

GOLDEN DRUM

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SEEDS
OF A
NEW
SOCIETY



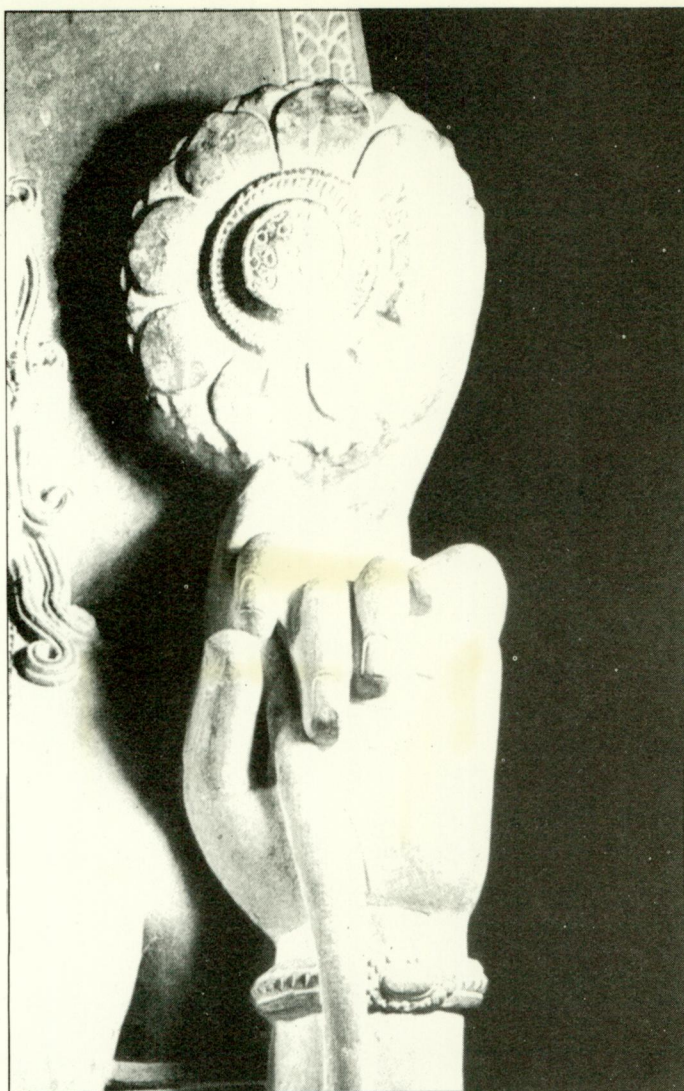
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*t*he cover illustration shows a lotus in the hand of Avalokitesvara, the Bodhisattva of Compassion.

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SEEDS OF A NEW SOCIETY

As the last issue of *Golden Drum* made clear, Buddhists cannot ignore the fact that they live in and form part of a wider world. They may feel in sympathy with the forces at large in their surrounding culture or they may not, but they cannot pretend that the world around them does not exist, or that they are immune from its distractions and dangers, deaf and blind to its tensions and tragedies.

Anyone committed to developing such qualities as concentration, clarity, compassion, or fearlessness, must therefore ensure—at the very least—that their contact with the world does not militate against spiritual development, and—more positively—that they will work to find ways of turning that interaction into a relationship of positive benefit to themselves and to the world.

Set baldly on the page, this may seem obvious. Yet it is something we each have to learn and assimilate afresh. After all, the reasons that induce many of us to explore meditation and Buddhism are probably as selfish as those which induce us, unenlightened as we are, to do a lot of more mundane things. In its earliest days, the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order consisted almost entirely of people looking for exotic excitement, intellectual titillation, psychological confidence, mystical bliss, or straightforward peace of mind. Few said or thought very much about changing the world.

The work involved in finding, fundraising for, and converting a new London Centre (now 'The London Buddhist Centre', in Bethnal Green) came as quite a shock, and was regarded by some as a major disturbance.

