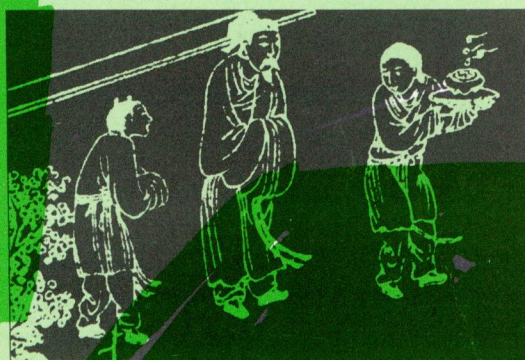


GOLDEN DRUM

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**buddhism
in family life**



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Cover Layman P'ang and his
children (top), Hridaya with his
family (see page 4)

Erratum: Due to a technical error,
the last three words of
Nagabodhi's article in the last
Golden Drum were omitted. The
final section should have read:

'We will therefore need to find
new ways of ensuring that the
FWBO is really one Movement,
and, above all, that it remains a
truly spiritual Movement. In this
work we will be aided by the
insights of inspired, articulate
individuals with new ideas and
new genius, and by courageous
people prepared to put
themselves on the line to test the
ideas and principles in practice.

'Most of those individuals have
yet to appear even at our
beginners' classes. The rest have
just finished reading this article.'

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AROUND THE WORLD

Activities and events around the FWBO

GOING FORTH IN THE HOUSEHOLD LIFE

When Nagabodhi asked me if I'd like to emerge from my 'back room' as reviews editor, and edit the whole of this issue of *Golden Drum*, the topic of Buddhism and family life soon came to mind—a topic that, as it turned out, was already on Nagabodhi's own 'short list' for near future issues.

But why this particular topic? I'm not a 'family man' myself; but some of my closest friends within the FWBO are, so I can't but be aware of many of the issues and challenges which arise for Buddhists who are bringing up a family—as well as of the often very creative ways in which they approach them. I hope that people with families in the Movement will feel encouraged in their Dharma practice and their family life as, in this issue of *Golden Drum*, a few experienced Order members with families share their thoughts and experiences of practising the Dharma in the family situation.

I also hope that this issue of *Golden Drum* might help dispel what appears to have been misconstrued at times as 'the FWBO view of the family', that is, that the FWBO promulgates a fundamentally 'anti-family' attitude.

Naturally—and rightly—Sangharakshita's views are seminal as far as the FWBO and Western Buddhist Order are concerned; and Sangharakshita has, on various occasions, spoken or written about the family. Among the views that he has expressed more than once, are, firstly, that he considers the *nuclear* family, as usually found in Western society today, to be unconducive to ordinary psychological health (and by extension not conducive to spiritual development); and secondly, that Dharma practice is likely to be more difficult and demanding for people who have the responsibilities of family life than for those who are free of such responsibilities (all other things being equal).

Such moderate and carefully qualified positions have occasionally been inflated, misunderstood, or misrepresented in terms such as: 'Sangharakshita/the FWBO is against families' or 'Sangharakshita/the FWBO thinks that people in families can't really practise Buddhism.' In fact, quite the reverse is the case: If Sangharakshita felt that family life and effective practice of the Dharma were incompatible, he would never have ordained people with families, nor would he have founded an Order which is 'neither monastic nor lay'.

The FWBO's encouragement of single-sex activities and communities is another area which may be wrongly seen as 'anti-family'. Single-sex situations have been found extremely valuable by innumerable people involved with the FWBO including many with families. In fact, through my involvement with FWBO centres, I have often met family people who seem especially to relish the benefits of single-sex retreats, study groups, and so on. Experience of at least some single-sex activities and family life-style, then, are not mutually incompatible—some have even suggested that joining in single-sex Dharma activities has helped improve their family life!

In common with the wider Buddhist tradition, the general consensus within the FWBO is neither 'pro-' nor 'anti-' families.

Families are simply an integral part of human society—a fact of life—and as such they present part of the 'material' that some Buddhists at least are working with in their spiritual lives. Given that this is the case, we in the FWBO need to address (or if we don't live in a family, at least be aware of) the issues which are likely to arise for Buddhists who have their own families.

Something you definitely could say that the FWBO is 'pro', is Going for Refuge: that we should go for Refuge as effectively as possible, and help as many people as we can to go for Refuge, whatever our or their life-style. Certainly, and very explicitly, the FWBO refutes the view, still found in some traditions of Buddhism, that 'lay people'—people with families—cannot really effectively practise the Dharma. The Western Buddhist Order is a living affirmation of the fact that *anyone* can go for Refuge effectively—including people such as some Indian Order members who live with their families in conditions which would undoubtedly appal most Westerners.

The FWBO is also definitely 'pro' Going Forth. Going Forth (or renunciation) means leaving behind or growing beyond those aspects of ourselves that hold us back from deepening our Going for Refuge. For people practising the Dharma in the context of family life, this might seem to give rise to difficulties, as the idea of Going Forth brings irresistibly to mind the image of the dramatic Going Forth of the Buddha-to-be, and his entry into the life of a homeless wanderer. But the problem is only apparent; in fact, Going Forth is an integral part of Going for Refuge. To the extent that you go for Refuge, you go forth; to the extent that you go forth, you go for Refuge: any development of skilful mental states is a 'Going Forth' from unskilful ones; any movement 'towards' the transcendental is a 'Going Forth' from *samsara*.

Sangharakshita has emphasized that for members of the Western Buddhist Order Going Forth—as an aspect of the 'effective' Going for Refuge (the point at which one is ready for ordination)—means that one will not deliberately take on new 'worldly' responsibilities, including family ones. The emphasis here, however, is on *new*. For someone with a family, this could mean, for example, deciding not to have any *more* children. But if one already has taken on responsibilities—especially responsibilities towards other human beings, such as one's own children, it would be culpably irresponsible simply to 'go forth' from them without regarding their needs. For this reason, there never has been and never will be any question of a person being 'expected' to give up their family in order to join the Western Buddhist Order.

Nevertheless, Going Forth is just as important—in fact indispensable—for people living with their families as it is for those who live in single-sex communities or who have taken the *brahmacharya* precept of full celibacy. I hope that—whatever your life-style—you find the articles that follow, by five people whose Going Forth is taking place *within* the family life, both encouraging and helpful. □

Tejananda

'Lay people' and the Buddhist tradition

Over the 2,500 years of Buddhism's existence, many approaches have been taken to Dharma practice within family life. In this article, I want to sketch some impressions of how earlier Buddhist tradition has regarded the capacities and needs of people whose practice of the Buddha-Dharma takes place within this context.

The earliest strata of Buddhist teachings to which we have access are in the Pali Canon. The majority of these teachings are addressed to bhikshus and bhikshunis who, having left the household life, are exhorted to remain aloof from society. However, many of the *suttas* (discourses) of the Pali Canon depict or are addressed to family people. Some teachings are aimed at helping them maintain a good and broad basis for family life:

Fidelity, modesty and generosity—

These do the good pursue: This is the deva-path.

(Anguttara Nikaya iv.236)

However, this kind of material can appear problematic for Buddhists living the family life. Many of the teachings offered to 'lay' followers in the Pali Canon only go so far, promising respect in society and a better rebirth. Perhaps the Buddha was being realistic in setting lesser goals for those living a family life than for those who had gone forth from it. But this kind of teaching, coupled with critical descriptions of the household life in the Pali Canon, has created a particularly negative image of Buddhism in some people's minds. This is a mistake probably accounted for by the fact that many of the most well-known texts of the Pali Canon are those addressed specifically to bhikshus and bhikshunis.

Let's look at some Pali material that perhaps gives us an appreciation of the Buddha outside of the 'monastic' community. We can only look at a little, which is a pity, as there is so much that is fresh and rich.

On one occasion, the Buddha says to some bhikshus 'Hold it true, bhikshus, that the

householder Ugga of Vesali is possessed of eight wonderful and marvellous qualities.' Later, when a bhikshu goes off in search of Ugga at home, to find out what these qualities could be, he finds that Ugga's heart is 'clear and lucid', that his Dharma-eye has been opened, that he has completely overcome the first five fetters (i.e. that he has gained the Insight of a Non-Returner), and skilfully preaches the Dharma to others.

The householders Mahanama and Suraka received important teachings from the Buddha, who celebrated another called Hatthaka for his kindness and modesty. But, despite his modesty, Hatthaka still attracted five hundred lay disciples of his own, some of whom were

themselves Stream Entrants and Once-Returners.

Then there is the householder Dhammadinna (not to be confused with the famous bhikshuni of the same name)—also with disciples of his own—who when offered the teaching of *sunna* (*shunyata*, emptiness) by the Buddha holds back, saying: 'Lord, it's no easy thing for us living as we do in crowded houses, committed to children, handling money and enjoying Benares sandalwood, to spend our days learning these teachings. Let the Lord teach us some other teaching, us who stand firm in the five precepts.'

The Buddha then teaches Dhammadinna the Four Limbs of Stream Winning, upon which Dhammadinna realizes that he is already a Stream Entrant; Dhammadinna has underestimated his own spiritual achievements.

Finally, from these early Pali texts, let us mention the account of Nakula and her father and mother. Nakula's father is dangerously ill and suffering because he feels he is leaving his wife and child unprotected. His wife understands this, and in a moving account tells him not to die 'fretting with craving'. Eventually Nakula's father recovers and visits the Buddha who, understanding the quality of the wife's action, says 'It is an advantage to you, householder, it is a gain to you that your wife has been compassionate, wishful of your profit, a counsellor and a guide.'

If you read through these texts completely, you cannot help but feel convinced of the Buddha's positive attitude and love towards all the very different kinds of people he knew; 'He who was so kind', as Ananda later recollected.

With the arising of the Mahayana, ways were sought to emphasize even more the effective practice of the Dharma by lay followers. Perhaps the most outstanding way in which the Mahayana did this was through the teaching of the Bodhisattva Ideal. The bodhisattva makes no distinction between self and other, and perfects skilful means to help all beings. Significantly, the Mahayana acknowledged that lay people as well as bhikshus and bhikshunis can be bodhisattvas, and there are celebrated accounts of teachers with their own families.

Much of the Mahayana teaching, including the Bodhisattva Ideal, tries to point to what is fundamental and essential: that life-style and appearance are secondary and that it is the aspiration and will to move towards Enlightenment that is primary.

This message is also found in the Pali texts. In the *Dhammapada* the Buddha points to what is really important and cuts through appearances in a verse which begins 'But although a man may wear fine clothing, if he develops tranquillity, is quiet and subdued, leading a spiritual life and abstaining from injury to all living beings—he is a brahmin, he is a bhikshu.' The verse could well be paraphrased: 'But



Layman P'ang
and his
daughter, Ling-
Chao



**Hridaya plays
with his family**

although a man is pushing his foldaway push-chair through the shops, if he develops tranquillity,...

This verse, whether rendered like this or in the more conventional way, illustrates that the Buddha in the Pali Canon, as well as in other forms of the teaching, pointed to what was really important. We should all be guided by this principle.

Buddhist schools, like many things in life, had a way of repeating themselves. Some of the Mahayana schools, even the important ones, after originally stressing the importance of experience and complete understanding, moved towards scholasticism and theory. This, of course, distanced them from ordinary people. This tendency was, thankfully, followed by another flowering, that of the tantric movement, which breathed new life and vigour into Buddhism.

The Buddhist tantra, though based upon the doctrines of earlier schools, sought to discover the realities behind the concepts and symbols. It also emphasized that lay people as well as 'full-timers' were capable of developing *siddhi* (the tantric equivalent of Insight). Spiritual action was at the heart of its teaching.

The development of Tantric Buddhism in Tibet from the seventh century CE saw the strengthening of a monastic tradition that was not remote from lay people. The monasteries were centres for health and education and many family people would spend limited periods of time in them. The tradition of sending the eldest son into the monastery and having the family interests taken care of by the second son ensured a close family link with the monastery.

Many Tibetan lamas were married, and some famous teachers such as Marpa (1012–96), teacher of Milarepa, brought up a family. In recent times several of Sangharakshita's own Tibetan teachers were highly regarded married lamas.

In Tibet, the distinction between initiation and monastic ordination was important. Spiritual initiation into a tantric meditation practice was a vital aspect of Tibetan practice and teachers made this available to lay people as well as bhikshus, the important thing being their receptiveness

and understanding rather than their life-style.

