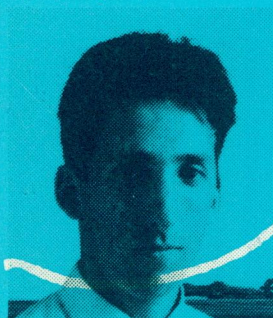
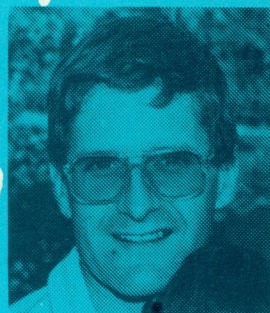
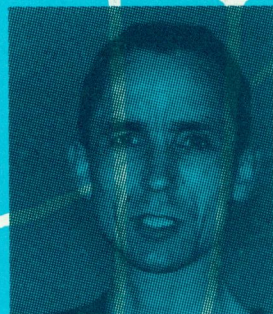


# GOLDEN DRUM

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**keeping a balance**



**five busy people share their secrets**

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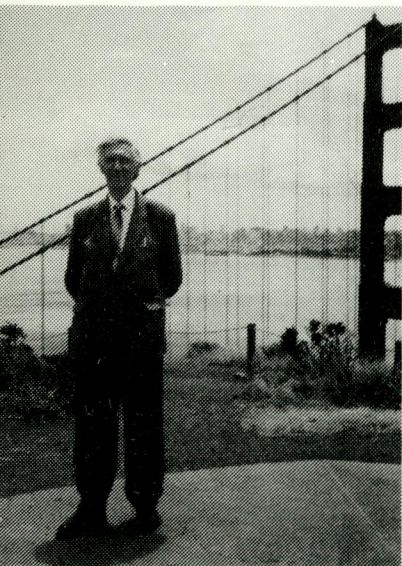
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# A QUESTION OF BALANCE

To be a Buddhist does not mean you are a Buddha. It means you are trying to become one. Most of the Buddhists I know—and they are all sincere people—have some way to go. Among other things they can occasionally get angry, irritable, and anxious. But then most of them have jobs, or families, or both, and all kinds of commitments and responsibilities. They lead lives in which certain stresses and strains are inevitable. They have probably discovered too that spiritual practice offers no shortcuts to tranquillity and bliss. Actually, it can introduce new tensions, bestowing a gathering sensitivity to the forces—even conflicts—at play within our nature, the disparity between our ideals and actions, and the pain and injustice in the surrounding world.

A lot of people contact the FWBO hoping that meditation and Buddhism will hand them the keys to a stress-free life. But if they get at all deeply involved, and if—as sometimes happens—life seems to get more, rather than less, challenging, they may wonder whether they haven't made a mistake. In the Buddhist East, after all, it is widely believed that only monks and nuns, those willing and able to renounce the pleasures and duties of worldly life, can really practise the Dharma.

This line of thought leads to two options. One can become a monk or nun, or one can 'become' a lay-person. As a monk or nun, of course, one will still have to deal with 'old age, sickness, and death', as well as the turbulence of one's inner life. One will have to work hard, too, to avoid sliding into complacency and formalism (to treat a complex subject with, I hope, at least intriguing brevity).\* As a lay-person—in a social context which recognizes only monks and nuns as serious Buddhists—one might be left wondering whether there is really much point in being a Buddhist at all if one is not striving after the highest ideals of Buddhism.

If neither of these options appeal, and if it is already too late to opt out altogether, there is only one thing left. Somehow one has to find an approach to life that balances the call of spiritual vision with the business of dealing with the world. Somehow one has to turn activity, even busyness, even stress, into the stuff of one's higher, spiritual development. Somehow, but how?

There is no single answer to this, nor any fixed set of simple answers. Although as an organization the FWBO is built upon the axiom that 'commitment is primary, life-style secondary', we are still very much working with it. I therefore took two risks in putting together this edition. Firstly, I asked five very busy people to write articles. Secondly, I gave them each more or less the

same brief—which boiled down to the question: How do you cope with being a busy person and a Buddhist?

Historically, and to an extent ideologically, the FWBO has responded to this issue by creating opportunities for people to live and work within a Buddhist context. There are communities to live in, public centres to run, Right Livelihood businesses to build.... At the very least, these institutions allow people to be busy, even stressed, for a good cause, and in the company of others who are reasonably sympathetic. Ideally, by using these opportunities to the full, an individual can turn his or her entire life into a single powerful 'technique' for spiritual change.

But, for most of us, this is very much an ideal—and one that is often shrouded in romantic expectations as to what an 'ideal' spiritual life should be. Most of us, whether living and working within an FWBO environment or not, whether practising any form of Right Livelihood or not, therefore tend to think of balance in terms of *time*. We take time off to meditate, to attend classes and study groups. We try to get away on retreat. We spend time on various 'conducive' cultural activities, and, not least, on our friendships within the sangha. We also arrange, and sometimes protect jealously, little bits of 'space'. Such oases can be hard to organize in the midst of a busy life—which is probably why so many of us assume that our lives would be more balanced, more spiritually efficient, if we could only arrange more of them, or if those nourishing gaps could last just a little longer.

That is all fair enough so far as it goes. A preoccupation with certain defined spiritual activities, and the hours and minutes required to perform them well, is a good start. But if one's goal is Buddhahood, surely it is only a start. Sooner or later one will have to dig deeper into the issue of balance, and turn more of one's life, whatever its details, into a spiritual practice in the broader sense.

The issue of balance is probably the most pressing issue facing anyone reading this magazine. How you deal with it will crucially affect your enjoyment of, and success in, the spiritual life. It will also quite possibly make or break our Movement as a truly positive contributor both to Buddhist tradition and to the modern world. I don't have to tell you that there are no easy answers. But I hope you will find the following articles helpful. □

Nagabodhi

\*For more on this read Sangharakshita's new book: *Forty-Three Years Ago: Reflections on my Bhikkhu Ordination, on the Occasion of the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Western Buddhist Order.*

# Living in the greater

**S**ona Kolivisa was a merchant's son. Hearing the Buddha preach for the first time he decided to go forth into the homeless life. He believed that living at home it would be difficult to practise the Dharma—even though this meant leaving behind considerable wealth, including eighty cartloads of gold and a herd of seven elephants. Some time later, practising walking meditation energetically, his feet began to bleed. It then occurred to him that despite his zealous practice he had not found liberation. Perhaps it would be better if he returned to his former life where he could enjoy his family possessions.

We too can feel like this sometimes. Wouldn't it be easier to give up the spiritual life and return to our former comfortable ways? How do we keep going when our initial enthusiasm—born of beginners' mind in blissful meditation or of inspired vision on a retreat—has worn off? Worse still, what if, instead of the anticipated increasing levels of tranquillity, we actually find our practice of the Dharma leading to increasing discomfort or conflict? This does happen.

When as a medical student I approached my final examinations I found meditation unbearable because I became extremely anxious each time I sat down to meditate. I stopped meditating. More meditation means more awareness—which may mean becoming aware of the conflicts in our life which we have hitherto 'papered over' by dulling our consciousness with distractions such as alcohol or mindless television programmes.

The conflicts may be of a practical nature, such as over how much time we apportion to our different activities. Alternatively there may be diverse aspects of our personality which demand differing and conflicting expression. Until very recently my work as a psychiatrist averaged out at about seventy hours a week. Trying to resolve the demands of this work with the demands of a full commitment to the Dharma was not always easy. On a deeper level I feel a conflict between my urge to go for Refuge to the Three Jewels (and to help others do so) and the pull of pursuing a medical career.

Such conflicts may only emerge when we are some way along the spiritual path. We may see, as Sona did, that if we really want to

develop we need different conditions, we need to change our life. We may feel that we need to leave some things behind, even leave some friends behind if they do not wish to accompany us on our journey, and especially if they actively hinder us. To part company with friends may be uncomfortable, even acutely painful if that friend happens to be our sexual partner. At such times we may think we have had enough of the spiritual life and would rather settle back into our old, comfortable ways.

So what did Sona do? Fortunately the Buddha read his thoughts and in an instant vanished from his abode at Vulture's Peak and reappeared at the Cool Grove

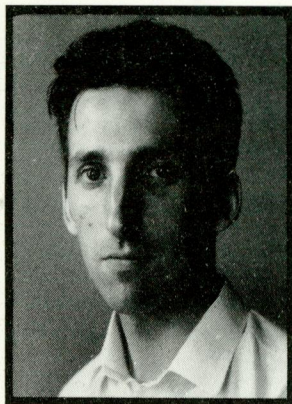
where Sona was meditating. He approached Sona and explained the simile of the lute. If the strings of a lute are too taut or too slack, the instrument, as Sona well knew, is not suitable for playing. The strings need to be just right to produce a melody. Similarly, continued the Buddha, too much energy will lead to restlessness and too little to slothfulness. The output of energy must be even and balanced. This seems to have been a decisive turning point in Sona's life. From then on he practised with evenness of energy and in time gained Enlightenment.

Two-and-a-half millennia later how do we practise evenness of energy? How do we practise balanced effort? Perhaps first we have to consider what the effort required actually is. Effort, or *virya*, is described by Shantideva as 'energy in the pursuit of the good'. Right Effort, as a limb of the Noble Eightfold Path, is traditionally classified under four headings: the prevention of the arising of unskilful mental states, the eradication of unskilful mental states (already arisen), the development of skilful mental states, and the maintenance of skilful mental states. The first means not putting ourselves into situations which are likely to produce unskilful mental states. 'Guarding the gates of the senses' has perhaps never been more relevant than it is in the industrialized twentieth century, with ever more sophisticated advertisements urging us to pander to our every sensuous desire. The second and the third right efforts are the work of our meditation practice in particular. We work with the five hindrances to eradicate unskilful mental states and cultivate skilful mental states such as *maitri* and *karuna*. Our meditation should then feed into our daily life where we make a continuing effort to remain in a positive mental state—the fourth right effort.

Shantideva further elaborates *virya* to include the effort that does not lose heart—not allowing oneself to be undermined by doubts—the effort which does not turn back because of adverse conditions, and the effort which is never satisfied.

Having looked at what is and what is not right effort, we can explore how actually to balance our efforts. Perhaps it is easiest to get a feeling for the process involved by paying close attention to our mental states during meditation. If we apply too much effort, if we are wilful, we may start to notice our posture becoming tight and rigid, our mind becoming restless, or our concentration feeling somewhat forced. We may even get a headache. If we apply too little effort, our posture may droop and our mind may become hazy or sluggish. In the extreme we fall asleep. To balance our effort we pursue a middle way, looking for a relaxed and upright posture, and a clear and expansive mind.

However, taking these insights into the larger domain of our outer lives may not be so easy. When Sona had been too wilful and had so become disillusioned with the spiritual life, the Buddha appeared and showed him a different perspective. We may not be so fortunate. But there may be something



Paramabandhu

# mandala

Paramabandhu at  
home in Sukhavati  
community

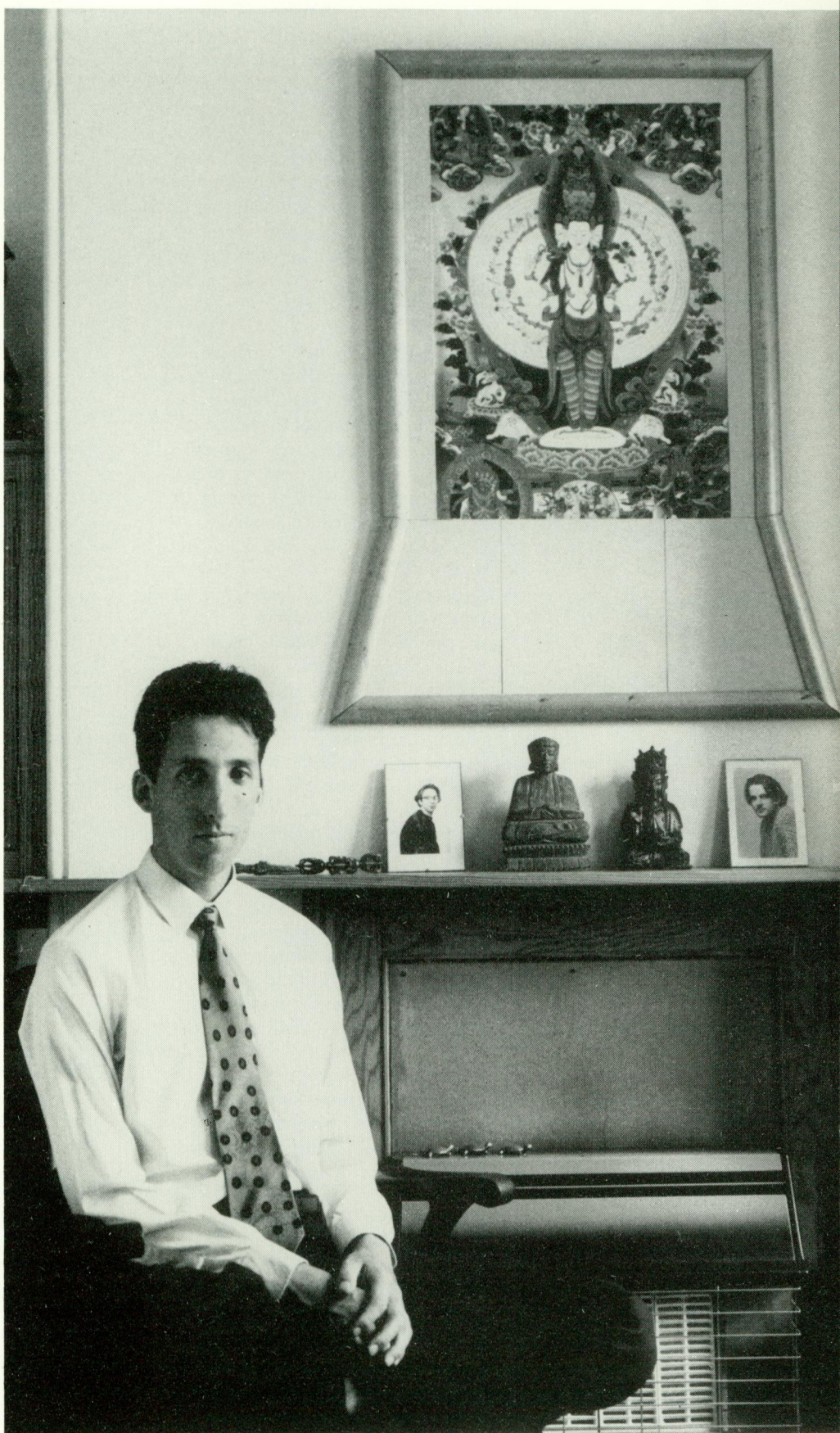
had to take other sets of major examinations. I still become anxious, but I don't stop meditating. I see the anxiety as merely a passing part of a much greater whole and so it does not spiral out of control. I may not have resolved all my conflicts between psychiatry and the spiritual life, but as long as I nourish my inspiration I can work with the conflicts and go for Refuge to the Three Jewels ever more deeply. □

for us to learn here. One could say that the Buddha represents our vision—before it became tarnished. If our lives are to be balanced and if we are to continue to make effort which does not lose heart, we need to keep in contact with our vision. We need to keep in mind a different perspective from the weary and cynical views of the world which are based on greed, hatred, and ignorance.