But as the jumble-sales, sponsored walks, and benefit dinners proliferated and gave birth to permanent, team-based businesses, and as a spirit of camaraderie developed—bearing fruit in a network of dynamic communities based on friendship and shared ideals, we began to realize

that we had not strayed from the 'spiritual life' at all. We had discovered it.

At around this time, Sangharakshita gave a series of talks entitled 'Buddhism for Today and Tomorrow'. Articulating current developments, he asserted that Buddhism offered, among other things, the 'Nucleus of a New Society', and a 'Blueprint for a New World'. This New Society was to be a 'world within the world', a living, working, financially self-sufficient sub-culture fed by Buddhist vision and practice, rooted in Buddhist ideals, infused with Buddhist principles. Through public Dharma classes, through trade, through normal social intercourse, the New Society would necessarily interact with the 'old society', in time setting an inspiring example, exerting a benign influence and, of course, continuously recruiting new members. By no definition or stretch of the imagination was the New Society intended as a closed elite.

In those days, 1984 had not yet come and gone, more or less without incident. There was still much cautious dread of quasi-Orwellian jargon, no matter how benign the phenomenon thus labelled. The term 'New Society' never quite caught on.

But elements of a 'New Society' have continued to emerge and crystallize nevertheless. Slowly, perhaps erratically and rather unpredictably, the experiments and developments have been taking place, certainly in the fields of Dharma teaching, community living, and Right Livelihood. Now moves are taking place in the realms of art, social work, education, medicine. . . . We are gaining experience, sharing ideas, grappling with problems and principles, sometimes still dreaming dreams. Our New Society is young, incomplete and tentative. But the more it comes to life, the more people are becoming able to live, really live, and share the spiritual life.

WHY WE MUST LOOK OUT AND SPEAK OUT

The thirty sixth-formers probed me for more than an hour, firing questions about the Eightfold Path, the subject of my Sunday night talk. Then, effusing rubicund delight, the School Chaplain proclaimed the approach of bedtime and set to rounding things off.

He was *thrilled* by the evening, not least because he had found himself—a Christian—able to agree with *every word* that I—a Buddhist—had uttered. And what was so *fascinating*, so *reassuring*, was the fact that our two faiths were 'so obviously talking about the same thing'.

The brighter boys looked baffled. Surely some of my points had conflicted with Christian doctrine?

I felt distinctly uncomfortable. Was the man speaking unmindfully? Or was I being trapped? By nodding bland agreement—the gentlemanly gesture at this time of night—I could be 'donating' to Christianity whatever sparks of enthusiasm my Dharma talk had inspired. A youth provoked by the talk to explore the spiritual life a little further might begin with Christianity rather than Buddhism. . . .

As politely, as positively, and as briefly as I could, I took issue. I reiterated that Buddhism finds man in a godless universe, ordered by godless principles, in which the individual human being is free to enjoy a significantly non-Christian perspective on his or her highest potential—and therefore on the very purpose of life.

So. Was I wrong to spurn a generous offer of inter-faith harmony—simply to score one last point? Might I have been a better ambassador of Buddhism to those boys had I displayed a little 'Buddhist tolerance', rather than making a last grab for clarity?

If your answer is 'yes', then perhaps you find the more critical articles that appear in our 'Outlook' pages disturbing too.

And yet, what is one to do? Should one never take a stand? Are there really no ideas, no principles, no facts, even, worth asserting or arguing over? Does the Buddhist conception of tolerance add up to nothing more than compromise and mutual indulgence?

Surely not. The Buddha challenged people forcefully and argued passionately: with Brahmins, Jains, free-lance holy men, with his own followers. He did so, not because he was a competitive or belligerent man, but because he really cared about what he was doing. It mattered

to him that those he taught or even met should at least understand what he had to offer, and not confuse his teachings with other, less helpful, prescriptions.

We are lucky enough to be living at a crucial moment in the history of Buddhism. The slightest wisp of its life and influence has begun to catch hold of the Western world. Just a few thousand of us, spread around a handful of movements, have the awesome responsibility of transmitting the Dharma to a new age, a new culture, a new millennium.