In China, the lay Buddhist community always played a significant part. When Buddhism first arrived in the country it could not ignore the existing cultural climate of Confucianism. China was already a developed and sophisticated society with deep respect for family and ancestors. One of the most popular and acclaimed sutras in China was the Vimalakirti-nirdesha, an account of the great bodhisattva Vimalakirti who 'manifested' as a layman as a skilful means in order to teach the Dharma to people from all walks of life.

All the important Chinese Buddhist schools seem to have had lay members participating significantly. If we look only at the Ch'an (Zen) School we find Hui Neng (638–713) at the end of his life predicting that his school would fully establish itself seventy years after his death efforts of two people, one a bhikshu, the other a lay person. The lay person was the Ch'an master P'ang Yun, who with his daughter Ling Chao influenced many contemporary Buddhists and left important teachings, one of the most famous being

'Carry water, chop wood: Therein lies Dharma.'

Wang Wei (699–759), one of China's most famous poets, was a dedicated lay Buddhist and is regarded as having written the first Chinese verses to contain *kung-ans* (koans), which are also important teachings of the Ch'an School.

'You ask me to explain the reason for failure and success; The fisherman's song goes deep into the river.'

The voice of Wang Wei is that of a True Individual—a fact which applies to all the lay Dharma-practitioners I have mentioned in this article. Progress in the Buddha's teaching is always made by individuals, as such, whether bhikshus or lay people. The conditions for either may be different, but, as we have seen, significant spiritual progress—including the realization of high levels of Insight—has been made by very many people who have had the responsibilities of family life. They have not treated this as an obstacle. Fundamentally, the Buddha's teaching tries to reach the hearts of those who will listen, wherever and in whatever circumstances they may be. □

Delusions and red

It is possible ... for a man to flatter himself with the comfortable conviction that he has "gained" something of a spiritual nature, simply because society has got into the habit of regarding certain actions as good, certain practices as religious, and certain attainments as spiritual, in themselves, without reference to the state of consciousness by which they are inspired. Whereas the truth of the matter is that a particular action, practice, or attainment is truly moral, religious, or spiritual only to the extent that it succeeds in eradicating the ego-sense.' (Sangharakshita, *Crossing the Stream*, Windhorse, p.47)

These thoughts of Sangharakshita's are a touchstone in my efforts to understand and practise the Dharma; I hope you will bear them in mind throughout what I have to say.

While it is true that I am married with children, I experience a slight shock when someone refers to me as 'living the family life', or as a 'family man'. I never think of myself in these particular terms. I am just me, living my life. That is not to say that I can't appreciate the outside appearances if I stand and look at myself from where someone else is looking.

Because of the life-style I choose to live, various problems and issues arise: these mostly involve sharing out the Cake of Time to all the children at my party. I have difficulties making Order weekends, with getting personal space, and seeing friends as often as I would like. I am concerned about my responsibilities for earning enough money; about the prospect of dying with potential unfulfilled. Then there are my growing children, not to mention a growing partner, and finding the balance between numbers of conflicting demands.... I choose to deal with these issues, more or less successfully, rather than avoid them; avoiding, anyway, does not seem to be that easy. I know many other Order members, with seemingly more propitious opportunities, who have similar lists of problems without the family life-style!

It is not the purpose of this article to deal directly with these issues, or make this a lecture on 'How to Live in a Family and Still be a Buddhist'. I think a more helpful approach to the 'family life' is to look at three main areas which concern its relationship with 'spiritual life'. Firstly, I want to take up some preconcep-

tions about what is possible within the context of a family. Secondly, I would like to clarify some essential truths as to what makes actions spiritual. And, thirdly, I want to say something about the basis on which the choices for our actions are made.

There are no doubt general, important observations to be made about 'families'. Society holds romantic, sexual love and families as ultimate goals to strive for, and as achievements against which to define ourselves. As followers of the Dharma, intent on moving beyond these mundane ideals, we need to see through them quite early. Yet here lies the danger of preconceptions. Many sweeping generalizations are made, and many



emotions directed towards and against what we perceive as a uniform entity called 'families'. But, if I think of all the families I know, the similarity between them becomes more superficial as the individuals involved follow paths of self-awareness.

General observations are of limited usefulness. Always, specific instances and individual experience must be sought. All general theories about the nature of things must be tested on the anvil of actual awareness, actual experience. This is Dharma. If we treat all people, or families, in the same sweeping way, we are not really seeing them at all. We are seeing merely our own preconceptions. The fact we call a particular arrangement a 'sangha' or 'community' does not make it, simply because we so label it, more 'spiritual' than calling it a 'family'.

The second point I wish to make arises from the way the word 'practice' is frequently used. It is sometimes used as a vague cut down version of 'spiritual practice', and seems to equate with 'meditation practice', but could mean either, both, or simply not-a-lot. Most often the term is used in the context of a duality: with formal



'Family life ... gives rise to daily opportunities to consider the needs of others above your own'

herrings



'practice' such as meditation, study, or retreats on the one hand, and everything else on the other. As in 'Now I've come back from retreat, I can't practise', or 'You must find it difficult to practise, living in a family'.

What concerns me are assumptions that I have sometimes heard voiced in relation to 'practice and family'. If by 'practice' we mean only our attempts at formal meditation, and if this is the only effort we ever put into making ourselves perfect, for most of us the outlook for gaining any degree of insight in this lifetime is about as poor as trying to fly with one feather, no matter how big it is!

It is not difficult to see that time spent in meditation, and all the other formal practices, is a tiny fraction of the time available this birth; even though this time may be well spent, and ultimately essential to gaining Insight. We might have lost any number of years before starting our path; we have to spend time eating and sleeping, conversing, working, most of which time is spent in a daydream anyway.

To make an impact on our condition, *all* times and activities must be brought into the sphere of the term

'There are also creative joys to be had playing on the floor with children, trusting, sharing, and supporting another's growth'

'practice'. It's not that there are some places and times in which the spiritual life can be led and others in which it cannot. The spiritual life involves transforming our consciousness. So, as there is no time when consciousness is not with you, there is no time when an effort to transform your consciousness cannot be made.

Family life presents continual opportunities to practise. Bringing up a two-year-old—particularly when you are not feeling well—gives ample opportunity to practise patience; supporting children for up to eighteen years gives rise to daily opportunities to consider the needs of others above your own; and sharing your life and that most precious of all commodities, time, with others who have their own lives and points of view, is a wonderful opportunity to practise generosity.

There are also great, and creative, joys to be had playing on the floor with children, trusting, sharing, and supporting another's growth. To bring up a child as a real human being at this time is an immensely important task. And if we, who practise Dharma, can't make a better job of it than our parents, who did not have this opportunity, or the many others that we have today, then it says a lot about the robustness and usefulness of the Dharma in the world. We must also remember the consequences of denying our children, of effectively telling them they are not wanted or get in the way of our 'practice'.

If you live in a family—if you are alive at all—there is much you can do, many opportunities. All is a long way from being lost! If you are in a sexual relationship, have children, work 'in the world', or are entering into any of these, what matters is that you know yourself, and know how this activity fits in with your Dharma aspirations. But most important: what makes any situation one of growth is the *willingness* to make it so.

At any one time our honesty is only as deep as our insight into our motivations and underlying mental states. How truly do we know the roots of our actions, know whether they are inspired by our highest aspirations, or are only knee jerks stimulated by personal fears and the hidden desires of the heart?

Here we have come to the third area I wanted to look at: onion-like, we have layers of feelings, conditionings, and desires. What the heart really desires and fears in its deepest chambers will affect us; affect our attitudes; affect our whole view of the world—which includes our view of families.

This applies to all the choices we make: choosing to start a sexual relationship or end one; start a family or break one; acknowledge one's child or deny that child; choosing to allow others to dictate who or what we are, or allow the trappings and labels of outward processes or occasions to be the criteria for our development, instead of the quality of our inner mental states.

Perhaps the most helpful guide-line as to whether *any* situation is beneficial or not is to ask with all the honesty we have in the moment, with all our rudimentary insight, what is the *use* of what we are doing? Does the situation give us a sense of expansion, growth, a sense of empowerment, or the opposite? Does our choice of mental, emotional, or physical activity, whatever form it takes, deepen our Going for Refuge or not? This will, of course, include the family environment, work, rearing children, and all such seemingly worldly activities.

I am not advocating the adoption of 'family life' as necessary for a person's 'spiritual life'. I am saying that each human being must work out the path for themselves. What matters are the mental states behind any activity. There is so much work to be done. Circumstances offer different opportunities for different practices. The 'family' can be one such circumstance, for some. □

Buddhists in families—and their friends—should give special attention to the importance of friendship, suggests Vipassi

Friends in the family

Parents, like anyone else, need friends if they are to develop their spiritual lives, or, at least, friends would be very useful. If they are to develop their spiritual lives they need, to some extent at least, to resist the received culture and economic conditions that force them into the nuclear family unit, which puts great pressure on its members, including the children: tense little Freudian houses, too hot or too cold.

So they need friends who are willing to enter their homes, become 'members of the family', if that is possible.—Though of course it requires discretion and good sense on all sides, and is anyway, perhaps, not always possible, since the family home can easily become someone or other's private domain, or the partners may not share the same spiritual vision.

So ideally they need not just friends who will meet them outside, in their free time, as though their domestic lives were off limits (an isolating thoughtlessness)—though, by the same token, the friends need to feel welcome, as well as know when they are, quite properly, not wanted.

In the FWBO probably the women have got this together better than the men: a network of fellow parents and sympathizers who will make up an extended family, even an extended spiritual family, all taking a small share in the care of the children; giving them, again with discretion, other role models than their parents; encouraging, without jealousy or possessiveness, the nurturing connections children sometimes make with their parents' friends, because of some affinity of personality, or common interest or attraction.

And, not least, such friends can help take pressure off the married relationship itself. One has to ask the question, within one's own life, whether the received ideals of our culture, high and low, do not demand too much of the marriage-partners. Here one's realism needs to face in two directions. On the one hand, there is surely wisdom in the great Elizabethan language: 'for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer' etc., since it dismisses illusion at once in favour of the need for commitment, at least to a stable and secure life for the children. On the other hand, there is an expectation in our culture, reinforced constantly, and probably difficult to shake off because of historical conditions, that the marriage partners should be for each other all in all: lover, parent, child, confessor, intellectual partner, friend, spiritual friend.... A division of labour is probably more realistic in (some of) these areas, though perhaps not to the extent of mutual redundancy! And there's no need to be 'politically correct' about these things;

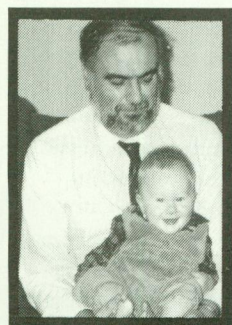


it must be a matter of cautious experiment, and arise out of the fidelity of friendship, mutual support and affection.

Parents do not need friends simply in order to 'get on with their spiritual practice', as though that had to be understood as entirely separate from family life, and family life were in itself a permanent distraction from the spiritual life. In a Buddhist movement in which celibacy and single-sex communities are rightly celebrated it is very easy for people who, via one route or another, find themselves in family life, to distance themselves emotionally from their spouse and from their little ones, who cannot but notice such rejecting vibrations. Perhaps this needs to be said more to fathers than mothers on the whole, but if you are in a family, be wholeheartedly *there*, using your intelligence and friends to make the home a place of greater light.

Of course, one needs the opportunity to meditate, to go on retreat, to develop one's spiritual friendships, and if that is what we mean by 'spiritual practice' then certainly one needs time away from one's family responsibilities in order to pursue it. And friends can help: they might learn something about (and from) the children.

But parents also need friends in order to be better parents, better spouses, better human beings, so that they can bring a higher quality of attention and awareness to their children and partners, so that they have more space to embody the practice of the precepts in their relations with their families. For what, after all, are the alternatives? People can easily be overwhelmed by the drudgery of constant and isolated child care: if one is not relieved by sharing the responsibilities, one does it all the worse, one's energies dwindle, and when they do there follow more reactive, less ethical courses.



Parents need friends who are willing to become 'members of the family'



'Some historically conditioned expectations linger in our culture and are reinforced still, bred into our unconscious lives'

It easily happens that one becomes too *absorbed* in family life; it easily happens that one becomes too little *engaged*. One has to learn to become engaged without becoming absorbed. If there are friends who are willing to share some of the burdens, one can gain proportion, bring vitality and responsiveness to one's child care, and bring happiness into the atmosphere.