Sangharakshita has described two ways of viewing the world which are based on either *use* or *appreciation*. To see a tree, for example, through utilitarian eyes is to see it as timber. To appreciate the tree is simply to see it as it is in its full beauty, for the eye of appreciation is the eye of beauty and love. Sadly, a lot of our energy is taken up with utilitarian purposes. We worry and are bowed down by the seemingly overwhelming burdens and hassles of our work and other activities. According to Sangharakshita we have it the wrong way round. Most of the time we should be seeing our life with the eye of appreciation. This 'greater mandala of aesthetic appreciation' should be the context for, and should interpenetrate, our utilitarian activity. Moreover, when we begin to see with an appreciative awareness a remarkable thing happens. To see beauty brings delight—and with delight comes energy. This spontaneous energy is in a way without any purpose for it has no utilitarian aims, it is 'useless'. But it is this useless energy which powers the play of the Bodhisattvas as they assist beings towards Enlightenment.

This, then, is the perspective we need in order to make a balanced effort, and to balance our lives. Only in this way can we find the energy to keep going without turning back, and the clarity to face the conflicts which will almost inevitably arise. If we wish to have such a perspective we need constantly to keep in mind, and cherish, our vision. In order for our vision to stay alive we need to feed it with whatever inspires us. We need to make time for meditation, study, friendships in the sangha, and for enjoyment of the arts or beautiful countryside. Finally we need to take ourselves away on regular retreats to boost our stores of inspiration and to remind ourselves of the greater purpose of our life. It is all too easy to forget the value of these activities. At times they may seem useless—which is precisely why we need them.

Since taking my medical finals I have



# Mastering all Dharmas

I am sitting in my office at Windhorse Trading wondering why on earth I agreed to write this article. Nagabodhi, the editor, has been on the telephone and he is not happy because the deadline was three days ago. What does he expect when he asks a busy Buddhist to write an article about being a busy Buddhist? I should be going on a one week solitary retreat tomorrow, but I had to cancel it because we are in the final stages of negotiating for a new warehouse/office to contain our growing business. They have been difficult negotiations and it has been hard to create the space to write an article. Is Nagabodhi sympathetic? I'm not telling.

I work in Windhorse Trading (WT), one of the FWBO's Right Livelihood businesses. I am both a full-time businessman and a full-time Buddhist. In certain respects WT resembles any other small but fast-growing business and I have most of the concerns of a typical businessman—sales targets, meetings with bank managers, cash-flow worries, decisions to make. The business requires me to travel a lot, mostly abroad, and to keep up with financial news and developments, as well as to study management and business techniques so that we can become better at what we do. Consequently I read and study quite a lot that is not, on the face of it, the Dharma.

I also have the aspirations of a ‘typical’ member of the Western Buddhist Order—I want to develop Insight, to become kinder and more positive, to help others, to serve the FWBO. I live in a men's community, meditate every day, go on retreat, attend meditation classes at the Cambridge Buddhist Centre, spend time with spiritual friends.

Both business and Buddhism demand my full attention, so I try to resolve potential conflicts and contradictions by bringing the two together.

It is a constant marvel to me that through Sangharakshita's exposition of the teachings of the Buddha we are able to turn the most unlikely material into dynamic opportunities for spiritual practice. Thus the need to make a living ceases to be a distraction, something one minimizes so as to be able to devote

more time to ‘real’ spiritual practice, and instead becomes an opportunity for developing one's spiritual vision.

At the same time, I cannot pretend that these opportunities are always seized, nor that tensions never arise between a busy business life and my Buddhist aspirations. Fortunately, it is not very difficult to recognize when my work is undermining rather than supporting my spiritual practice.

I meditate every morning with my community, but my level of concentration is often not as good as when I am on retreat. Indeed, my meditation practice is not infrequently swamped by the hindrance of restlessness

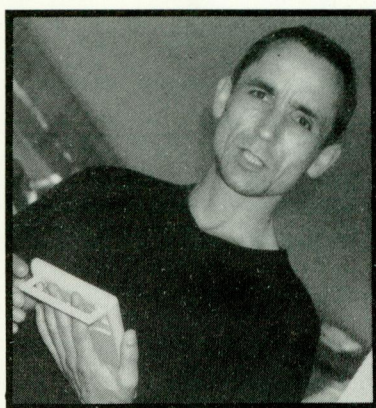
and worry hooking onto some current business problem. It would be nice if I could use this as something concrete to work against, but I frequently fail to overcome it. The other principal manifestation of strain is a tendency to get drawn into my work, the ‘objective’, at the expense of my human relations. I can get bad-tempered at work, and at home I can tend to avoid rather than go out to people, disappearing to my room with a book. This latter is a sure sign that something is not right.

I do not regard these and other manifestations of imbalance as altogether a bad thing. ‘You don't know what enough is until you have had too much.’ Spiritual life is about directed change, and almost by definition this takes place at the frontiers of one's capacities. If I never felt overstretched I would worry that I was not trying hard enough. Nevertheless, I do sometimes feel overstretched, feel tensions arising between the demands of the business and my own psychological and spiritual needs, I do get into mental states that are not healthy and need to be corrected. These manifest at many different levels, and have correspondingly many different methods of correction. Broadly I approach the whole question of balance through the Four Right Efforts: preventing the arising of negative mental states, suppressing those that have arisen, encouraging the arising of positive mental states, and nurturing those positive mental states that have arisen. Within this framework I have an armoury of methods for dealing with the tensions inherent in the life of a busy Buddhist.

Firstly, there is overall life-style. I live in a men's community, all the people I live with are involved in WT in some way, so we are able to approach the ‘question of balance’ collectively as well as individually. Over the years we have developed our living and working structures in accordance with the Four Right Efforts, and I find these structures very supportive. Also I go on retreat regularly, primarily to get a deeper experience of meditation than is possible for me during my normal working life. I have also learned various so-called ‘indirect’ methods for responding to the signs of tensions, things like yoga, running, spending time with friends, literature, music. Any or all of these are useful ways of transforming my mental state after ‘a hard day at the office’. They are often more effective at transforming my mental state at the end of a day than meditation would be, and, for example, I usually make a point of going for a run before meditating in the evening.

Sometimes I go through phases where the tensions seem to persist over a longer period of time, in current terminology I ‘lose touch with my vision’. Going for a run is just not enough to shift out of this. It is more difficult to generalize about how I deal with this. My first response is to think it is time to go on retreat, and sometimes that is what I do.

However, it is not always a convenient time to go away, and anyway I prefer on the whole to tackle these things *in situ*. If I *have to* go away it suggests that



Vajraketu showing some of the strain



**Vajraketu on a buying expedition in Bali**

things really are out of balance, and that therefore the solution lies either in tinkering with the externals (e.g. reducing my commitments, organizing my time better), or rising above them (e.g. if I am feeling consistently irritable, then working on *metta*, consciously suppressing irritation). I also find just talking things over with my spiritual friends very helpful in reconnecting me with my own vision, and that of the business and the FWBO. Very often what I regard as real spiritual progress occurs when the individual pushes through a resistance, rather than assuming that resistance is a sign that it is time to ease up.

I am concentrating on the tensions that arise in working in a busy business and trying to lead the Dharma-life because that is what I have been asked to write about. I could just as easily write an article on the joys of directed effort and the benefits of work as spiritual practice. I do not see tensions as being inevitable because of some conflict between business and the Dharma. I do not experience myself as less of a Buddhist when I am negotiating a loan with the bank than when I am on retreat. If I have to read a book on management techniques I do not regard this as less relevant to my spiritual life than reading a Dharma text. The Bodhisattva masters all Dharmas, and those of us who are inspired by the Bodhisattva Ideal can at least try and behave as we think a Bodhisattva would behave.

This is not to say that everything I do is in accord with my spiritual aspirations. I read an interview with the conductor Herbert von Karajan in which he claimed he had never wasted more than fifteen minutes at a stretch in the whole of his adult life. I could not make the same claim myself. I have a fairly

well developed sense of when I am wasting my time (i.e. not engaged in any of the Four Right Efforts), and while I cannot 'blame' my work for leading me to waste time, it is sometimes the case that work leads me into situations and mental states where my armoury of direct and indirect methods proves inadequate. One example is long evenings in bland

hotels in foreign cities watching bland movies on the hotel video. I would not dream of spending an evening like that in the community, even if we had a television, which we do not, but somehow the lack of a supportive environment sometimes undermines my resolve.

Ideally, of course, one would not waste any time, one would be living right

on the edge of one's capabilities but never overstepping. The question of balance would hardly arise at all. When working one would just work, when meditating one would just meditate. Every subject of frustration and worry would be seen in its proper light, with the benefit of Insight, as the natural consequence of trying to work with the impermanent, the unsatisfactory, and the insubstantial. One would plunge enthusiastically from one task to the next, taking on more and more, seizing opportunities to excel and to give.

One would even, perhaps, get one's articles written on time. □



# Juggling gracefully

I have always been fascinated by the sight of jugglers who are to be seen on English streets during the summer. I always stop, held by the apparent ease with which they keep five balls in the air simultaneously, and sometimes even flaming clubs. Attracted by their grace and poise, I wonder how they do it.

I often speak of my own life as a juggling act as I attempt to engage wholeheartedly with all that I do. I lead a full life, the demands of which sometimes seem to conflict. I work for three-and-a-half days a week as a clinical psychologist in a busy clinic where I see children experiencing emotional or behavioural difficulties. I have one son of eight and am expecting another baby in the autumn, and I have responsibilities as an Order member: leading or supporting classes, developing my friendships with Order members and mitras, regular chapter meetings, and Order weekends. Last but by no means least, there is my own personal spiritual practice.

Do I manage to keep all these balls in the air maintaining a sense of poise, lightness, and stillness, or am I often lunging in one direction or another in a vain attempt to catch one ball before it falls? I find it difficult at times, and the periods of greatest tension come when I feel I've lost touch with my spiritual vision and the momentum of my meditation practice. When I have a good daily meditation practice and feel in touch with the Three Jewels then it is easier to keep aspects of my life in balance and move from family life to the complex world of the National Health Service

to FWBO activities without a sense of conflict. If however I lose touch with this then a sense of dis-ease sets in and I start on the downward spiral towards feeling over-burdened and over-stretched.

The ability to keep different demands in balance is an aspect of psychological integration. Over the years I have had to work with two *micchaditthis* in particular about what constitutes the spiritual life. One is 'compartmentalization', and the other is craving for particular mental states.

In the past I have held on to too narrow a definition of spiritual life, and have fallen into the trap of only identifying a small range of my activities as 'spiritual', e.g. meditation, retreats, pujas, and seeing friends in the Dharma. If I thought I wasn't spending enough time doing these then I would start to feel frustrated and resent other activities. Faced with having a young child, and unable to take part for a time in more organized spiritual activities as much as I would like, I was forced to re-think, and gradually realized that the spiritual life is the whole of my life. My practice lies in the attitude and mental state I bring to bear on whatever I am doing. Everything I do, from

counselling the parents of a child with behaviour problems, to playing with my son, to performing a puja, is an opportunity for practice if only I can engage with it wholeheartedly and with awareness.

However I don't find this a straightforward task and I continue to find it easier to engage with activities which bring me into direct contact with the Dharma than with meetings about NHS reorganization or endless games of Monopoly. It is easy then to judge the former as more valuable to my spiritual life, and then all too soon a sense of frustration and conflict sets in. I know that the way to overcome this is through working on my mental state and choosing a creative, positive response. This requires constant vigilance and *virya*, and an ability to go beyond my immediate ego-bound hopes, maintaining a broad perspective of the situation, and keeping in mind the fact that each moment presents an opportunity to practise. The essence of spiritual practice lies not in the activity *per se* but in the creativity of my response. From this perspective all my life is my spiritual life, although clearly some situations are easier to practise in than others.

Another difficulty I encounter when losing my sense of balance is that of equating the spiritual with a particular mental state, which immediately sets up a tension as I try to cling on to the states I define as positive and therefore 'spiritual' and feel resentful of anything that gets in the way. This, of course, amounts to being in the grip of craving, which is the origin of *dukkha*. Once craving is present then any poise I may have disappears. Craving creeps into all areas of my life. One example is of meetings at work, which I tend to find difficult because people are often operating from negative mental states. I feel they 'interfere' with my own mental state and so I tend to react by withdrawing emotionally, and perceive the situation as a hindrance to me. When this happens I set up a circle in which I am very self-oriented, and usually judge other people negatively and feel superior.

I also encountered craving on discovering that I was unexpectedly pregnant. I did feel very disappointed initially because I felt I was losing the opportunity to be more directly involved in FWBO activities, and therefore to lead a more 'spiritual' life. I now see that the only way forward in this situation is to respond positively and reconnect with a broader vision. In so doing I feel that my options have clarified, since I am now further committed to practising within a family context. Paradoxically this has led to a sense of freedom, in that I know how I shall be practising for the next few years. Although the balls I am juggling have changed and may not be the ones I would have chosen, the important thing is that I am still the juggler and have the ability to maintain the balance in my life.

We are constantly faced with the options of engaging creatively in the moment or withdrawing. Choosing the latter strengthens the ego and our selfish tendencies, whereas the former brings a sense



Punyamala





**Punyamala with her husband, Advayachitta, and son, Ben**

of expansion and fulfilment. When this is present then the balance in our life feels harmonious.

Another way of looking at balance is in terms of our energy. Padmasambhava advises Queen Ngang Chung: 'Not falling into the errors of excitement or passivity be filled with confidence.' The two extremes of having too much or too little energy are what we are often working with throughout our lives on increasingly subtle levels. Perhaps this comes into focus most clearly during a session of meditation, but the principles we apply on our cushion hold good for the rest of our lives. When meditating we're looking for a dynamic balance between too much and too little effort. We want to maintain a balanced concentration on the meditation object. Just as when kite flying we want to keep the kite steadily in the air without it careering off to left or right, which often initiates a downward spiral to the ground, so in meditation we need to work to maintain our equilibrium, keeping the balance between calm receptivity and dynamic vigour. Enjoyment, enthusiasm, and emotional engagement are also aspects of working towards balanced concentration. So in life in general we need to unify our energies creating a steady state which is both gently receptive and vigorous without being excited.

Padmasambhava describes this Middle Way as confidence. Having faith in ourselves and our ability to practise the spiritual life helps maintain balance. Once we start questioning we undermine ourselves; then the voice of Mara quickly announces that this situation is too difficult for us to practise in, and we start to fall into passivity, or distract ourselves, or withdraw.