Certainly, now is not the time—nor is it ever—to act with enmity, malice, or spite towards those who follow other faiths, or towards each other.

But nor is this the time to be bashful about asserting—and even if necessary arguing about—what Buddhism fundamentally is, what it has to offer, and what it is not.

What would be the fate of the Dharma if we allowed the idea to spread that one can be a Buddhist and believe in god, or be a regular church-goer? What will happen if we make light, even accidentally, of the 'Going for Refuge', the crucial act that determines whether someone is a Buddhist or not? What will happen if we confuse a number of traditional Eastern cultural conventions with the Dharma itself—or strive over-hastily after 'Western' innovations? What will happen if we are unclear about so many things now? Our contemporary media of mass-communication will ensure that even the slightest distortions are amplified and spread at the speed of sound, if not of light.

All Buddhists agree on certain fundamental issues. There are radical, immutable principles which reside at the heart of all Buddhist traditions. Let us at least be clear about these, unafraid to pull each other up when we see them threatened by carelessness. And let us be prepared to defend them when we see them threatened by the ignorance or prejudice of non-Buddhists.

Nobody knows what form—or forms—Buddhism will assume as it becomes integrated into Western culture. But let us at least do our best to ensure that it really is the Buddha Dhamma, the unique, distinctive, and therefore universal communication of the Enlightened mind, that we pass on to future generations.

4

Community living has always been an essential aspect of Buddhist life. Subhuti—who has established several FWBO communities—explains the attraction of

LIFE IN A SPIRITUAL WORKSHOP

Buddhism consists essentially in the conscious evolution of individuals towards the goal of Buddhahood. This much is relatively easy to comprehend. Yet how are we each to make Buddhism effective in our own lives?

Naturally we begin by carrying out the practices recommended by Buddhist tradition. However, effective as they can be, these practices may often only touch the surface of our lives. They do not in themselves strike deeply enough beneath the congealed core of our conditioning. The Dharma challenges each of us to become an entirely new kind of being but, though we call ourselves Buddhists, basically we are no different from the non-Buddhists around us.

For deep change to take place we need great inspiration and self-knowledge. Our glimpse of the goal must be so vivid that we are spontaneously transported towards it. But we must also be brought face to face with *ourselves* as we are, so that we can see what in ourselves must be changed and what cultivated.

Evidently, if we are to be transformed root and branch, we must seek situations

which both inspire us and confront us with ourselves. It is in connection with other people that such situations are most often to be found.

Intense, intimate, and prolonged contact with others inevitably brings us into conflict with them. Sooner or later our desires clash with theirs. Then, usually, we either part company or remain in hostile intimacy. Sometimes, however, we come to understand what it is in us that has produced, or helped to produce, the conflict. Thus we are able to resolve it by changing ourselves.

Other people can also be the source of our greatest inspiration. Whether directly, through what they are, or indirectly, through their works, they help to bring the Ideal to life for us. Whether it be the shining words of the Buddha, relayed through the centuries, or a talk with a sympathetic friend, others encourage, stimulate, inspire, and uplift us. Sometimes they may even be able to initiate in us a completely new dimension of awareness and understanding.

The more of this inspiring and self-confronting contact we get, the deeper it goes, the longer it lasts, and the more likely we are to be moved by it to change



A community meeting at Sukhavati, London



At Taraloka

ourselves radically.

This, then, is the purpose of community living. We live together with others who are trying to realize the same Ideal that we aspire to; thereby we reinforce each other's aspirations. We perform spiritual practice together and encourage each other to sustain effort. When we have difficulties, one or another of our fellows will inspire us or help us to clarify our minds.

Just as the community helps us to view the Ideal more clearly, it also confronts us with ourselves by bringing us into close contact with other people. The closer that contact the more transparent we become both to them and to ourselves. Sometimes this contact can



be quite painful.

