sangha with each other in a way that has never happened before. By and large there are good relations between them, even though ordination into one tradition would not be recognized within another. Contrary to some claims that are made, however, none of them may be regarded as the *only real Sangha* completely faithful to the original forms as laid down by the Buddha. All have adapted and modified themselves to suit changing times and

circumstances. All this is quite proper and faithful to the spirit of the Buddha's teaching. Most, if not all, may therefore be regarded as authentic representatives of the Buddhist Sangha, split into different groupings (called *Nikayas* or 'chapters' by the Theravadins) of individuals who share common traditions and teachings.

Another development since the time of the Buddha has been the increasing emphasis given by most schools of Buddhism to the distinction between monk and layman. In some quarters the term 'Sangha' has come to refer exclusively to the monks and nuns. Even if laymen are acknowledged as being part of the Sangha their place is definitely, by and large, an inferior one. This is the consequence of emphasizing the style of life one follows, and the precepts and vows undertaken, at the expense of the act of Going for Refuge to the Three Jewels, which is what fundamentally constitutes one a member of the Sangha.

In introducing the Sangha to the West, we are faced with an *embarras de richesses*. Since we are heirs to the entire Buddhist tradition we cannot readily decide to follow one branch at the expense of all the rest. We must therefore go back to first principles and follow the spirit of the tradition rather than pick on one of its particular manifestations. In the Western Buddhist Order we have therefore chosen to emphasize the Going for Refuge before all else, eliminating the rigid distinction between monk and layman which has done so much to sap the creative energy of Buddhism in the East. Our ordination ceremony, whilst it centres upon the traditional Pali formula of Going for Refuge, cannot be placed within any of the existing *Nikayas*. The Western Buddhist Order is thus a new *Nikaya*, international in character and suited to the needs of the present age.

Although, through our founder, we are directly connected to the main Tibetan initiation lineages and to one of the Burmese Theravada ordination traditions, we consider that first and foremost we are heirs to the Buddha himself and therefore to the vast riches of Buddhism through the ages. Drawing upon this wealth we hope that our own *Nikaya* of the worldwide *Maha Sangha* will come more and more to resemble the *Arya Sangha* and will increasingly exemplify its perfect harmony.

# THE HEART OF THE MOVEMENT

*At the heart of the FWBO is the WBO, the Western Buddhist Order. Without the Order, the Movement could not survive. Abhaya considers what the Order is in ideal terms.*

‘What is the Western Buddhist Order — ideally?’ Putting aside for a moment that word ‘ideally’, the short answer to the question is that the Order consists of those who have Gone for Refuge to the Three Jewels, that is, to the Buddha, to the Dharma (the teaching of the Buddha), and to the Sangha (the spiritual community).

It is a bit early to speak in terms of regular readers of this magazine, but those who have already got to the stage of looking forward to the next issue will soon recognize that one of the more insistent beats of *Golden Drum* is this crucial point: so far as the Order is concerned, the most important thing is not becoming a monk or a nun, or adopting any particular lifestyle, but *Gone for Refuge*. It is this that makes one a Buddhist.

But what about this word ‘ideally’? Because of its associations, there is always a danger, when we start using it, of entering the realm of the airy-fairy. In order to avoid all such associations in this context, I will strive to stay grounded. The term ‘ideal’ in FWBO terminology is not something dim and misty which could never be realized in a million years even with the best will in the world, nor a titillating dream, the contemplation of which plunges one into fantasies from which one inevitably emerges only to find oneself back where one started. On the contrary, the genuine spiritual Ideal is something which draws us on, actually causes us to grow spiritually, to make real progress.

Using traditional terms, one could say that the ideal for an Order member is to attain the Transcendental Path. This can be explained by way of an example. In one of the discourses of the Pali Canon, known as the *Maha Parinibbana Suttanta*, the Buddha makes an interesting observation about the spiritual status of some of his former disciples at the time of their death. Five hundred of them, he tells Ananda, have reached the level of ‘Stream Entry’.

This means that those disciples had developed Transcendental Insight; they had reached a stage of spiritual development from which they could no longer fall back, and their eventual Enlightenment was assured. They had thus become members of the *Arya Sangha*, the Spiritual Community of the

Noble Ones, a technical term designating all those who have attained the Transcendental Path. The *Arya Sangha* is the Spiritual Community *par excellence*.

The first point to note is that the people about whom the Buddha was talking were not monks and nuns but householders, indicating that the Spiritual Community is not exclusively monastic. Inspired by the Buddha’s teaching, they had Gone for Refuge and had achieved that exalted state as a result of their own individual spiritual effort. But the incident also underlines the fact that Stream Entry is an ideal in the sense of being a realizable spiritual objective which can be achieved, in this very lifetime, by those who make the effort.

In this light, one could define a member of the Western Buddhist Order, *ideally*, as someone who will achieve Stream Entry in this life. Though the Ideal may not yet have been realized, it *can* be realized. It is practicable. There is nothing airy-fairy about it. Also, it is important to see that there is a vital connection between the Spiritual Community and the Transcendental. The goal is not just mundane; the Order member’s aim is to develop Insight.

The Ideal does, however, have a wider significance than this. The answer to the question with which we began needs to satisfy us as to what, ideally, an Order member is *before* the Transcendental goal is realized.

Using less traditional terms, Sangharakshita has defined the Spiritual Community as ‘a free association of individuals committed to the same Ideal’. This definition highlights some other important features of the Order.

In the first place, it is a *free* association; that is, there is no question of coercion or of being pressurized into it. One becomes a member of the Order because one wants to, irrespective of what others may think. One is free to join or not to join. It is, in the second place, an association of *individuals*.

The word ‘individual’ usually means ‘one who is separate or distinct, especially from others of its kind’ (*Collins English Dictionary*). The FWBO usage of the word certainly has this association of distinctness and uniqueness, of learning to be oneself instead of what others would like one to be; but it also denotes, more specifically, someone who is vigorously and unremittingly practising in order to



Dharmacharinis in London ▼



develop as a human being in the fullest sense — that is up to the point of Stream Entry and beyond. To this end, the aspiring individual is working to develop qualities such as mindfulness or awareness, positive emotion, especially in the sense of warmth and friendliness towards others, and a strong sense of personal responsibility and directedness.

These three factors of the definition, ‘free’, ‘individuals’, and ‘committed’ are drawn together in the word ‘association’.



**Dharmacharis on the 1985 Order convention▲**

This element of associating, of coming together, frequently and in large numbers, is an essential feature of the Spiritual Community. The Going for Refuge is, ultimately, an individual affair; one grows spiritually through one's own individual effort. Yet though technically possible, in practice it is very difficult to achieve the Goal in isolation. Association with others of like mind is indispensable.

In the *Udana* of the Pali Canon, we find the story of Meghiya, the monk who is impatient to go off alone to a lovely mango grove to take up a life of meditation. After only a short time, a matter of hours it seems, he is unable to concentrate; his mind is assailed by endless thoughts and the hindrances of ill-will and sensual desire. Later, the Buddha explains that the chief reason for his failure is the fact that he has not had sufficient experience of Spiritual Friendship.

The need for the individuals who constitute the Spiritual Community to associate together and develop friendships with one another is paramount for two reasons: one positive, the other negative. To deal with the negative first: the spiritual life is sometimes described as a battleground. In spite of his concern to move forwards,

the spiritual aspirant is constantly drawn backwards by the strong pull of his mundane conditioning.

No one can be sure of not slipping back until Stream Entry has been reached. Up to this point, mutual moral support and encouragement is needed in the struggle against the lure of the mundane. Not that there is necessarily anything wrong with the mundane *per se*. The danger lies in the possibility of being overwhelmed or intoxicated by it.

Being composed of ordinary human beings, the Order is not perfect. It has been known for Order members to resign, but it is significant that these represent only a tiny fraction of those who have Gone for Refuge since the Order started eighteen years ago. When Order members do get 'out of contact', it is a matter of deepest concern for their spiritual friends, who do whatever they can to keep the lines of communication open.

That said, however, the prime emphasis is a positive one. Order members come together in order to bring the best out of one another, to love one another, and inspire one another to further progress along the Path. Thus the keynote of being an Order member is essentially altruistic. One does not enter into Spiritual Friendship for what one

may get out of it for oneself, but from a genuine concern for the other. 'If ye will not take care of one another', said the Buddha, exhorting his disciples, 'who else, I ask, will do so?' Paradoxically, the more we get away from ourselves and give, in friendship, the more we become ourselves and the nearer we approach true individuality.

Since I have been trying to explain what the Order ideally is, it seems appropriate to conclude by saying how it feels to be an Order member when everything is going well. It is at one and the same time a stimulating, challenging, and extremely rewarding experience. In the context of the Spiritual Community one is drawn out of oneself and beyond oneself in spite of oneself. At such times, one gets the Ideal in sharper focus and can stride towards it with greater faith. As one does so, the Ideal itself marches forward, so to speak, in sympathy. One begins to see that, in some profound sense, the Ideal will always be beyond one's reach. Far from being frustrating, this is inspiring. For the further one progresses, the less goal-oriented one becomes and thus deeper and yet deeper satisfaction is derived from the process of growth itself.



## A WOMAN'S ROAD TO FREEDOM

*Religions have often treated women as 'second class citizens'.*

*Vajrapushpa investigates the position of women in Buddhist tradition, and in the WBO.*

There was a queen infatuated with her own beauty; there was a daughter of a domestic slave, as well as a prostitute and a teacher of Jain philosophy; there were daughters of wealthy families, there were mothers whose children had died, and mothers whose children had left home. These, and many other women, went for refuge to the Buddha during his lifetime and found freedom in his teaching.

For many of them, this may initially have meant freedom from kitchen drudgery, or from the limitations of purely intellectual pursuits. For many of them — as they gained insight into the unsatisfactoriness of conditioned existence — it came to mean freedom from the rounds of rebirth.

Perhaps in some people's minds there still lingered a little doubt as to whether a woman could reach the highest goals of spiritual development — a woman with her 'two-finger consciousness', only capable of testing whether grains of rice are cooked. Mara (a devil, or 'shadow' in Buddhist mythology), appearing to the nun Soma, tried to make her a victim of this confusion. But she, already an Arahant, knew better:

*How should the woman's nature hinder us?*

*Whose hearts are firmly set, who ever move*

*With growing knowledge onward in the Path?*

And, as an alternative translation of the verse suggests, one who is over-concerned, over-identified, with his or her sex, is susceptible to the confusions, to the arrogance and the self-doubt that Mara is always ready to conjure up.

After all, the Buddha had stated that women were capable of gaining Enlightenment. There is nothing in her 'nature' to prevent woman from doing so.

The fundamental task for both men and women is the transformation of *human* nature, steeped as it is in greed, hatred, and delusion.

Apart from being a step of immense spiritual significance, joining the Order of nuns was also a significant step in a society in which woman was primarily seen entirely in the light of her functions as daughter, wife, and mother, i.e. in relation to men, and not as an independent individual. The only other group of 'free' women in the Indian society — at that time were the prostitutes.

It is interesting to note, however, that the status of women during the Indian Buddhist era was on the whole higher than it had been before — and higher than it has been since. Collective freedom in the sense of a general level of legal, financial, and psychological independence is an important stepping stone to spiritual freedom, gained through individual effort and motivation.

The Western Buddhist Order, in which men and women are members of the

same, united, Order, reflects the importance of shared commitment to the Three Jewels, above and beyond all other differences. On the other hand, that fact that out of the 283 Order members only 45 are women, reflects a different sort of story, a story of biological, social, cultural, and psychological conditioning to which both men and women have been subject.

There is no obvious or simple answer to the question as to why there should be such an imbalance within the Order — and why it seems to take women longer to reach the point of readiness for ordination. The answer is made up of many different threads. There is, on the socio-psychological level for instance, the push-pull dynamic of the mother-daughter relationship. A mother wants her daughter to have greater freedom than she ever had, yet simultaneously convinces her that she will never escape, never be free and independent. She will always have to put other people's needs first. This mixed message instills in a

woman a sense of insecurity, a lack of self-esteem, a hunger for affection and acceptance.

Women have been convenient targets for psychological projection, carriers (for men) of much that is 'alien' — whether desirable or not — in human nature: destructiveness, sexuality, mysteriousness, emotional dependence, and complexity. Mutual projection between men and women (for no doubt women project many things onto men) has become crystallized in educational, religious, social, and cultural patterns which define a woman's place in society — and define her 'nature' and her identity.

It is such patterns, with their unconscious undercurrents, that 'feminism', as a doctrine and as a movement, has sought to illuminate and to eradicate. The numerous handicaps and restrictions experienced by women have left their marks. There has been an inevitable reaction in many areas of life: a forceful assertion of equality — if not of superiority — as regards men. Both degraded and idealized in the myths and histories of many religions, women find it difficult to create for themselves an active role of their own in the spiritual life.

Even though the currently fashionable quest for a 'women's spirituality' may have a part to play in the process of creating a new degree of psychological independence and autonomy for women, it has, at least from a Buddhist point of view, a number of limitations. By emphasizing women's 'unique' spiritual qualities, it sets up new boundaries between men and women. The rejection of men and what they represent, i.e. the masculine principle of power and reason, and the deification of the female principle — of caring and nurturing — does not help any more than the reverse process has helped. Men and women need to grow into psychologically and spiritually balanced individuals.

Although members of the same Order, men and women in the WBO regularly attend 'single-sex' Order meetings, retreats, and conventions, and many women Order members live in women's communities. It must be stressed, however, that such separating of the

sexes for certain practical purposes has nothing to do with a more negative 'separatism'. The often negative reasons for separatism are rooted in hatred of the opposite sex. This kind of segregation leads to false notions of 'inferiority' and 'superiority', and to the appropriating and disowning of certain qualities, conveniently labelled as 'masculine' and 'feminine'. The Western Buddhist Order has no existence apart from the Order members — male and female — who comprise it. The women who have joined the Order have done so as spiritually motivated individuals, and not to assert their common identity as women.

The decidedly more positive reasons that underlie our own 'single-sex' situations, therefore, are based on an understanding of the individual's emotional and spiritual needs. Single-sex situations within the Order and the FWBO serve to create an atmosphere in which self-knowledge, self-acceptance, emotional clarity, and motivation for spiritual development can grow unhindered by distraction and projection.

Besides offering a general ambience conducive to development, single-sex situations can, perhaps more importantly, act as practical spiritual workshops. Vajraloka and Taraloka, for instance, are retreat centres for men and women respectively. Their existence means that the monastic lifestyle, with a strong emphasis on meditation practice, is available to both men and women in the Order and the FWBO.

It is only natural and necessary that women Order members devote much of their time to teaching, and practising with other women. However, their overall frame of reference is the entire Order, their ultimate concern the entire movement, their field of activity the whole world.