Two important factors in helping to maintain a

sense of harmony and inner balance are having time for reflection and mindfulness. In a life full of outwardly directed activity it can be difficult to find time and space simply to 'be'. I make use of spaces that are available such as when I am driving to work, and lunch hours. I use them as times to connect more deeply with myself by reflecting on an aspect of the



Dharma, or by simply recollecting the focus of my practice in the preceding hours. A crucial factor in keeping a sense of proportion is the fact that I only work part-time, so my life is not weighted too much in one particular direction. In an ideal world I think that everyone should work part-time—so allowing space and time in their

lives for some 'direct' spiritual practice.

Ultimately, a state of balance and harmony is a state of non-craving. We regain our equilibrium by transforming the five hindrances into positive mental states. Looking more closely at our juggler, we find that she is standing confidently, undistracted by the busyness of the street, and wholeheartedly engaged in creating rich and lovely patterns of light with five scintillating balls. The hindrances which cause disharmony are transformed, and our juggler is poised, able to respond spontaneously, freely and appropriately to the next moment—or able to be at ease doing nothing at all. □

# Learning to dance

What do Buddhists do? The most likely answer is: They meditate. But what else do they do? In the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order they do all sorts of things. Some live relatively quiet lives in retreat centres. Others live relatively busy lives in city centres. I live in London and spend a large part of my time working in a vegetarian café, the Cherry Orchard: mopping floors, washing up, and serving behind the counter. I don't do it for the money—in fact I earn just what I need to live a fairly simple life—but because I can work there with other Buddhist women; and for all of us our work is a large part of our spiritual practice.

'The object of meditation is to transform oneself, not to have good meditations,'<sup>1</sup> and there are many complementary ways to approach that transformation. From a Buddhist perspective we are made up of body, speech, and mind, in ascending order of subtlety. In meditation we work directly on our mind to transform ourselves from the inside out. In our lives in general we apply ethical awareness to our speech and actions to transform ourselves from the outside in. Obviously both approaches feed into each other. Our ultimate aim is total transformation, or Enlightenment, but it doesn't usually happen all at once. Most of us will have had some experience of a time when our habitual view of ourselves and the world was profoundly shaken into a more positive, fluid, vivid one, and, although these experiences may not last long, neither do they vanish without trace. Two such occasions stand out for me.

The first was during a two-month fundraising appeal for Aid For India (now the Karuna Trust) and took me completely by surprise. For five days a week I knocked on a hundred doors a day and asked people if they would consider making a covenanted donation to a charity working in India. What was most salutary was the direct correlation I discovered between my state of mind and the number of covenants raised by the end of each week. Such a graphic lesson in the Buddhist law of cause and effect! That appeal was one of the most concentrated and instructive lessons in communication I've ever had. Knocking on doors was a bit like looking into a mirror. Over and over again I had reflected back at me not myself as I liked to think I was but

myself as others saw me. Towards the end of the appeal I began to feel so completely exposed that I had nothing left to hide—and then something strange happened. For two or three days I felt a warmth and understanding that came from deep inside me and reached out to make contact with the same depths in other people. What's more, I felt the same towards everyone, total strangers and good friends alike. The usual instant classification of like and dislike had gone.

The other occasion was about four years ago when I

was working in a typesetting business run by Buddhist women. For a week I experienced no distinction between work and non-work. Whether I was working, supporting classes, or spending time with friends, it all had the same flavour: every moment was purposeful and an opportunity for transformation, and no time seemed wasted on things that just had to be done. I felt truly alive.

Both occasions echo one of my favourite descriptions of a spiritual life as described by Anuruddha and his friends. While visiting them the Buddha asked whether they were living in harmony. Anuruddha replied:

'Lord, as to that, I think that it is a gain and good fortune for me here that I am living with such companions in the Holy Life. I maintain acts and words and thoughts of loving-kindness towards these venerable ones both in public and in private. I think "Why should I not set aside what I am minded to do and do only what they are minded to do?" and I act accordingly. We are different in body, Lord, but only one in mind, I think.'

The other two each said the same thing, adding: 'Lord, that is how we live in concord, as friendly and undisputing as milk and water, viewing each other with kindly eyes.'

'Good, good, Anuruddha. I hope you all dwell diligent, ardent and self-controlled?'

'Surely we do so, Lord.'

'But, Anuruddha, how do you dwell thus?'

'Lord, as to that, whichever of us returns first from the village with alms food gets the seats ready, sets out the water for drinking and for washing and puts the refuse bucket in its place. Whichever of us returns last eats any food left over if he wishes; otherwise he throws it away where there is no green or drops it into water where there is no life. He puts away the seats and the water for drinking and for washing. He puts away the refuse bucket after washing it, and he sweeps out the refectory. Whoever notices that the pots of drinking water or washing water or water for the privy are low or empty sees to them. If any are too heavy for him, he beckons someone else by a sign of the hand and they move it by joining hands. We do not speak for that purpose. But every five days we sit out the night together in talk on the Law. It is in this way that we dwell diligent, ardent and self-controlled.'<sup>2</sup>

All this might sound quite straightforward, but how often do we actually walk home slowly, and take a little detour, to avoid being first back so as not to have to put the seats and water out, or feel so hard done by at being left to do the washing up yet again that we leave it pointedly in the sink, or use the last of the toilet paper and don't put out a new roll, or sulk for days because no one has noticed that we needed help?

A large part of our experience of the world is our experience of other people. It has been said that hell is other people, but paradoxically they can also be heaven. We don't have to search hard in the newspapers to see the suspicion and even hatred that one group of people often has for another. The seeds of that group response are in each of us; we see it in the way we so quickly leap



Ratnadharini



into mistrust and miscommunication. We work to transform this tendency 'from the inside out' in meditation, especially in the *metta bhavana* practice. Working 'from the outside in' is something we can do all the time in our interactions with other people, but it can be especially effective in the company of our spiritual friends who share the same ideals and ethical guide-lines.

Although I've been meditating for most of the last thirteen years I haven't found it easy. Twelve years ago I decided that I wanted to make more of my active contact with other practising Buddhists. I moved into a Buddhist community and handed in my notice as a computer programmer. At my final interview I found it hard to explain why I was leaving—I loved programming and didn't know exactly what it was I was looking for. In the end my interviewer screwed up the form he was trying to fill in and threw it in the bin.

I experimented with a few options until a year later I joined the team of Buddhist women running the typesetting business, and immediately felt a deep sense of satisfaction that I was living my whole life in a situation dedicated to the practice of the Dharma. It did take a while to adjust. The work was important but so too was the way we did it and how we interacted with each other. I was horrified when one of the Order members working there insisted on taking me out for a cup of tea 'to talk about our communication' when there was a pile of typing waiting to be done. But that was the beginning of a beautiful friendship for life.

As the years went by I saw my career in computers slipping away as I became increasingly out-of-date. But I was growing in confidence as an effective human being, and when I was ordained I knew that my work practice had played an important part in the process. After eight-and-a-half years the business was sold and I joined the

**The Cherry Orchard team (from left) Mary Healy, Ratnadhari, Jo Quirck, Sandra Greenaway and Wendy Clarke**

Cherry Orchard vegetarian restaurant, which soon went through a complete transformation to emerge as a mainly daytime café with a much smaller team. These business decisions and team changes were an anxious time for me. I was also living in a community, supporting classes and retreats, and attending meetings for Order members. Often my diary was full for weeks, if not months, ahead. I became unusually forgetful. I would set out to unlock the doors at the restaurant and lose the keys on the way; I came close to losing fingers in kitchen equipment. Eventually someone pointed out that these were symptoms of stress—which was a shock as I had been trying to set up a life conducive to growth and development. I had to simplify my life.

I now live with the same people that I work with (plus another Order member). I used to think of such an idea with horrified expectations of claustrophobia, but in practice it seems the most natural thing in the world. I don't leave one combination of people behind after work and come home to a completely different one. Relationships at work can be quite particular and in this way we get a much fuller picture of each other.

As we get to know each other better we can be more open and have more effect on each other. As we each transform ourselves the overall situation changes too, and we discover the magical equation that the more flexible, co-operative, and harmonious the team becomes, the more energy is produced and the more work we do more easily with fewer people. Over our busy lunchtimes at the Cherry Orchard we begin to work as one. We each know where the others are, how they are, and what they are doing. We do what is needed without having to keep asking each other. Work becomes a dance. The model of Anuruddha and his friends isn't so far away after all. □

<sup>1</sup> Sangharakshita, *Peace is a Fire*.

<sup>2</sup> Nanamoli, *The Life of the Buddha*, pp.114-5

# Turning difficulties into

I am rather suspicious of the way the idea of 'balance' is sometimes applied. It can so easily come to mean balancing out fixed and unintegrated sides of ourselves, and can be used to justify a lot of uncreative activity. Even some so-called 'spiritual practice' can be little more than this at times. One is not happy in what one is doing and so, instead of trying to find out why, one all too quickly makes a sudden change in one's work or jumps at the chance to attend a retreat, without really having a look at what is happening.

Another danger in compartmentalizing one's Dharma practice—which a wrongly applied idea of balance can lead to—is that of over-doing one area of life or work because we think we will be able to balance ourselves out on our next retreat. This is something I used to fall prey to again and again, allowing myself to get into bitter and frustrated states thinking that I would be able to restore myself to a more positive equilibrium when I went on retreat. The approach was clearly unsatisfactory. Not only was I harming myself spiritually, but other people often suffered as a result. On solitary retreats I have been faced with one question above all: how can I maintain in the rest of my life the skilfulness and clarity that I gain on retreat?

I once thought that the only answer was to spend two weeks of every month on retreat, if possible by myself. But how would I be able to continue with my very demanding work? Did Dharma practice really mean that one was limited in what one could skilfully do in the world? Surely not. Right Livelihood is one of the cornerstones of our Movement, and I could not have

had a better form of livelihood. I had the opportunity to help make the Dharma available to others, to help others socially, and to help bring back the Dharma to the land of its birth. What did it suggest about my attitude to this work if I was going to rely only on retreats to come to grips with myself ethically and to raise my consciousness? In other words, how could I allow myself to remain in mental states that were incompatible with what I was trying to accomplish through my work? What about the Bodhisattva Ideal? Was it just a means for those who did not want to make the effort required for the bhikshu life to justify their position? Or was it really possible to live and work in the world, and at the same time raise one's mental states?

In the *Thousand-Petalled Lotus*, Sangharakshita talks of the disciple of Sri Ramakrishna who inspired him because he combined a deep spirituality with work in the world. The account struck a deep chord in me. This too was my ideal. I realized I had no option but to use my work and my family life—indeed, everything I do in the world—much more effectively as opportunities to practise the Dharma. If I could not practise the Dharma in these situations I might as well give it up.

It is only in the cultivation of skilful mental states that I have found meaning in my life. In the difficulties I

experience in life are found the best possible opportunities to transform my unskilfulness. While I cannot say that I now welcome difficult situations, I find I can live with them much more easily than I once could.

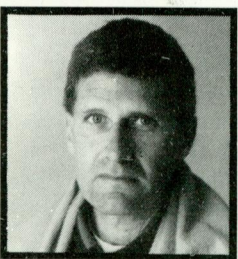
My life is very diverse, and while at times it seems as if I am being pulled in too many directions, I do find the different elements, for the most part, enriching. In Poona, at the Mahavihara in Dapodi, I have my office. I am concerned with the ordination process, including the community in Dapodi, which is one of its central aspects. I meet regularly with Maitreynatha, Gaganbodhi, and Bodhidhamma to discuss the work of Bahujan Hitay (our social welfare wing). I also meet with Sudarshana, the secretary of the Trailokya Bauddha Mahasangha Sahayak Gana (TBMSG) Chairmen's meeting, with Chandrashila, the Mitra Convenor, with Adityabodhi, the Order Convenor, with Vimalashuri, the women's Mitra Convenor, and with many others who want to see me, especially those who are passing through Poona. There is a lot of correspondence from abroad and with people outside the Movement within India. With Mahamati, I am involved in relations between the Karuna Trust and Bahujan Hitay. And I occasionally manage to write an article or prepare a paper for a seminar.

I become frustrated and sometimes annoyed much too quickly when things do not happen as I think they should, when others do not do what they said they would or do not try and overcome their difficulties with others in the Order, and when I cannot seem to get on with what to me is most important. I suffer and sometimes others do too. But I have learnt to deal with these states of mind immediately instead of letting them build up so that I really need a retreat (this is not to say that I do not need retreats in general). I have an ideal opportunity to reflect on my shortcomings, to develop more creative speech, to overcome the temptation to operate through the power mode, and to practise patience—without which my life would be meaningless. My daily meditation practice helps to keep up my energy and purify any negativity towards others I have not been able to resolve otherwise. And my daily meetings with Mahamati give me a very valuable opportunity to confess anything I feel the need to.

I live with my family. Ranjana, my wife, teaches in a nearby college, and of the two children, Ashok is in primary school and Rajyashri has just started at a nursery school. Buddhists often speak of their family life as an ideal situation in which to practise the Dharma, in the sort of spirit I have been talking about above. But not all difficult situations are helpful in the practice of the Dharma. Some are so difficult that they can just cripple us. I must say that I find family life incredibly hard, and have seen so much spiritual ugliness manifest in me. I find it a very difficult situation to work Dharmically in, and without years of practice beforehand, do not know how I would have managed—if I can be said to manage even now. There are compensations. I never was particularly attracted towards children, but do delight in Ashok and Rajyashri

12

With  
Sangharakshita in  
1983



Lokamitra

# opportunities



(although my patience is still very limited), and now find myself able to empathize with parents and children. Seeing the inevitable attachment grow in me, I have been forced to contemplate impermanence more tangibly than I ever did before.

I go away often—I am in Poona for not more than six months most years. I am writing this on my fourth Going for Refuge retreat this year. On these, besides attending Order meetings and seeing mitras, my participation may involve giving lectures, answering questions, and leading study. Although this can be very demanding, working with people preparing for ordination is most inspiring. This year was quite special, with the first women's ordinations in India for six years, and thirty-two men's ordinations. Depending on the retreat I am able to get on with my own meditation,

**Lokamitra in a meeting and (below) with Ranjana and Ashok**

study, and writing. Most important I am able to spend more relaxed time with friends in the Order, both Indian and Western. And just to be here at Saddhamma Pradip, our retreat centre, with the hills behind, and facing the ancient Buddhist caves of Bhaja, is such a delight.