People often expect a spiritual community to be entirely free from interpersonal difficulties. This is seldom the case (although, on the whole, communities are probably far more harmonious than many another living arrangement). Communities bring together a number of people with varying backgrounds, temperaments, and even perspectives on the Ideal, each with their own areas of weakness and immaturity. Inevitably, there will be times when it is difficult for community members to get along together. But they all share the same Ideal—an Ideal which includes living in harmony with others. Thus, if they are at all sincere, they will commit themselves yet more deeply to taking whatever steps in their personal growth are necessary. They will try to resolve conflicts and bring about greater harmony by deeper self-understanding.

The tension between personal difficulties on the one hand and the ideal of harmony and love on the other is one of the factors that makes communities so effective as catalysts for self-development. By virtue of the Ideal, which is constantly before the eyes of all, lack of harmony cannot be accepted and

must be resolved as soon as possible. This does not mean the cultivation of an atmosphere of flaccid 'niceness', but *radical* changes in the community members themselves.

Younger communities—either in the sense that their members are young or that they have not been established for very long—can be quite stormy. The overall direction, however, is towards greater communal harmony and personal maturity. In more established communities, although the same dialectic is taking place, there is a greater sense of stability and confidence. People become more used to working with the mechanism of conflict. This leads to greater harmony, and to a general atmosphere which is more definitely positive.

This more positive atmosphere is the sign of a successful community, in which personal differences are no longer experienced as problematic points of conflict but as opportunities to learn more about oneself and about human nature in general, and to become a fuller, more rounded person.

There have been communities in the FWBO for some fifteen years now. They have developed spontaneously out of the

need many felt for a more intense spiritual life. Over the years a great variety of communities have grown up in the different parts of the world where the FWBO has been established. Most are either for men or for women separately (thus minimizing one of the major areas of risk to the spiritual path), although a few 'mixed' communities have been formed. Some communities are for relative newcomers who may have 'ordinary' jobs, whilst others are dedicated to very intensive meditation practice or to study. Some are based around a co-operative business or a public FWBO centre whilst, in others, the members may have no specific common task.

There is no set pattern and there are no prescribed rules. Each community is governed autonomously, in accordance with the wishes of its members.

Varied and experimental as our communities may be, a body of experience has grown up among Order members and mitras, and some basic principles are now quite clear. Communities are becoming an ever more effective means for the following of the Buddhist path—and a medium for a happy and fulfilling life.

There is no such thing as a carefully worked out plan for the 'New Society'. All we have to go by are the principles of Buddhism. Learning to apply these principles in the area of money and work is an essential part of our lives as Buddhists.

The Spiritual life is not a leisure-time activity; ideally it involves every moment of our lives. The principles and practices of Buddhism must therefore be applied to the way we organize ourselves economically, just as they can be applied to the way in which we brush our teeth. Every moment must be used to advance our progress on the path to

WORKING FOR THE WORLD

Right Livelihood is a fundamental Buddhist practice—and an important ideal. As Vajraketu suggests, what is 'right' for oneself may be of great value to others.

Enlightenment.

Buddhism attaches no special value to work in itself—there is no 'work ethic' as such. There is certainly no shame or stigma involved in living off the labour of others if their support is freely given. After all, the Buddha never did 'an honest day's work' in his life. For decades, while he gave his teachings, he relied on others to provide for his material needs. Nor was he unique in this respect. Through the ages, many of his followers, famous and unknown, have relied on the support of others to maintain their spiritual quest. These sages were not lazy. They were engaged in the 'higher evolution': the struggle of individual consciousness to break free from habit, to develop and grow towards the ideal of infinite compassion and wisdom.

Naturally, not every Buddhist is ready for a life of full-time meditation or study; it is not a lifestyle that suits—or is even good for—everyone. So how is one to live and support oneself in a creative, spiritually advantageous way?

According to Buddhism, an activity becomes a spiritual practice when it supports, contributes to, and advances



Windhorse Photosetters, London

the development of positive states of mind. As Buddhists we therefore need to engage ourselves with activities that allow us—even require us—to develop states such as concentration, clarity, friendliness, and generosity. In such a context, work can be a powerful tool for spiritual growth.