From psychological freedom and positive self-image, so valuable in themselves, there is still much further to go: 'She grows in faith, grows in virtue, in learning, in generosity, in wisdom. Making such growth, brethren, she wins the essential and wins excellence.'

## THE TEN PRECEPTS

*With deeds of loving kindness  
I purify my body  
With open handed generosity  
I purify my body  
With stillness, simplicity, and contentment  
I purify my body  
With truthful communication  
I purify my speech  
With words kindly and gracious  
I purify my speech  
With utterance helpful and harmonious  
I purify my speech  
Abandoning covetousness for tranquillity  
I purify my mind  
Changing hatred into compassion  
I purify my mind  
Transforming ignorance into wisdom  
I purify my mind*

In this 'positive' rendering, the sixth and seventh precepts are combined

## PRINCIPLE & PRECEPT

*Principles, and even high ideals, are meaningless unless accompanied by appropriate actions. Kamalashila shows how the Ten Precepts offer a guide to the transformation of body, speech, and mind.*

**T**he life of every Order member begins, in the Buddhist ordination ceremony, with verses which affirm the highest possible ideal for mankind. From now on he or she is dedicated to development towards Enlightenment.

But no ideal can hold real meaning unless it is expressed in action. So immediately following these verses comes the taking of the Ten Precepts — ten training principles, each covering a particular area of life which is to be transformed by the fundamental ideal of Enlightenment.

Refuges and precepts always go together — without action, any ideal is merely external; without some governing principle, actions

have no direction. The ideal of Enlightenment and its expression in the precepts are so basic to the spiritual life that both are recited at all Order gatherings.

The ten precepts observed by members of the WBO were first outlined by the Buddha, and are referred to many times in both Pali and Sanskrit Scriptures. One example from the Pali is the *Kutadanta Sutta* wherein the Buddha explains to the rich brahmin, Kutadanta, the various dispositions and tendencies of people — in terms of whether or not they follow the ten precepts.<sup>1</sup>

In the Sanskrit *Perfection of Wisdom in 8000 Lines* the Buddha speaks of the irreversible Bodhisattva as being characterized not only by his own observation of these precepts but also by his encouraging of others to do likewise.<sup>2</sup>

Traditionally, the ten precepts are taken as enjoining abstention from ten types of harmful action. We cannot avoid acting, or the fact that our actions will have consequences. Even the tiniest thought may modify our future state of mind, even if to

a correspondingly tiny degree. It is clearly vital, assuming we wish to develop, that we encourage good states. Keeping the precepts, in the sense of avoiding actions which will do us or others harm, will ensure that this happens.

But abstention is only one element in the practice of the precepts. Each of the ten can be expressed as a guide to positive action aimed at developing a particular quality. In fact, unless we see the precepts in this way — as aids to self-development — we could forget their real purpose. Then we may begin to see the spiritual life as a matter of adherence to a set of rules, or see 'goodness' not as a means to an end, but as an end in itself.

Morality is not self-justifying. According to Buddhism, good actions have the definite purpose of creating happiness (happiness is essentially freedom from regret — if we have done nothing regrettable, we feel happy). Going even further, good actions (not necessarily conventionally good or 'acceptable' ones, but actions which are genuinely helpful and creative) are the only possible basis for meditation. In turn, the concentrated tranquillity of meditation is the indispensable basis for the development of prajñā or transcendental wisdom. These three stages of the spiritual path — śīla (moral action), samādhi, and prajñā — were often mentioned by the Buddha in order to demonstrate the relationship between moral action and the ultimate goal of Enlightenment.

## THE SANGHA

*He wanted that His followers should be flames  
And burn up to the Zenith. Now they are  
Faint embers underneath a mound of ash,  
Afraid of claiming kinship with a star.*

*Sangharakshita: Kalimpong, 1957*

But precepts are not rules — they go far deeper. Essentially, they are universal principles which, finally, cannot be expressed in words. Rules (if they are good ones) are created on the basis of principles. They may be changed as circumstances change, but principles are independent of circumstances

and *do not change*: they are unconditioned. In essence, to keep the precepts means to be mindful of the living reality of universal principles that influence us constantly, whether we realize it or not: regrettable actions always make us unhappy, good actions invariably lead to happiness.

So what are the Ten Precepts? The first three concern bodily action: (1) Abstaining from harming other living beings (or, helping them in any way we can); (2) Not taking for ourselves anything which has not been made freely available (or, practising generosity); (3) Not harming others through our sexual desire (or, being content with our present sexual status).

Four speech precepts follow:

(4) Not telling lies (or, speaking the truth); (5) Abstaining from harsh, cutting speech (or, speaking with consideration for others); (6) Abstaining from useless, frivolous speech (or, saying only what is actually helpful); (7) Abstaining from slanderous, divisive speech (or, speaking harmoniously, to reconcile others).

The remaining three concern 'acts of mind':

(8) Abstaining from covetousness (or, letting go of our grasping tendencies, and inclining towards a freer, more tranquil state of mind); (9) Abstaining from hatred (or, developing an attitude of love and compassion); (10) Abstaining from wrong ways of seeing things, such as thinking that actions have no consequences, or that there is no such thing as human development (or, developing wisdom).

The Ten Precepts are a basis to be extended and elaborated. Order members are, of course, not perfected beings. Each has his or her own particular faults to be transformed. At times they will find it necessary to take additional, more specific vows, perhaps a rule unique to them such as giving up smoking, or

something more general, such as refraining from making cutting, hurtful remarks.

In the East there are a number of different *patimokkhas* (lists of precepts) for committed Buddhists. Those living a monastic life take hundreds, while others just take the five basic precepts — the same five that are recited at general meetings in the FWBO. These correspond to the first four of the ten Order precepts, plus abstention from intoxicants.

The existence of such different *patimokkhas* has come to lay an inappropriate emphasis upon the actual numbers of precepts observed. Sheer numerical weight can easily give an illusion of some far greater degree of spiritual attainment on the part of the monks. However, these extra precepts do not add to the fundamental principles of ethics: they are mainly elaborations, in the form of extra rules, workings-out of the same basic principles in the more thorough and specific way appropriate to a monastic environment. Many of them have but secondary ethical significance, being primarily concerned with matters of monastic etiquette.

This is why, towards the end of his life, the Buddha gave permission for his monastic disciples to abandon their minor rules if they chose: the most important Buddhist precepts are shared by monk and layman alike. They are the five basic precepts and the transcendental principles which underlie them. If we go further and compare the range of the ten Order precepts with that of the traditional monastic code, we find in fact that the ten are more comprehensive.<sup>3</sup>

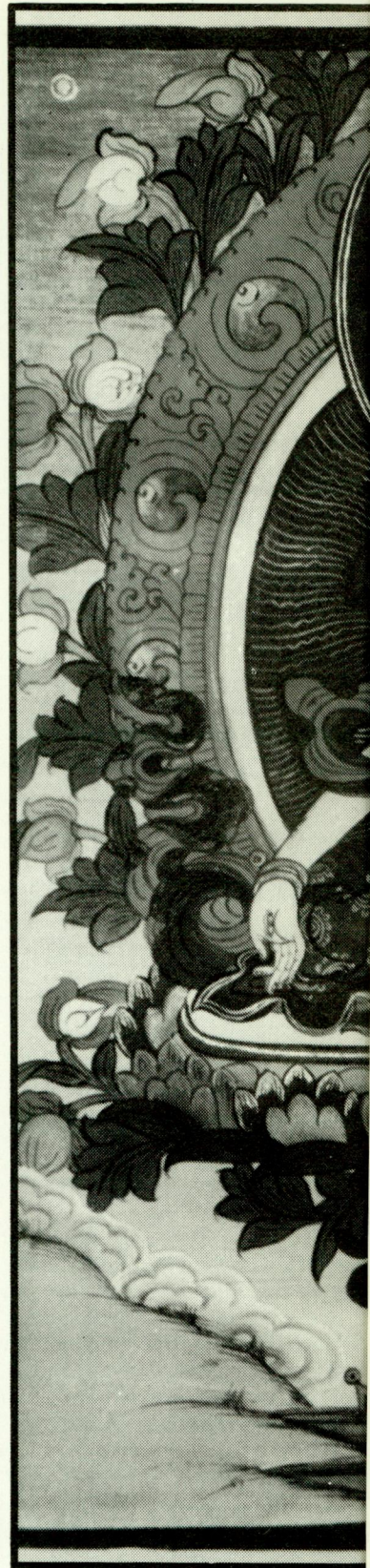
If Buddhists in the East, and their Western followers, were also to uphold the primary ethical significance of these principles, then the ten precepts could become a unifying force — a fundamental *patimokkha* — for all practising Buddhists.

### Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup> *Digha Nikaya* Other examples from the Pali Canon are the 'Sevitabba-asevitabba Sutta' (Majjhima Nikaya 114) many short suttas in the *Anguttara Nikaya* and numerous others.

<sup>2</sup> Edward Conze, *The Perfection of Wisdom in 8000 lines and its Verse Summary* pp. 200-201. (Four Seasons Foundation)

<sup>3</sup> See especially Sangharakshita's *The Ten Pillars of Buddhism* (Windhorse Publications) for a fuller discussion of this, and many other points discussed here.



## SIGNS: ]

*What is a Kesa? Why do Order members have strange names? What are the special meditation practices they do? Shridevi explains.*

*'Nagabodhi', you read under the editorial of Golden Drum;*

"...an archetype of the highest dimension of human potential."



## INNER & OUTER

'Kamalashila' is leading a retreat in Wales, says a leaflet. You walk into a meditation class in Bristol and meet *Tejananda*. Your mind boggles and your tongue recoils from even trying to get round the peculiar sound combinations. What's more, all these ordinary looking people wear a kind of white cloth around

their necks, and do a special meditation practice not taught at the general classes. It may seem a little strange.

It is of course helpful to know, by certain signs, who are the people responsible for what takes place in a situation, such as a retreat or meditation class. But if you continue to attend FWBO

activities, you will be embarking on an adventure which will in time reveal what, on many levels, those 'signs' really mean.

Most members of the WBO wear no distinguishing clothes, even for ceremonial occasions. The exceptions are of course our *Anagarikas* who wear their orange robes for ceremonies, or if living in traditionally Buddhist countries such as India and Thailand.

However, when appropriate, Order members wear a simple *kesa*, a 'stole' of white brocade. The Three Jewels emblem embroidered onto it symbolizes their goal and their practice. (The yellow Jewel represents the Buddha, the blue, the Dharma, and the red, the Sangha.) This idea of a 'minimal robe' comes in fact from the Japanese Buddhist tradition. Apart from signalling one's position to others, it is an outer manifestation of one's commitment to the Three Jewels, a visible source of inspiration for Order members themselves.

Between the level of the body and the level of the mind comes the mediating level of speech. Between the material and the Transcendental worlds is the world of myth: the imaginal, the archetypal. For those who wish to develop awareness of this realm, it can be helpful to leave behind the more or less meaningless label bestowed at birth according to the fancy of one's parents. It is encouraging to be called by a new, meaningful name by people who are increasingly conscious of its meaning — and its unique appropriateness to you. It is to be recognized as a significant character in an unfolding spiritual drama.

The tradition of giving a disciple a new name at ordination did not begin until Buddhism had moved from India, but in time the custom spread throughout the Buddhist East. In the WBO the use of Order names has become a practice in itself. When you hear your new name — chosen by Sangharakshita — it comes as a recognition and a challenge, as if someone who knows you far better than you as yet know yourself is pointing you in the direction of finding out more. The name is a constant reminder to explore and

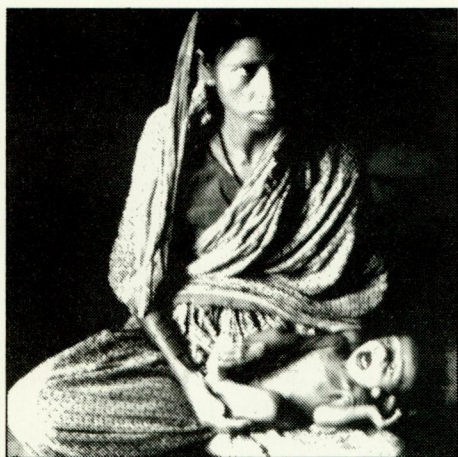
strengthen the spiritual qualities that lie 'within'.

The more your practice evolves and your (intuitive if not linguistic) understanding of Sanskrit develops, the more these Order names will begin to mean. ( — Though it can be a lifelong adventure to discover how untranslatable '*Naga*', for example, actually is, not to mention '*Bodhi*'!) You might also share a name with a famous Buddhist hero from centuries 'back, as in the case of Kamalashila, who was the main disciple of Shantarakshita in Tibet. The name is a link on the mythic level with the tradition and with your teacher, as well as with other Order members. The bond is particularly strong with those with whom you share a certain name-quality, as I am personally discovering through my friendship with Shrimala, 'the Garland of Transcendent Radiance'.

The new name is announced to all at the public ordination ceremony. A more 'inner' aspect of the occasion remains implicit, however. Those present may just be able to discern the effect on the ordinee of having just been given a new meditation practice: the visualization of a 'Transcendental figure' — an archetype of the highest dimension of human potential — such as Tara, Avalokiteshvara, or Padmasambhava.

By visualizing this figure and chanting the associated mantra, the Transcendental level of one's being becomes increasingly manifest. This is the most precious gift imaginable: a method of dissolving one's mundane self into happiness, and of gradually creating a 'subtle' body of Transcendental Wisdom. Now you not only have a kind of esoteric connection with your guru and all of his disciples, but you have also been born into a particular Buddha family.

The Western Buddhist Order endeavours to be practical. We each of us aspire to be manifestations of the Dharma. The more the outward signs and symbols remind us of our inner purpose, and urge us to relate to each other on that basis, the more valuable they are. The more our inner Transcendental Wisdom unfolds, the more meaningful those signs become.



## FOR THE WELFARE OF THE MANY

*Is the spiritual life escapist?  
Vajraketu explains what the  
Spiritual Community does for the  
world — and why the world  
needs the spiritual community.*

**I**n the summer of 1984 I returned to the UK from India, where I had been involved in establishing TBMSG (Bombay), an FWBO Centre. I had not been back long when I met an old neighbour, whom I had not seen since becoming a Buddhist. I told her something about what I was doing, what Buddhism is, and what the FWBO does. She was interested, but could not help adding 'It all sounds very nice, but isn't it rather escapist?'.

I didn't think so. I had just spent two years living and working in the slums of Bombay, one of the world's most unpleasant environments. I was surrounded by poverty, overcrowding, disease, suffering. It was hard and it was mostly ugly. I wouldn't recommend it to anyone looking to escape.

While I had been in India, my friend had been carrying on in her usual way, her life revolving around the house, the family, holidays, and television. She was sadly typical of many people I have met 'in the world' since then — comfortable, complacent, bored, her life measured out in distractions. Who was really escaping? And from what?