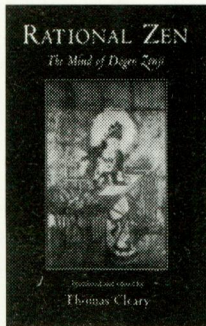
At the end of February I went to Taiwan for just over a week. These visits are becoming annual. I go there to raise funds for our Dharma activities in India (the Karuna Trust has been able to raise a lot of money for our social activities but is not able to meet all our Dharmic needs). I have never found these easy. Chinese culture is very difficult to understand and I still know nothing of the language. My friend who organizes these is one of the most energetic people I have met. A scholar of Chinese Buddhism, with a high ranking government job, he drives me from one engagement to another, all over Taipei, and up and down the island. We arrive back at any time of the night and may have to start at any time in the morning, giving two, and sometimes three, talks and slide shows a day. I find it extremely demanding and have been tempted to feel sorry for myself, but looking at the dedication of my friend, who not only manages everything but also translates for me and gives his own talks, I just have to give myself to the situation and use it as an opportunity to keep up mindfulness and *metta*. It is not without its rewards (besides the extremely generous donations). I now have very good friends there, and I find the devotion of the Chinese people very inspiring indeed.

In April I spent two weeks out of Poona. First I went to Sarnath to try to arrange access to the land we have bought there. One of the problems with working in India is that the person who is perceived to be the 'top man' in any organization is expected to be involved in all important negotiations. I try to avoid these as much as possible, but in this case I could not. I then spent a day at Buddha Gaya getting to know the lie of the land, as we are trying to find a plot for a centre. From there I went to Nagpur, where I was able to visit Sanghasena—who was in hospital with cancer of the throat—as it turned out, for the last time. I spent a day at the Ven. Hsen Tsang Retreat Centre, funded by our Taiwanese friends, to see whether the work would be completed in time for the opening on 25 October.

In Nagpur, Wardha, and from there in Bombay and Thane, I gave talks on Dr Ambedkar's approach to communal difficulties and the significance of his conversion to Buddhism in this connection. At each place I met Dharmacharis and others. I usually find myself inspired by the efforts they are making to practise and make available the Dharma, and moved by their warmth and appreciation. Tired though I may be, I almost always return to Poona refreshed and stimulated. A change is not only as good as a rest, it is better. Especially important is the fact that my time outside Poona, be it spent travelling or on retreat, gives me a chance to reflect on my practice of the Dharma, and especially of ethics.

I suppose I do lead a balanced life in a sense. This balance has developed out of my work, seeing how I can best contribute to the Movement here in India. There are two main directions. On the one hand there are people desperate for the Dharma all over India—we could start Dharma centres in a thousand towns today if we had the Order members and money to do so. On the other we have to develop the Sangha so that by the time Sangharakshita leaves the world, we will be spiritually mature enough to manage without him. I know that I cannot contribute at all unless I am Going for Refuge fully myself. □

## Shambhala



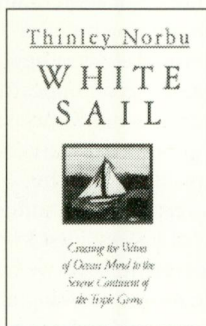
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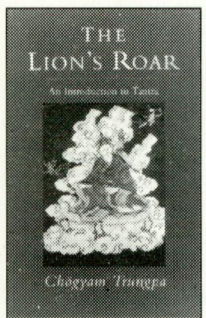


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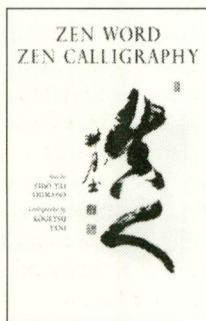


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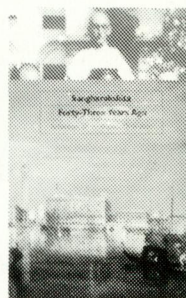


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# ENTERING THE MAINSTREAM

**Tricycle: The Buddhist Review**  
Published by Buddhist Ray Inc.  
Quarterly, \$6.00

I have been a reader of *Tricycle* for over a year now. It comes through the door with a satisfying thunk: over a hundred pages looking—and reading—for all the world like a proper magazine. It is informed, intelligent, well written, and Buddhist. In many ways it is an extraordinary achievement with much of the credit going to the editor, Helen Tworok, a journalist and author of *Zen In America*. After just two years *Tricycle* has a circulation of 100,000 and is on sale at newsstands and shopping malls across the USA.

The magazine's whimsical title announces its nonsectarian stance, the three wheels of the tricycle equating to the three *yanas* or 'vehicles' of Buddhist tradition. In this spirit it carries articles on all aspects of Buddhism, though with an undeniable emphasis on the Zen and Tibetan traditions which dominate the American scene.

Most impressive of all is the magazine's self assurance. Here Buddhism is no longer a fringe religion for drop-outs and ex-drop-outs: it is part of the American cultural mainstream.

There are now up to half-a-million Buddhists of European descent in the USA, many of whom discovered Eastern religions in the 1960s and, now that they have reached positions of prominence and responsibility, they have brought their Buddhism with them. Past issues have featured John Cage, Laurie Anderson, and Philip Glass representing the Manhattan Zen avant-garde; the Dharma Bums generation of Kerouac, Ginsberg, and Snyder is regularly represented; there have been pieces by the American Buddhist writers Peter Matthiesen and Pico Iyer; and there was recently an intriguing interview with presidential candidate, ex-Governor, and Zen

afficionado Jerry Brown.

There is a self-awareness and sophistication at work here at which European Buddhists can only wonder, but this has been hard won and creates its own blindnesses. Behind the confident stance lies a decade of scandals, crises, and disillusionment within American Dharma groups. The cases of prominent teachers involved in scandals concerning sex, power, and alcoholism have thrown their American pupils back on their own resources. In particular, doubts have emerged concerning the appropriateness of Asian models of organization and relationships to American life, and *Tricycle* seems to be a deliberate attempt to reframe the context in which Buddhism is understood in America. The magazine is run by lay people and it may be significant that the two principal editors are women. It is eclectic, giving space to whatever is Buddhist and reasonable and smart. It is non-deferential without being irreverent. On the one hand, the editorial eclecticism gives rise to an element of *laissez-faire* and there is always plenty to disagree with. But on the other hand the magazine is prepared to tackle some controversial issues in the Buddhist world (a recent example being a forthright account of the conflicts surrounding the installation of the new Karmapa).

But in spite of its eclecticism, *Tricycle* has a very distinctive character. At the heart of this is its *Americanness*: it attempts to articulate a distinctively American, as opposed to a Western or even contemporary, Buddhism. The current issue, for example, includes a piece on Shoyen Saku, an early Zen teacher in America, an article on Buddhism among the Japanese inhabitants of Second World War internment camps, part of a serialization of *Wake Up*, a life of the Buddha by Jack Kerouac; and an interview with the magisterial patriarch

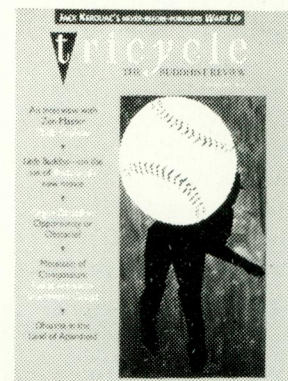
of American Zen, Roshi Philip Kapleau. These figures are clearly seen as forming a lineage or, at least, a history for American Buddhists. Beyond this there is a peculiarly American attempt to define an indigenous tradition—including Thoreau and even the authors of the American constitution—from which American Buddhism can be said to have emerged.

To a European eye this Americanness can seem baffling and parochial. American Buddhism has been strong on practice but comparatively weak on ideas, in contrast to European Buddhism which has its roots in scholarly and intellectual interest. The most impressive European Buddhists—men such as Lama Govinda and Sangharakshita—possess a stature, erudition, and complexity which is the distinctive product of the interaction of Buddhism with European culture and which, I would suggest, is not to be found within American Buddhism, for all its dynamism and creativity. And behind European Buddhism lies an intellectual hinterland of Buddhist influences and analogues which stretches back to Schopenhauer and beyond. European culture is also a part of the American inheritance and, in any case, many of the social conditions obtaining in the USA are now present throughout the developed world. So why not show an interest in a broader issue: the development of Western Buddhism to which Europeans have already contributed a great deal?

These limitations expose *Tricycle* to a number of pitfalls. It is sincerely trying to question the relevance of the forms of Buddhism we Westerners have inherited from the East, but in the absence of a critique emerging from Buddhist principles, many of the contributors base their questions upon the values of American liberalism. Feminism, eco-Buddhism, and 'engaged Buddhism' inform many of the contributions which seek to go beyond traditional expositions of the Dharma. But while it is fine that Eastern Buddhism is being subjected to sassy NYC/West Coast good-

sense, what is really needed is that America itself is subjected to the scrutiny of Buddhism. *Tricycle* is happy to comment on acceptably problematized questions such as euthanasia and abortion, but will it try to develop a critique of such beloved American institutions as the family, Christianity, and the various trappings of middle-class American life? Will it seriously challenge the spiritual materialism of the 'New Age', or subject to a thoroughly Buddhist critique the views and life-styles which many American Buddhists have brought with them, unquestioned, into their new religion.

The current issue shows the strengths and weaknesses of *Tricycle's* approach. Helen Tworok, on the set of Bertolucci's forthcoming film *The Little Buddha* (which seems to have the whole Buddhist world crossing its fingers) is perceptive, ironic, and sceptical. But Stephen Batchelor's *Letter from South Africa* appears to have been written because South Africa is topical and important, even though he has nothing really *Buddhist* to say



about it. Kerouac's *Wake Up* is remarkable only for its famous author—a fairly traditional retelling of the Buddha's life which has the characters speaking bizarre sub-Shakespearean dialogue. It is clearly going to be hard to maintain the standard of the early issues.

It is extraordinarily encouraging to read *Tricycle's* confident and intelligent writing and to see Buddhism entering a mainstream (even if Europeans will feel that it is not their own). But the mainstream is not the Middle Way, and unless the editors take care it may turn out to be nothing more than the middle of the road. □

Vishvapani

# THE GLORIOUS COMPANY

## Meeting the Buddhas: A Guide to Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and Tantric Deities

by Vessantara

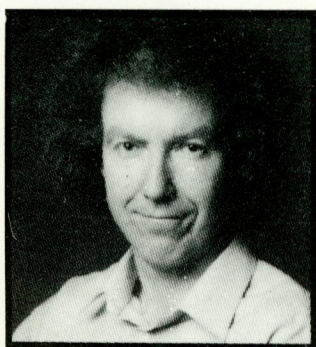
Published by Windhorse

pp.356, paperback, £13.99

When Buddhism was 'discovered' by the West in the nineteenth century it was often perceived as a 'rational philosophy', devoid of ritual or iconography. Despite the availability of much contrary evidence, this view persisted, at least in popular works, well past the middle of the present century.

However, perceptions of Buddhism have gradually shifted. In particular, over the last twenty or so years, the rich iconography of Buddhism in its Indo-Tibetan form has become quite familiar in the West:

16 religious art, such as the recent major 'Wisdom and Compassion' exhibition, seen in both the USA and Britain, have brought an understanding of the various figures of Buddhist iconography within the purview of a far wider segment of the public than



those directly involved with the study or practice of Buddhism.

All the same, it is still surprisingly difficult to find reliable and straightforward information on how these figures are utilized within Buddhist traditions as means towards Enlightenment.

Where do such figures come from? How are they meditated upon? How does



such meditation 'work'? What spiritual 'effects' are different iconographic forms supposed to have on the meditator? Readers of Vessantara's book *Meeting the Buddhas* will find that it sheds considerable light not only on these questions, but also on numerous others that they probably have not even thought to ask!

In fact, true to the nature of the material it is addressing, this is a multi-layered book. On one level, it could well be read as an introduction to Buddhism—one which would appeal especially to those who respond to the world primarily in visual and imaginative terms.

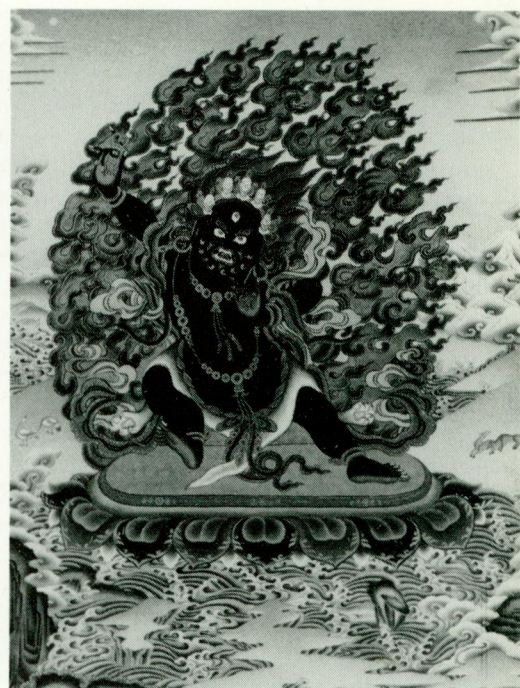
Vessantara's outline of the life of the Buddha at the beginning of the book, for example, is one of the most beautiful short evocations that I have come across. Not that doctrine is overlooked—as the book progresses, virtually all of the principal teachings of Buddhism are clearly and succinctly outlined.

For those who know something of the fundamental teachings of Buddhism, but not so much

about Mahayana and Tantric Buddhism, visualization meditations, and 'archetypal' Buddha and Bodhisattva forms, the book will work on a different level. Vessantara provides a convincing rationale of the way in which these forms and the meditations upon them probably evolved. Typical of his imaginative approach is the way in which he tells a story to suggest how people's different perceptions of the historical Buddha may have led some to 'see' him in a glorious form in their mind's eye (pp.27ff.). From this point, as he explains, it was only a matter of time before the glorious company of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas (not to speak of Dharmapalas, Dakas, and Dakinis) 'arose from the depths of the minds of experienced meditators'—and he makes it clear that this was far more than a mere 'thinking up' of new forms.

Having suggested how these figures arose, Vessantara gives a concise and useful overview of the theory and practice of visualization; this includes, perhaps most importantly, a clear explanation of the way

(Clockwise from left)  
Vessantara,  
Vajrasattva,  
Vajrapani—wrathful form,  
(two of the colour plates from  
*Meeting the Buddhas*),  
and the cover *The Drama of  
Cosmic Enlightenment*



in which visualization meditations operate as means of developing an Insight which goes beyond our deluded perception of things in terms of a really existing subject and object. It also includes some refreshing de-mystification of the whole question of initiation, and some pertinent comments about the basis on which visualization practices should be taken up: 'the figures ... are all images of a Going for Refuge which has found its fulfilment'; hence, without the fundamental Buddhist act of Going for Refuge, and the ethical life-style that this implies, visualization would be little more than a colourful mind-game.

Mention should also be made in this context of the section, later in the book (chapter 18), which introduces the fundamentals of the Tantric approach. Suffice it to say here that this is the most lucid short exposition of the Tantra that I have come across. Anyone who finds Tantric Buddhism unintelligible would do well to read and reflect on the underlying principles of Tantra that Vessantara



enumerates.