Unfortunately, in the modern West, it is difficult to find employment that is both ethically skilful (the jobs of butcher, pornographer, or publican being among the more obvious 'non-starters'), and conducive to the development of positive states of mind. Some jobs may be ethically neutral, but the atmosphere in which they are undertaken—riddled with greed, gossip, negative competitiveness—is not one in which a Buddhist can thrive. Much work is repetitive or uncreative, offering little personal responsibility: a necessary evil to support a desired lifestyle.

The provision of positive alternative options is therefore one reason why we have worked so hard to create our own forms of employment. But it is not the only reason.

As one's faith in Buddhism grows and as one's gratitude for Buddhist practice



deepens, so too does the desire to share it with others.

The world is full of suffering: physical, psychological, existential. Seeing this suffering, it is the impulse of any sensitive person to respond. A Buddhist—someone who is actively endeavouring to develop friendliness and compassion on a day-to-day basis—cannot but respond when confronted by suffering. But what is the most creative form that that response can take?

One can respond to suffering as it arises—by feeding the starving, by supporting the emotionally distressed, and so on. But any longer term solution demands a radical transformation of the entire society, and of the individuals who comprise it. The world needs more people who are generous, who are friendly, patient, honest, and wise.

Such qualities are not unique to Buddhists, but Buddhism does offer certain tools whereby these qualities can be systematically developed. Making these tools more widely available calls for structures and facilities through which people can be contacted, and through which they can explore Buddhism for themselves. This takes

money.

Caught between the need for money to spread the Dharma, and the often unskilful or stultifying ways in which this money could be earned, those involved with the FWBO in its early days experimented by starting businesses of their own. Quite soon a number of wholefood shops, restaurants, and building/decorating companies grew up, with a smaller number of specialist businesses when people around any of our centres had some specific skills.

This, they found, was not only a pleasant way to earn money—working with others sympathetic to their own ideals and aspirations—but it was obviously a direct means of personal and social transformation as well. A radical approach to the problem of work was beginning to emerge.

Everybody involved with these businesses was—and still is—encouraged and expected to take responsibility and initiative to the limits of their ability—and to be pushing themselves all the time to extend those limits. By adopting the principle of 'give what you can, take what you need' our aim has been to convert work into a 'giving-based', rather

than 'greed-based' activity.

Of course this doesn't always proceed smoothly, without so much as a ripple of disagreement. Questions of responsibility often arise, people can almost always give more than they do, needs are not always easy to agree about.

But these issues, indeed all issues related to the business in particular, and to one's life as a Buddhist in general, are fully aired. Through this we learn to trust each other, we learn to co-operate; the barriers that divide people are slowly dissolved, friendships blossom. All this is made possible because underpinning everything is a shared adherence to Buddhist ideals, which provides both a common ground and a reference point for resolving difficulties.

Right Livelihood provides a significant interface with the wider, non-Buddhist world. In the course of our business activities we meet people who might never come to a Buddhist centre or read a Buddhist magazine. There is no



doubt that some are influenced to consider alternative ways of living and working when they see that these manifestly 'produce' happier, more energetic people.

The FWBO's Right Livelihood businesses are still young. Nothing is fixed. We are still experimenting. But many Order members, mitras and Friends are now financially supporting themselves in ways which act as active elements in their spiritual lives. They are also generating surpluses which support other Buddhist activities. They are learning to use work to advance themselves along the spiritual path, and helping others to do the same.

SHARING THE GRAIN

Dhammarati recently forsook his drawing board to become chairman of the London Buddhist Centre. He spoke with Mokshabandhu about the purpose of a public Dharma Centre.

We are trying to set up the conditions which allow as many people as possible to become aware of themselves as much as possible, and to develop as much as possible.'