Buddhism asserts that human life is rich in potential, and that the Buddha's teaching offers the key to unlock this potential, allowing people to live lives based on the cultivation of friendliness, compassion, generosity, honesty, clarity, and contentment. The systematic development of qualities such as these constitutes the Spiritual life, and their perfection represents the Buddhist Ideal.

Opening up the full potential of human life for oneself and for others seems to me to be the most worthwhile thing one can do. This is what the Order is for, and it is to this that Order members are committed. Order members may apply this commitment in different ways, but one would be wrong to imagine that any of them have 'turned their backs on' the world.

True, a few live permanently on retreat, and most choose to do without a television set, but all are aware that their commitment to the Buddhist ideal requires from them an active involvement in the lives of other human beings. Members of the Order not only have a desire to see the world change for the better, they have also dedicated their lives to working to bring this about in whatever ways seem most appropriate.

Thus, most Order members live 'in the world'. Some have ordinary jobs; a few have families; and many work full-time teaching the Dharma at our public centres. With a view to reconciling economic realities with the Spiritual life in a modern industrial society, many work in the various Right Livelihood ventures that have grown up around the FWBO.

It seems important to stress how 'normal' Order members are in order to counter the commonly held misconception of Buddhists as saffron-robed, shaven-headed, good-natured-but-lazy people, out of touch with the 'real' world. At the same time one must



not 'undersell' the Buddha's teaching. People who have Gone for Refuge, who have placed a wholly spiritual ideal at the core of their lives, are radically different from people who have not. To pretend otherwise is to do Buddhism a disservice. Members of the Order may not differ from their neighbours in matters of dress, hairstyle, or taste in music; but these are externals, a thin covering over a vision of existence which permeates every aspect of the individual's thoughts, words, and actions. One could go so far as to say that if you do not have a radically different value system from that of your neighbour you are not really a Buddhist at all.

For Buddhism to gain too much in the way of 'social respectability' would therefore be an alarming portent, suggesting a compromise of principles.



The sight of Thai Buddhist monks 'blessing' guns and tanks is an extreme example of the sort of compromise that over-reliance on social acceptance can foster. The Order interacts with the world as much as possible, but on matters of principle at least, the flow of influence can only be one way.

Going for Refuge is not static, not a ceremony held on a particular day, but an unfolding commitment to ideals, and to their manifestation in daily life. Naturally one would expect this to take some practical form since, as Buddhists, all Order members are committed to developing compassionate activity.

A criticism sometimes levelled against Order members is that we do not engage in very much 'good work' — of the type favoured by our Christian friends. This is

not entirely true; one could point to the medical and educational work being initiated by Order members in India, or to our involvement in prison visiting and hospice work. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that the prime function — even duty — of the Spiritual Community is to preserve and uphold Spiritual Values themselves, as a living ideal.

The Buddha referred to the Dharma as a lamp. If the light goes out, the world is plunged into darkness, a darkness from which it will not easily escape. The essential function of the Order is to keep alive the values proclaimed by the Buddha. This is why Order members are working through the 'Friends of the Western Buddhist Order' to develop and organize facilities which will ultimately

Avalokitesvara.

an embodiment of Enlightened Compassion

benefit great numbers of people.

A doctor who discovers the remedy for some terrible disease can go out and cure people personally, or he can train others to do so, setting up structures to facilitate the spread of his remedy as widely as possible. If he concentrates on training others first, his discovery will not be lost, and in the long run far more people will be cured.

In the infancy of both the WBO and the FWBO much of the energy available to the Order has gone into creating public centres, retreat centres, Right Livelihood businesses, communities, a publishing wing, an arts centre, and more. These represent our attempts to find ways in which to contact as many people as possible, and provide them with conditions in which they can realize for themselves the benefits of Buddhist practice. For some time yet the bulk of our energy will continue to go into these structures and facilities. We still need to create many more, so that we can reach even more people, and we need to improve the ones that already exist.

The structures are concrete manifestations of our Going for Refuge. They are not static, but improve as our experience deepens and our vision expands. The sum total of these structures is our vision of a healthy human society: one which encourages people, in harmony with one another, to live truly human lives. The vision itself is not fixed, but grows as we grow, as we develop new talents, and as it interacts in ever more ways with a world in which spiritual values enjoy little respect.

There is no escape from the world. The Buddha explicitly rejected the 'option' — if one can call it that — of cutting himself off and enjoying the state of bliss he had discovered. He went out into the world and taught the Dharma 'for the welfare of the many'. Our inheritance is not just the Buddha's teaching, but also his example of putting that teaching into practice.

There is no escape from the world, but there is the option of helping to turn the world into a place one would not feel inclined to escape from: a world of love rather than power, a world of spiritual rather than material values. If this sounds naive, remember that in the centuries after the Buddha's death Buddhism had a strong and benign influence on a golden era of Indian culture — which transplanted into China, Tibet, and Japan.

So long as even a few people come together on the basis of a clear understanding of the principles of Buddhism, and a commitment to their practice, for so long will Buddhism have a real message for the world. If these principles manifest in the lives of individuals then they will inevitably be communicated to others with whom they come into contact. There is nothing greater that one can do for human beings than to help them lead truly human lives. This is the great task of Buddhism, and it is a task in which the WBO aspires to play as full a part as possible.

# THE PEOPLE'S CANON

## ALSO RECEIVED:

### **Aryasura's Aspiration and A Meditation on Compassion.**

By Aryasura and the 14th Dalai Lama. Published by the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives £3.00

### **Death, Intermediate State, and Rebirth in Tibetan Buddhism.**

By Lati Rinpoche & Jeffrey Hopkins. Published by Snow Lion Publications. US\$6.95

### **The Essence of Nectar**

By Yeshe Tondru. Translated by Geshe Lobsang Tharchin with Benjamin & Deborah Alterman. Published by the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives

### **Living by Zen.**

By D T Suzuki. Edited by Christmas Humphreys. Published by Rider £4.95

### **The Kalachakra Tantra, Rite of Initiation**

By Tenzin Gyatso, the Dalai Lama. Published by Wisdom Publications. £11.95

### **Opening the Eye of New Awareness**

By The Dalai Lama. Published by Wisdom Publications. £6.95

### **Selected Works of the Dalai Lama I: Bridging the Sutras and Tantras**

by Glenn H Mullin. Published by Snow Lion Publications. £7.95

### **Selected Works of the Dalai Lama II: the Tantric Yogas of Sister Niguna**

By Glenn H Mullin. Published by Snow Lion Publications. US\$10.95

### **Selected Works of the Dalai Lama III: Essence of Refined Gold**

By Glenn H Mullin. Published by Snow Lion Publications. US\$10.95

### **Selected Works of the Dalai Lama VII: Songs of Spritual Change**

By Glenn H Mullin. Published by Snow Lion Publications. £9.55

### **Tales and Teachings of the Buddha: The Jataka stories in relation to the Pali Canon.**

By John Garrett Jones. Published by George Allen & Unwin, London. pp. 216 + xvi. £6.95

Since almost the earliest period of Buddhism, the collection of *Jataka* stories, supposedly depicting the past lives of the Buddha, have been the mainstay of teaching, practice, and inspiration for countless millions of Eastern — especially Theravadin — Buddhists. Yet in the perspective of 'Western' Buddhism, with the exception of a certain amount of academic interest, the *Jakas* hardly figure at all. *Tales and Teachings of the Buddha* is a book which, though by a Western academic, John Garratt Jones, could well help introduce the *Jakas* to a wider audience.

The author's main aim is to 'investigate the relationship between the stricter minority and the laxer majority within the Theravada community [i.e. bhikkhus and laity respectively] . . . by comparing the core of scriptural teaching contained in the four *Nikayas* of the *Sutta Pitaka* with the teaching implied or expounded in the *Jataka* stories' (p. xi).

After a useful summary of the origins, form, and general themes of the *Jakas* the author examines in turn the *Nikaya* and *Jataka* treatment of Karma and Rebirth, Non-Injury, 'Sex and Marriage: Love and Friendship', social and doctrinal teaching, and finally — rather circumspectly — Mythological Elements.

One of the most interesting themes to emerge is the effect that the *Jakas* have had in 'tempering' — for the laity, at least — the rather austere tendencies of the monastic side of the Theravada school. The author suggests that 'Mahayanist ideas' have clearly influenced certain *Jakas*: ' . . . in these stories, which have exerted far more influence in the Theravada cultures than has the canon itself, ideas are

conveyed which never occur in the *Nikayas*. By being thus conveyed, the difference between Theravada and Mahayana at the popular level is very much reduced' (p. 71).

Particularly thought-provoking is the chapter on 'Sex and Marriage: Love and Friendship'. The author begins with the statement: 'Anybody who has studied the *Nikayas* will feel compelled to admit that they exhibit an overwhelming antipathy to each of the four words in the title of this chapter' (p. 72). One could — and space allowing, *would* — take issue with the author on some elements of this rather sweeping statement. However, the canonical antipathy to unhealthy personal attachments, whether sexual or otherwise, is not in doubt. What comes as something of a surprise is the attitude of the *Jakas* to these topics.

While emphasizing the drawbacks of sex and marriage perhaps even more emphatically and luridly than the *Nikayas* the *Jakas* positively extol love and friendship — particularly the kind of friendship exemplified by that between the Buddha himself and his disciple Ananda.

The author further suggests, quite convincingly, that 'in what is said about friendship in the *Jakas* it is fairly clear that a good deal of homosexual emotion is operating . . . The East has not been afflicted with the Judaeo-Christian taboos which have made the homosexual emotion . . . such a stunted and neurotic travesty of itself in the West' (p. 113). Further: ' . . . if one has correctly read between the lines, if sex enters a loving friendship, there is no cause for alarm' (p. 115). This section of the book deserves careful appraisal.

Much else of interest emerges, for example the author's treatment of that rather curious sort of Enlightened being, the *Paccekabuddha* — which figures quite prominently in the *Jakas*. This makes fascinating

reading. Unfortunately however, the book cannot be recommended unreservedly. The author is strong on the more 'sociological' aspect of his material, but his attempts to interpret Buddhist doctrine seem, at times, woefully askew.

Worst is the sorry shambles he makes of the *anattā* doctrine in Chapter 3. Briefly, his position is that if *anattā* is a doctrine of 'radical selflessness', then it cannot be reconciled with a doctrine of rebirth — for what is there that can be reborn? The ramifications of this view loom large throughout the book, leading the author into some extraordinarily tight spots, entirely of his own creation.

The problem lies in an over-'nihilistic' interpretation of *anattā* - i.e., holding that, in actuality, no self, no-'thing' exists; whereas the real import of the *anattā* doctrine is simply that there is no permanent, unchanging element in the psycho-physical 'makeup' of the individual. If we can exist as an impermanent, changing 'being' *now*, there is no reason in principle why an impermanent, changing non-physical (or 'subtle-physical') 'being' could not continue and 're-become', after death. Empirical proof of this is not possible — but then, the Buddha never claimed (contrary to an apparent assumption on the part of the author) that his teaching could be 'proved' in the scientific-empirical sense.

So, this is a book to be read critically — there are other dubious points in it, such as an occasionally heavy-handed literalism in the interpretation of mythological material, and a rather silly and irrelevant 'feminist' critique of certain *Jakas*. All the same, there is much of interest and value. The book provides a useful introduction and guide to the *Jakas* and should encourage many readers to plunge — armed with a degree of critical awareness — into the strange and wonderful world of the *Jakas* themselves.

By Tejananda

# ANOTHER VIEW OF DEATH

## REBIRTH REVISED

In letter to *Golden Drum* Nick Ribush of Wisdom Publications has explained the 'scrappy finish' of Martin Willson's excellent booklet *Rebirth and the Western Buddhist*. (See issue 1, 'Rebirth Reappraised'.) The essay was first published in their 'transcript series', as: 'material that is not quite ready for the general market, needing further editing, but in demand by serious practitioners who are prepared to accept the interim versions.'

Mr Willson's article will eventually appear in an anthology, but for the time being it is now to be republished in Wisdom's new (and extremely handsome) booklet series.

In our next issue we are hoping to review some new Wisdom books about the Bodhisattva Tara.

## Death and Dying:

### The Tibetan Tradition

By Glen H. Mullin

Published by Arkana. £5.95

This collection of material about death and dying from the Tibetan tradition is well worth examining. Drawing from the works of three Dalai Lamas, an eighteenth century mystic, a modern *terton* ('text revealer'), a contemporary *Geshe*, and others, Glen Mullin has put together a comprehensive selection from this rich field. He has also supplied some helpful annotations, and provided brief prefaces to each of the texts.

Ours is a society which worships youth and beauty. Death is still frequently treated as a taboo subject. In Buddhism, of course, death has never been seen as

Cover illustration: *Death and Dying*

offensive or taboo, but simply as an inevitable consequence of being alive, and yet another manifestation of impermanence. Mullin's own experiences of death are touched upon. He describes an old Tibetan sitting under a tree, 'beaming an enormous smile', leaning back and calmly dying, surrounded by his family. Then there is the old abbot who carries on quietly teaching during a heart attack.

There are well-chosen examples from each of the main classes of Tibetan literature on death. The first few chapters are introductory, and include the Death of Gyere Lama, which is remarkable for being a modern *terma*, or 'revealed treasure', which was disclosed to a yogi by dream and trance only thirty years ago.

Next comes a more technical section, starting with a text on predicting the time of death. Out of their cultural context, these methods may seem odd — not to say medically dubious. However, the 'dream-signs', and the section on the experience of death, are of great interest. Chapter Six describes a longevity practice in detail, but unfortunately fails to include any statement on the necessity for a personal teacher in order to practise it. This omission also applies to the next section, on 'consciousness transference'. The selection concludes with a poem on impermanence by the Seventh Dalai Lama, which, together with another poem, 'Conversation with an Old Man' is of note for both its personal message and its poignant call to a sense of urgency.

Glen Mullin is a prolific translator, and this book, which is his first for the 'Arkana' imprint, contains a wide range of material on death and dying. It is, he freely admits, 'not intended as a replacement or alternative to *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* but rather as a supplement to it, and the other works on the subject.' In this it succeeds; it is also very enjoyable to read.

By Dharmadhara

**Tales and  
Teachings  
of the  
BUDDHA**  
The Jātaka Stories in Relation  
to the Pali Canon  
John Garrett Jones



# A BOOK OF BOOKS

**Alternative Traditions.** By Sangharakshita. Published by Windhorse Publications. pp. 197. £6.50.

As a writer and as a teacher, Sangharakshita has been for much of his life intimately concerned with the communication of Buddhism to the West. It is therefore only to be expected that he should show an exceptionally keen interest in the Buddhist — and Buddhism-related — literature that has been and still is pouring forth from British and American publishing houses.

He is a prodigious and scrupulous reader, and has often commented that he would like to devote far more time to writing book reviews than his busy life allows. Reliable, well-written books deserve congratulation and comment, doubtful or misleading interpretations have to be challenged, confusion-sowing frauds must be exposed.