It is pretty obvious that one needs such friends if one is to develop a family life, in keeping with the precepts, in which harmony *and* conflict are both available. Less obvious at first, perhaps, is the relation between *work* and the quality of family life.

I have used this expression 'family life' several times, as though we all know what is being referred to. But, clearly, family life takes many different forms, and one of the most important determining factors is the economic one, which is not always a matter of choice—indeed, it is frequently a matter of greater desperation than most of the Westerners reading this are likely to have experienced.

We know well enough that particular forms of economic life and livelihood do damage to their participants. One way in which such damage can occur is in the form of family life that economic necessity can impose upon us. There is a real connection between the nature of our work and the nature of our family life. In fact, we can hardly discuss the two in separately. In the old days, and for most working people still in the wider world, the nature of people's work and the length of the working day determined the possibilities of personal life: one had the strength and the leisure to do little more than recreate one's capacity to continue work; there was no space or energy for self-renewal or spiritual

development. This is not to say that such circumstances did not draw out of some people a large degree of spiritual courage and heroism. It also no doubt bred particular forms of dependence, emotional loyalty, and expectation, both positive and negative: factors which often linger on even after the original determinants have long ceased but which are built into one's conditioning and determine one's expectations in ways which no longer serve a purpose, which undermine clear communication, and impede personal transformation and liberation. As I say, some of these historically conditioned expectations linger in our culture and are reinforced still, bred into our unconscious lives. One may, for instance, and simplistically, inherit attitudes to the family that derive from the harsh experience and necessities of the prairies, or the Depression, or the rural village.

Even if we are not victims of the old drudgeries, which are still not that far removed from many of us, our working lives can still absorb so much of our energies that we have little left to give to family life, so that we are still only able to recreate ourselves in the intervals of work, so that we cannot give what the Americans call 'quality time' to our families—and our public demeanour, no doubt honest enough, slips away to be replaced by a private self which is pretty unreconstructed so far as the practice of the precepts is concerned. No doubt the same thing can happen in a Right Livelihood community, if its members work too hard, too often.

So I am suggesting in effect that friends and Right Livelihood make it easier to go for Refuge in the midst of family life. We need whatever will make it easier because it is *hard*. As it says in the *Majjhima-Nikaya*, 'House life is crowded and dusty; life gone forth is wide open. It is not easy, in a household, to lead a Holy 9 Life as utterly perfect and pure as a polished shell.' House life is certainly crowded and dusty, or at least mine is. Perhaps in the olden days the homeless life was a better option than a constant round of dusting, though if one gets into the way of dusting one may bethink oneself, from time to time, especially if one has friends to prompt one, to do what one can to lessen the dust on one's eyes.

But surely we need to say something about the children. One can make polite noises about the need to be mindful and keep the precepts, but this is compatible with being pretty inattentive to the real stages of their growth and formation as spiritual beings. Mindfulness is not just a way of carrying oneself, it is a means of *discovery*, to be embodied, perhaps, in a future Buddhist conception of childhood, not in terms of generalities but in minute particulars.

Meanwhile it is easy to run on automatic pilot (thus becoming merely the medium of earlier generations) in the way one relates to one's children. It is possible to be quite unreflective about the nature of the influences on them in the course of negotiating time for one's 'spiritual practice'. Is it such a good idea to stick the kids in front of the telly, watching a video, for the sake of an hour's peace? Are they really to be addressed as little adults, or primed to be ideologically sound from an early age? They need to be nurtured according to their natures, but we glean that nature from the received culture without close scrutiny or scepticism. It would be sad if, in our anxiety to maintain our spiritual practice, we did not bring the fruits of that practice to bear upon our beliefs about what it is to bring up a child. □



'Children need to be nurtured according to their natures'

One Woman's Ex

I moved to Norwich in 1979 with my husband and two children (a third was born later) in order to get to know more about the FWBO. We chose Norwich because there were other Buddhist families living there and we had heard talk of family communities. We had come from a background of the sixties and seventies—university, travel, macrobiotics, meditation, and a search for an alternative life-style which would give us a balanced, healthy, practical, and spiritual framework for our lives. In pursuit of this we had just spent three years in a village community in Eire. The community was fine in many ways, but the work was exhausting and its underlying philosophy (based on the teachings of Rudolph Steiner) was not for us. We felt that meditation and possibly Buddhism could provide the answers we were looking for.

So we moved to Norwich. My first contact with the FWBO Buddhists there was quite a relief. After past experiences, I must confess I'd been afraid of encountering a rather other-worldly group of religious cranks. It was refreshing to meet people so friendly and down to earth and to hear the Dharma explained in a way that was so clear, practical, and applicable to my life. Here was a movement that was exciting and full of possibility.

However, I discovered that as far as family communities were concerned, there appeared to be a few teething problems. Most of the families seemed to have broken up or moved away. There had been some attempts at community living with other families, not very well thought out and not very successful, and perhaps a certain disillusion had set in, coupled with the impression that the family was incompatible with the spiritual life.

We had arrived at quite a pivotal time for the FWBO—a time of experimentation and pioneering. The single-sex community was evolving as a radical new way to live in order to further one's spiritual growth, to develop close friendships with members of the same sex, and to change the unhealthily dependent relationship that can exist between couples. In our zeal we often felt that this was the answer for everybody. Where families were concerned, this often involved the man moving into a men's community, at least for a

time, and the woman staying with the children. While this did help the individuals to become stronger and more independent, and in some ways could be an improvement on the nuclear family, it was by no means an ideal situation, and left major areas untackled as far as the family was concerned.

Meanwhile, those of us with children set about doing some pioneering in our own way. We couldn't accept the view that bringing up children was incompatible with the spiritual life (such a view is in any case antithetical to the teachings of the Buddha, who said that the Dharma can be practised by anyone who is willing to try), we couldn't stop being parents, and we



couldn't give up the spiritual life, a new way to be found.

Personally, I found the practices and structures of the FWBO invaluable. The emphasis on a regular meditation practice, friendship, and study all helped me to keep things in perspective, maintain a balance in my life (mostly), and continue to grow in awareness and positivity in spite of circumstances that weren't ideal. I'd grasp precious half hours for meditation while the children were asleep, attend a class or study group whenever I could (sometimes with baby in arms—or at least in a pram), and spend many an hour in piecemeal discussion about life the universe and everything with other mothers, in between blowing the noses, answering the questions, and sorting out the disagreements of our offspring. I found the support of the other mothers in Norwich at this time particularly valuable; it helped to cement some very strong friendships, which have continued and deepened. Many of us are now members of the Order, considerably stronger, wiser, and—in more than just age—more mature.

As our children were growing up we experimented with various situations and activities to help our



'As our children were growing up we experimented with various situations and activities to help our practice of the Dharma and to incorporate the children into our spiritual lives'

perience



baby-sitting for each other to enable us to attend classes, retreats, or just have a break.

While I think the needs of my children were well catered for at this time, there was still the question of day to day support for me. Being at home a lot of the time with small children I felt quite lonely, and longed for contact with other Buddhists. Finally, I moved house and now live close to a number of Buddhist friends, including several families, some of whom have moved for the same reason. This feels like a step in the right direction: towards an expanded community in which we can provide networks of friendship and support for each other and for those in our care.

In this respect I am grateful for the support I have been given for my son, now fifteen. As he grew into adolescence I was afraid that he was lacking in male contacts, since most of my friends were women. He regularly spent time with his father but rarely with other men. Now he regularly spends time in two men's communities—one with his father—and while I don't think he engages in anything overtly Buddhist or spiritual, he values and enjoys his time there. I'd like to see more of this kind of sharing and giving in the FWBO.

My children are now all teenagers and no longer need creches or babysitters. Although I feel quite pleased with the way they have turned out so far (and I think they are reasonably pleased with their parents!) I sometimes wonder what models for society or potential parenthood they have apart from the nuclear or (ever more common) one parent family. As far as their parents and parents' friends are concerned, I hope they can see growing individuals who try to be as open, honest, aware, and emotionally positive as possible and who try to extend those qualities of kindness and awareness to others, the children included. In terms of models for human communication I think in the FWBO we have many answers. However, in terms of structures to support the involvement of families in the Movement, and to enable people to practise and grow in conducive surroundings, we are only just beginning.

Perhaps that is because we need to reassess completely our attitude to the family itself—going beyond, at extremes, possessiveness and clannishness (if we have children) and unconcern and indifference

(if we don't). Perhaps we need a view in which child rearing and parenthood is seen more as a sharing of resources. Such a view would require children not being seen just as the individual parents' concern, but as part of, even an asset to, a wider society of growing beings for which all have a responsibility. To do so would involve working against the strong pull of tradition, the safe and familiar—in fact against conditioned existence itself. It would involve a radical change in each individual, working towards an abandoning of the distinction between 'mine' and 'yours', 'self' and 'other'—a life based on awareness of and *metta* towards other human beings.

Western society is sometimes said to be in the melting pot. Old structures are breaking down or being abandoned, with nothing really positive to replace them. Perhaps our search and experimentation has been to some extent part of this process, but with the tools we have at hand in our spiritual practices, we have the ability to be completely radical and the means to create something truly revolutionary: a society founded on the Bodhisattva Ideal. □

practice of the Dharma and to incorporate the children into our spiritual lives. We knew we couldn't bring our children up to be Buddhists (this being a choice that each individual has to make for him or herself) but we wanted to provide them with a positive, ethical atmosphere in which to grow up. We also wanted to give them a positive experience of the Buddha's teachings to which they could relate, rather than it just being something their parents did which they either had to endure or for which they were kept out of the way.

So over the years a number of parents would get together and organize activities for children on the major Buddhist festivals. Among other things, we made elaborate offerings which we offered in the context of a simple puja, acted out Jataka tales or the life of the Buddha, adults and children alike dressing up, put on puppet shows and had lots of fun with a Buddhist slant. Children's activities have since become regular events in Norwich on festival days. We also organized camping trips and retreats for mothers and children, and had many a birthday party and informal gathering. In addition we helped out with



'Children's activities have since become regular events in Norwich on festival days'

A future for families

The Buddha stealing silently across the sleeping bodies of his wife and child, creeping out of his father's palace; in traditional terms, Going Forth into homelessness in search of the Truth that would bring an end to all suffering. How familiar this scene is to all Buddhists.

With this as the great example of spiritual renunciation, it is not surprising that down the ages the practice of the Buddha's Dharma has come to be associated with a life outside the arena of family responsibilities. The Buddha himself, however, communicated with all who came his way, not hesitating to encourage those who chose to lead 'a householder's life' from practising the Dharma.

Trying to embody something of that spirit of the Buddha, the FWBO extends the invitation to 'come and see' to all, whoever they may be: young or old, sick or healthy, male or female, single or with family responsibilities. As the Movement matures, gaining experience and attracting people from a greater diversity of backgrounds, so it is able to offer the Dharma effectively to a wider spectrum of people. In recent years, for instance, there have been events specially for gay men and black women, and the first experiments in retreats for parents and children.

The FWBO seeks to create a society within the wider society, in which social, economic, and political arrangements will support spiritual development. So far there are some successful FWBO communities for single men and women—environments in which each person is able to express and extend their individuality. And there are also successful FWBO Right Livelihood businesses; but there are no FWBO schools, and no communities which are specifically set up for people with children. In this sense the Movement has not yet much to offer the parent or the child who come within its orbit.

So what of the future? It is clear the FWBO needs to expand. We need to think in terms of what we can offer to parents and to children. What the FWBO can seek to offer parents is, firstly, an understanding of the issues that arise for someone who is trying to practise the Dharma in the context of a family, and, secondly, situations which are set

up to support and encourage people with families in their efforts to grow as individuals.

I think the fact that there are no such situations is a result of our having not yet understood deeply enough the issues involved for parents who want to practise the Dharma. In a sense parents are still quite largely on their own. A few people have wrestled with the issues and come to some understanding of them—as we can find in the articles published in a recent issue of *Dakini* (the FWBO's magazine for women, whose recent issue was on the theme of 'Motherhood and Spiritual Life') and as we see from this issue of *Golden Drum*. As the result of one mother's initiative, for the

first time women Order members in the UK discussed the issue of motherhood and non-motherhood and its implications for the Western Buddhist Order at an Order weekend held earlier this year. But these ideas are only just beginning to be pooled and discussed.