A third level on which the book operates is, as the subtitle promises, as a guide to—one could even say an encyclopaedia of—'Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and Tantric Deities'. While the book is structurally well crafted, and I would certainly recommend it be read straight from cover to cover (otherwise many gems may be missed), the sections on the various figures do also stand up very well on their own. The numerous and often very beautiful colour and monochrome illustrations also contribute greatly to the usefulness, and fine appearance, of the book.

Space, unfortunately, doesn't allow me to mention more than a fraction of the extraordinarily rich and evocative material that Vessantara has mustered on the figures that he writes about. The chapters on the mandala of the Five Buddhas, forming Part Two of the book, as well as those on the principal Bodhisattvas in Part Three, are full of imaginative and doctrinal stimulation. I found Vessantara's evocation of the 'journey' to each of the Buddha realms very enjoyable, and many of his comments, such as this one from the chapter on Vajrapani, are quite salutary: 'Vajrapani's path is one of activity, of taking the risk of trying to change, not of sitting back and grumbling about how things are.'

The final part of the book, dealing with the principal deities and gurus of the 'higher' Tantric lineages makes some of the very weird and wonderful looking figures of the *anuttarayogatantra* at least (relatively) comprehensible as manifestations of the Enlightened state—though I doubt whether I'll ever come to love the wrathful Shridevi, who rides on the flayed skin of her own son! Again, there is much to enjoy, ponder, or—perhaps best—simply contemplate here. In all, this is a book that I am sure the reader will turn to again and again for information, elucidation, and inspiration. □

Tejananda

# ABUNDANT TREASURES

## **The Drama of Cosmic Enlightenment: Parables, Myths, and Symbols of the White Lotus Sutra**

by Sangharakshita  
Published by Windhorse  
pp.240, paperback, £8.99

The White Lotus Sutra (*Saddharmapundarika Sutra*) is a text which has exerted a tremendous influence on Mahayana Buddhism, especially in the Far East where entire schools have devoted themselves to its study, recitation, exposition, and, in some cases, worship through the repetition of its title. It seems quite likely that it will take its place as an important canonical text for Western Buddhists too. However, on first encounter the sutra may seem rather forbidding, immediately plunging its reader, as it does, into an unfamiliar and phantasmagorical world. We need to find a way into what at first sight may seem to be an alien realm. This is where *The Drama of Cosmic Enlightenment*, Sangharakshita's latest book, comes in.

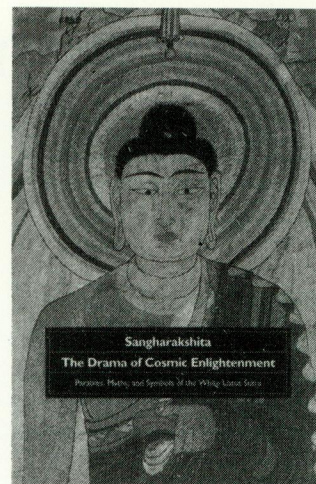
The book is based on a series of eight lectures given in 1970, together with questions and answers extracted from seminars on the sutra held fifteen years later. It is not, and does not purport to be, a line by line commentary on the sutra. Rather, it offers a series of gateways into the world of the sutra; a series of points at which we can make our own connections with it. After all, the best result of reading a book such as this would be for it to encourage us to read and recite the original text, seeking inspiration and understanding from the sutra itself, with knowledge of how to approach it and open ourselves to the teachings contained within it.

The subtitle of Sangharakshita's book is 'Parables, Myths, and Symbols

of the White Lotus Sutra', and he takes us through some of the more important of these. For example, the parable of the burning house and the myth of the return journey are both well known in the Buddhist tradition. Sangharakshita does not try to explain them, but instead opens them out, revealing glimpses of the layers of meaning inherent in them and giving us a taste of some of the implications of these incidents for our own spiritual lives. Thus, rather than leaving us feeling that we now 'understand' what these mean, we are led to reflect on the stories themselves and to contemplate their meaning on ever-deeper levels.

One of the central episodes of the sutra is the appearance of the great stupa of the Buddha Abundant Treasures. This is the focus of a chapter entitled 'Five Element Symbolism and the Stupa'. Here, Sangharakshita reviews and comments on the stupa in the Buddhist tradition as a whole, teaching us a great deal about Buddhism and one of its main symbols, while providing the background necessary for understanding the appearance of the stupa in the text itself. Thus we range over the forms of stupas in South-East Asia and also their development in Nepal and Tibet, as well as considering the Chinese pagoda. In the seminar extracts, we are urged not only to understand the significance of stupas, but even to build them. I was left with a wonderful image of stupas arising everywhere, to be worshipped and circumambulated by devotees and creating a bridge, both architecturally and in terms of devotional practice, between Buddhism in the East and in the West.

Apart from dealing with the White Lotus Sutra specifically, the book also



contains a wealth of incidental material of great interest to any practising Buddhist. This includes discussions on the nature and form of visualization practices; on sacred relics; on the inadequacy of translating *akasha* as 'space'; on guardian angels; on the relationship between different views of reality such as mutual interpenetration, *shunyata*, and conditioned co-

production, and much more. Finally, the appearance of the book lives up to its content. As well as the striking cover, the pages are decorated with motifs taken from lino-cuts. These were designed specially for this book, but are suggestive of traditional Chinese and Japanese illustrations. They are a fitting setting for *The Drama of Cosmic Enlightenment*, which is itself a worthy companion to the White Lotus Sutra.

I would like to urge Buddhists to buy this book and also a copy of the White Lotus Sutra itself (a recommended translation is the one published as *The Threefold Lotus Sutra* by Weatherhill/Kosei). Read the two in conjunction and you will find a combination to which you can return again and again for inspiration, understanding, and practical advice on how to lead the spiritual life. □

Virachitta

# Towards a Western Buddhism: A Conference with His Holiness the Dalai Lama

In March 1993 a group of twenty-two Western Buddhist teachers from all the major Buddhist traditions of Europe and America met in Dharamsala, India, with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, to discuss matters concerning the teaching of Buddhism in the West. Dharmachari Kulananda reports.

There is something of a boom-town feeling to McLeod Ganj, high above the North Indian town of Dharamsala. Home to His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama and a large portion of the Tibetan refugee community in India, one approaches it up a twisting, narrow mountain road, passing a wide variety of temples, monasteries, pilgrims, tourists, and travellers to arrive finally in its untidy chaos of thrown-together buildings, muddied streets, and makeshift shops and restaurants. Stupas, temples, guest-houses. All the panoply of Tibetan life and Western 'traveller' culture is there: incense, prayer-wheels

chow-mein, and cappuccino.

And behind all this crowd and chaos the white Himalayas silently tower. Hawks, eagles, and vultures wheel in the clear skies above the pine forests. Prayer flags flutter and the romance of Buddhist mystery faintly scents the mountain breeze.

It was an appropriate setting for our conference where, possibly for the first time in history, representatives of the Theravada; Rinzai and Soto Zen; Gelugpa, Kagyupa, and Nyingmapas; and some of the emerging Western traditions gathered together in open forum to discuss matters of crucial interest to all of them. The ten day meeting focused on a single theme—How is this new generation of Western-born Dharma teachers, designated by their respective traditions to carry on the Teachings, going to present the Dharma in the contemporary West?

To quote from the pre-conference brochure: 'Attuned to the particular needs of their own Western culture and students, each is

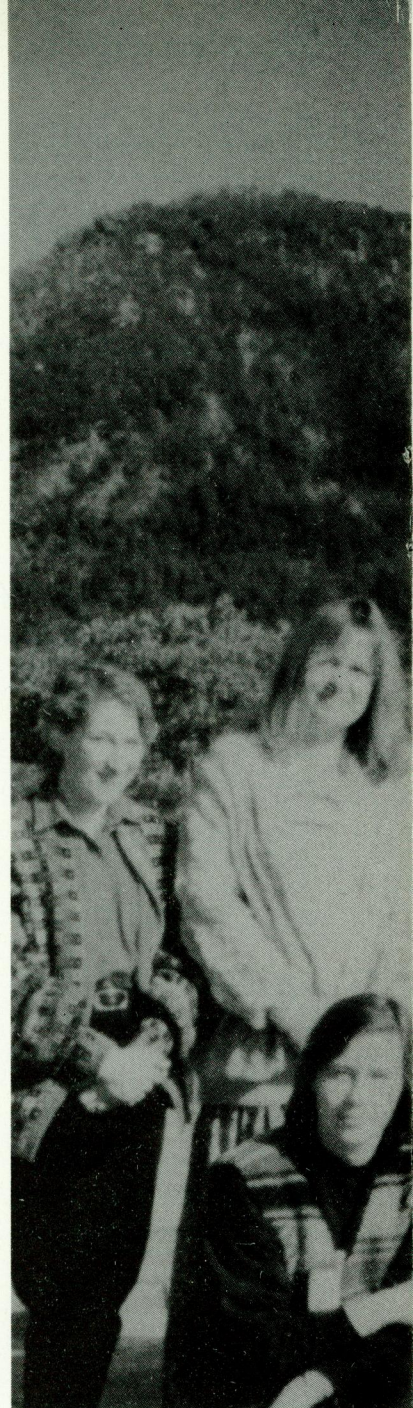
Buddhism....' This could almost be a manifesto of the FWBO, and so it was with high anticipation that I made my way up that mountain road to join in the meeting. And I was not disappointed—most of the teachers present had been practising the Dharma for at least twenty years and the fruits of their practice showed in the concern and attentiveness they brought to the meeting.

We spent the first few days getting to know one another—discussing in large and small groups and talking over meals—and then we got down to the business of honing down the issues we wished to raise with His Holiness. It soon became clear that we were meeting against a backdrop of what many present saw to be a time of crisis in Western Buddhism. This seemed to be most acutely felt by the North American teachers, where several Dharma groups have recently been rocked by scandals involving, variously, sexual misconduct, alcoholism, misappropriation of funds, and the misuse of power.

The middle four days were given to meetings with His Holiness. Over the course of these each teacher had the opportunity at least once to make a ten or twenty minute presentation of an issue to His Holiness, who then had the chance to respond as he saw fit. This led to some vigorous and startling interactions.

Bodhin Kjolhede Sensei, Roshi Kapleau's successor at the Rochester Zen Center in

striving to translate and transmit the Teachings in a way that keeps them alive, fresh and relevant to modern life. Such innovations may well set the tone for generations to come, in creating a uniquely Western



New York State, spoke of the crisis in American Zen circles, focusing on the issues of alcoholism and sexual misconduct amongst teachers, some of whom claim that if one has 'Buddha-Mind' then anything goes. His Holiness questioned the qualifications of such teachers. He insisted that charisma was not indicative of spiritual attainment and asserted that anyone who claimed that their insight took them beyond the practice of the ethical precepts had probably misunderstood the Dharma. This led on to a discussion of the same issues as they effect the Tibetan Buddhist community in the West and the suggestion that perhaps His Holiness might join in with some Zen teachers to

18



His Holiness the Dalai Lama invites questions, meets Kulananda, and (far right) poses with the teachers

and offering scarves, knick-knack and 'ethnic' clothing shops, banana cakes, tsampa,



issue a joint statement on the subject. 'But' His Holiness lamented 'my relations with the Pope are closer than with Zen or Theravada....'

His Holiness then tried to get to grips with the notion of 'crazy wisdom' which he thought a little bizarre. It is an idea used in some Western 'Tantric' circles to suggest a level of behaviour so deeply founded in Wisdom and Compassion as to be beyond all apparently conventional restraint.

His Holiness made the point that in the Tantric rites which involve sexual acts, faeces, urine, semen, flesh, and alcohol are all experienced as *amrita*—sacred nectar. And people who claimed to use sex in this way would very likely be unwilling to take faeces or

urine into their mouths. Amid some hilarity Prof. Robert Thurman from Columbia University proposed the 'taste test' to sort the true 'crazy wisdom' masters from the merely lecherous.

'How many people do you know who can really perform these Tantric rituals these days?' asked Ani-la Tenzin Palmo, a British bhikshuni.

His Holiness reply was succinct—'Zero.'

But there is the problem which some present felt quite deeply: they and others have strong Tantric bonds of allegiance with some of these teachers—what should they do? Again His Holiness was to the point: 'Pack your bags....'

I made a presentation of the FWBO as an example of adaptation to modern

Western culture; Stephen Batchelor, a British writer and teacher, presented some of the history of Buddhism's adaptation to host cultures; and the Ven. Ananda Olande, a Dutch bhikkhu based in Sri Lanka, developed the same theme: what must we keep, what can we drop?

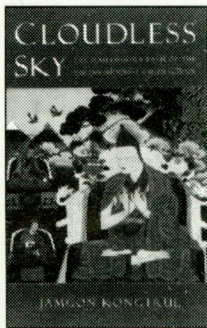
His Holiness: 'It is important to take the essence and adapt it to your life and culture.... There can be Buddhists who don't even believe in re-birth. Going for Refuge is the primary matter....'

Sylvia Wetzel, who teaches in Germany, opened her presentation by inviting His Holiness to join in a new visualization practice. She invited him to visualize a Buddhist world where the

genders were reversed—Tara was the main Buddha-rupa and all the main thangkas on the walls depicted various female Arhats. Women proudly filed into the shrine-room first, followed eventually by a trail of meek and insecure men. The rimpoches were all women and when the men occasionally complained about their inferior status they were advised to 'meditate on sunyata'.

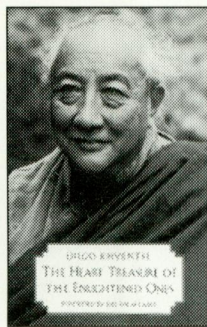
This strong and startling presentation was followed by another by Ani-la Tenzin Palmo on the many difficulties she and others had encountered in their monastic training in Tibetan Buddhist institutions. This brought His Holiness to the point of tears. Ani-la Thubten Chodron, [continued on page 21]

# Shambhala



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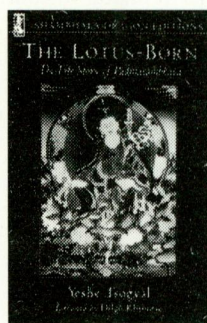
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from Seattle, made a very gentle critique of what she saw as a strong gender bias in the Tibetan monastic sangha, and the Ven. Thubten Pende, who is based in France, spoke of the sense of a lack of spiritual community and the problems of isolation and loneliness in Western Tibetan monastic circles. He then made a heartfelt plea: 'How can we change the Vinaya rule so as to make monks and nuns equal?'

'Yes,' His Holiness replied 'I too find this embarrassing ... but I can't change this alone. We must call for a Maha-Sangha Council.' Well, let's see.