During the years 1974-80, however, Sangharakshita did manage to contribute a series of some thirty reviews to *Golden Drum's* forerunner, *The FWBO Newsletter*. These, along with a 'bonus': Sangharakshita's article 'Buddhism and William Blake' have now been brought together in a single volume. Between them the reviews deal with books on all three *yanas* of Buddhism as well as some 'alternative traditions' from the West. A book in which a Buddhist scholar and interpreter of Sangharakshita's calibre treats themes as diverse as 'The White Lotus Sutra in the West', 'Religio-Nationalism in Sri Lanka', 'D. H. Lawrence and the Spiritual Community', and 'The Wisdom of Tibet' — to name but four of the book's nineteen chapters — must surely be worth serious consideration.

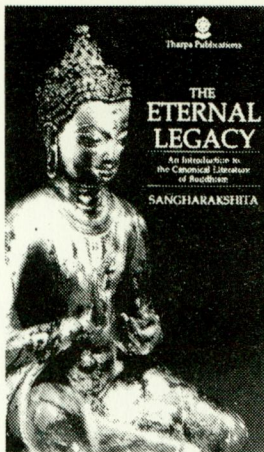
Of course, some potential readers may naturally wonder whether a series of reviews — of books they may not have read, or perhaps not even have heard — is likely to be an exciting or particularly relevant read. But even a small dip into the book will reveal that each chapter succeeds as an essay

in its own right, a meditation on a theme, or a series of themes, sparked off by the books under review. Here is Sangharakshita's formidable range of knowledge, his insight into Buddhist — as, well as Hindu and Christian — teachings, his uncompromising commitment to truth, and, without doubt, his sense of humour. The book review medium certainly lends a special edge to his particular form of precision, yet he knows how to deploy that precision in the service of an underlying — and fully conscious — emotional involvement with his subject.

Thus, while dealing chapter by chapter with Walpola Rahula's *The Heritage of the Bhikkhu* (pp. 69-91), Sangharakshita in fact presents us with a disturbing essay of his own on the link between the degeneration of Buddhism in Sri Lanka and the rise of the 'political bhikkhu', and a heartfelt warning against the phenomenon of religion-nationalism. While exposing in frequently humorous detail, the narrow, confused thinking behind Agehananda Bharati's *The Light at the Centre: Context and Pretext of Modern Mysticism* (pp. 35-52), he offers us a stimulating and scholarly appraisal of the place of the pleasure principle in the spiritual life. An appreciation of Keith Sagar's illustrated biography of D. H. Lawrence naturally flows into an elaboration of the principles which guarantee the success of a spiritual community. And so on.

This is a rich, entertaining, and rewarding book, providing us with a host of valuable insights into Sangharakshita's views on Buddhism, Buddhist literature, and the Buddhist path. It also offers us a chance to 'catch him in the act' of exploring Western literature and the Western language for tools with which to continue his life's work of communicating the Buddha's vision and teachings. This is all in all an excellent book to add to your collection — even if your collection is still very small.

By Nagabodhi



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## Meaningful To Behold

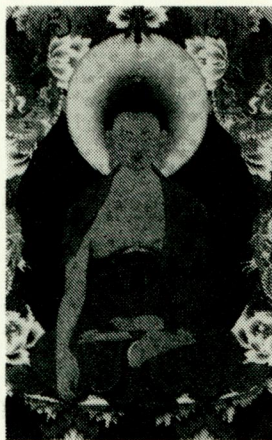
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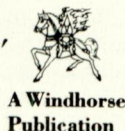
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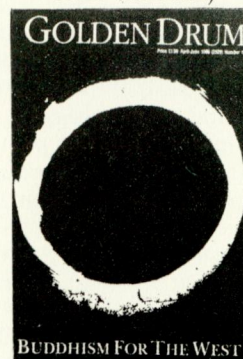
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# RAISING THE (DOUBLE) STANDARD

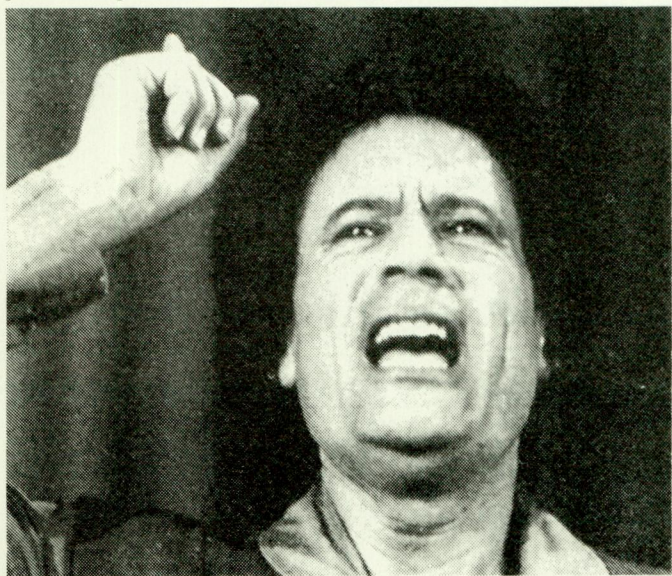
**I**t is not often that your correspondent can look Rambo in the eye, but outman him he did just a few weeks ago — along with another several hundred intrepid members of the bulldog breed. An unlikely bunch of heroes, garbed in holiday casuals, we were all crammed aboard a Boeing 737 bound for Spain. Days before, the US air-force had launched its attack on Libya, and, now, thousands of Americans were cancelling vacations in Europe for fear of reprisals (reprisals for the Reprisal to end all Reprisals?), whilst decrying the gutlessness of those ‘over here’ who had raised their voices in protest over the strike.

One of the 'subtler' (and hereto unrealized) goals of the US attack was to incite anti-Ghaddafi elements in the Libyan bourgeoisie to the kind of action that might topple their 'mad-dog' leader. It seems strange that an administration prepared to stir up the forces of civil war in Libya, and even to fire the first shots in that war, should have withheld aid to its old ally, President Marcos of the Philippines, on the grounds that it could not morally contribute to the development of civil strife in which Filipino citizens would get hurt. The White House was of course showing a little cunning. There could be no mistaking the direction in which those winds of change were blowing; it was time to find an honourable way out of an old partnership.

A cynical contemporary of William Gladstone once said, 'Like all politicians he always has a few cards up his sleeve; but unlike the others he actually believes that the Good Lord put them there'. The appropriation of Moral Authority by those in high places, to justify acts which are at best morally dubious, is nothing new. But one cannot help feeling that the pace is quickening these days, that double standards have become an indispensable item of baggage for those who cruise the political freeways of America, Russia, France, Britain, or — one cannot help fearing — anywhere.

Some comfort then is to be had from those events which shook the Philippines. When the Catholic Church-run 'Radio Veritas' called the people out onto the streets in support of the high-ranking insurgents, they came in their thousands and formed a protective human barrier between the rebel stronghold and the President's forces. President Marcos was, and still is, a determined man. Had ordinary people not shown their courage and responded to that call, there is little doubt the insurrection would have come to a violent and unsuccessful conclusion.

Politicians and 'Statesmen' may connive, manipulate, scheme and misinform; they may even get away with it most of the time; they may even be loved for it; but they are not quite all-powerful. Ordinary people can still take responsibility for their world. They can still have an effect.



## A man for toppling?

# COURT CIRCULAR

When not regaling us with detailed accounts of the Princess of Wales' *couture*, the British press is whipping itself into a frenzy over the coming wedding between Prince Andrew and Miss Sarah Ferguson. From time to time, however, the 'Royals' do manage to attract serious treatment.

Prince Philip, in his capacity as President of the World Wildlife Fund, has launched a major initiative to involve the world's religious bodies in a drive to promote care for our natural environment, something, according to the Fund's circular, 'that religions have been thinking about since their very beginnings'. While such a view may be somewhat on the rosy side, the ecological debate should nevertheless provide a valuable and appropriate arena for co-operation between the world's religions: one in which the Buddhist voice deserves an especially sympathetic hearing.

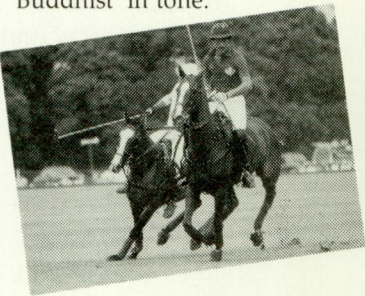
The Fund is organizing a major conference, — to be chaired by the Prince — a 'conservation pilgrimage', and a two-day retreat for 'leading religious figures' - including Buddhists — in Assisi, Italy, next September.

While president of the British Medical Association, from 1982-83, Prince Charles initiated a three-year study of 'alternative' systems of medicine; the Association's report, recently published, demonstrates that an honest attempt was made to understand the 'fringe' techniques. Even so, the investigating committee concludes that it is extremely difficult, and in some cases impossible, to assess the real medical effectiveness of most techniques studied. A few of the alternatives seemed promising, worthy of much fuller consideration, while a few others struck them as 'positively' dangerous. The onus, they felt, lay with practitioners of alternative therapies themselves to invest the time and money required, should they feel the need, to put their techniques onto a scientific basis.

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## Prince Charles

FOKKIZIA

MARINIA

When the Prince has issued a clear statement to the effect that he is indeed a Buddhist, has steered his way out of the inevitable constitutional crisis that will eventuate from his revelation, and has been seen on a Wednesday night at the London Buddhist Centre, we will, as fellow Buddhists, take mild issue with some of his terms. Meanwhile we will refrain from commenting on the ripples of speculation over his true spiritual proclivities, and congratulate him for struggling at least a little to move things onto a higher level.

For the past year, visitors to the Thames river bank at Chelsea have been able to gaze across the wide, grey waters and admire a unique addition to the London landscape: a 33 metre high pagoda, built in traditional Japanese style.

Overlooking the river, it stands amid an expanse of well-tended lawns and towering chestnut trees; the 'Sri Chinmoy Peace Mile' passes its base. Clad in reconstituted Portland stone, its spars and beams fashioned from Douglas Fir, with ornamental tiles imported from Japan, and surmounted by a gilded *kota*, the entire structure is extremely pleasing to the eye. Four golden bas-relief 'screens' adorn the four faces of the lower tier, representing the Buddha's birth, his Enlightenment, his first sermon, and his Parinirvana. Though not of the highest craftsmanship, the images nevertheless succeed in offering their uplifting

A black and white photograph of a traditional Chinese pavilion. The pavilion features a multi-tiered, dark-colored roof with upturned eaves. It has a central stupa-like structure on top, which is white with dark horizontal bands. The pavilion is supported by several pillars and has a decorative railing around its base. It is situated behind a low, white, rectangular wall. The background shows some trees and a clear sky.

### The London Peace Pagoda

The calves and lambs that have just appeared in the fields adjoining Padmaloka would be a little less frisky if they knew about a debate taking place at the moment, whose main protagonists are the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and representatives of the Jewish and Islamic faiths. The issue under discussion is animal slaughter.

particular to adopt more flexible attitudes in this sensitive area.

The issue is a sensitive one because Jews and Moslems are quick to sense an odour of religious discrimination, and even persecution, in such admonishments. For their part they claim that their own methods, which are of 'divine origin', are clean, efficient, and as painless as possible.

a scrap of spiritual or simple human sensitivity can bring themselves to discuss these matters in such a dispassionate manner, let alone think of eating meat — thus creating a demand for animal slaughter — when so conversant with the details of the meat-making process.

'Ah!' some might say. 'But if there was no meat industry, there would be no nice little lambs and calves to watch, frolicking outside your office!'

Fair enough, but that would of course mean less people in the world going hungry. It has long been established that if the land currently dedicated to meat production were turned over to other food crops, then famine would no longer be a problem.

We've had Band-Aid, Live-Aid, and Sport-Aid. Perhaps it's time for 'Veg-Aid'?

# THE SANGHA AND TWO NEWSLETTERS

The Singapore Buddhist Union is clearly a valuable and lively element in the Far Eastern Buddhist world. Its smart, cheerful quarterly Newsletter offers news about Buddhist activities in Singapore, articles about basic Buddhism, some 'advanced' Dharma material — culled from both Theravada and Mahayana sources, and even Buddhist stories. Last year (Vol. 33, issues 2 and 3) the magazine featured a lengthy, two-part essay by Sangharakshita, entitled 'The Goal of Buddhism' — an extract, in fact, from his book *The Three Jewels*.

In the March 1986 issue (Vols. 33-34) there was a short introduction to 'The History of Theravada Ordination' by Piyadassi Mahathera, in which the Going for Refuge — the making of a heartfelt commitment to the active realization of the spiritual Ideal — was unambiguously cited as the root and focal point of the entire Buddhist ordination tradition. Precepts and lifestyle, Piyadassi went on to show, play a crucial part in the life of a committed Buddhist, as reflexes of his or her fundamental commitment, but can never act as a substitute for that commitment.

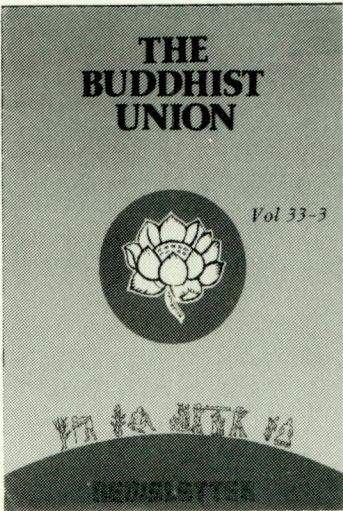
This point was thrown into interesting highlight by an article in another publication, the *Amaravati Sangha Newsletter* (Vol. 2), published and distributed free by friends of the Amaravati communion of monasteries in England.

The article, by the Venerable Sucitto, was a warm and moving obituary to two women who had spent their final years at Chithurst forest monastery. From the tone and content of the article it is obvious that Sisters Nanda and Dassaniya loved Chithurst and its lifestyle, and were much loved — and lovingly cared for — by their companions there.

Sister Nanda had received the *Anagarika* precepts from Ajahn Sumedho and was styled an 'honorary nun'. A photograph of Sister Dassaniya shows her to be wearing a robe, though we are not told what her formal

ordination 'status' was. Of course, there was no reason why we should have been offered such 'technical' information in the article. What was clear, however, was that both ladies, were 'Sisters', both had Buddhist names, and lived as full-timers in the monastery. They are clearly portrayed as members of the Sangha.

But then we read that it was Sister Nanda's wish to have a Christian funeral, and Sister Dassaniya's to have a 'joint Muslim-Buddhist funeral'. This strongly suggests that while attracted to the monastic lifestyle, neither of them could have Gone for Refuge, since their involvement with the Dharma itself was clearly superficial.