In tackling the subject of parenthood and the spiritual life we have to acknowledge that we are treading on ground almost as sensitive as that which we encounter when we venture into the area of sexual relationships. Like sexual relationships, parenthood is underpinned by tremendously strong instinctual forces. In fact I would say from my own experience that the forces of motherhood, at least, are stronger than the forces of sexual attraction. When we talk about practising the Dharma we are talking about developing individuality, non-attachment, and so on. When we look at parenthood we find a natural attachment of the strongest kind existing between parent and child. We find the experience of fatherhood and motherhood characterized by a strong identification with the child—one that is basically instinctual. Unlike friendship, the relationship with one's own child is not the creation of conscious effort, and it is rarely based on objective appreciation of the child's needs, or an objective response to the child's own qualities and weaknesses.

For a parent practising the Dharma, the challenge of changing instinctual attachment and conditioned behaviour to awareness and creative responsiveness is a very big one indeed. Even when one has begun to realize that it is a necessary and natural part of one's spiritual development, the question remains: how *in practice* does one bring about those changes?

As one begins to consider more carefully what it means to be a parent, one is faced with the question not only of how one can best discharge one's parental duties but, even, what does it in fact mean to be a parent in terms of responsibilities to another human being (above and beyond looking after the merely physical welfare of a child)? There is also the question what is the best environment for a growing child?—Not only physical, but also social and educational. What Buddhist parent has not lamented over some aspect of their child's schooling at the hands of a secular, philosophically confused educational system?

Many educationalists have put forward views and ideas about the best way to educate children. But what do Buddhist principles tell us? Dharmo Rimpoche, teacher and friend of Sangharakshita, and founder of the ITBCI school in Kalimpong for refugee Tibetan children, once said that the most important thing they could learn was that 'actions have consequences'. If that is the most important thing for children to learn, how do we best teach it to them (apart from realizing it deeply and clearly ourselves)? This is a question not just for parents but for all of us who come into contact with children in any way. It is a challenge to those who nurse the idea of founding a Buddhist school.

So the issues we are dealing with as parents need to



The Buddha on the community shrine where Kalyanaprabha and Miri live



be clarified. Perhaps some parents will start meeting together regularly, exploring, discussing, and from that giving talks, writing articles, and even books about these issues. But, even better, perhaps some parents will dare to start living together with the very purpose of coming to a deeper understanding of the issues involved, trying to find something of a blueprint for spiritually successful living for Buddhist parents and their children to live happily and fruitfully together.

All community living is challenging, but such a community would, I think, be particularly so. It would need commitment, maturity, and willingness to make mistakes and let go of old ways of being and operating, that would require unusual strength of character. Experience suggests that a single-sex community would work best: perhaps mothers with daughters and young children of both sexes, whilst fathers and older boys lived in a nearby men's community. I hope within the FWBO some individuals may be able to get together to start such a project. Taken on in the right spirit, it could be a real practice not just of communal living in the ordinary sense, but of breaking through the habits of egotism in a new way.

Out of such a project, or projects, could emerge an understanding of how to make the family situation 'work' for those practising the Dharma within that context. It could similarly discover for the benefit of the whole FWBO how bringing up children can be a



Kalyanaprabha with her daughter Miri, and above with most of the community and one of Miri's friends

spiritual practice, a means for breaking asunder the fetters that bind us to the wheel of conditioned existence. In addition, such a project would lead to a deeper understanding of what it means to be a child, and what a child needs in order to grow up into a healthy, responsible human being. Such discoveries would indeed be a gift to society.

As well as one or two intensive 'family projects' one could imagine other, more loosely organized, communities, perhaps forming satellites of the main project; as well as places where a 'Buddhist village' is formed, rather as there have been mothers and children in Norwich living near each other, in close contact and providing each other with practical, psychological, and spiritual support.

As for what the FWBO has to offer the children who come within its orbit, there are many things which, over the years, I hope we will be able to offer them. But we do, always, have *ourselves* to offer. It has been said that you can judge a society by the way it treats the very young and the very old. Let us always bear in mind that our scope in seeking to offer the Dharma to all beings includes a welcome, a genuine friendliness, and interest in those children who come within our orbit because their parents 'come and see'. Let us hope such children grow up remembering that Buddhists were different—Buddhists were interested in them, were the sort of people they would like to be when they grow up. What better invitation have we got? □

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BUDDHIST BUDDHISM

**The FWBO and
'Protestant Buddhism'—
An Affirmation and a Protest**
by Sangharakshita
Published by Windhorse
pp.187, paperback, £5.95

The title of Sangharakshita's latest book is to some extent self-explanatory. He sets out to examine the concept of 'Protestant Buddhism', and to ascertain whether or not such a label can be applied to the FWBO. He protests, strongly, that such a label is inappropriate, and affirms the principles upon which the FWBO has been founded, and by which alone it can be understood.

But why should such an exercise be necessary? Sangharakshita explains in his introduction how he was first approached, with a request for an interview, by a research student in 1986. The student, one Philip Mellor, was interested in issues concerning the cultural transference of Buddhism to the West, and wished to interview Sangharakshita because of his involvement with the English Sangha Trust in the 1960s and his later founding of the FWBO. The student planned to compare the FWBO with the English Sangha. The public results of this work appeared in 1991 in *Religion*, an academic journal published by Lancaster University, in an article entitled 'Protestant Buddhism? The Cultural Translation of Buddhism in England'.

Many who read this article, and not least Sangharakshita, were dismayed by the degree to which, seeking to substantiate his main thesis, the author distorted or misrepresented the attitudes and practices of the FWBO, backing his arguments with data which revealed a pitifully limited acquaintance with either the writings of Sangharakshita, or with the

realities of the FWBO as an organization. Whilst Kulananda attempted to correct some of the factual errors in a letter to the same journal, Sangharakshita decided to undertake a critique of many of the attitudes and assumptions underlying Mellor's article. The result of this exercise is the present essay.

Since this is a critique of Mellor's article, Sangharakshita follows its structure, dividing his essay into five sections corresponding to those of his subject: The Burden of Self, Protestantism and Buddhism, Modernism and Buddhism, Culture and Buddhism, and The Cultural Translation of Buddhism; these are prefaced by a discussion of Mellor's own introductory paragraph.

In the course of this critical analysis Sangharakshita examines a number of issues. Some involve the re-affirmation of positions and principles often upheld before (one wonders how or why Mellor came to ignore them in the first place), while others have required forays into new territory, including that of the methodology of the sociology of religion. Amongst many other things Sangharakshita discusses in what sense the FWBO might be seen as 'Western'; the related question of whether there can be said to be an essence of Buddhism; the relationship of the FWBO to the Buddhist tradition, and the importance of selecting from that tradition; the place of charisma, and whether Sangharakshita is himself 'charismatic'; the relationship of progress, development, and evolution, and the extent to which the language of evolution can be used to expound the Buddhist path; the distinction between cultural transference and cultural translation, and the possibility of a true translation of Buddhism to



The cover shows a detail of Martin Luther and a head of Maitreya

speciousness of Mellor's thinking here, Sangharakshita makes clear the reasons why it is that, when Christianity is criticized in the FWBO, that criticism is most pertinent to the Roman Catholic church.

While doubtless many people within the WBO and FWBO, and other Buddhist groups, will (indeed should) read this essay with great interest and edification, one hopes that it will also be appreciated by professional academics working in the field of Buddhist Studies and the Sociology and Anthropology of Religion. Sangharakshita raises questions over long held axioms of the pseudo-scientific methodology of sociology and anthropology, questions which need to be answered honestly if these 'disciplines' are to survive in the long run with any intellectual credibility. In an age when the notion of totally detached, 'objective' observation is reluctantly eschewed, even in such a hard-nosed field as particle physics, how much more so is a similar admission needed in fields of study that deal with such emotive areas as personal belief. Perhaps the era when all writers declare their personal beliefs, so that readers can know all the attendant factors that inform the judgements that they make, is nearer than one dares to hope.

Notwithstanding its adversarial approach to its subject, one hopes that this essay will contribute to a creative resolution of the apparent conflicts between the worlds of academic study and Buddhist practice, through their mutual commitment to truth. □

Shthiramati

the West.

The major thrust of Sangharakshita's argument, however, is concerned with the central claim of Mellor's article, namely that, far from being a Buddhist movement in name and in practice, engaged in the task of 'diverting Western culture into new religious channels', in reality it is merely 'exploring the existing religious channels in new ways' in so far as it is 'creating new religious forms within liberal protestant culture'. In other words, whereas many sincere but presumably simple-minded and unreflective people have seen themselves as engaged in the pursuit of the Buddhist path for and of its own sake, clever student, Mr (now Dr) Mellor maintains that they are in reality acting out a pattern of cultural and religious rebellion epitomized by that of Protestantism against the Roman Catholic church. This, Mellor thinks, explains the alleged Protestant characteristics of a movement such as the FWBO. In elaborating upon the

RADICAL ESSAYS

**A Sharpham Miscellany—
Essays on Spirituality and Ecology**
edited by John Snelling
Published by the Sharpham
Trust
pp.192, paperback, £7.00

Books on ecology, spirituality, and the new politics must by now be plentiful enough to sink the new British Library without trace in the new London Ring Main. The irony in this prospect can have escaped few people: more books than ever before in our civilization; more destruction than ever before on our planet. The more words, the less experience, the less experience the more alienation, the more alienation the more temptation to fill the void with words. It's hard to avoid the thought that the whole

process must end in an Armageddon that will set the struggle for a more human consciousness back several millennia.

Well here is another book on spirituality and ecology. It is weighty and serious looking and appears as a timely antidote to offerings of the 'Mysteries of the Inner Spirit' variety. It is furnished with a ferocious line-up of serious names, has a welcome absence of numinous white stallions on the front cover, and is well printed on state of the art recycled paper. Between its full colour covers (illustrated with a powerful water-colour by John Snelling) are sixteen short essays which without exception deserve the label 'radical', for they attempt in various degrees of directness to uncover the root cause of our world's ills. An introductory piece by the editor sets the penetrating and grounded overall tone of the book:

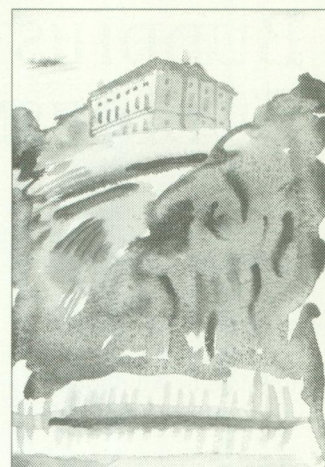
'Our present global predicament is the direct result of the way we are presently constituted, in

particular the way we think ... Our analytic and reifying processes destroy the seamless unity of nature and inaugurate instead a fallen world of separate things, which are set against one another, manipulated and exploited, with the devastating results that we see all around.'

Jonathan Porritt argues strongly against the 'instrumentalist concept of sustainability' which enables us to think with a good conscience of the environment as a legitimate resource which will, if managed on ecological principles, enable us to carry on living with little or no change to our acquisitive lifestyles more or less indefinitely.

John Crook deals with the enduring problem of Buddhist-Christian dialogue, and makes a better argument for it than I have to date come across elsewhere. His witty and trenchant style is both readable and uncompromising:

'In its attempts to retain a foothold in the contemporary



**John Snelling's watercolour
of the Sharpham Estate**

scene, Christianity has given way before the needs of people for whom adolescence seems to be a permanent condition. To be young, moneyed, sexy, satisfied by emotive sensation, and admired, is the hedonistic blindness to which so many of us succumb.... Churches with cut-back liturgies in which the subtle nuances of earlier form are lost, with sing-song jollification producing superficial togetherness and teachings of trite simplicity ignorant of any relation to the learning of our time, pander only to the simple-minded who seek security outside themselves in imaginary heavenly powers.'

Given this grim scenario, one might be forgiven for wondering what shall it profit a man to have any truck with such a ramshackle outfit. However, Crook points out that there is a 'deep' Christianity cognisant of true values and still embodied in England in communities such as the Franciscan Anglicans and Eastern Orthodox faiths, and it is this Christianity which retains the qualities essential if a dialogue with Buddhism is to be fruitful.