Our four days with His Holiness were a mine of precious gems. We ended our conference by drafting an Open Letter and by forming the 'Western Buddhist Teachers Network' which hopes to keep this process alive by creating forums where Western Dharma teachers can continue to meet and discuss. For, as much as anything, the fact of our coming together in the



*His Holiness: 'It is important to take the essence and adapt it to your life and culture.... Going for Refuge is the primary matter...'*

spirit of trust, mutual respect, and openness is a great ray of hope for the future of the Dharma in the West. □

Kulananda

From 16–19 March 1993 a meeting was held in Dharamsala, India, between His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama and a group of twenty-two Western Dharma teachers from the major Buddhist traditions in Europe and America. After four days of presentations and discussion we agreed on the following points:

1 Our first responsibility as Buddhists is to work towards creating a better world for all forms of life. The promotion of Buddhism as a religion is a secondary concern. Kindness and compassion, the furthering of peace and harmony, as well as tolerance and respect for other religions, should be the three guiding principles of our actions.

2 In the West, where so many different Buddhist traditions exist side by side, one needs to be constantly on one's guard against the danger of sectarianism. Such a divisive attitude is often the result of failing to appreciate anything outside one's own tradition. Teachers from all schools would therefore benefit greatly from studying and gaining some practical experience of the teachings of other traditions.

3 Teachers should also be open to beneficial influences from secular and other religious traditions. For example, the insights and techniques of contemporary psychotherapy can often be of great value in reducing the suffering experienced by students. At the same time, efforts to develop psychologically oriented practices from within the existing Buddhist traditions should be encouraged.

4 One's position as a teacher arises in dependence on the request of one's students, not simply on one's being appointed as such by a higher authority. Great care must therefore be exercised in selecting an appropriate teacher. Sufficient time must be given to making this choice, which should be based on personal investigation, reason and experience. Students should be warned against the dangers of falling prey to charisma, charlatanism, or exoticism.

5 Particular concern was expressed about unethical conduct among teachers. In recent years both Asian and Western teachers have been involved in scandals concerning sexual misconduct with their students, abuse of alcohol and drugs, misappropriation of funds, and misuse of power. This has resulted in widespread damage both to the Buddhist community and the individuals involved. Each student must be encouraged to take responsible measures to confront teachers with unethical aspects of their conduct. If the teacher shows no sign of reform, students should not hesitate to publicize any unethical behaviour of which there is irrefutable evidence. This should be

done irrespective of other beneficial aspects of his or her work and of one's spiritual commitment to that teacher. It should also be made clear in any publicity that such conduct is not in conformity with the Buddhist teachings. No matter what level of spiritual attainment a teacher has, or claims to have reached, no person can stand above the norms of ethical conduct. In order for the Buddhadharmas not to be brought into disrepute and to avoid any harm to students and teachers, it is necessary that all teachers at least live by the five lay precepts. In cases where ethical standards have been infringed, compassion and care should be shown towards both teacher and student.

6 Just as the Dharma has adapted itself to many different cultures throughout its history in Asia, so it is bound to be transformed according to conditions in the West. Although the principles of the Dharma are timeless, we need to exercise careful discrimination in distinguishing between essential teachings and cultural trappings. However, confusion may arise due to various reasons. There may be conflict in loyalty between commitment to one's Asian teachers and responsibility to one's Western students. Likewise, one may encounter disagreement between the respective value of monastic and lay practice. Furthermore, we affirmed the need for equality between the sexes in all aspects of Buddhist theory and practice.

The Western teachers were encouraged by His Holiness to take greater responsibility in creatively resolving the issues that were raised. For many, His Holiness's advice served as a profound confirmation of their own feelings, concerns and actions. In addition to being able to discuss issues frankly with His Holiness the conference served as a valuable forum for teachers from different traditions to exchange views. We are already planning future meetings with His Holiness and will invite other colleagues who were not present in Dharamsala to participate in the on-going process. His Holiness intends to invite more heads of different Asian Buddhist traditions to attend future meetings.

Signed,

His Holiness Tenzin Gyatso, the XIV Dalai Lama  
 Fred von Allmen, Ven. Ajahn Amaro, Ven. Olande Ananda, Martine Batchelor, Stephen Batchelor, Alex Berzin, Ven. Thubten Chodron (Cherry Green), Lama Drupgyu (Tony Chapman), Lopon Claude d'Estree, Edie Irwin, Junpo Sensei (Denis Kelly), Brendan Lee Kennedy, Bodhin Kjolhede Sensei, Jack Kornfield, Dharmachari Kulananda, Jakusho Bill Kwong Roshi, Lama Namgyal (Daniel Boschero), Ven. Tenzin Palmo, Ven. Thubten Pende (James Dougherty), Lama Surya Das (Jeffrey Miller), Robert Thurman, Sylvia Wetzel.

The open letter

## SANGHARAKSHITA IN THE USA

*Sangharakshita returned to England from America some days after the deadline for this issue had passed. We were therefore unable to interview him for our usual 'Sangharakshita Diary' feature. Here instead is a fairly brief report of his six week visit to the USA. In the next issue we will carry an interview with him, which will include fuller details of his important meetings with Buddhist leaders on the West Coast.*

## ORDINATIONS AT ARYALOKA

In May, Aryaloka Retreat Center was the scene of an historic event in the development of the FWBO. For the first time on American soil Americans were ordained into the Western Buddhist Order. Sangharakshita was present to perform their public ordinations on the first part

the following evening Sangharakshita gave a talk entitled 'The Rain of the Dharma', and launched his book *The Drama of Cosmic Enlightenment*.

On the 22nd, two ordination retreats began, one for men at Aryaloka, and another for women at a nearby location. On the evening of Sunday 27th, Subhuti conducted Alan Sponberg's private ordination ceremony, while Sangharakshita performed Carol Forest's. (Coincidentally, on that same day, another American, Phil Travers, was receiving his private ordination across the Atlantic at Guhyaloka. He is now Dharmachari Marapa.)

About seventy people attended the public ordination ceremony, which was held in the beautiful circular shrine-room at Aryaloka on Sunday 30th. This

the airport, he and the six Order members who were accompanying him joined the Bay Area FWBO for a five-day retreat at the Vajrapani Institute, a Tibetan centre in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Thirty-three people attended the retreat, and not only had the chance for some one-to-one with Sangharakshita, but were able to enjoy talks on the Five Pillars of the FWBO by Paramabodhi, Paramananda, Parami, and Manjuvajra. A special highlight of the event was a poetry reading by Sangharakshita. On the last day he conducted the mitra ceremonies for Susan Michael, Lynne Gorham, and Evonne Chen.

Following the retreat Sangharakshita spent a whirlwind several days in the Bay Area meeting with a number of prominent local Buddhists. Among these were Yvonne Rand—who was closely connected with Lama Govinda and Dr Conze—and Tenshin Reb Anderson, an abbot of the San Francisco Zen Center. The Zen Center, where Sangharakshita also met up with Ananda Dalenberg and Michael Wenger, arranged a reception for him, and hosted a well attended lecture and book launch. In the lecture, Sangharakshita spoke, amongst other things, about the dangers of 'Cotton Candy Buddhism'—which is sweet, sticky, and bulky, but not very nourishing, and the 'acid' rain of the Dharma—which is a Dharma polluted by non-Dharmic elements.

Sangharakshita visited Jack Kornfield at Spirit Rock, the retreat centre of Insight Meditation West. In Berkeley he was given a guided tour of Dharma Publications headquarters by Jack Petranker and Elizabeth

Cook, and visited the Institute of Buddhist Studies where he spent time with Dr Ron Nakasone, Dr Ken Tanaka, the Ven. Sheelawimala, and Professor Houston Smith and his wife. Professor Smith, author of *The Religions of Man*, and Sangharakshita have been in contact over the decades, but this was the first time they had met.

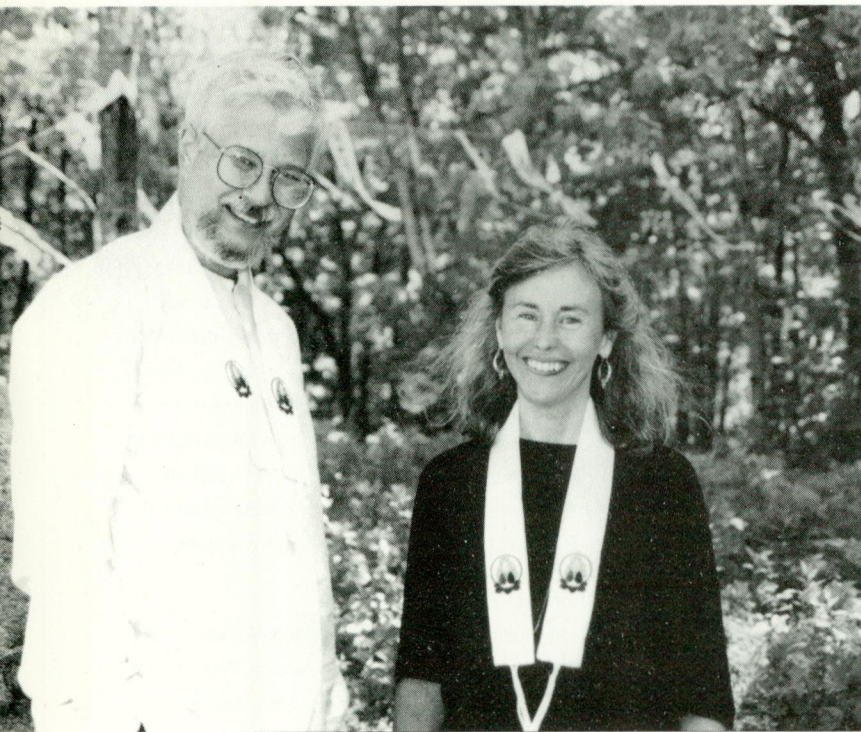
On 10 June Sangharakshita led a dedication ceremony and puja at the FWBO's San Francisco Buddhist Center. Sangharakshita explained that he had written the ceremony twenty-six years earlier for the dedication of the first FWBO centre in London. This occasion was particularly significant because it coincided with the official beginning of the new local Order chapter, with Karunadevi—largely responsible for the FWBO's presence in San Francisco—now ordained, and Paramananda and Paramabodhi newly arrived from London to live and work there.

## INTO THE NORTH WEST

From the Bay Area, Sangharakshita and his companions flew to Washington State to join the north-west regional sangha on a five-day retreat at Cloud Mountain Retreat Center. This was organized by Dharmacharis Aryadaka and Ratnottara, and covered the theme of the Ten Pillars of Buddhism.

After the retreat, Sangharakshita took a trip to Portland. An avid reader and book collector, he was keen to visit Powell's Bookstore, a 'shop' which occupies an entire city block. Whilst there he had the great pleasure of meeting up with an old friend Robert Gerke. Robert, who worked on the creation of the London Buddhist Centre, now manages Powell's book purchases.

In Seattle, where Aryadaka and his wife Sandra have established an FWBO centre, Sangharakshita attended a reception where he met, among others, Thubten Chodron and the Rev. Don Castro, the minister of the



of his USA tour.

Sangharakshita, accompanied by Prasannasiddhi and Parami, had arrived at Aryaloka on 19 May, and was accommodated in the solitary retreat cabin by the river that runs through the Center's land. A welcoming evening, given by local friends on the 20th, included songs, music, and poetry recitations. On

was obviously a very happy occasion, and Manjuvajra, the Center's chairman, had the joyful honour of announcing the two new names. Carol became Karunadevi and Alan became Saramati.

## ON THE WEST COAST

Sangharakshita flew to San Francisco on 1 June. From



**Retreatants at Aryaloka's ordination weekend and (left) Saramati and Karunadevi**

local temple of the Buddhist Churches of America. He and Rev. Castro met up again the next day at the temple. Over the years, Rev. Castro has shown a particular interest in our Movement's work in India. That evening Sangharakshita gave a public talk and book launch at the Elliott Bay Book Company Store, which 160 people attended.

From Seattle, Sangharakshita and his companions drove the 500

miles, over the Cascades and through sagebrush desert, to the Rocky Mountains, and Missoula, Montana, where Saramati and his wife Jean have established a branch of the Movement. As well as meeting a number of Friends, and taking part in a discussion session and a meditation and puja evening, he enthralled a packed house with a lively talk about his life and work.

From Missoula, Sangharakshita returned to Aryaloka for a few days 'debriefing' and rest before returning to the UK. □

#### COMPARING NOTES WITH AN OLD FRIEND

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On 5 May, shortly before leaving for the USA, Sangharakshita enjoyed an interesting visit from an old friend, Lawrence Mills, better known as the monk and writer Bhikkhu Khantipalo.

The two had not met for thirty years. When he was a Theravada samanera Khantipalo stayed with Sangharakshita in Kalimpong, and accompanied him on a lecture tour among Maharashtra's ex-untouchable Buddhists. Sangharakshita remembers that while in Kalimpong Khantipalo spent much of his time writing a book, entitled *Tolerance*, which was later published by Rider.

Khantipalo has lived in Australia for twenty years, where he was abbot of the Wat Buddhadat centre, just outside Sydney.

Having disrobed last year, Lawrence Mills is now the disciple of a Tibetan teacher.

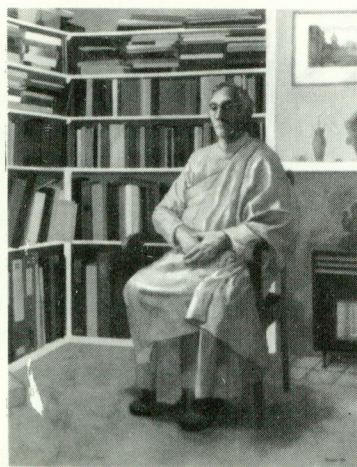
Sangharakshita was extremely pleased to see him—and to compare notes with him—during his month-long visit to London. □

## ... AND AT THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

A portrait of Sangharakshita is on show at the National Portrait Gallery in London for three months over the summer. The artist is Alison Harper, a mitra at the London Buddhist Centre, who entered it for the annual NPG portrait competition. It is displayed along with the work of fifty other finalists who were selected from a field of

over 700 entries in an exhibition sponsored by BP.

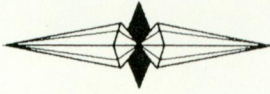
A previous portrait of Sangharakshita by Alison Harper appeared on the cover of his volume of memoirs, *Facing Mount Kanchenjunga*. The picture on exhibition is in oils and evolved through four attempts painted over five years. It shows



Sangharakshita in the study of his flat at the London Buddhist Centre; the background includes a great deal of significant detail. Alison comments that she sees the portrait as 'an expression of my respect and gratitude to him as a teacher'.