As chairman of the London Buddhist Centre, Dhammarati has recently been involved in planning activities for the first four months of 1987. During that period there will be a series of public talks and two meditation courses in central London; lunchtime, afternoon, and evening meditation classes at the Centre itself; meditation workshops, meditation retreats, and Dharma courses for those new to Buddhism as well as for those who have been practising for a while; courses in Hatha Yoga for people at different levels of experience; courses in massage, Alexander Technique, and dance; two festivals; and more besides. The Centre is currently offering more activities, and a broader spectrum of activities, than ever before: activities which, in Dhammarati's view, help people to become more aware, more

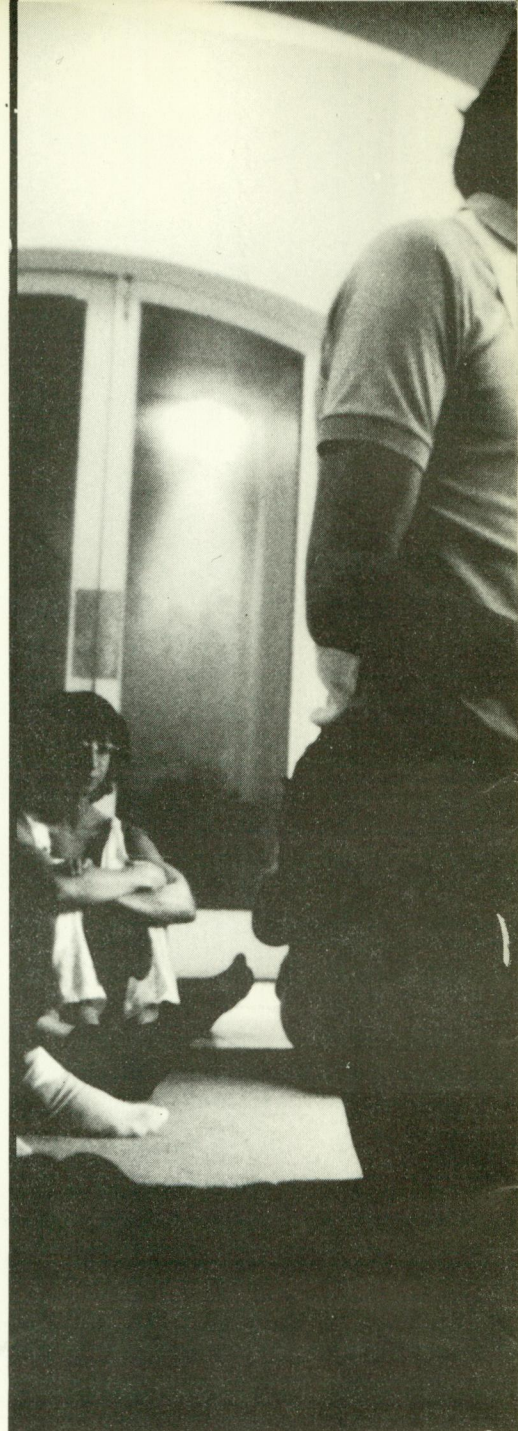
emotionally positive, more spiritually alive.

To Dhammarati, the centre is a 'point of contact': a place where people can learn about and begin to practise the Dharma.

'It is frequently dissatisfaction that brings people along—though that dissatisfaction gets construed, expressed, and explained in all sorts of different ways. There are those who come along searching for spiritual truths and others who want release from stress. Some people simply want to take up a physical exercise like Yoga. And one man came because he thought that meditation could improve his golf.'

But what effect does Dhammarati hope the Centre's activities will have on the individuals who attend them, and on the world beyond?

'You do start modestly, with the individual, and work up to the cosmic. That golfer, for example, reads somewhere that meditation can improve his golf. He comes to one of our retreats, and on that retreat has the deepest experience of himself he has ever had,



Hints on meditation posture at the Glasgow Buddhist Centre



Dhammarati

and encounters a level of communication with others that is absolutely new to him and deeply satisfying. Suddenly, a whole range of possibilities opens up for him—a depth of experience of himself and a quality of relationship with other people that has never occurred to him as a possibility before. 'On a personal level, that would be the



first effect: that deepening of experience. It could be, to begin with, a little more self awareness and more sensitivity to other people. It could go deeper, into real spiritual experience in meditation, or deeper still into what the tradition calls insight experience, a "glimpse of the Transcendental".