Other stimulating essays in the book include 'Rebirth: A Case for Buddhist Agnosticism?' by Stephen Batchelor, 'In Search of the Guru' by Shenpen Hookham, 'Buddhism and Meister Eckhart' by Maurice Walsh, and 'Lamas, Tsars and Commissars: Buddhism in Russia' by John Snelling. But those that hold the focus of attention centre on the roots and ramifications of the

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global ecological crisis. Ken Jones—'The Inner Work of Radical Social Change'—gives timely criticism of so-called Dark Greens who reject any need for a spiritual underpinning of ecological action. Arguing the need for deep personal change by means of inner work, Jones says:

'First it has to be said that spiritual work is ultimately about existential liberation and the transcendence of self. To see it solely as an enabler of radical social revolution would be a grotesque secular inversion. Contrariwise, it is possible to create social conditions which strongly favour spiritual work and aspiration, and that I see as being the ultimate purpose of the ecologically sustainable society envisioned here.'

But perhaps for me the most directly moving essay is the one by Satish Kumar—director of the Schumacher College and long standing editor of *Resurgence* magazine—on 'The Way of Replenishment'. In this small and beautiful essay on *dana* and simplicity he touches a note of celebration of the Earth and our essentially spiritual relationship with it that is only tenuously evident in the rest of the book.

This is an important collection of essays which deserves wider dissemination than its somewhat sequestered title is likely to allow. If dialogue between sacred traditions and modern institutions is to have any virtue it must be constantly fed and renewed by such writers and practitioners as these, who are motivated not by dreams of good career moves or an appearance on the *Late Show*, but by a heartfelt vision of the next step that needs to be taken if human society is to continue in any form worthy of the name.

To this end I hope that the urgent issues addressed here will be taken up by those who share such a vision and given a much wider popular debate. Only by such sustained coherent action can the present wasteland be replenished and transformed into a future ground of nourishment. □

Ananda

STILL SMALL VOICE

Letting the Silence Speak

An Anthology of Poetry by Contemporary Western Buddhists
Ed. Dharmachari Ananda
Published by Pennyfields Press
pp.46, paperback, £3.95

As in a dream I move from one landscape to another, from one life to another. Now I am watching a snail:

'I can see you breathing colour into skin pores that join hands and fingers and stretch grey blue and green so that your neck and your shoulders are rainbowed into movement.'

Now I am in a hospice, pacing a corridor, listening to the agony of an old man dying:

'At seven, eight, nine she returns as if to a scab now crisp enough to pick, seeing how much she can bear'.

Now I am Julian of Norwich, 'grappling year after year with ideas as with dragons';

now I am an artist painting a horse. Now I am a father struggling to get through to my children; now I am a son striving to listen to my father. Now I'm on the Clapham omnibus; now I'm watching a magician make a sandwich.

These are just a few glimpses of the landscapes, inner and outer, opened up to the reader of this anthology of the work of twenty-two FWBO poets. What are we to make of these poems? How are we to judge what is poetry? Are you expecting me as 'reviewer' to tell you? As with anything contemporary, it's surely too early to judge whether these poems are 'literature', whether they will 'last'. I am not T.S. Eliot, nor was meant to be. Like many another product of education, I cheered as the boys in 'Dead Poet's Society' ripped out their textbook's account of

how to measure the 'greatness' of poetry with a graph.

Ananda, the editor of *Letting the Silence Speak*, is clearly deeply concerned with the function of modern poetry. His introduction to the anthology—a manifesto in the best tradition of the 'defence of poetry'—sets forth a challenge to the Western Buddhist poet which it would be unrealistic to expect this early product of a fledgling genre to live up to. Perhaps it would have been better to let the poems speak for themselves.

But Ananda also hints at what may be expected of the reader. Many people, he says, 'come to poetry in either a state of deep awe, or simple indifference.' Sangharakshita urges us to appreciate art as an integral part of spiritual life, but how can the Western Buddhist reader 'come to poetry'? In a pamphlet on *Buddhism and Poetry* Ananda observes 'A poem may be appreciated aesthetically; it may be analysed; it may be set as the subject of an examination; it may be anthologized, even held up as a great masterpiece of literature, and eulogized in critical journals as a landmark in poetic expression. But all this means nothing at all if we as individuals do not enter into the blood of the poem and experience it from the inside.'

So if we 'enter into the blood of a poem', the poem in turn enters into our bloodstream and wakes us to new life. From a Buddhist perspective, this is the true use of poetry, because Buddhism is concerned above all with awakening. The poems in this anthology were chosen because they speak from the heart; they demand also to be 'read from the heart', and they repay such openness. And what a relief to find a collection of contemporary poetry to

which the heart can be entrusted without fear of being crushed in some gloomy vision! Not that this is the 'Fireside Book of Buddhist Hope' by any means. These poets constantly deal with the paradox of coming to terms with a world of beauty and suffering, love and loss—but in doing so they lift us beyond the scope of much modern poetry.

Perhaps none of these poems can yet be 'held up as great masterpieces of literature'. All I know (and all I need to know) is that since I first read this anthology, its images have followed me around, worked their subtle alchemy. Make the effort really to read these poems, and that effort will be greatly rewarded. They have a life of their own, and it is worth listening for their heartbeat. And some of them make the heart beat a little faster in sheer exhilaration....

*Soon I shall spring up,
or let an angel
lift me by the hair,
to see, to see,
I do not know what,
but the whole landscape
in a single glance! □*

Karen Stout

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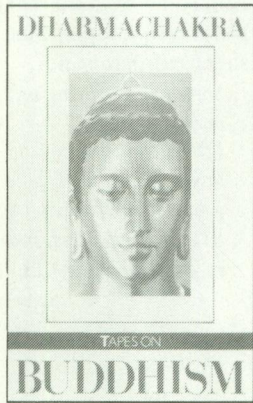
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Taking Offence

The publication of a new book, the *Chambers Dictionary of Beliefs and Religions*, has provoked a reaction within Christian circles in Britain. Described by Christian fundamentalists as 'poisonous', apparently many Christian bookshops throughout Britain intend to boycott the book, which has offended because it does not adopt a Christian stance and treats Jesus of Nazareth no differently from the founders of other religions. 'The very

idea of Buddha being on an equal footing to Jesus is deeply offensive' said Neil Maclean, manager of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland Bookroom in Glasgow. Concerning the book he said 'We would not stock it; I would not care to dispense this poison to anyone.' In contrast, other religious leaders have been more enthusiastic. Dr Zaki Badawi, principal of the Muslim College and chairman of the Imams and Mosques Council, said 'This dictionary could build bridges between faiths and religions, and it is unenlightened for bookshops to refuse it.'

Criticizing an idea with which you disagree is appropriate. A Christian is simply being self-consistent in disagreeing with, and even strongly criticizing, the idea that the Buddha and Jesus are on an equal footing. There is no intolerance in such a position. Taking offence is a different matter. From a Buddhist point of view taking

offence is an immoral or unskilful action. It is thus unskilful for a Buddhist to be offended by someone holding the idea that the Buddha and Jesus are on an equal footing, no matter how spiritually and morally inferior Jesus was to the Buddha. The idea may be based on a lack of knowledge of relevant Buddhist discourses and Christian scriptures, but reacting to it by taking offence is unethical, even absurd. Nor is someone expressing the idea that Jesus was superior to the Buddha an excuse for a Buddhist to take offence, even though an integral aspect of Jesus's mission, as portrayed in the Gospels, is to 'burn the chaff on a fire that can never go out', i.e. send people to eternal torture if they do not do what he said. This is a vindictiveness totally absent from the Buddha's compassionate nature, as portrayed in Buddhist sutras. Even should someone describe the Buddha in explicitly derogatory and

insulting terms, this is still no excuse for taking offence.

Although taking offence is a very common human failing which we must all strive to overcome, Buddhist as well as non-Buddhist, it does seem to be strong amongst strict practitioners of theistic religions. It crystallizes there into the concept of blasphemy: what offends the theist becoming a criminal offence (now punishable by death in Pakistan, for example). Indeed, even in Britain the 'crime' of blasphemy still exists, and technically covers whatever is 'offensive to anyone in sympathy with the Christian religion'. One Christian being offended by something is enough to secure conviction, so technically the *Chambers Dictionary of Beliefs and Religions* is committing Blasphemy under English law—as, no doubt, is this article and many a Buddhist publication. Indeed, since the practice of Buddhism must itself be offensive to some Christians, blasphemy is a 'crime' the English Buddhist appears to have a duty to commit. □

Life Before Birth?

A distressing accident has raised a complex legal issue, and perhaps also highlights a frequent assumption about when a 'life' begins. A baby girl was delivered by doctors after her mother-to-be was killed by a car that had gone out of control. The baby soon died. Can the car driver be held legally or criminally responsible for the death of the child? A police spokesman said 'The child was not born before the accident so can she be said to have died as a result of the accident?' Common sense would suggest the answer 'yes', but in English law the alive but unborn do not have the same rights as the alive and born. If you have not yet been born are you a 'person', legally or otherwise? Oddly, too, we often take it for granted that our life began at birth. We even work out our age by computing from the day of our birth, omitting the months *in utero*. From a Buddhist point of view the answer is straightforward: our life, this life, began at conception, even if until birth it depended upon the nourishment and protection of our mother's body. The day of our 'birth' was not the day our life began. □

European Buddhist Union

The Congress of the European Buddhist Union (EBU) passed off very successfully in Berlin in late September. The Congress was harmonious, instructive, and very efficiently organized. Between 1,500 and 2,000 people attended, including representatives of all the main traditions of Buddhism. The EBU and the German Buddhist Union, who were jointly responsible for the organization, deserve to be congratulated on a job very well done.

But what are the aims of such an occasion? One aim was to raise the profile of Buddhism in the host city and country. The Berliners who attended the Congress seemed very open to what Buddhism has to offer and it will be fascinating to see how Buddhist activities develop in the city.

The most important function of the Congress, however, was surely the meeting of Buddhist teachers and practitioners. Sogyal Rinpoche commented that it is easy for mistrust and misunderstanding to develop between Buddhist groups if teachers do not meet one another: 'The human element is vital', he said. Sangharakshita agreed. It is to be hoped that there will be many more such meetings.

There is much that we can learn from one another. It was very refreshing, for instance, to hear the Ven. Dr Rewata Dhamma (a Burmese

bhikkhu now living in Birmingham) say that he felt Westerners were fortunate to have so many kinds of Buddhism available to them—in Burma he had known only one! Thus a spirit of tolerance and a common commitment to practice seems to be abroad in the Buddhist world, which is greatly to be rejoiced in.

In order for these encounters to fulfil their potential, it is important that all the issues involved in the development of Buddhism in Europe are addressed openly and frankly, even if this reveals differences of opinion. There are many such issues to address, some of which were raised by members of the audience during the final panel discussion. One questioner asked whether the division between monks and laity meant that there were first and second class Buddhists. Another asked about the meaning of sexual imagery in tantric Buddhism, prompting Sangharakshita to express his concerns that they were very prone to vulgar misrepresentation and that caution should be exercised in making 'esoteric' teachings available.

Consideration of such questions has been at the heart of the evolution of the FWBO. It is good to see these issues emerging within the context of European Buddhism and good that the FWBO was able to make its contribution to the debate. □

SANGHARAKSHITA DIARY

Sangharakshita had a very full summer this year, including the completion and launch of a new book and a trip to Germany where he led a retreat and gave two talks, one of them at the Congress of the European Buddhist Union (EBU).

Sangharakshita's summer started on 1 July with a visit to South London's Imperial War Museum where he saw the 'Art and War' exhibition of work by Wyndham Lewis. □

GUHYALOKA

On 17 July, Sangharakshita

Guhyaloka support team. He was also able to spend time with each of the senior Order members who had arrived for their own retreat. Particularly fruitful was a discussion with Subhuti concerning the place of sadhanas (the visualization practices undertaken by Order members) within the FWBO's system of meditation.

On 18 August, a few days after his return to England, Sangharakshita was interviewed by Rose Mary Denman for a book of interviews with Order members which she is writing. □

English Sangha. There were book launches at the London Buddhist Centre, Cambridge, Padmaloka (at the National Gathering of men who have asked for ordination), West London, and Croydon. On each occasion, Sangharakshita took the opportunity to read some of his poems. At three of these events—those at Cambridge, Padmaloka, and Croydon—Kulananda gave a talk elaborating some of the themes of the book. At the London Buddhist Centre, Sangharakshita gave a more extended reading of poems on the themes of 'Affirmation' and 'Protest'. At Padmaloka he read more poems in the context of a talk by Padmavajra which took Sangharakshita's own poetry as its subject, and he also conducted a mitra ceremony. And in West London, he dedicated the shrine at the new Centre.