There are 'regulars' at all FWBO centres who do not consider themselves to be Buddhists. Some come along for years, taking whatever they can and want from what we have to offer without shifting their prior religious allegiance. This is quite acceptable. But, it must be stated, no one can become a member of the Western Buddhist Order unless he or she has made a definite commitment to the Buddhist Path. Even a mitra is expected to have made a clear decision to follow exclusively the Buddha's Teaching and the Buddhist path.

This glimpse into Chithurst therefore comes as something of a surprise. The Chithurst/Amaravati communion is, after all, a bastion of Eastern Theravada orthodoxy, and its resident monastic Sangha deemed by

some, on the basis of purity of lineage, to be the Sangha extant in Britain (see 'Outlook', last issue). The obituary article is therefore confusing, to say the least, since it throws into doubt the entire relationship between ordination, participation in the Sangha, and Going for Refuge, as practised at Chithurst.

As we have seen, the article does not make it clear whether or not either of these ladies had formally Gone for Refuge. It is conceivable, though unlikely, that an Ajahn would give the anagarika precepts to someone who has not Gone for Refuge. But many unwary readers of the *Amaravati Newsletter* may now be left with the impression that one can be a member of the sangha — even of the monastic sangha at Chithurst, even *The Sangha*, without actually being a Buddhist.

We mean no disrespect or criticism whatsoever towards the memory of either of the ladies in question. It is clear that they contributed at least as much to the life of the monastery as they received from it. The account also shows the monks and nuns of Chithurst in a good light, able to ease and enrich the last years and months of two dying people. Their willingness to hold Christian and 'Muslim-Buddhist' funerals on their land will strike many as an admirable display of compassionate tolerance.

Nevertheless, some clarification is called for. In this issue of *Golden Drum* we have tried to state where the WBO and the FWBO stand with regard to the Buddhist ordination tradition. It seems essential that the principles around which the Western Buddhist Order is being established should be acknowledged and understood. The intrusion of 'nominal' Buddhism into the monastic Sangha, and the confusion between Buddhist monasticism as lifestyle and Buddhism as individual commitment, played an important part in the decline of Buddhism in the East. We in the Buddhist West cannot afford to be anything less than fastidious with regard to our principles, and our communication of them.

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Across the courtyard, at the Retreat Centre end of Padmaloka, sixteen men are getting their first 'Introduction to Buddhism and Meditation' on a weekend event of that name. Tonight, if the law of averages is anything to go by, a few of them will return home quite satisfied in their minds that the FWBO has nothing more to offer them. A few more will follow up their weekend with some extra reading; they'll meditate, perhaps quite regularly, for months and even years; they'll feel grateful for what they've received, and remember this weekend with affection. But they'll never set foot in an FWBO centre again. They won't see the need. And then, perhaps just one or two will feel that they have come across something too valuable to set aside. They will be back, for retreats and weekend events . . . on mitra retreats . . . on a pre-ordination course, and perhaps, in a few years time, on an Order convention.

Even if there are tens of thousands who have benefited, and are still benefiting, from a single brief taste of the FWBO, it is at the same time sobering and awe-inspiring to contemplate that those who constitute the Movement's world-wide 'core population' of Order members, mitras, and regular Friends are but a tiny fraction of all those who have passed through the doors of our centres. One in fifteen would be an optimistic estimate.

The transition from 'beginner' to Friend, to mitra, to Order member can be so rich, and exciting in itself, the spiritual life so absorbing — and demanding — that we can easily throw ourselves right in, forgetting, except occasionally, why we chose to stay around, how it was that we found the Dharma and the Movement so attractive, and so necessary in the first place.

## Two festivals

On festival occasions, however, we get a chance not only to practise the Dharma but to express our heartfelt gratitude for it; we not only participate in the FWBO, but spend a few minutes, or hours, wondering what might have happened to us had we never found it.

In his talk, 'Discerning the Buddha', Sangharakshita confessed that he for one did not like to contemplate what would have happened to him had he never found the Dharma, and even wondered whether he would still be alive today!

He was talking to the 400 Order members, mitras, and Friends who had gathered at Conway Hall in London for the first ever 'National Buddha Day Festival', an all-day event comprising meditation, pujas, talks, a photographic exhibition, and a slide show. Friends came from every centre in the UK, some having hired coaches for the



# AROUND THE WORLD

occasion, and made the day a lively success. The LBC bookshop ran an impressive bookstall, and Windhorse Publications launched their latest production, Sangharakshita's *Alternative Traditions*, but it has to be admitted that most available cash went to an enterprising local sandwich bar which opened its doors for us on a 'Bank Holiday Monday', and did some brisk trade in vegetarian specialities!

Five weeks earlier, as many people again had gathered in Bethnal Green, at a municipal hall just around the corner from the LBC, to celebrate the nineteenth anniversary of the FWBO's founding. The normally drab expanses of this vast hall — more typically devoted to wrestling and boxing matches — were festooned with balloons and streamers. A sizeable exhibition of Friend's paintings, drawings, textile designs, and stained-glass work also contributed to the festive spirit. Making some opening remarks before introducing an afternoon 'symposium', Sangharakshita registered his satisfaction in seeing at least some progress in this area. In India, he said, people really do know how to celebrate. By contrast, Westerners can seem a little staid. This celebration gave him hope that we were at last moving in the right direction.

The symposium itself dealt with some of the Movement's more outward-going aspects.



Mahamati, taking a day off from organizing an Aid for India appeal in Oxford, spoke about the work of AFI. Dharmadara surfaced briefly from an ever-rising mound of correspondence to talk about the Office of the Western Buddhist Order, and the Buddhist Information Service. And, to tumultuous applause and general exultation, Nagabodhi launched the first issue of *Golden Drum*.

## Indian Celebrations

Even as Mahamati spoke, fairy lights must have been illuminating the night sky in a number of Indian localities, for a few hours transforming hutment areas, and scrappy maidans between city tenement blocks, into little heavens. There too the day was being marked with a number of 'programmes', as public events are called in India. But the major festival to be celebrated around that time was 'Ambedkar Jayanti' (the anniversary of Dr Ambedkar's birth, on 14th April). The number of localities requesting speakers was numerous, and given the closeness of that festival to Buddha Jayanti, many Order members were attending celebrations for an entire month!

Most Indian towns have at least one centrally sited statue of Dr Ambedkar, and several programmes were held on the spaces beside them. Wherever Order members go, the books published by Triratna Grantha Mala — the Indian Movement's publishing wing — go with them, and several centres report excellent sales. This is not only good for finances; for tens of thousands of Dr. Ambedkar's followers those books will act as an important link with the Movement. It is impossible, as yet, for Order members to keep in

regular contact with all the Buddhists in Maharashtra, Gujerat, and Andhra Pradesh. Meanwhile the books will be sowing seeds.

This is not to say that our Indian Dharmacharis don't make every effort to reach even the most inaccessible Buddhist localities. Jyotipala, no lover of bullock-cart travel, undertook a two-hour journey by that form of conveyance, along with Nagasena, to reach a remote village for a festival programme. Much of the programme itself turned out to be a bullock-cart procession. Finally, after his talk, came the two hour ride back to the main road again. 'It was,' he drily reports, 'an experience.'

Jyotipala and Nagasena are based in Aurangabad, and for them this year's Ambedkar Jayanti was of special significance. Not only was a Marathi translation of Sangharakshita's lectures on the Eightfold Path launched (with a cover designed by Siddhiratna, passing through India on his round-the-world tour), but they were able to hold their main programme on their own plot of land. Almost immediately afterwards, work began on the construction of a hostel for slum and village school children. Work on an initial 'temporary' building was to be complete by June, when the school year began, so by the time this issue of *Golden Drum* goes on sale, the first students at Bahujan Hitay's latest hostel should be settling in.

The Aurangabad land has been put to good use for some months now. Jyotipala has been living there for some time, in a small house that came with the land, and Padmashuri was able to hold Aurangabad's first ever women's retreat there in February. Forty

women attended the event, and still remember it well. Now, Mrs Lebhane, an Aurangabad mitra, is taking a regular weekly class for local women.

Land is very much in everyone's mind in Ahmedabad too. Mangala reports that the purchase formalities on their plot are almost complete. In June they should have opened their first kindergarten, and in July they will be running coaching sessions in English, maths, and science for high-school pupils. In time there will be a hostel and a public Dhamma centre on the land too. In the meantime, regular classes have finally moved out of the old vihara into Bakul Bhavan, a larger building just a few streets away.

On 10th March, a 99-year lease on a plot of land in Hyderabad was formally handed over to Trailokya Bauddha Mahasangha Sahayaka Gana (as the FWBO is known there). At present there is a simple mud and brick vihara on the land. Plans for the plot include a hostel and a larger vihara, which will act as a focal point for Buddhists in the city. With the acquisition of this piece of land, TBMSG is now based in three Indian states.

Back in Maharashtra, where everything began, the Pimpri Centre is expanding both in size and in scope. A new vihara is being built to cater for the many people who come along, a kindergarten has been opened, and an adult literacy class has been initiated. Just a few miles from Pimpri, the new, main TBMSG Centre, and headquarters of Bahujan Hitay (the 'social' wing of the Movement in India) at Dapodi, is now painted and complete. It also has a new name, 'Jivak', after the Buddha's doctor disciple. Paying a visit to the Centre, Shri R. S. Gavai, a member of the Legislative Council of Maharashtra, and Vice President of the World Fellowship of Buddhists, spoke of his admiration for the work of TBMSG which is, in his opinion, the only movement doing important Dhamma work in Maharashtra.

The Bhaja retreat centre has now been expanded. With more than 70 people attending retreats, extra accommodation had become a top priority. A new 800 sq. ft. building has therefore been constructed. In time, as the Saddhamma Pradeep vision unfolds, this will be a dormitory, but for now it is being used as the main shrine-room, releasing a substantial part of the original building for accommodation.

## Space Race

Space seems to have become a preoccupation in a number of places around the world. At the Camp branch of the Poona centre, new meeting places are being urgently sought; they have quite simply run out of room for all those who want to attend the

regular classes. In Germany, Friends helped Dhammaloka move into a new house/centre in Essen, and in Wales, the administrative office for Vajraloka, the meditation centre, has moved down the lane to Blaen-ddol, a delightful old farm house that will now serve as an extension community for Vajraloka. In England, the young Accrington



**Taraloka**

Centre has already had to move to larger premises, and now has a new name: 'the Lancashire Buddhist Centre'. At Taraloka Women's Retreat Centre, an intensive building phase has begun, converting a two-storey granary into a dormitory, and some outbuildings into another dormitory, a kitchen, some showers, and toilets. The community there has expanded to eight since four more women moved in for extended stays to help with the work. The number of women wanting to live in communities around the LBC has called for some major refurbishments. The old Samayata community has now been expanded through the simple expedient of knocking through the walls to the house next door. Soon there will be four houses in a row, a kind of urban mansion, devoted to housing this ever-expanding women's community!

Obviously none of these developments would be possible, or necessary, were there not greater numbers of people becoming involved, and most centres report sharply rising attendance figures. In West London, the new Centre, though only a few months old, is already attracting as many visitors as did the previous Baker Street Centre when 'at its peak'. A third men's community has just opened in the area. One addition to the Centre's weekly programme is a free, day-time class for the unemployed.

A similar scheme is being tried in Glasgow, where two such classes are held. Order members also go out to teach meditation to unemployed people at a local community centre, as just one aspect of a vigorous 'outreach' programme which includes visits to schools, women's health groups, boy-scout clubs, Spiritualist associations, and vegetarian societies!

The new Centre in Sydney has also got off to a good start, after its official opening by Dr Bruce Boreham, a director of science policy for the Commonwealth Government. A course, entitled 'Meditate — Be Aware' is attracting large numbers, and the recently published Centre programme has



**Friends at Ratnajala, in Wellington**



**Gunabhadri, Vajragita, and Bodhimitra on a Dutch retreat**

been drawing a lot of new people to the regular classes and weekend workshops.

In Croydon, class attendances at both beginner and intermediate level have risen by about 60% this year! It is now four years since the Centre moved to Croydon from Aryatara in Purley, and Dharmaruchi comments that the Centre finally feels properly established there. Events at the Arts Centre naturally bring many people into the orbit of the Buddhist Centre, but the Buddhist side of things is no poor relation. A recent series of lectures, 'Buddhism in the West' proved extremely popular, and one lecture, 'the Challenge of Buddhism to Western Psychology' drew a hundred people — more than the meeting room could hold! As the Centre becomes better known, it is attracting some significant visitors. On 1st July was held a Religious Education Teachers' Seminar, the purpose of which was to help teachers communicate Buddhism in schools.

In Auckland, classes have become so full that the beginner's meditation evening has been split into two groups for the meditation sessions, and into three for the study groups. Similar measures will be soon be necessary in Leeds. Aryamitra reports that classes are getting fuller all the time. The Centre services a very wide area of Yorkshire, including Hebden Bridge, Sheffield, and Doncaster — as well as Leeds itself. Perhaps we will see centres in each of those towns before long, but meanwhile some concession has been made to expansion in the shape of a refurbished 'back basement', which now serves as a silk-screen workshop. The trouble is, the silk-screen press will be printing posters for the Centre, so now there will be even more people

coming along!

'Firsts' include Vajragita's course on the Eightfold Path, in Utrecht, a women's morning meeting — and a men's 'Art' evening — in Wellington, New Zealand, and a weekly 'posture workshop' at the London Buddhist Centre, led by Vajrachitta and Judy Senior, the Centre's Alexander Technique teacher. Also, there are now regular meetings in Cambridge. Jnanavira, currently an undergraduate at Corpus Christi (studying Theology), began hiring rooms for classes some months ago, and Ratnaprabha, who recently moved there from Padmaloka, has now taken the class over. Numbers are still low, but the first weekend retreat, though barely advertised, attracted a great deal of interest. There is no doubt that the future is bright. No only is Ratnaprabha determined to get things going, but the eight men who constitute Windhorse Trading, the entrepreneurial Right Livelihood business, have now moved to Cambridge from Bethnal Green.

## Mixed fortunes

It is sometimes hard to tell why some of our Right Livelihood ventures succeed brilliantly, while others struggle along on much the same level for years, or even fade away. Windhorse Trading, a giftware import and retail business that can generate miraculous amounts of money, is currently suffering from a lack of manpower. With so many people attending our centres and looking to get more deeply involved, this comes as something of a surprise — not least to people at Windhorse Trading. True, the work is extremely hard, some of it calling for shrewd business acumen, but there must be a few men reading this who would like to work with a good team to earn money for our Indian projects, and for the Order Office. . .

The past months saw the demise of two Right Livelihood ventures. Padmaloka Candles has now closed after nine years, and the Norwich-based 'Friends Building Services' has closed after four. Commenting on the latter case, Saddhaloka, chairman of the Norwich Centre, suggests that the

Movement in the UK needs a stable training situation for its builders. While it is just possible for keen but amateurish workers to pick up odd jobs and make ends meet for a while, there can be no real breakthrough into the building world until some more of our people have developed the skills required to a professional level.