The portrait will be on show from Friday 4 June to Sunday 3 September. □

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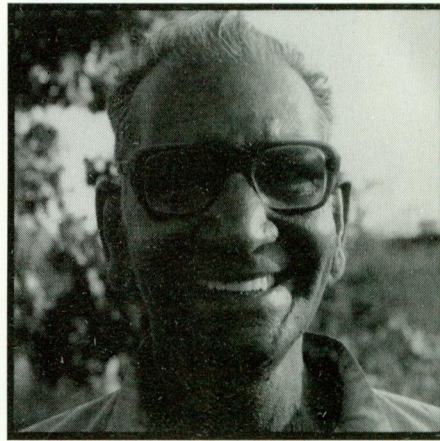
On 22 April this year Dharmachari Sanghasena died in the Nagpur Medical College Hospital, aged 70. Lokamitra writes:

'Originally from Yewatmal in the heart of the Vidharba region of Maharashtra, he spent most of his life in Poona supporting himself on the pitiful wages earned through making *bidis* (country cigarettes). He was

up and on the move by 6 or 7a.m. Sanghasena was always the last to bed and the first up, always getting in his hour of meditation and arranging our breakfast before leaving. He never seemed to rest. He would arrange everything: food, travel, rest, and the talk, while at the same time inspiring local people about how at last, through the TBMSG, they could

understand the Dhamma.

'He was very much appreciated by all, and seemed to have a special skill in helping to solve family problems. He could walk into anyone's house and, even if the owners did not know him, he would be appreciated and



very involved in politics and trade union activities until he came in contact with TBMSG in 1981. This gave him a new lease of life, and he immediately devoted himself to organizing lectures and telling people about our activities. In 1983 he was ordained at Bhaja by Sangharakshita.

'Soon after his first contact he started organizing tours of Vidharba. This area is the centre of the new Buddhist movement in India, but until then TBMSG had not made contact with it.

From 1982 until 1987, once or twice a year, I went with him around the towns and villages of Vidharba. This is where I saw Sanghasena in his element. We would have two, sometimes three, lectures a day, usually a few hours apart with a bus ride between them. He would have organized everything beforehand (which is quite a task) although the final arrangements were often not made until we arrived. Of course things would be late, but it never seemed to matter. Sometimes we would get to bed at midnight and be

looked after—despite being at times very critical. He would be especially critical if the men of the house were drunkards or claimed to be Buddhists while keeping pictures of the old gods in the house.

'It was as a result of these tours that we were able to start regular retreats in Vidharba and, eventually, a TBMSG centre in Wardha. At the same time, Sanghasena continued travelling from village to village giving people confidence in the Dhamma. He became known by many as "the lion of Vidharba".

'Sanghasena was very poor and his family had many difficulties. He faced up to these and numerous other problems, but I never saw him feeling sorry for himself. He was always bright and energetic in a way that inspired me and put many much younger people to shame. I have lost a valued friend and the Order and Buddhist movement in Maharashtra a hero. I hope we can soon fulfil his desire for a TBMSG centre in his home town of Yewatmal.' □



## NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN INDIA

In May this year three Dharmacharis moved to Agra, in Uttar Pradesh, to start regular TBMSG activities. The city has the largest concentration of Buddhists anywhere in India outside Maharashtra—an estimated 100,000, most of whom come from the 'chambar' caste of leather workers and most of whom are very poor. Order members have been visiting Agra regularly for the last eighteen months and, in June, Bahujan Hitay opened a hostel there for twenty-six boys.

At around the same time two Dharmacharis moved to the city of Amaravati in Andhra Pradesh. There has been a very well attended Dhamma class in the city for over three years and there are already fourteen mitras, so activities now look poised for rapid development. In June a hostel was opened in Amaravati for twenty-six boys.

Meanwhile, a hostel for forty boys opened in Sholapur, Maharashtra, the result of co-operation between the Dr Ambedkar Memorial Trust and TBMSG. The town has four Dharmacharis but no centre of its own, so the new hostel will provide a focus for their work. There are now some sixteen Bahujan Hitay hostels catering for some 575 boys and girls. □

**Opening the hostel at Sholapur and (below) Buddhists discuss economics in Thailand**



## ENGAGED BUDDHISTS IN BANGKOK

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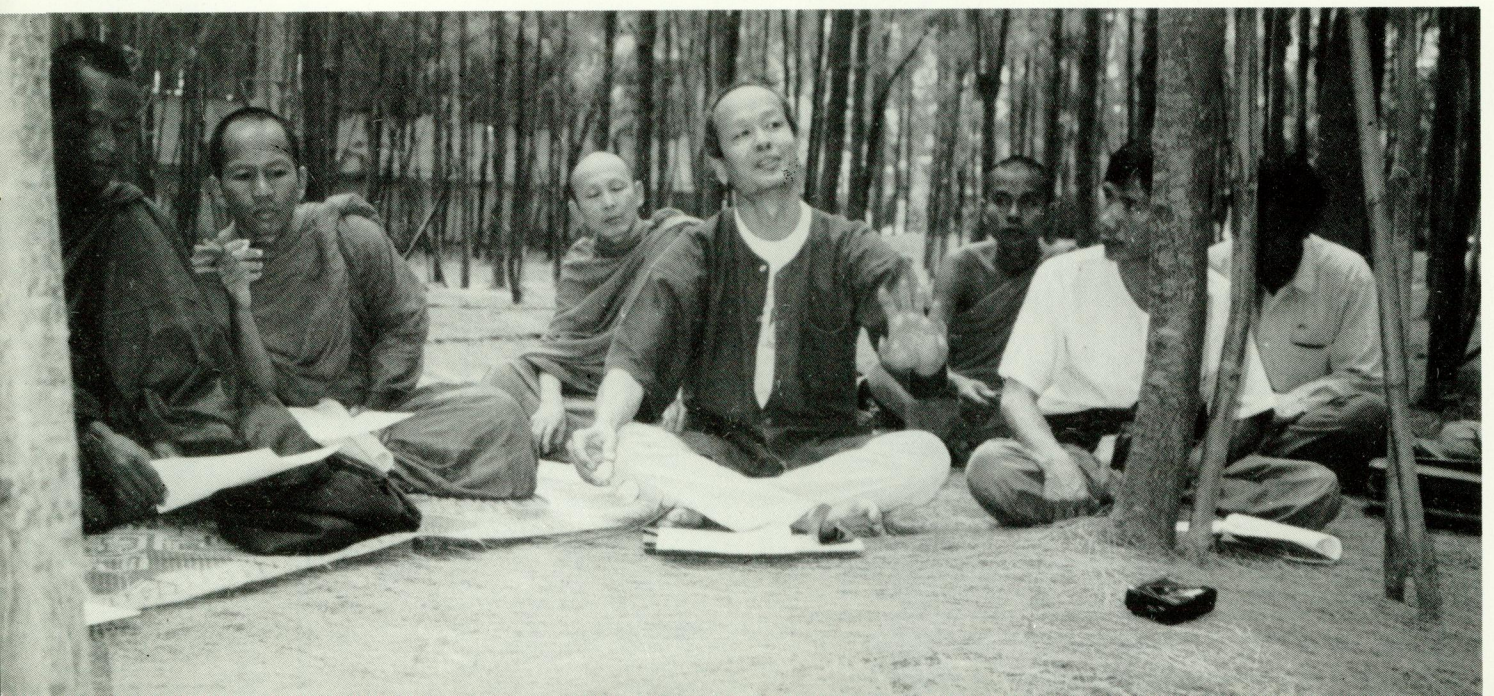
In March Kulananda attended the fifth annual conference of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB) in Damnoensaduak in Thailand.

INEB brings together people and organizations from around the world that are trying to find ways of applying Buddhism to social and political conditions. The one hundred or so participants at the conference

were drawn mainly from South-East Asia, but they also included Westerners, and the topics discussed reflected the variety of the participants. These topics ranged from the adaptation of Buddhist principles to the American cultural context to the possibility of non-violent resistance to oppressive political regimes.

Kulananda gave a presentation on the work of the FWBO, the Karuna Trust, and Bahujan Hitay. He also agreed to co-ordinate a working party on Buddhist economic theory, and hopes to edit a book on Buddhist economics.

Kulananda is hopeful that the FWBO will be able to have a continuing positive involvement with INEB. □



# PHILOSOPHY, RELIGION, AND THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

In 1991 Dharmachari Vipassi, a lecturer in philosophy at Liverpool University, hosted a conference under the auspices of the Royal Institute of Philosophy. The conference, which addressed topics such as the role of philosophy as a route to wisdom and the nature of love and its relation to mindfulness, was attended by philosophers from all the mainstreams of theistic thought as well as by Buddhists.

The conference papers have been edited by Vipassi and published as a book, *Philosophy, Religion and the Spiritual Life* (Cambridge University Press, £13.95).

Paul Williams, the author of *Mahayana Buddhism*, contributes a fascinating article on 'seeing things as they really are' in which he describes the seminal eighth century debate between the Madhyamika teacher Kamalashila and the Ch'an monk Mahayana.

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In his introduction, Vipassi calls into question the very basis on which philosophers discuss religion. 'There is a familiar conceptual slope down which philosophers of a certain temperament slide when they come to the analysis of religion, and perhaps they do so on purpose, because we like to bring discussion round to what we can talk about.... The philosopher slides from 'religion' to 'religious belief' and from that to 'belief in God' and the latter becomes, imperceptibly, 'belief in the

existence of God' so that philosophical reflection about religion is transformed without a pause into reflections on the existence of God.'

Vipassi's own contribution to the debate is entitled 'Facing Truths: Ethics and

the Spiritual Life'. In this article he continues his attempt to naturalize into a Western philosophical context concepts derived from the practice of Buddhist meditation.

This September Vipassi will

be in India for another meeting. It will be the third in a series, arranged by him, which brings together Eastern and Western philosophers for informal meetings and discussions on areas of mutual interest and concern. □

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## ASHVAGHOSHA COMES TO THE WEST

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As *Golden Drum* reported in the Autumn 1992 issue, Jayamati, a former theatre director and a senior member of the Western Buddhist Order, recommenced his drama work in the course of a recent visit to India. Having started out with the intention of encouraging creative expression among the people involved with TBMSG, he struck on the idea of using story-telling as a simple but powerful medium which would enable people to express themselves and communicate the Dharma in an accessible way. Now he has returned to the West and formed a small troupe who aim to develop something parallel to the Indian work which will be applicable to Western circumstances and experience.

Jayamati returned from India in September and by January he had handed over his remaining responsibilities at the London Buddhist Centre. He formed a team including Prasannaraja, Yashomitra, and Alayavajra to work initially for a three week period culminating in a series of 'performances' at FWBO centres and a National Order Weekend. Jayamati writes:

'This exploratory period revealed that to make story-telling a viable means of

communication in the West one had to do more than revive the traditional stories of Western cultural tradition.

'The stories had to be dusted down and re-invented to release their former potency. Likewise it was not enough to tell stories because they were old and established. New stories had to be found that particularly addressed the issues that engaged us in our twentieth century technological society. Equally, new ways had to be found to engage a modern audience which might not readily respond to an overture starting "Once upon a time..."'

The team of four had such a powerful experience during the initial period that they have all decided to commit themselves to the Ashvaghosha project for an indefinite period.

The troupe is now looking for ways of communicating the Dharma to people regardless of their involvement with Buddhism. Story-telling is a fundamental medium of communication in all civilizations, so if we can define the crucial stories we can begin to speak the language of our popular culture.' □

Jayamati tells stories at an open-air festival in London

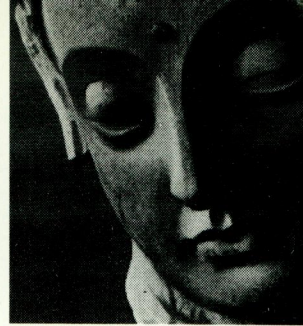


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## FWBO ARTS

FWBO Arts is the registered charity which acts as an umbrella organization for many of the arts activities within the FWBO. Past activities include organizing retreats and producing plays, and it has overall responsibility for the London Buddhist Arts Centre in Bethnal Green. For more information contact Kovida at the Order Office at Padmaloka. □

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#### the retreat

**A retreat is an ideal situation in which to take a fresh look at yourself and your life. On retreat you can relax and enjoy yourself. You can learn to meditate, or take your meditation further with the help of experienced teachers. This can help you develop clarity, confidence, energy, positive emotion – even a deep insight into yourself. A retreat is an ideal situation in which you can grow.**

#### the programme

The programme is designed especially for people relatively new to meditation and thinking of attending their first longer retreat. Every day will begin with a period of meditation practice, followed by a short work-period after breakfast. Further sessions of meditation will follow. There will be discussion groups every day, giving you the opportunity to talk about the retreat and to get to know some of the other people better.

In the afternoon, there will be an optional yoga period led by a qualified instructor. The programme will include 'communication exercises,' which are simple techniques for encouraging our awareness and appreciation of others.

There will also be time to enjoy the countryside. In the evenings, there will be a series of talks by members of the team, and an optional puja. A puja is a devotional practice, intended to help us to strengthen our emotional connection with our ideals and aspirations.

#### the team

The retreat will be led by members of the Western Buddhist Order, who have been living and practising the Buddhist life for a number of years and have experience in various aspects of the Buddhist tradition, especially in meditation.

#### information

The retreat will be held at Nanhurst, a school in the Surrey countryside near Guildford.

**The dates** of the retreat are Aug 24-Sept 3 inclusive; Tuesday afternoon to Friday morning. There are places available for those unable to attend the whole retreat. However, priority will be given to ten day bookings.

**Accommodation** will be provided, normally in men's or women's shared rooms. The food will all be vegetarian, and we can accommodate special diets such as vegans.

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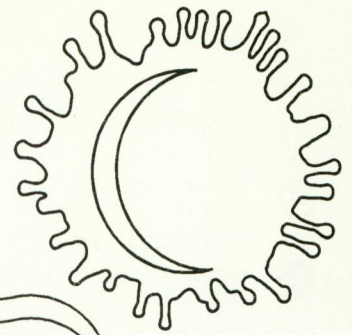
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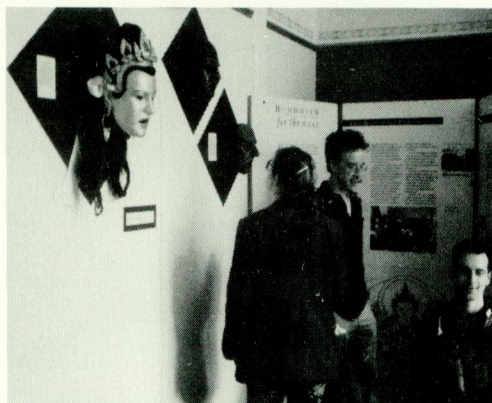
Last autumn Bodywise, the natural health centre associated with the London Buddhist Centre, was awarded a grant of nearly £10,000 to provide treatment to elderly patients referred to them by local National Health Service surgeries. Six months on the scheme has proved a great success. Patients have been referred for treatment in acupuncture, osteopathy, massage, and reflexology.