On 27 August, Sangharakshita was interviewed for a forthcoming television programme. On 10 September he attended a performance of *Rigoletto* at the English National Opera, together with Anomara and Paramartha. This production transposes the opera to a New York mafiosi setting, and Sangharakshita commented that it worked well although he is normally 'rather sceptical of such things'.

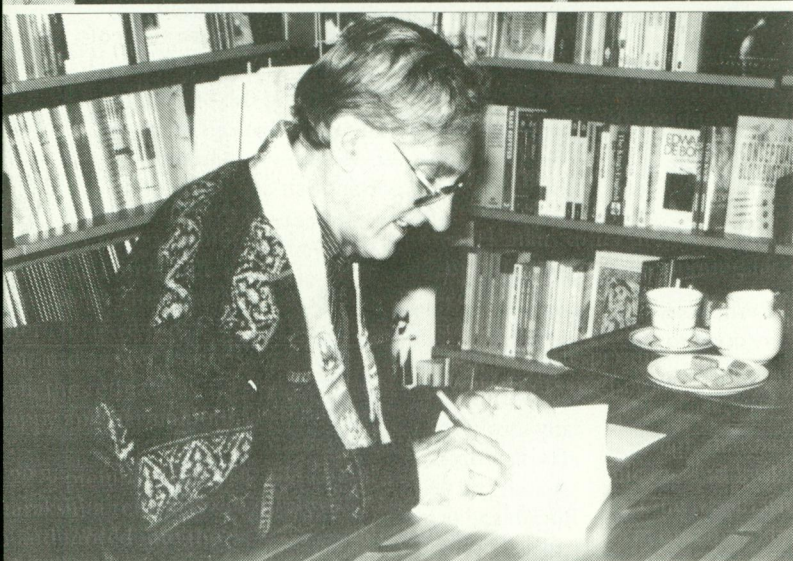
Over this period, Sangharakshita saw many people for personal interviews from many countries, including South Africa, New Zealand, the USA, Finland, and India. □

BERLIN

On 14 September, Sangharakshita travelled to Berlin. This was his first visit to the city and he was there primarily to lead a retreat, to give a public lecture, and to participate in the EBU congress. He was also there to see a little of the city, and on 15 and 16 September he visited Potsdam, the Sans Soucie Palace, the Dalheim

Palace, and the Pergamon Museum. He also found time to have a meal in the Hakuin restaurant with members of the FWBO group in Berlin. Many of them joined him for a six day retreat in Schoenberg, where a number of people spent time with him in personal interviews and where he gave two question-and-answer sessions. All in all, the retreat was a very happy and harmonious one.

On 22 September, Sangharakshita returned to Berlin and moved into the Hotel Johannesshof, where other speakers at the Congress were staying. That day, he visited the Bode Museum and also delivered a public lecture on *The Meaning of Friendship in Buddhism* to an audience of about a hundred people. □



travelled to Guhyaloka in southern Spain, where he spent four quiet weeks in the company of Paramartha meditating, writing, and enjoying the valley. He spent an evening with members of the 1992 men's ordination retreat and met the

BOOK LAUNCH

Next came a series of engagements to launch Sangharakshita's latest book, *The FWBO and 'Protestant Buddhism': An Affirmation and a Protest*, which he has written in response to an academic article on the FWBO and the





EBU CONGRESS

The EBU Congress started on Thursday 24 September, immediately preceded by a press conference with Sangharakshita and some of the other speakers, including Thich Nhat Hanh, Ayya Khemma, and Sogyal Rinpoche. Sangharakshita said that his main reason for attending the Congress was to meet the other speakers, some of whom he had known for a long time. He first met Sogyal Rinpoche over thirty years ago; the two men greeted each other warmly and resolved to meet again.

Sangharakshita listened to several of the lectures, and on the Saturday he delivered his own to an audience of over a thousand: a paper on the subject of *The Integration of Buddhism into Western Society*. The subject had been suggested by the organizers of

the Congress, but Sangharakshita took the opportunity to present a crystallization of his experience of teaching in the West. This talk had been printed before the Congress and was available immediately after it was delivered as a booklet, *Buddhism and the West*, both in English and in a Spanish translation, and in a German translation which was distributed free.

Sangharakshita gave a press conference immediately afterwards and was interviewed by German World Service radio and by a German magazine.

On the Sunday, Sangharakshita participated in a panel discussion with Sogyal Rinpoche, Thich Nhat Hanh, and Dr Rewata Dhamma on the theme of *Emptiness and Compassion*. A lively discussion ensued, prompted by

Sangharakshita at the Congress with (front from left) Thich Nhat Hanh, Ayya Khemma, and (far right) Sogyal Rinpoche.

At the public talk (right) with Dhammaloka. Left, Kulananda launches the latest book in Padmaloka's shrine-room, and Sangharakshita signs copies



questions from the floor, which ranged over topics such as the role of social action, the relation between monks and lay; the meaning and appropriateness of sexual imagery in tantric art; and how to present the bewildering variety of

Buddhist traditions now present in the West to people new to Buddhism.

Finally, Sangharakshita spent Sunday evening with the German Order members and on 28 September, after some more sight-seeing, he returned to London. □

POONA PROJECT REACHES 80,000

The Poona project is the centre-piece of Bahujan Hitay, the social welfare wing of the FWBO's work in India. Over the past twelve years it has set out to make a real difference to the standards of health and education in part of Poona, a city in the western Indian state of Maharashtra. Now, its work and its philosophy of acting from inside local communities, has been given a resounding vote of confidence by the local Indian authorities.

In 1988 the Indian government agreed to take on the World Health Organization objective of 'Health For All', meaning the universal availability of

INDIAN UPDATE

NORTHERN INDIA

22

TBMSG activities are starting to become established in northern India. Last year a new centre was set up in Hastinapur, and earlier this year Lokamitra undertook a lecture tour in Delhi and Agra. The lectures were well attended and they were followed last May by a retreat led by Vimalakirti and attended by eighty-two people.

ACTIVITIES IN GOA

Work is under way on a new Bahujan Hitay hostel in Goa in south-western India. The foundation stone was laid by Gaganachitta at a programme attended by eight hundred people, including several local government ministers. There are now regular Dharma activities in Goa, and there are plans to establish a TBMSG centre there by the end of this year.

WALCHANDAGAR

A three-and-a-half acre plot of land, including a statue of Dr Ambedkar, has been donated to TBMSG in Walchandagar, a town in Poona district. It has already been used as the venue for several talks and retreats. □

primary health care by the year 2000. The government of Maharashtra State was even more ambitious and decided it could achieve these goals within just two years.

Well over two years had already passed when the director of Poona's Urban Community Development Project approached Bahujan Hitay, among other local voluntary organizations, and explained that with its resources alone the Corporation simply could not meet the government objectives. He asked if Bahujan Hitay would take over full responsibility for fulfilling the 'Health For All' objectives in areas of Poona with a total population of about 80,000 people. While this included the areas in which Bahujan Hitay was already working, it meant extending work to several new areas. The Corporation offered vaccines and the use of its clinics in some of the new areas; otherwise, Bahujan Hitay would use its own facilities.

Bahujan Hitay decided that it was able to undertake the new responsibilities. Over the last year its health teams have started infant vaccinations in the new areas and are gradually introducing other primary health care activities. □

Pabonka Rimpoche with the victory banner on the roof of the ITBCI school's shrine-room in Kalimpong

FLYING THE VICTORY BANNER

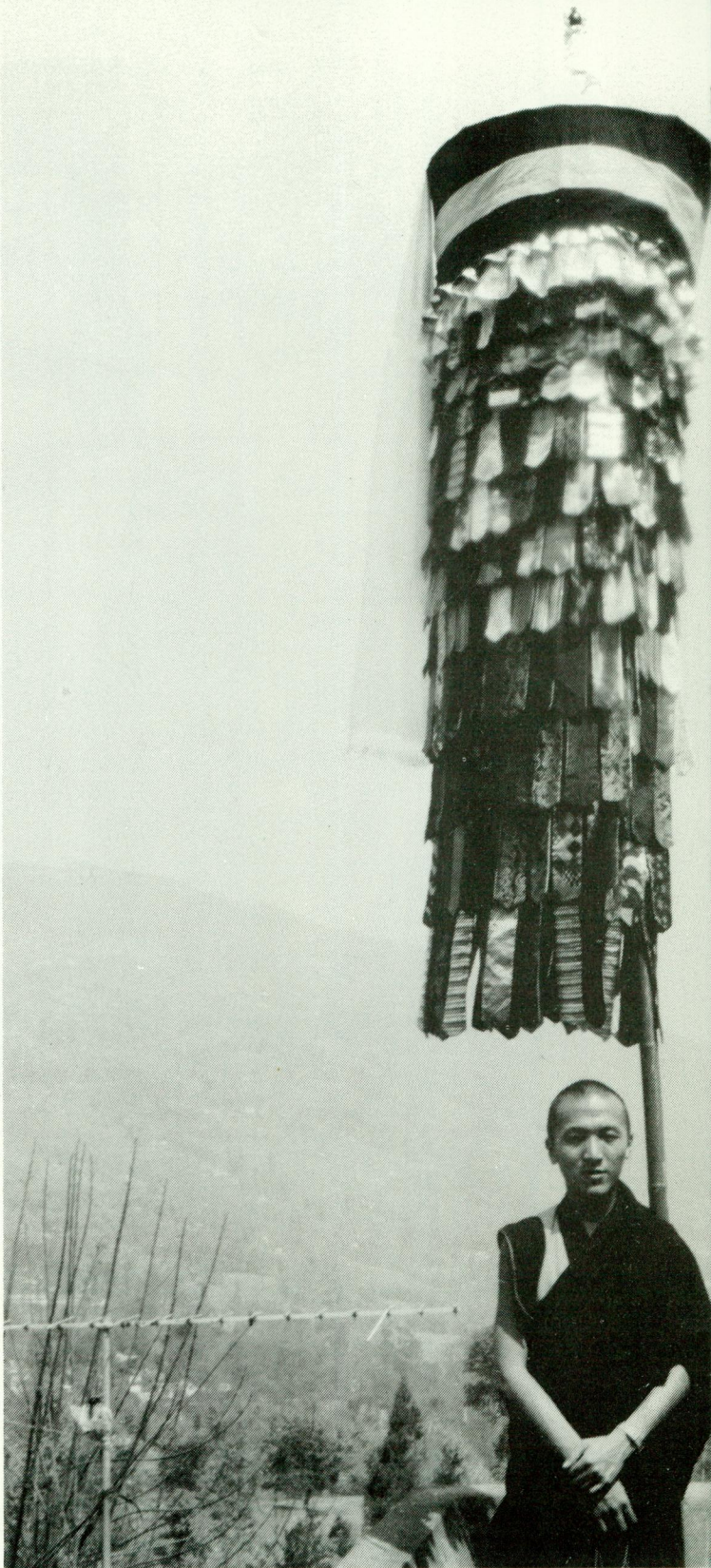
A victory banner, made in London by Ratnaketu and Vajramala as a memorial to Dhardo Rimpoche (one of Sangharakshita's principal teachers), is now flying above his school in Kalimpong, in north-eastern India. Before it reached Kalimpong the banner was taken on a grand tour of some of India's Buddhist holy places both ancient and

modern.

First it went to Nagpur, birthplace of the ex-Untouchables' conversion movement; next to Poona and Bhaja Retreat Centre where it was blessed by Sangharakshita as it flew before several thousand onlookers. Then it went to Kusinara, Bodhi Gaya, and Darjeeling before finally arriving at the ITBCI school

in Kalimpong. *En route* it had collected additional adornments in the shape of bells, beads, silks, and semi-precious stones.

At the school it was erected fifty feet above the courtyard, on the golden roof of the shrine-room, on the second anniversary of Dhardo Rimpoche's death. Pabonka Rimpoche led the puja to mark its inauguration



RATNOTTARA IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Ratnottara left Czechoslovakia as a political refugee in 1981, and became involved in the FWBO in England soon afterwards. He is now living in Washington State in the USA where he works as a scientist. In July this year he returned for the first time to the newly democratized Czech Lands.

After decades of spiritual holocaust, spirituality is sprouting everywhere in Czechoslovakia. A glance at July's issue of *Dortek* (*The Touch*), a calendar of spiritual events, revealed a plethora of activities from magic healing to Transcendental Meditation, most of which had been initiated by Buddhist and Hindu teachers. Due to their unique historical experience, many Czechs have become dissatisfied with both theistic religion and Marxist as well as consumerist materialism. The Czechs are presently a nation of atheists in a state of transition from a totalitarian to a free market society. But how would they respond to a Buddhist alternative?