Perhaps our weakness here is an aspect of our strength. Anyone capable of making a substantial, long-term commitment to a single line of work on the basis of an essentially spiritual vision, is likely to be drawn towards — and require — other, more directly Dharmic activities. Today's capable candle-maker or plasterer is tomorrow's centre chairman, co-op founder, or mitra convenor. Come to think of it, Padmaloka Candles has never been quite the same since Kulananda left — to establish Windhorse Trading. . .

In West London, anyway, the understandably seasonal gardening business is over its 'winter slump' and has just taken on two new workers for the summer. In Leeds too, a gardening business has got off the ground, while the second-hand book business is expanding as new 'outlets' are found. In Dapodi, a welding and metal fabrication business is going well, and in Pimpri some extra funds — and new confidence — are being generated through a food distribution venture.

Perhaps in an attempt to reverse the tendency suggested above, Devaraja, chairman of the Brighton Centre, took a return dip into his old trade as a draftsman/set-designer in the movie business, on a film starring pop-singer Madonna. The job not only earned him a great deal of money — which will go towards the purchase of the Brighton Centre's premises, but it also took him to Hong Kong — the perfect springboard for a quick visit to the People's Republic of China. While there, he made contact with a number of Buddhists in Sichuan Province, and went on pilgrimage to Emei Shan, a mountain associated with the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra. Let's hope he writes the trip up for a future issue.

Friends in Brighton have set their sights on a target of £50,000, the amount required to buy their centre. In Bristol the target is £68,000, the sum being asked for a property that Tejananda has found in the City centre. In Auckland, Friends have surpassed their original target of \$25,000, but are continuing to raise funds, since inflation has led to substantial property price increases. Their goal is now \$35,000. Up in the north of England, property must be very cheap indeed, for the Accrington fund-raisers are after a mere £10,000. Great or small, these amounts still have to be found, so jumble sales, sponsored

walks, car-boot sales, and 'standing-order' drives will be a prominent feature of many centre programmes for some time to come.

Despite their own local needs, most centres in Britain have welcomed Padmashuri who has been touring the country with a slide show to raise money for Dharma work in India (*see separate report*). A wonderful testament to a centre's capacity to think beyond its own 'narrower' preoccupations was provided by the Brighton sangha who between them covenanted £10,000 after watching her show! A centre capable of that kind of generosity deserves to have little trouble meeting its own needs.

## Retreats

It is incidents like these which serve to underline the fact that all our centres are essentially *spiritual* workshops. All their associated activities, no matter how down to earth in appearance, are aspects — and barometers — of spiritual vitality. Even so, all of them take a lot of care to ensure that the more *directly* spiritual aspects of practice are being catered for. For example, every single centre has organized at least one retreat during the past months. In Australia, the Sydney Centre held its first ever men's retreat, and a women's retreat took place in Canberra. In Holland came the first ever retreat in Amsterdam, a non-residential weekend devoted to the theme of the 'Threefold Way', led by Gunabhadri — on a visit from Croydon. Sixteen people attended the weekend, five of them having first contacted the FWBO on a retreat that Subhuti led last year, at El Bloque in Spain. It was while he was there, last summer, that Subhuti began to look into the possibility of buying land for a retreat centre — the outcome of which is Guhyaloka (*see separate article*).

At our oldest Retreat Centre, Vajraloka, the first *Satipattana* (Mindfulness) Retreat has been a great success, though participants were somewhat shocked, on arrival, to find themselves confronted by a written text on the subject. The Vajraloka 'Meditation Workshops' are now proving so successful that they are being 'exported'. Small teams from the community are paying weekend visits to centres, giving scaled-down versions of these normally two-week events. At Padmaloka, Kamalashila and Dharmananda showed slides, gave several talks, and answered questions. The idea of the weekend was to give people a clearer idea of how to work creatively in meditation, and how best to deal with the hindrances that one encounters.

Another 'first' for Padmaloka was a weekend Aikido retreat, led by Satyapriya. Fourteen people turned up, many of them from beyond the Movement. No doubt we will be hearing much more



## Dharmanandi's ordination

about Aikido in the coming years. We could also be hearing quite a lot more about Achala's contacts with some 'ethnic' Buddhists from South-east Asia in Palmerson North, New Zealand. After hearing him give a talk, during April, they asked whether there was any chance of a retreat. One is now being planned for later in the year.

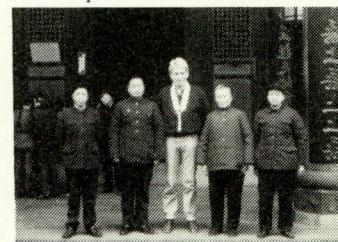
Turning 'ethnic' (or 'born') Buddhists into real, practising ('100%') Buddhists is a major activity in India, and here retreats are of paramount importance. They give thousands of people who have long considered themselves to be Buddhists, at least by name, their first taste of actual Dharma practice. Order members will travel long distances for these events too. Sanghasena and Manjuvira led a retreat for 60 in Talni (Amaravati District), the Ahmedabad team are currently planning some retreats up in the north of Gujarat state, and seven Order members from Poona led a retreat for 40 in Nagpur, at 'Buddha Bhumi' the Venerable Ananda Kausalyayana's vihara. By Indian standards this was a very small retreat, but Lokamitra comments: 'It was organized very much at the last minute by some extremely keen Friends up there. It was examination time in all the colleges, which affected the attendance figures considerably. All in all, it is now abundantly clear that we cannot postpone establishing a centre in Nagpur for too long.'

It was a retreat that began TBMSG's contact with Sholapur. Even though we still have no centre in that central Maharashtra town, there are now five mitras living there. Two mitra ceremonies on a 'Wesak retreat' brought the number of mitras living in Holland to seven (though several more Dutch mitras are currently living in communities in England), and the Lancashire Centre has just gained two new mitras, though their ceremonies were conducted in Manchester. The ceremonies for Russel Oliver and Mike Nixon were the first mitra ceremonies in Auckland for a year and a half; David Howes became Leeds' second mitra; and Bristol recently celebrated its

biggest ever 'mitra induction' — three men and one woman on the same joyous occasion.

Thus the Movement continues to extend and develop. Activities increase, strangers become 'beginners', beginners become Friends, Friends become mitras, and mitras become Order members. In the last months, three women have joined the Order. Janet Smith and Marg McCune-Colbert, from East London, became Vajramala and Ratnamala respectively, and Sue Storey, from Auckland, became Dharmanandi. Of course, by the time one reaches ordination, the statistics are somewhat changed. You are no longer a 'one-in-fifteen' chance, but more of a 'one-in-a-hundred'!

Ordination is not by any means the end of the path! In a way, it is only the very beginning. Not all Order members are working in the centres that have appeared in these columns. Some are 'out there' alone, doing whatever they can to spread the Dharma in their



## Devaraja with members of the Chengdu Buddhist association

areas without a centre or other Order members to back them up. Don't forget Aryadaka in Seattle, or Jayapushpa in Penang, and spare some thought for Ashvajit and Baladitya in Sri Lanka and Vancouver respectively. And then there are many Order members who have very little to do with Dharma teaching at all. Like everyone else connected with the FWBO, however, ordained or not, they are working towards their goal, making whatever contribution they can to the world around them.

Our goal, after all, is not just a big or successful movement, but a thoroughly, radically, Buddhist one. As Sangharakshita said in the talk he delivered at the FWBO's anniversary, in London, he will not think he has succeeded unless he leaves behind him a *number* of people who have progressed further along the path than he has himself. The goal for each of us, for the time being at least, is Stream Entry — a completely creative identification with the ideals of Buddhism based not on group pride, or collective strength, but on individual effort and Transcendental insight. Sangharakshita voiced his belief that for those who want to make the necessary effort to attain Stream Entry, all the facilities they require can now be found within the FWBO. That is quite an achievement. It is something indeed to celebrate. And it is quite a challenge.



# A JOINT EFFORT

*Subhuti introduces Guhyaloka — and the start of FWBO activities in the Spanish-speaking world.*

Some twenty miles as the crow flies from the crowded beaches of Benidorm on the Spanish 'Costa Blanca' lies the newest FWBO retreat centre. It is called Guhyaloka, 'the secret realm', or 'the esoteric world', for it is located in a mountain valley so secluded and secure that it seems to be in a land of its own, isolated from the ordinary world and existing in another dimension.

The valley is bounded on each side by high cliffs, beyond which can be glimpsed the impressive peaks of neighbouring mountains. The valley's main slope faces south, catching the sun all day, and at its western end it looks out over the Mediterranean. Its two hundred acres encompass a variety of terrain and vegetation: bare cliff scree with a few coarse bushes, slopes of gorse and wild thyme, rosemary, and other aromatic herbs, groves of short pine trees, and cultivated terraces on which stand some three hundred almond trees, as well as olives and apples. Outcrops of grey rock stand high in the centre of the valley, suggesting the shapes of mythical men and beasts. An ancient spring supplies three jets of water to a stone-carved basin sited in a shady ravine at the bottom of the valley. There is a simple stone house whose two floors are

joined by a ladder. Hardly a sound can be heard from outside the valley and, at night, scarcely a light can be seen. In the local dialect the estate is called 'El Morer' — the place of the Moors — whose terraces fill the valley to the cliff's foot, abandoned since those industrious people were expelled from Spain four centuries ago.

Guhyaloka has been purchased with funds from Sangharakshita's 'Sixtieth Birthday Appeal', launched last year to establish the conditions for him to function as effectively as possible in the years that remain to him. All those who have benefited from Sangharakshita's teaching were invited to contribute. The target was firstly to provide proper facilities at Padmaloka so that he can have around him the secretarial assistance he requires, and so that he can receive in an appropriate manner the many people who wish to see him; secondly, to support a full-time secretariat; and finally to establish a more secluded retreat where he will be able to continue with his writing undisturbed, yet where he will also be surrounded by a community able to help him in his work. So far some £100,000 has been raised in cash, plus an annual income of £7,000. A portion of this has been used as a loan to help with the purchase of Padmaloka and to redecorate and upgrade the Order Office facilities; some is being used to support extra staff in the secretariat; the remainder has been put towards the purchase of



Guhyaloka.

Many people have contributed money towards this project, and many have helped in other ways to make it a reality. The creation of Guhyaloka has been a joint effort in which several hundred people across the world have participated. Many of these people are Order members, mitras, and Friends who attend FWBO activities, but there are others who are not directly connected with our Movement, some of whom do not consider themselves to be Buddhists, and some who have probably barely even heard of the Buddha. Everyone who has helped deserves thanks, but it is perhaps these last — who will receive a less obvious benefit from the establishment of Guhyaloka — whom we would especially like to thank. Foremost amongst them are Dolf and Baukje in't Veld who found the place, put me up while I was conducting negotiations, gave advice and contacts, translated for me, contributed handsomely to the funds, and were always enthusiastic and encouraging. Without them Guhyaloka could not have been established so quickly.

For the last two or three years we have been tentatively investigating the possibility of buying property in the Mediterranean area, but have never found the right spot or had sufficient money. Last year Vajrayogini, Chittapala, Vajranatha, and I led a retreat at El Bloque, a delightfully situated centre on the Costa Blanca at which are run a range of 'New Age' courses. It was established five years ago by Vajrayogini, a Dutch Dharmacharini, with her son and daughter-in-law, Dolf and Baukje,

who now run the centre with considerable skill and success. The retreat went well, we liked the area and, more importantly, we made a strong connection with Dolf and Baukje, so I asked them to look out for likely properties for us.

Dolf activated his local contacts and began to think of places he had seen which might be suitable. He had a sort of vision of an isolated valley he had once encountered in the mountains way up behind El Bloque. When he had been there before there was a barrier across the road — but in his mind's eye the barrier was now up! Clearly this had to be investigated. He and Baukje set off in their Landrover up the steep mountain tracks to the area in which they had seen the valley. Where precisely it was they could not remember, but suddenly two eagles appeared and flew up a gorge. Needless to say they decided to follow and found themselves at the lost valley whose gate was indeed open. What is more, as they drove up the track they saw a board nailed to tree with the words 'Se vende esta finca' (This farm is for sale) and a telephone number. Even more remarkable, the owner was on site, making one of his very rare visits to the property, having only just put up the sign.

It is hardly surprising that with such portents this valley should be the only property I could find which was remotely suitable, and that both Sangharakshita and I should discover ourselves certain that this was the place we should buy. There then followed a complicated series of negotiations to secure not only the main property of some 200 acres but also a small parcel of 10 acres right in the middle of the property. This belonged to a cousin of the owner who demanded almost as much for his part as was being asked for the whole valley. A further small plot at one corner had a weekend cottage on it and we decided that we must buy this too. Once more the price was formidable.

A final meeting took place in a small village up in the hills with the owner of the main property, his cousin and his wife, his aunt and uncle, another cousin, various children, and another man who grinned at me throughout the evening but whose place in the scheme of things I never did discover. Gradually the conversation edged around to business. My translator was a Dutch girl, married to a Spaniard, who was so ebullient and charming that she had them all relaxed and jovial in a very short time. Nonetheless the question of price was a difficult one. The cousin's wife, who was in charge, was a formidable negotiator, and was motivated not by consciousness of what the land was worth but of what she wanted to buy with the proceeds of its sale. Slowly we edged towards an agreement and suddenly I was shaking hands all round. We had a deal.

The third piece of land with its small house has proved more difficult to get. Although the owner has agreed to sell and we have accepted his price, various legal complications involving unpaid taxes, an illegal contract, and two heirs who are legally insane, has entangled the business in a complexity from which it may not emerge for some months. The owner himself, who runs a bar in Alicante, is most upset that, having given his word, he is not able to go ahead with the sale smoothly and easily. It is touching to see such a strong sense of honour. In the purchase of the land with all its complications I have been assisted by Ed Richelle, the Dutch Consul in Benidorm, who runs an estate agency there, and who has given me freely of his time and his agency's resources.

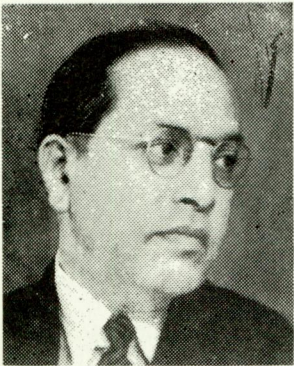
We have also received considerable assistance from a number of Spanish Buddhists connected with the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition, founded by the Tibetan monk, Lama Yeshe. Xavi Alongina, Basili Llorca, and Francois Camus have given me advice, contacts, and assistance, particularly for establishing a legal framework for the FWBO in Spain. In contrast to the history of unco-operativeness that has dogged the Buddhist movement in Britain, it seems that the Buddhists of Spain are able to work together, and we look forward to continuing and deepening our relations with them.