Many of the clients have said how much they appreciate the treatments. They each have five sessions lasting forty-five minutes. This gives time for the practitioner to give them detailed information about whatever ailments they are suffering from. They have also reported benefits from the self-help advice the practitioners can give and from the hands-on contact involved in much of the treatment.

In addition to the individual treatments, there has also been a yoga class for the over-sixties at a local health centre as part of the project. The teacher reports a great deal of enthusiasm from participants: they are asking themselves why it is that they feel more energized, and better in themselves, than they do after the usual keep-fit class.

Initially, the project is being funded for a year, but staff at Bodywise are confident that they can demonstrate that the treatments they provide are cost-effective, giving value for money and providing lasting benefits without recourse to drugs. They are hopeful that the funding will be renewed and that the project will continue to be an important interface between the people involved with the LBC and the local community. □

(Below) Bodywise yoga class and (from top) Cambridge Centre opening, Chintamani's masks on display, and the flood at Padmaloka



## A NEW CENTRE IN CAMBRIDGE

A new Buddhist centre has opened in Cambridge, three doors down from the previous centre, at 25 Newmarket Road. The shrine-room and reception rooms are much larger than their predecessors at No.19. The basement shrine-room is decorated with 'distressed' yellow walls and a frieze of waist-high lotuses. The shrine centres on a rupa made by Dharmachari Aloka.

The Centre was inaugurated with an Open Day which attracted over a hundred newcomers, many of whom have subsequently attended classes and courses. Included in the Open day was an exhibition of masks made by Chintamani for FWBO Arts. □

## FLOOD AT PADMALOKA

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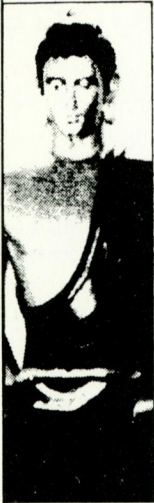
A flash flood left Padmaloka in a state of chaos recently when the field adjacent to the retreat centre flooded, sending a small river through the buildings for a couple of hours. The fire brigade were called to help and the damage was limited but, all the same, most of the carpets were ruined and a regional Order weekend had to be cancelled. There was no lasting damage, however, and before long Padmaloka will be fully restored and refurbished. □

## SYDNEY

After six years in rented premises, the Sydney Buddhist Centre has started to raise funds to buy its own centre. The Centre has gained tax deductible status and written to everyone on its mailing list in a search of support and donations. The appeal was formally launched on FWBO Day in April this year and its target is to raise \$100,000 to pay the deposit on a large house in a quiet part of Sydney. □



# VAJRALOKA



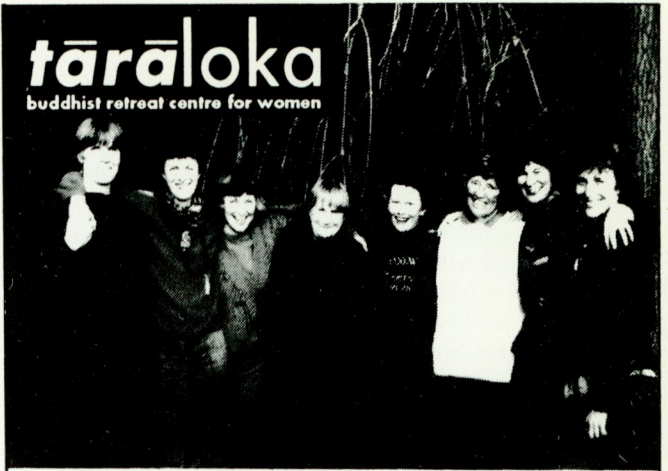
- 30 Jan – 13 Mar **Rainy Season Retreat**  
For men Order members
- 19 Mar – 2 Apr **Brahmaviharas Retreat**
- 9 Apr – 16 Apr **Spring Retreat**
- 16 Apr – 30 Apr **Mindfulness Retreat**
- 7 May – 21 May **Meditation and Insight Retreat**
- 23 May **Open Day**
- 29 May – 1 Jul **Building Project**
- 9 Jul – 23 Jul **'Mandala of Enlightenment'**
- 24 Jul – 3 Aug **Five Spiritual Faculties**
- 6 Aug – 19 Aug **Hot Season Retreat**
- 21 Aug – 4 Sep **Brahmaviharas Retreat**
- 7 Sep – 17 Sep **Meditation Refresher Retreat**
- 17 Sep – 30 Sep **Women's Insight Retreat**  
For women Order members
- 8 Oct – 22 Oct **Men's Insight Retreat**  
For men Order members
- 22 Oct – 5 Nov **Meditation and Insight Retreat**
- 13 Nov – 27 Nov **Mindfulness Retreat**
- 29 Nov – 10 Dec **Teachers' Retreat**  
For men Order members
- 11 Dec – 18 Dec **Open Practice Retreat**
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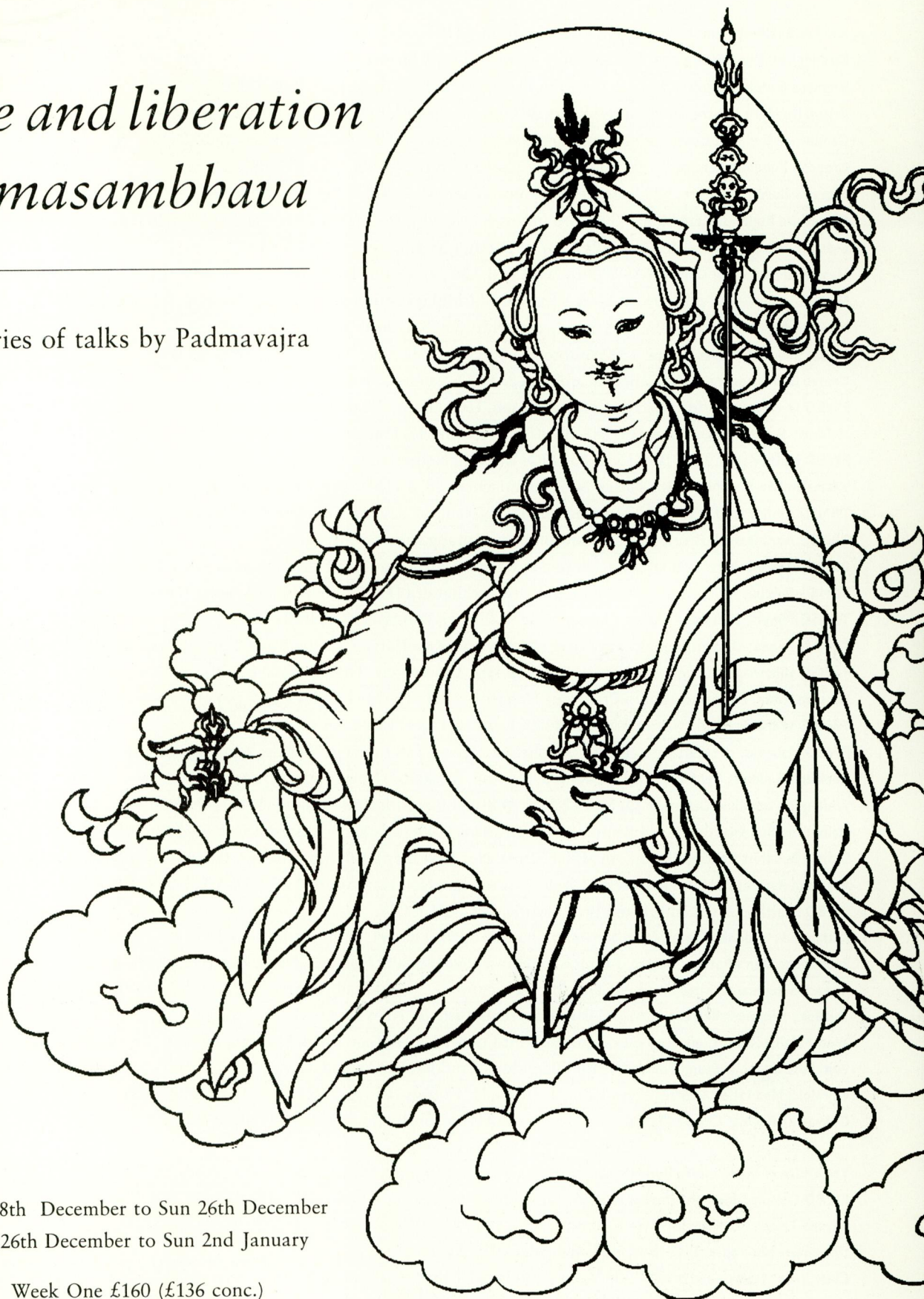
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**Birmingham Buddhist Centre**, 135 Salisbury Road, Moseley, Birmingham, B13 8LA. Tel: 021-449 5279

**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**, 25 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: 071-700 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 Budista de Valencia**, Calle Ciscar 5, pta 3, 46005 Valencia. Tel: 06-374 0564

**FWBO Germany**, Buddhistisches Zentrum Essen, Herkulesstr. 13, 45127 Essen, 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 Dharmachakra Pravartan Mahavihar, Raja Harishchandra Road, Dapodi, Poona 411012, India

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**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**, c/o 5/248 Miller Street, North Sydney 2060, Australia (postal address only). Tel: (02) 958 4705

**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 (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 2LD. Tel: 094875-646

**Water Hall Retreat Centre**, c/o London Buddhist Centre, 51 Roman Road, London, E2 0HU. Tel: 081-981 1225

**Vajrakuta Buddhist Study Centre for Men**, Blaenddol, Treddol, Nr Corwen, Clwyd, LL21 0EN. Tel: 049081-406

**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: 071-700 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

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



# HELP US TO RECLAIM THE TAX YOU PAID ON YOUR GIFT

A covenant is simply a promise to make a regular gift for at least four years. Provided you are a taxpayer, for every £10 you give, we can claim an extra £3.30 from the Inland Revenue (at current income tax rate) - at no extra cost to you. So an annual gift of £120 will actually be worth £480 plus £160 tax to Angulimala over four years. **All you have to do is fill in both forms below (block capitals please) and return them to ANGULIMALA.** And if you don't pay tax, a regular **Banker's Order donation** (please complete Banker's Order form only) is still of enormous benefit to us. Either way, we will ensure that your valuable gift is put to good use.

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of .....  
..... Postcode .....  
hereby covenant that for 4 years (or during my life if shorter) from  
today I will pay to ANGULIMALA the sum which after deduction of  
income tax at the basic rate will be .....  
£ ..... a year, (insert amount of your payment)  
amount in words .....  
Signed and delivered by me .....  
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Witness's signature .....  
Witness's address .....  
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To the Manager of ..... Bank  
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Please pay to National Westminster Bank, Millbank Branch, London  
(56-00-33) for the credit of Angulimala A/c no 11304839  
Annual/Monthly amount in figures and words  
£ ..... (amount in words ..... )  
**starting on** ..... of ..... 19 ..... **and a like sum**  
**\*Annually** on the same date of each of the following  
3 years making 4 payments in all or  
**\*Monthly** on the ..... day of each subsequent month for 4 years  
making 48 payments in all.  
(\* delete where not applicable)  
Name .....  
Your A/c no ..... Date .....  
Signature .....

# Angulimala

## BUDDHA GROVE APPEAL



HELP CREATE A SPACE FOR  
THE BUDDHA IN PRISONS

# Angulimala Buddha Grove Appeal

The Buddha Grove in the grounds of Springhill Open Prison, Buckinghamshire was dedicated on 31st October 1992. This is the first Buddhist Shrine to be dedicated in any prison in the western hemisphere, and it represents the faith and hope of the prisoners whose enthusiasm and work made it possible. Faced with the difficulty of finding somewhere to meditate, inmates at Springhill conceived the idea of a Buddha Grove, and with the invaluable support of Ven, Khemadhammo, the prison authorities, and goodwill of many people, they made their vision a reality.



The Buddha Grove will provide a place for quiet reflection for all prisoners and staff, Buddhist and non-Buddhist alike. Judge Stephen Tumin, in his letter of congratulations, expressed the hope that this would be just the first of many such shrines, and indeed, there is much enthusiasm and support from inmates and staff at other prisons who wish to establish a similar place of meditation of their own. However, all is not plain sailing. Since its inauguration in 1985, Angulimala, the Buddhist prison chaplaincy organisation, has battled against the bureaucracy to gain access to Buddhist prisoners and to get Buddhist Chaplains accredited and able to function within the prison system. Currently there are 36 Buddhist chaplains covering nearly two thirds of the prisons in England and Wales. The chaplains visit prisoners, teach meditation and the basic teachings of Buddhism and offer counselling and help in whatever way they can, often under difficult conditions. Angulimala co-ordinates these activities; provides support for the chaplains; books and literature for prisoners, their families, members and friends; and does all it can to provide aftercare. All these activities have been inspired by the dedication of Ven Khemadhammo and many others who have committed themselves to this work. But now they need your help too if the work is to continue to grow.

The Buddha Grove at Springhill cost £3,200 in materials alone; the costs of importing the rupa were donated. The Governor of Springhill lent the cost of the materials from prison funds. Although Angulimala has now repaid this in full, its reserves are drained and such generous support from the authorities cannot be expected in the future. A tremendous amount has been achieved on very little, but if

## Help Create a space for the Buddha in prisons

further Buddha Groves or shrine rooms are to be established, and the work of Angulimala is to continue to grow, then more financial support is vital.

Already the hope and faith embodied in the first Buddha Grove is inspiring many, not just to try to build other shrines, but to do the work within the heart that frees oneself and others from the imprisonment of greed, hate and delusion.

### How You Can Help.

Angulimala is a registered charity no. 294939. It is funded entirely from donations made by members and friends. Please help by giving whatever you can afford in any of these ways:

**1) GIFT AID.**

If you pay income tax and make a single donation of £250 or more, by completing a Gift Aid form, Angulimala can claim from the inland Revenue the tax paid on your donation. Thus a donation of £300 is worth £400 to Angulimala.

**Please write to ANGULIMALA if you would like a Gift Aid form.**

**2) COVENANTS AND BANKER'S ORDERS.**

A covenanted donation over a period of four years. This will give Angulimala a good financial base and enable it to plan ahead.

See the form overleaf if you would like to make a covenanted donation.

If you do not pay income tax a regular Banker's order donation is of great benefit.

Even £5 a year from enough people will make an enormous difference. (see overleaf)

**3) CASH DONATIONS.**

Please make cheques payable to "ANGULIMALA"

For all correspondence, please write to:

**ANGULIMALA  
c/o The Forest Hermitage,  
Lower Fulbrook,  
Warwick. CV35 8AS  
Tel: (0926) 624385**

As well as financial help, ANGULIMALA needs members to support its work in a variety of practical ways. If you would be able to offer assistance or would just like more information about the work of ANGULIMALA, please tick the box and send this with your name and address for a leaflet.



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With thanks for your contribution

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*With Compliments*