Some are already exploring this path. A Theravada group led by Libor Valek, 'The Friends of Dhamma', draws its inspiration from Mirko Fryba, a Swiss-based professor of psychology and Buddhist monk. I led a day retreat at Valek's apartment which was attended by seven people, during which I led a discussion on the FWBO and answered questions, most of which related to problems of personal progress.

The focus was different when I met several members of the Zen group, whose regular meditation session had been visited by Vajradaka in June. They asked many questions about the FWBO, and seemed genuinely to appreciate its unique approach to Western Buddhism. But what they lacked was first-hand experience of the richness of the life of the Movement, and none of them had ever visited an FWBO centre. In Czechoslovakia it takes ten to

twenty times longer to earn the same amount of money as it would in the UK so, generally speaking, foreign travel is out of the question.

But Czechs are avid readers, and however tough things are economically, they are always prepared to buy books. Exploring the book market I found a handful of Buddhist books on the shelves including an excellent treatise on Buddhist philosophy by the dissident philosopher and poet, Egon Bondy. Lumir intends to publish a translation of Sangharakshita's *Human Enlightenment*.

Most Czechs, however, know very little about Buddhism. It is commonly seen as just another irrational and restrictive belief-system. For those Czechs who are practising the Eastern forms of Buddhism, a problem arises from their anti-authoritarianism and their deep suspicion of alien cultural influences.

But, in my opinion, this is a most favourable time for supporting Buddhism and

establishing the FWBO in the Czech Lands. I hope that Order members will be able to move to Prague and that Czech Buddhists will be able to travel to the UK to experience the Movement in its birthplace. These initial contacts may be the first steps towards the establishment of a genuinely Czech Buddhism. □

Ratnottara

Czechoslovakia : emerging from its history.

(Below) Prague: the Buddha land of the future?



and he was so impressed by the banner that he insisted on climbing onto the roof to bless it personally. This was considered most auspicious. □

Clear Vision has recently released a video featuring the work of the ITBCI school. Copies can be obtained from Clear Vision or The Karuna Trust.

NEW CENTRES

New FWBO Centres are opening at an unprecedented rate. Over the last few months several centres have started activities or moved to larger premises.

CENTRE FOR NORTH LONDON

A large, new FWBO centre has opened in Highbury and Islington in North London. The first class was held on 22 September and an official opening ceremony took place in early October.

The Centre is housed on the first floor of a huge former Methodist chapel, the remainder of which is used

house. Critical mass was reached, Ratnadakini called a meeting, and the Centre council came into being with Kulamitra as its chairman.

From this point it was not difficult to find affordable rented accommodation and, after a month of renovation work (master-minded by Greg McKeown) the Centre was born. Two more Order members, Lokapala and Vishvapani, both recently ordained at Guhyaloka, have joined the Centre team, and there is a full programme of classes and courses scheduled up to the New Year.

The Centre has contacted all the people on the London Buddhist Centre mailing list with North London post codes, and many of them are interested in being involved. It is near the train and two tube

lines and is in an excellent part of London to attract new people to its activities. □

LIAISON OFFICE

The FWBO Liaison Office is the address to contact for issues that affect the FWBO as a whole. The Office is manned by Kulananda and Vishvapani and will act as an interface between the FWBO and others in matters relating to the press and to legal and financial issues. Its address and that of the North London Buddhist Centre appear on the back of this issue of *Golden Drum*. □

PADMALOKA SHRINE-ROOM

Padmaloka Retreat centre has many wonderful features, but until now its shrine-room has hardly been among them. But the old cavernous and minimally renovated barn has been transformed into a beautiful and immaculately furnished shrine-room, which

will act as a focus for the men's wing of the FWBO.

The shrine-room was inaugurated on the September National Gathering of men who have asked for ordination, when about 150 men participated in a series of dedication ceremonies.

Building work had been undertaken by a team of eight men and took about a year. The work was carried out in a dedicated and devotional manner (offerings and thankas being hidden behind the walls) and the high standard of craftsmanship is testimony to their endeavours.

The focus of the shrine-room is an impressive twelve-foot-high stupa which was designed and built by Chintamani and Rod Drew. Chintamani was also responsible for the decor: the walls are orange with a mandala of golden lotuses, vajras, and flames surrounding the room. The floor is made of a very beautiful polished Canadian maple, set in tiers, three on either side of the central section on which stands the stupa. □

HELSINKI CENTRE EXPANDS

Saturday 5 September saw the opening of a new centre in Helsinki. The lease was gained in April and several teams of people were

engaged in building and decorating work.

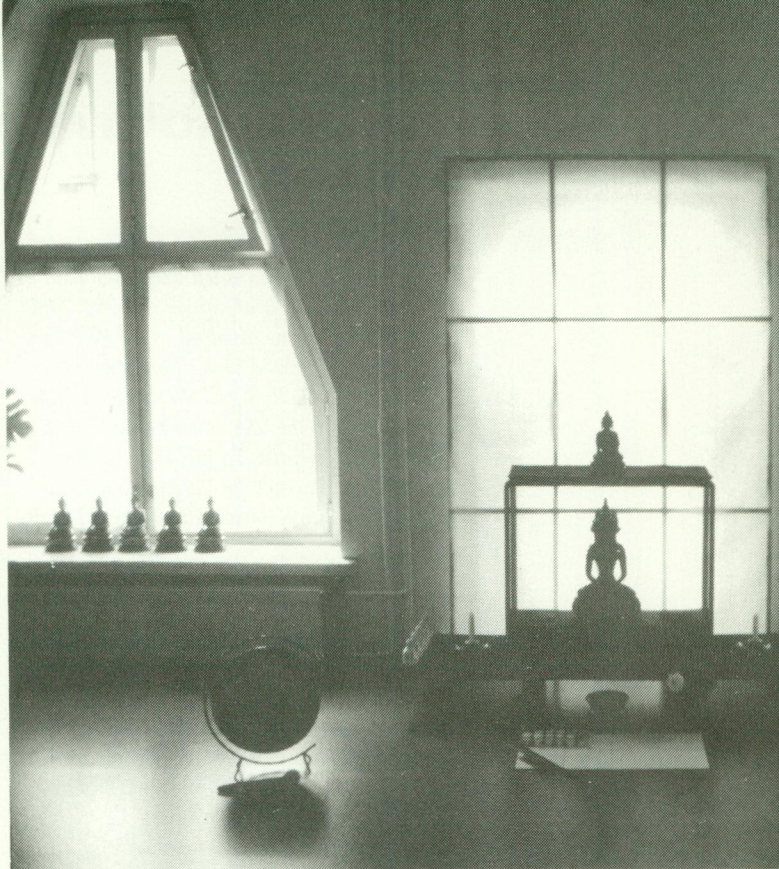
The FWBO has had a presence in Helsinki since 1973, but for the past eight years all its activities have been confined to one small room. Sarvamitra, the chairman, commented 'After so long in one small room, it feels a luxury to have a reception room and a shrine-room.' □

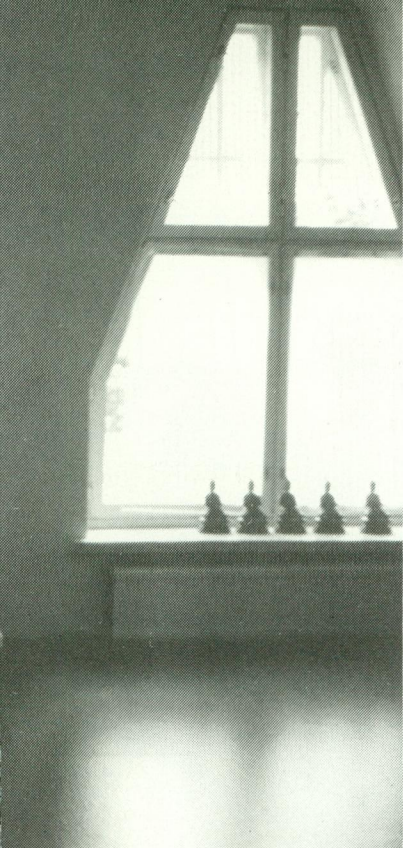
CAMBRIDGE

A house has been purchased as the site of a new Cambridge Buddhist Centre at 25 Newmarket Road, just two doors down from the previous Centre. The Centre will be about three times the size of its predecessor, which has rapidly been outgrown. The house will also provide a fourth community for men working at Windhorse Trading and it means that there are now approaching fifty people living in FWBO communities in Cambridge. □

WEST LONDON CENTRE MOVES

On 19 August, the West London Buddhist Centre moved to new premises: a very attractive house on Westbourne Park Road, just ten minutes walk from the previous Centre. It is large enough to accommodate a much expanded centre and a community of five. The house is in good condition, but





Helsinki (above), West London (left)

there has also been quite a lot of renovation work to complete in order to make the Centre fully-operational, and friends and mitras have thrown themselves into the work.

The fact that the Centre has had the confidence to take out a mortgage in order to buy the new property is an indication of increased confidence within the FWBO in West London. A covenant appeal launched a few months ago brought a very generous response and has created a financial bed-rock for future activities. Three men from West London were recently ordained at Guhyaloka and with the extra Order members the Centre is now able to run a number of outlying activities. It is particularly keen to establish a presence in Ealing, where it is currently holding a series of courses. □

SOUTH LONDON

A regulars' class has been inaugurated at Utpala community in Clapham, South London. The class is an extension of the activities of the Croydon Buddhist Centre, but those involved hope that before very long they will be able to start a regular beginners' class and launch the South London Buddhist Centre. □

NEWS IN BRIEF

BIRMINGHAM'S BIRTHDAY

The Birmingham Buddhist Centre celebrated its fifth birthday in September. Over the years the Centre has become very firmly established. There are now twenty mitras, a men's community, and the basis of a women's community. Last year saw the Centre's first ordination and the first experiment in Right Livelihood. □

GUHYALOKA ORDINATIONS

In June this year, twenty-six men were ordained at Guhyaloka Retreat Centre in southern Spain. The ceremonies were conducted by Subhuti, Sona, and Ratnaguna at the culmination of the annual four-month men's ordination retreat. This is the greatest number of people to have been ordained into the Western Buddhist Order on a single retreat and brings the number of men ordained in 1992 to fifty. □

SENIOR ORDER MEMBERS IN SPAIN

A dozen senior members of the men's wing of the Order have been enjoying up to two months together on retreat at Guhyaloka in Spain. The retreat was held at the instigation of Subhuti and it had to be planned some two years in advance, such was the difficulty of getting such busy people together for so long. The hope and intention is to strengthen the trust and friendship between people who are likely to have a strong influence on the future of the Movement. □

NEW RETREAT CENTRE IN SCOTLAND

After a long search, the FWBO in Scotland now has its own retreat centre. It is situated in 'Rob Roy' country, just north of the Trossachs and overlooking Loch Voil, in a beautiful mountainous landscape.

The retreat centre itself consists of an eighteen acre estate which includes a former hotel with eight bedrooms. This should be able to house between twenty and thirty retreatants in very comfortable conditions—the bedrooms all have *en suite* bathrooms, for example. A separate house accommodates a retreat community which currently has two members. One of them, Geoff Newman, has bought the centre outright, leasing it on to the FWBO.

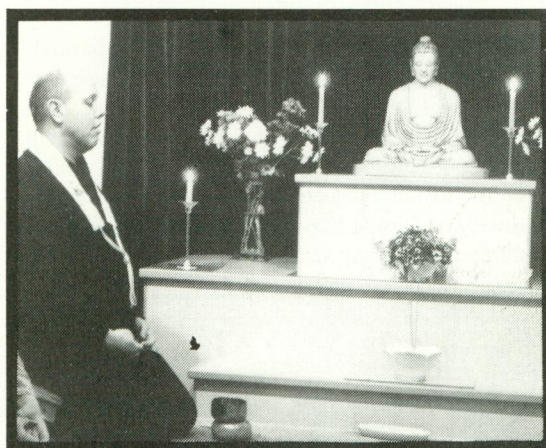
So far, the retreat centre is unnamed, though suggestions are plentiful. The official opening was on Sunday 11 October and was followed by the first retreat—a Women's Mitra Weekend. □

INK ABLAZE

The FWBO's Glasgow printing business, Ink Print and Design, has suffered a fire at its city-centre building. The blaze, which was caused by a large explosion, destroyed the top two floors of the building, but there may be unseen damage to the four lower floors, and since the fire an interior wall has collapsed. The Ink team immediately set to work to locate and decorate new premises, and order new equipment, and are now back in production.