By August a team of ten men will have started work at Guhyaloka, building a retreat facility so that the men's pre-ordination retreats can be held there from next year. They will also be adapting one of the existing houses so that Sangharakshita can take up residence in the new year. There is only enough money for quite a temporary job to be done — another £50,000 or so will be needed over the next few years to build a proper monastery on the site. Once the builders move out, a small men's community will be established to look after Sangharakshita whilst he is in residence, and to run the men's ordination retreats.

Although the primary objective has been to set up an intensive community in which Sangharakshita can live and work, Guhyaloka will also be the first step in the establishment of 'Los Amigos de la Orden Budista Occidental' (FWBO) in Spain, and thus in the whole Spanish-speaking world. It is a very important step. There will be another English-medium, international mixed retreat at El Bloque in Spain this year (6th-20th September — contact the Order Office for further information), led by myself with Vajrayogini and Dharmavira — who will be giving karate lessons. We hope that English speaking Spaniards will attend and that quite quickly the first public centre of *Los Amigos* will be established somewhere in Spain.

Apart from a short trip away each month, Sangharakshita has spent most of the period from March to May at Padmaloka. He is now over halfway through writing a short book: *Ambedkar and Buddhism* for release, around the end of the year. Originally planning to write just a booklet, Sangharakshita later decided to expand it into a small book, owing to the amount of material he wanted to include.

Although Dr Ambedkar was an important and outspoken contemporary of Mahatma Gandhi, he is still hardly known outside India. This is remarkable, particularly in view of the fact that it was he who instigated the conversion of several

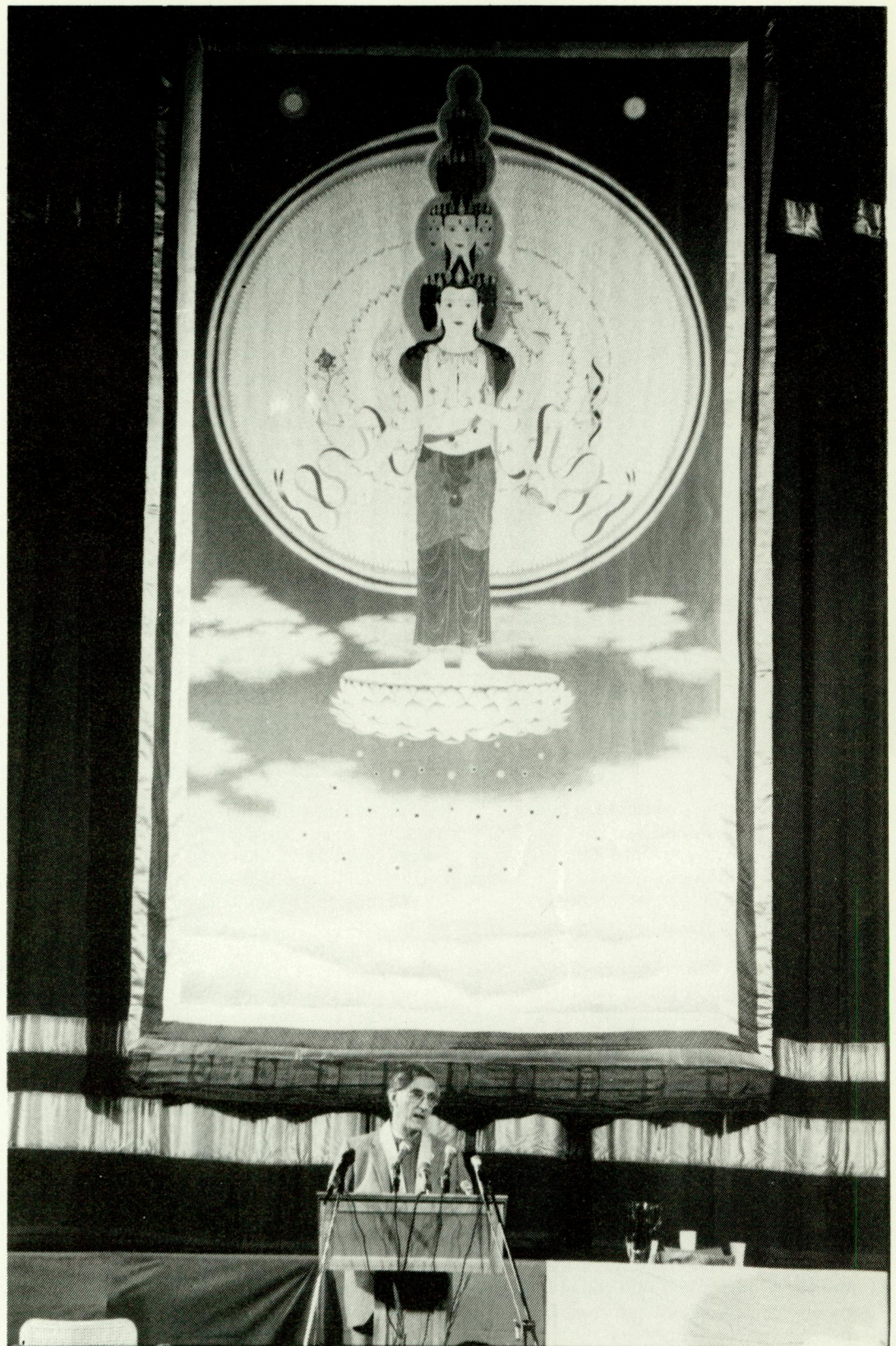


Dr B. R. Ambedkar

millions of ex-Untouchable Hindus to Buddhism during the 1950's. With his sudden death, just weeks after the first conversion rally, the huge movement was left leaderless and in danger of foundering. In his coming book, Sangharakshita describes his meetings with the great man thirty years ago, as well as his own crucial role in rallying the stunned followers immediately after their leader's death.

An extract from this 'work in progress' was read out at the Commonwealth Institute in London recently. The occasion was the eighteenth anniversary of the founding of the Western Buddhist Order, and over 120 Order members were present for a foretaste of the book as part of their celebration. Unfortunately Sangharakshita could not be there himself because of sickness, so Suvajra, himself recently back from the 'ordination mission' to India, read the extract instead.

The following week came a poetry evening at the Norwich Buddhist Centre, and as Sangharakshita was the star billing, there was 'standing-



## PADMALOKA notebook

room only'. A poet for over forty years, he explained however that none of his poems survive from his pre-India days. Dividing his selection in two parts — places and people — Sangharakshita invoked a wide range of moods, from the simplicity of village India and the warmth of fresh tropical rain, to more stirring pieces, such as a

diatribe on the shooting of helpless birds by Tuscan hunters. A new selection of Sangharakshita's poetry is now in preparation, and another booklet of his poems has just come off the press in India. As well as reading his poetry, Sangharakshita has given two public talks recently, 'Buddhist Dawn in the West' on FWBO Day, 5th April and 'Discerning

the Buddha' on Buddha Day, 26th May. Both were given on festival days to an audience of about four hundred people, and are now available on video-tape for those who missed them.

Before FWBO Day Sangharakshita spent a week in Spain, inspecting a property to the north of Alicante. As a consequence, a

small valley was later purchased which will become an FWBO Retreat Centre. This has been largely Subhuti's project. He has been in Spain for most of the period of this report, and will now be staying there to oversee the building phase in preparation for holding next year's men's ordination course there. (See separate article.)

While en route for Spain, Sangharakshita entertained Dr Skorupski, a Buddhist scholar, at his flat at the London Buddhist Centre. Dr Skorupski is originally from Poland, and lectures at the School of Oriental and African Studies, in London. His works include the translation of a Tantra, 'The Elimination of All Evil Destinies', into English. Dr Skorupski spent an hour and a half with Sangharakshita and invited him to visit SOAS to give a talk to his students.

In addition to Dr Skorupski, eighty people have seen Sangharakshita in personal interviews over the last three months. They include Pamela Gordon, a writer and teacher of creative writing, from Boston, USA,

#### Music at the Norwich poetry evening



and Mr Lim Hock Eng, a Chinese Malaysian doing a post-graduate course in the UK. Mr Lim has kindly allowed some FWBO classes to be held in his house in Penang and will return there soon.

Another visitor to Padmaloka recently has been Richard Hunn (Wen Shu). Richard stayed and spent a couple of days working in the Order Library, cataloguing a collection of Chinese texts which had been donated by a monastery in Hong Kong. He

found a complete text of the longer *Avatamsaka Sutra* in Chinese, as well as a number of smaller sutras of interest, such as a sutra on making Buddha images.

Another Sutra which was the subject of discussion recently was *The White Lotus Sutra*. Sangharakshita answered over 120 questions arising from it during an eight day study-leaders' retreat, on subjects which included fundamentalism and sectarianism. He reflected that the recent rise in fundamentalism appears to be a world-wide phenomenon, a reaction to over-rapid industrialization. Examples he gave were Iran with its Ayatollahs, America with its new, aggressive churches, and India with its increasingly militant Hinduism.

Fundamentalism, the taking of scripture and dogma as literal fact, is a growing force because it offers simple answers and instant confidence. Buddhism on the other hand is difficult to understand; even many Buddhists do not seem to understand more than the basics. The FWBO is simply

attempting to present what is common and fundamental to all forms of Buddhism. Paradoxically, however, as Sangharakshita pointed out, even when one is trying to be universal and non-sectarian, there are those to whom one will nonetheless appear sectarian!

It is therefore pleasing that a joint gathering of different Buddhist groups was arranged not long ago by Amaravati Buddhist Centre to celebrate Buddha Day. Dharmadhara



Salutations to the Buddha at Amaravati

attended on behalf of the Order Office, and arranged for a small group from the FWBO to go. At a combined ceremony around the stupa at Amaravati, there was chanting in turn from the Tibetan Buddhists, Nichiren followers, members of the Western Buddhist Order, and the Theravadins. There were also talks, including an excellent one by Devaraja, and the FWBO team had an encouraging discussion with Ajahn Sumedho.

Buddha Day, the celebration of the Buddha's Enlightenment, is significant for all Buddhists and a time of solidarity with our Buddhist friends everywhere. Two hundred Buddha Day cards were sent out by Sangharakshita and the Order Office to Buddhist friends and groups all around the world. The responses to these cards, the Three Jewels blazing on their covers, have been very positive and friendly indeed.

Other notable events have been the awarding of the Christmas Humphreys Book Prize for *The Eternal Legacy* by Sangharakshita, and the broadcast of seven short talks by him on Thames Television between 1st and 7th June. Though showing late at night it seems that these could have been seen by large numbers of people who stayed up late to watch the World Cup football matches! In addition, several articles by members of the Order Office have been re-published in other Buddhist magazines. Vessantara's article about non-violence was re-printed in *Zen Bow*, and one by Ratnaprabha in the World Fellowship of Buddhists Review. Sangharakshita has no less than three appearing in Malaysian magazines: in the Singapore Polytechnic Buddhist Society's, the Nanyang Technological Buddhist Society's, and the

Young Buddhists of Malaysia's.

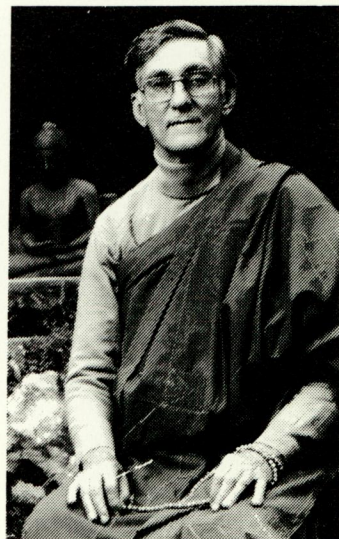
At the Order Office meal-table not long ago Sangharakshita quoted Enoch Powell who was asked if he preferred to be on the 'outside' of society. Mr Powell replied, 'You can't change society from the outside!' This is certainly true, and is why the Order Office will be continuing to help the FWBO and the Order in their efforts to reach out to society more and more in the coming years.

#### ERRATUM

Some readers will have noticed that the picture of Sangharakshita, on page 11 of the last issue, showed him wearing his robe over his right shoulder. The traditional practice is of course that the robe should be worn over the left.

We are sorry to say that at some stage in the production process, the original picture was 'flopped over', and the mishap went unnoticed by our design team. The result was a mirror image of the original — which is shown here.

Apologies also to Ric Gemmell, from the Illustrated London News, who took the picture. He was wrongly credited as Nic Gemmell.



# THE GREEK HERITAGE

The Croydon Arts Centre is currently staging its most ambitious season to date. The programme, which is the result of months of intensive research work and organization, falls into three parts.

Firstly there is *Le Testament D'Orphee*, the overall theme for the season, which comprises an exploration of the relevance of Greek civilization to modern Western art and culture. Then follows a unique celebration of the centenary year of writer Ronald Firbank (described by Brigid Brophy as 'the most inspired, the most avant-garde, of twentieth century novelists'). Finally there is a celebration of the music of Benjamin Britten.

At the time of writing, the season has run for a third of its three-month course. Cocteau's *La Belle et La Bete* and *Le Testament D'Orphee* have been screened, and D. H. Lawrence's biographer, Keith Sagar, has given an excellent lecture on 'The Oresteia and the Superannuation of the Gods'. In a lively talk on 'The World of Jean Cocteau', Derek Prouse, film critic and inaugurator of the London Film Festival, offered a sprinkling of choice quotations from Cocteau: 'There are poets, and there are grown-ups.' 'Advice is an excellent thing, not to follow but to

disregard.' 'Art alone tells the truth; history creates confusion, even in its own time.'

Among the events still to come are lectures by Kathleen Raine and the poet Michael Hamburger, a reading of Cocteau's Oedipus play, *La*

*Machine Infernal* by Simon Callow, a lecture by theatre-director Patrick Garland on Ronald Firbank the dramatist, and a series of videos and films on Sir Benjamin Britten, his operas, and his lifelong friend Sir Peter Pears.



Early last year a freelance journalist presented herself at the London Buddhist Centre making preliminary enquiries for an article on Buddhism in Britain. She had been in letter contact with Vessantara — who had offered some background material — and now wanted to know more about the FWBO. Khemavira, the LBC's secretary, immediately referred her to the Office of the Western Buddhist Order, which deals with enquiries of this sort on behalf of the Movement.

Several months later, a photographer from The Sunday Observer appeared at the Centre, explaining that the article — which was now written — was to appear in the Newspaper's 'Colour Supplement', and asking whether he could take some pictures.

Since the journalist had made no attempt whatsoever to contact the Order Office, we were rather alarmed at the prospect of an article, based on such a flimsy level of investigation, appearing in a respected, 'quality' paper.

Subhuti wrote to the Observer's editor expressing

## DISTINGUISHED GUEST FOR AFI

The Croydon Arts Centre was the venue for a reception on 29th April to welcome Mr R. K. Saha, a senior civil servant in the Government of India with responsibility for development programmes.