Windhorse Publications, which had an office at the same address, has lost some of its stock, but most was stored in a separate warehouse from where distribution has been continuing normally. □

Satyapala leads meditation in Birmingham's shrine-room and (below) the Scottish Retreat Centre



SAKYADHITA MEETING

Sanghadevi from Taraloka Retreat Centre will be speaking at an open meeting of the international association of Buddhist women, Sakyadhita, on 15 November at Conway Hall in London. The programme starts at 2pm and includes meditation, a sale, and a video presentation. For more information contact Wendy Barzetovic on 0203 351123. □

WOMEN'S ORDER-MITRA CONVENTION

In August, the International Order-Mitra convention for women attracted 56 mitras and 16 Order members to Taraloka Retreat Centre. They came by car, train, and plane from the USA, Finland, Estonia, Germany ... from twenty FWBO centres in all, to attend an eight day event which combined a celebratory, sometimes festive atmosphere with talks, discussion, meditation, and puja. In the afternoons there was a series of workshops, offering activities from massage to mask-making.

Meditation and puja took place in one of two large marquees which had been erected for the event. At the centre of the marquee was a shrine constructed to look like the top half of a stupa, jewelled clouds (courtesy of Karunachitta) hung above the shrine around a rainbow-coloured drop. Streamers reached from the spire to five painted pillars which rose up at each corner. The whole effect seemed to lift one up from *samsara* into realms of joy, bliss, and inspiration.

The final puja, lasting more than three hours, started with a sunset procession of women carrying banners from each FWBO centre, accompanied by a slow drum-beat. There was a sense of sangha spreading in all directions which found an embodiment as parts of the puja were recited in different languages. The puja seemed to actualize a theme which had been present throughout the retreat: the importance of creating sangha by meeting regularly and in large numbers. □



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the fwbo has a beautiful new retreat centre



In the glorious highlands of Scotland yet with easy access from Glasgow and Edinburgh, lies a high-quality former hotel that is now being transformed into the

scottish retreat centre

It consists of an eight-bedroom house (with ensuite bathrooms), a separate shrine room and a community house. It backs onto three-thousand feet mountains and has a shore line onto Loch Voil. (You'll find it on the map between Callander and Crianlarich, near the village of Balquidder.)

Weekend retreats start in mid-October and the first big retreat is the

men's winter retreat

This is a Meditation Insight Retreat lead by Vajracitta from Vajraloka and should be a very special fortnight indeed. This retreat, running from 19 December to 2 January 1993, is likely to fill up soon, so please book early to avoid disappointment.

for more information

contact Ian Brooksbank on 041 427 4432 or the Glasgow Buddhist Centre on

041 333 0524

VAJRALOKA

**Places still available
on these retreats**

November 10–November 21

Meditation and Insight Retreat

November 21–December 5

Men's Vipassana Retreat

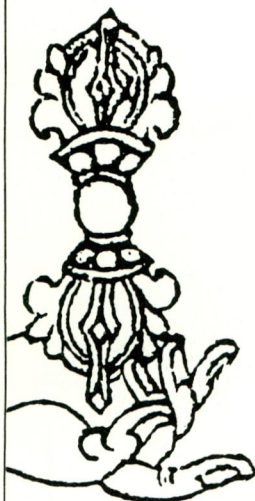
for men Order members

December 8–December 19

Sesshin

December 19–January 2

Mitra Winter Retreat



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BUDDHIST MEDITATION
CENTRE FOR MEN

Further details from The Secretary, *tārāloka*

Cornhill Farm

Bettisfield

Nr Whitchurch

North Shropshire

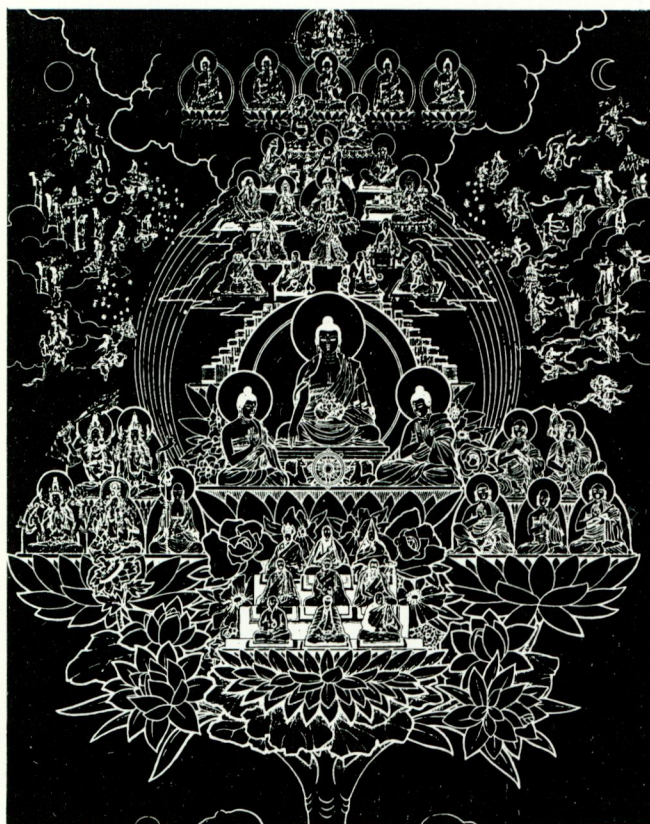
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tārāloka
BUDDHIST RETREAT CENTRE FOR WOMEN

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Padmaloka

BUDDHIST RETREAT CENTRE FOR MEN
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Retreat?



Discover the delights of a hidden world. Guhyaloka, a secluded 200-acre limestone valley high in the Spanish mountains near Alicante, provides a breath-taking and peaceful setting for meditation and relaxation. We have a number of chalets available for men set amidst the wild beauty and tranquillity of this valley. For more information and bookings contact The Retreat Organiser at Padmaloka.

Guhyaloka

Padmaloka • Surlingham • Norfolk NR14 7AL ☎ (05088) 8112

Where to find us

MAIN CENTRES OF THE FRIENDS OF THE WESTERN BUDDHIST ORDER

London Buddhist Centre , 51 Roman Road, London E2 0HU. Tel: 081-981 1225
Birmingham Buddhist Centre , 135 Salisbury Road, Moseley, Birmingham, B13 8LA. Tel: 021-449 5279
Brighton Buddhist Centre , 15 Park Crescent Place, Brighton, Sussex, BN2 3HF. Tel: 0273-698420
Bristol Buddhist Centre , 9 Cromwell Road, St Andrews, Bristol, BS6 5HD. Tel: 0272-249991
Cambridge Buddhist Centre , 19 Newmarket Road, Cambridge, CB5 8EG. Tel: 0223-460252
Croydon Buddhist Centre , 96-98 High Street, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 1ND. Tel: 081-688 8624
Glasgow Buddhist Centre , 329 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, G2 3HW. Tel: 041-333 0524
Lancashire Buddhist Centre , 301-303, Union Road, Oswaldtwistle, Accrington, Lancs, BB5 3HS. Tel: 0254-392605
Leeds Buddhist Centre , 148 Harehills Avenue, Leeds, LS8 4EU. Tel: 0532 405880
Manchester Buddhist Centre , 538 Wilbraham Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Manchester M21 1LD. Tel: 061-860 4267
North London Buddhist Centre , St Mark's Studio, 12 Chillingworth Road, London, N7 8QJ. Tel: 081-700 3075
Norwich Buddhist Centre , 41a All Saints Green, Norwich, NR1 3LY. Tel: 0603-627034
West London Buddhist Centre , 112 Westbourne Park Road, London W2 5PL. Tel: 071-727 9382
Centro Budhista de Valencia , Calle Ciscar 5, pta 3, 46005 Valencia. Tel: 06-374 0564
FWBO Germany , Buddhistisches Zentrum Essen, Herkulesstr. 13, 4300 Essen 1, West Germany. Tel: 0201-230155
Helsingin Buddhalainen Keskus , PL 288, SF-00121, Helsinki 12, Finland
FWBO Netherlands , P.O. Box 1559, 3500 BN Utrecht, Netherlands
Västerländska Buddhistordens Vänner , Södermannagatan 58, S-116 65 Stockholm, Sweden. Tel: 08-418849
TBMSG Ahmedabad , Triyana Vardhana Vihara, Vijayanagar Society, Kankaria Road, Ahmedabad 380002, India. Tel: 0272-50580
TBMSG Aurangabad , Bhim Nagar, Bhausingpura, Aurangabad 431001, India
Bhaja Retreat Centre , c/o Dhammachakra Pravartan Mahavihar, Raja Harishchandra Road, Dapodi, Poona 411012, India
TBMSG Bombay , 25 Bhimprerna, Tapodhan Nagar, Bandra (E), Bombay 400051, India. Tel: 022 6441156
TBMSG Pimpri , Maitreya Vihar, Gautam Nagar, Pimpri, Poona 411018, India
TBMSG Poona , Dhammachakra Pravartan Mahavihar, Raja Harishchandra Road, Dapodi, Poona 411012, India. Tel: 0212-58403
TBMSG Ulhasnagar , Block A, 410/819 Subhash Hill, Ulhasnagar, Thane, 421004, India
Bahujan Hitay , Dhammachakra Pravartan Mahavihar, Raja Harishchandra Road, Dapodi, Poona 411012, India. Tel: 0212-58403
TBMSG Wardha , Bhim Nagar, Wardha 442001, India. Tel: 07152-2178
FWBO Malaysia , c/o Dharmacharini Jayapushpa, 2 Jalan Tan Jit Seng, Hillside, Tanjong Bungah, 11200 Penang, Malaysia
Auckland Buddhist Centre , P.O. Box 68-453, Newton, Auckland, New Zealand. Tel: 09-378 1120
Wellington Buddhist Centre , P.O. Box 12-311, Wellington North, New Zealand. Tel: 04-787940
Melbourne Buddhist Centre , 34 Bishop Street, Brunswick, Victoria 3056, Australia. Tel: 03-386 7043
Sydney Buddhist Centre , 806 George Street, Sydney, Australia. Tel: (02) 212 6935
Aryaloka Retreat Center , Heartwood Circle, Newmarket, New Hampshire 03857, USA Tel: 603-659 5456
FWBO Seattle , 2410 E. Interlaken Blvd, Seattle, WA 98112, USA
Kathmandu Buddhist Centre (February-May, October-April) , PO Box 5336, Thamel, Kathmandu, Nepal
Padmaloka Men's Retreat Centre , Lesingham House, Surlingham, Norwich, NR14 7AL. Tel: 05088-8112
Rivendell Retreat Centre , Chillies Lane, High Hurstwood, Nr Uckfield, Sussex, TN22 4AA. Tel: 081-688 8624
Taraloka Women's Retreat Centre , Cornhill Farm, Bettisfield, Nr Whitchurch, Shropshire, SY13 2LV. Tel: 094875-646
Water Hall Retreat Centre , c/o London Buddhist Centre, 51 Roman Road, London, E2 0HU. Tel: 081-981 1225
Vajraloka Meditation Centre , Tyn-y-Ddol, Treddol, Nr Corwen, Clwyd, LL21 0EN. Tel: 049081-406
Guhyaloka Retreat Centre (Spain) , c/o Lesingham House, Surlingham, Norwich, NR14 7AL. Tel: 05088-8112
The Office of the Western Buddhist Order , Padmaloka, Lesingham House, Surlingham, Norwich, NR14 7AL. Tel: 05088-310
FWBO Liaison Office , St Mark's Studio, 12 Chillingworth Road, London, N7 8QJ. Tel: 081-700 3077
Karuna Trust , 186 Cowley Road, Oxford, OX4 1UE. Tel: 0865-728794
Dharmachakra Tapes , P.O. Box 50, Cambridge, CB1 3BG
Clear Vision (videos and prints) , 538 Wilbraham Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Manchester M21 1LD. Tel: 061-881 0438
Windhorse Publications (editorial office) , 354 Crookesmoor Road, Sheffield, S10 1BH. Tel: 0742-684775
Windhorse Publications (orders and accounts office) , 136 Renfield Street, Glasgow, G2 3AU. Tel: 041-332 6332

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