After meeting the AFI director, trustees, and professional advisors, Mr Saha gave a short address. This provided an overview of the programmes in women's and children's development undertaken by the Indian government. He appreciated the role of voluntary organizations such as AFI whose efforts, while relatively small in scale, are worthwhile because of the intimate relationship between the voluntary organization and the beneficiaries.



Mr Saha with AFI trustees

these apprehensions, and received a polite, encouraging reply. The editor was personally prepared to ensure that the article would not reflect a superficial level of research.

The article, which appeared on 23rd February this year, did precisely that. Dealing with the 'Buddhist boom' in general, and Throssel Hole Priory, Samye Ling, Nichiren Shoshu, Chithurst Forest Monastery, and the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order in particular, the article managed to be not only sketchy and superficial, but occasionally dismissive and derisive in tone, and littered with factual errors.

The Abbot of Throssel Hole Priory succeeded in having his letter of complaint published in the newspaper a couple of weeks later, but Subhuti was unable to win justice for the



# NO NEWS IS GOOD NEWS?

FWBO, which was treated in at least as poor a fashion as was Throssel Hole.

After a brief and stupendously misleading account of Sangharakshita's background, culminating in a reference to 'his refusal to confine himself to the teachings deemed authentic', the article introduced its readers to the FWBO 'whose directives sound a bit like "Scouting for Boys"'. Very little then followed: a derisory encapsulation of the Movement's ideals, an insinuating exposure of the writer's failure to understand (and sympathize with) the FWBO's single-sex activities, and a garbled quote — allegedly from Khemavira — which put the FWBO firmly into the 'refuge for disillusioned relics of the 'sixties' bracket.

Subhuti's letter of protest to the Observer received a polite but discouraging reply. The editor was sorry Subhuti 'felt' that the writer had got some

letter than before, now acknowledging that 'to someone closely involved' the article might have appeared superficial, but defending the journalist's honest efforts and his paper's integrity. Finally, he offered to *consider* publishing another letter, should Subhuti wish to put in writing again any 'impressions' which stood in need of correction. By the time this letter arrived, however, Subhuti was buried deep in the Spanish countryside, and the Throssel Hole letter had been published, which at least alerted the paper's readers to some of the article's shortcomings.

Perhaps the journalist shares, along with many educated Westerners, a vague and generalized respect for Buddhism; the article was not unsympathetic to Buddhism as an idealized abstraction. Perhaps she could not stop herself from capitulating to cynicism when the Buddhism of her imaginings was confronted by a Buddhism wrapped in British flesh and blood. To the 'outsider', Western Buddhism — as a living reality — may well seem eccentric for some time to come. It will probably seem to be a little world unto itself, even a jargon-ridden one, even an argumentative one.

Unfortunately, it will certainly continue to appear so if journalists persist in making such puny efforts to understand Buddhism, or to investigate in depth the remarkable phenomenon which is Western Buddhism in evolution. And it will certainly continue to appear so while they can get away with it!

The books are there to be read, centres can be visited, and people are willing to be properly interviewed, even deeply probed. There is really no excuse for the kind of article which appeared in the Observer.

It is sad that such an article was written, disturbing that it was considered fit for publication. Above all, it is alarming that, when this sort of thing happens, there is absolutely nothing of equivalent public impact that anyone can do about it.

# MEDICAL MEETING

Eight of the fourteen doctors involved in the FWBO met on Saturday 25th May to swap medical and Buddhist case histories — and found a good prognosis for the future.

Virabhadra, recently returned from India, described the creation of the primary health project in the Poona slums, and outlined his future plans. Tessa Pyne presented a report on the Buddhist Hospice Project (see last issue), for which those attending expressed strong support.

Finally came a discussion

on the possibility of establishing a Right Livelihood 'general practice' some time next year. All agreed that if doctors can find more ways to express their spiritual practice in their work, it will lead to the very best of care — for patients and doctors alike, encouraging mutual honesty and self-reliance.

The doctors met again on 14th June, to discuss 'alternative therapies'. Any interested (medically qualified) Friends are invited to contact Tessa Pyne, on 01-985 5403 (late evenings).

## PADMASHURI ON TOUR

Dharmacharini Padmashuri has just completed a successful fundraising tour of FWBO centres in Britain. She began by posing the question, 'Why did I stop working as a nurse on the Dapodi project to carry out Dharma work among Dr Ambedkar's women followers?' At first sight, she conceded, her priorities could seem rather confused, but she hoped to show that she had made the right decision.

She certainly succeeded, and at the end of a moving audio-visual presentation of the Movement's Dharma work in India, many people were moved to commit themselves to giving regular financial support for that work.

Altogether, £45,000 was covenanted to the AFI 'Dharma Account' during the tour.

On her six month visit to India recently, Padmashuri was the only Dharmacharini working full-time with women mitras and Friends. In her presentation she sought to demonstrate that the practice of Buddhism is as helpful and necessary to the social uplift of the 'backward classes' in India as is the provision of medical, educational, and other social facilities.

Over the next few months she hopes to be able to take her presentation to several other Buddhist groups, beyond the FWBO.

## SANGHARAKSHITA WINS BOOK AWARD

Christmas Humphreys, founder of the London Buddhist Society, worked strenuously to publish and make known the basic principles of Buddhism in the West. In 1984, to commemorate his life and work, the Buddhist Society introduced 'The Christmas Humphreys Award', an annual accolade to be bestowed upon new works representing an outstanding contribution to the literature of basic Buddhism.

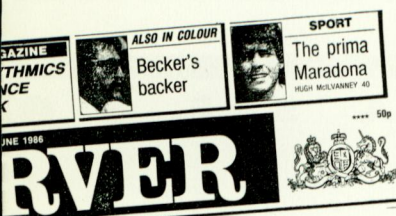
This year's winner was *The Eternal Legacy: An Introduction to the Canonical Literature of Buddhism* by the FWBO's founder, Sangharakshita.

Sangharakshita was leading

a study seminar on the *Saddharma Pundarika Sutra* at Padmaloka, and therefore could not accompany Hugh Clift, director of Tharpa Publications, to the Society's Wesak tea-party where the award was announced.

Accepting the certificate and medallion on Sangharakshita's behalf, Nagabodhi said that Sangharakshita had known Christmas Humphreys for many years, and was extremely happy to receive an award that would serve as a link with his old friend.

*The Eternal Legacy* is published by Tharpa Publications, and costs £7.50.



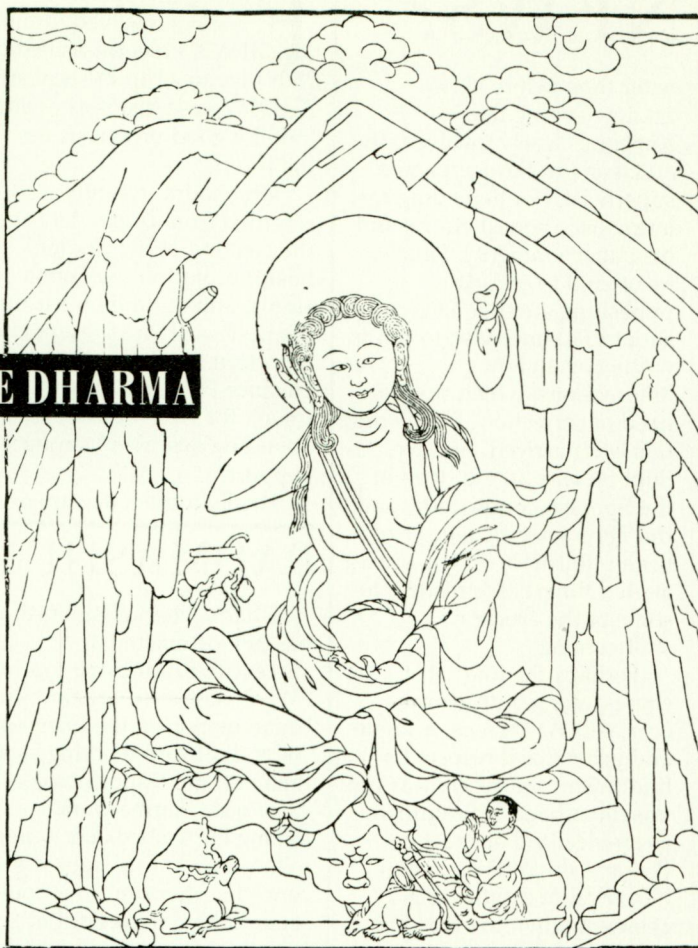
things wrong, and reported having received no other complaints. (The letter from Throssel Hole could not yet have arrived.)

A legal adviser indicated that the account of Sangharakshita's background and his views on Buddhists in the East, were arguably libellous in their inaccuracy, but a libel action was out of the question. Such suits are formidably expensive, uncertain in outcome, and likely to win more enemies than friends in powerful places.

Subhuti wrote instead to the Press Council. His long, detailed letter of complaint, in which he outlined his precise objections to the article and enumerated at least most of its errors of fact, was subsequently passed on to the Observer's editor.

The result was a longer

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Saturday 29th September – Saturday 4th October  
MEDITATION WORKSHOP

Thursday 9th October – Thursday 6th November  
ORDER MEDITATION COURSE

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## PADMALOKA MEN'S RETREAT CENTRE 1986

PADMALOKA is a men's Buddhist community running a residential centre in the Norfolk countryside about seven miles from Norwich. For more than four years the centre has been running a continuous programme of retreats, weekend courses and other events. We regularly hold events for newcomers although many of our events are for those who already have experience of Buddhism. The events below are open to all men, with or without previous experience of Buddhism, except for those marked \*, which require previous experience of meditation and Puja within the FWBO. The open day is of course open to all.

SUMMER RETREAT 11–25 July

OPEN DAY 26 July

PERFORMING ARTS' EVENT 19–26 September

\*MEN'S EVENT The Path of Purity 24–26 October

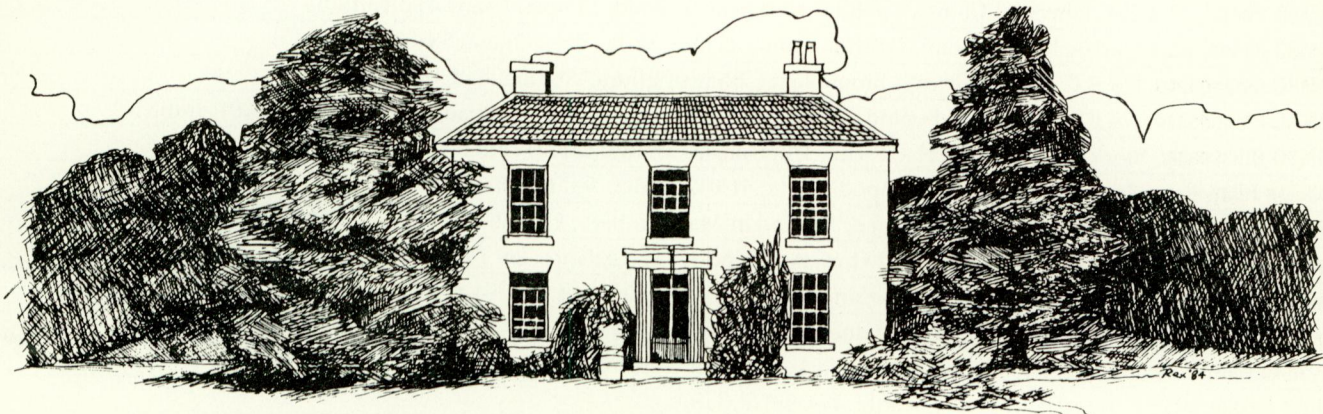
\*MEN'S EVENT The Glorious Company of Bodhisattvas 29–31 August

MEDITATION & BUDDHISM COURSE 12–14 September

GARDENING & MAINTENANCE RETREAT 14–21 September

KARATE & MEDITATION COURSE 7–9 November

FOR DETAILS OF ALL OUR EVENTS CONTACT THE RETREAT ORGANISER AT PADMALOKA



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# Where to find us

MAIN CENTRES OF THE FRIENDS OF THE WESTERN BUDDHIST ORDER

<b>London Buddhist Centre</b> , 51 Roman Road, London E2 0HU. Tel: 01-981 1225
<b>Brighton Buddhist Centre</b> , 15 Park Crescent Place, Brighton, Sussex, BN2 3HF. Tel: 0273 698420
<b>Bristol Buddhist Centre</b> , 120 Long Ashton Road, Long Ashton, Bristol, Avon, BS18 9LS. Tel: 0272 392463
<b>Croydon Buddhist Centre</b> , 96-98 High Street, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 1ND. Tel: 01-688 8624
<b>Glasgow Buddhist Centre</b> , 329 Sauciehall Street, Glasgow, G2 3HW. Tel: 041-333 0524
<b>Lancashire Buddhist Centre</b> , 301-303 Union Road, Oswaldtwistle, Accrington, Lancs, BB5 3HS. Tel: 0254 392605
<b>Leeds Buddhist Centre</b> , 148 Harehills Avenue, Leeds, LS8 4EU. Tel: 0532 405880
<b>Manchester Buddhist Centre</b> , 18 Burlington Road, Withington, Manchester M20 9QA. Tel: 061-445 3805
<b>Norwich Buddhist Centre</b> , 14a All Saints Green, Norwich, NR1 3LY. Tel: 0603 627034
<b>West London Buddhist Centre</b> , 7 Colville Houses, London W11 1JB. Tel: 01-727 9382
<b>Padmaloka Retreat Centre</b> , Lesingham House, Surlingham, Norwich, NR14 7AL. Tel: 050-88 8112
<b>Vajraloka Meditation Centre</b> , Tyn-y-Ddol, Trerddol, Nr Corwen, Clwyd, LL21 0EN. Tel: 0490-81 406
<b>Taraloka Women's Retreat Centre</b> , Cornhill Farm, Bettisfield, Nr Whitchurch, Shropshire, SY13 2LV. Tel: 094875 646
<b>FWBO Midlands</b> , c/o 39 Portland Road, Egbaston, Birmingham B15 9HS. Tel: 021-454 7322
<b>The Office of the Western Buddhist Order</b> , Padmaloka, Lesingham House, Surlingham, Norwich, NR14 7AL. Tel: 050 88 310
<b>Aid For India</b> , 548 Kingsland Road, Dalston, London E8 4AH. Tel: 01-241 1420
<b>Helsingen Buddhalainen Keskus</b> , PL 288, SF-00121, Helsinki 12, Finland
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<b>Wellington Buddhist Centre</b> , P.O. Box 12311, Wellington North, New Zealand. Tel: 04-851156
<b>Sydney Buddhist Centre</b> , 806 George Street, Sydney, Australia
<b>Aryaloka Retreat Centre</b> , Heartwood Circle, Newmarket, New Hampshire 03857, U.S.A. Tel: 603-659 5456
<b>FWBO Seattle</b> , 2410 E. Interlaken Blvd., Seattle, WA 98112, USA.