Beyond the individual, Dhammarati sees the Centre having an effect on society at large as individuals—who are themselves benefiting from Dharma practice—communicate with friends and companions at work. 'You would certainly expect someone's more immediate relationships to start changing if he is becoming more aware of himself, more open, more friendly, and so on. If one person in a communication is more aware, then that actually opens up possibilities for both people. In time, that deepening of experience will start to flow out into the culture; you are opening up a depth and authenticity of experience for the culture in a very practical way.'

It is difficult to estimate how many people make use of the Centre's facilities

in any one week, but it is probably somewhere around three hundred. Many of those people live locally in communities, and work together in Right Livelihood businesses. Thus the Centre acts not only as a point of contact for people wishing to learn about Buddhism, but also as a focus for those who are already practising.

Many people, after a period of coming to the Centre, practising, and benefiting from their practice, want in turn to share their experience and to help others. Dhammarati sees this wish as an urge intrinsic in the practice.

'It is all rather mysterious. As your own experience deepens you tend to feel a real urge to communicate it. In the *White Lotus Sutra*, there is a parable about a famine. In the parable, the *Bodhisatta* is a young merchant with lots of grain. He sees people starving, and realizes that they haven't the strength to come to his door. So he takes the grain out to them in sacks. He sees the famine, he's got the resources, and he wants to feed the people. . . I think for a centre to be working well there has to be that care.

But, in a way, that care arises almost spontaneously out of what is happening in our own practice.'

Dhammarati stresses that the Centre is not just a building—a disused fire station which eight years ago was converted into the London Buddhist Centre:

'Our whole spread of activities—every attempt by people with experience to address that experience to others: all of that is part of the Centre. The Centre isn't the council of Order members which directs it; it isn't the people who lead the classes; it isn't the people who come to the classes; it is the *totality* of all those people and their relationships.' All who are involved gain from interaction and communication with one another. 'We have a hundred people living around here, fifty people working in business ventures, a few hundred more practising; all of them in communication. We are creating a culture, a network of relations, a kind of society that stimulates, accelerates, encourages, and supports spiritual growth. In these conditions, everybody grows faster than they could on their own.'

Why does Dhammarati choose to teach? 'In the end I do it because it is so satisfying to do. Also, I want to see things changed. People are starving for lack of grain. It wouldn't be right to be sitting here with all this grain, watching people die of starvation. There is a real onus on us to get out there and distribute.'

KEEPING A HEALTHY BALANCE

Yoga, massage, T'ai Chi, karate. . .

Several FWBO centres offer classes in physical disciplines.

Judy Senior, who teaches massage and Alexander Technique at the

London Buddhist Centre, explains why.

Since the early days of this century it has been recognized, at first by a few pioneers and nowadays more widely, that in our industrial and technological society we have favoured the intellect to the detriment of our physical being. As a result of this 'split' between mind and body, many people suffer the consequences of a sedentary

Technique and dance are recent additions to the 'Bodywise' programme at the London Buddhist Centre.

What do these apparently diverse activities have in common, and why are they being taught at FWBO centres? The answer lies in the magic ingredient of *awareness*. Each of these activities, if practised regularly, brings about greater awareness of the body. On the



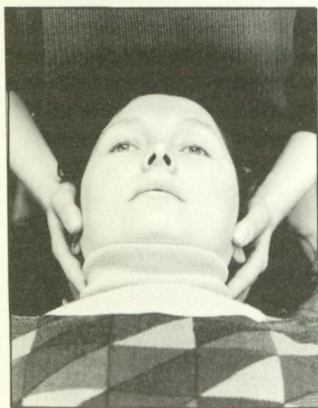
lifestyle, or work which involves the repetitive action of conveyor-belt production.

Some attempt has been made to redress the balance by the introduction of 'physical education' in schools, and various forms of keep-fit exercise and sport for the adult population. But the attempt to 'make up' to the body what it has been denied during the school or working day still perpetuates the dualism, since it lacks the vital ingredient of awareness which can marry the needs of both the mind and the body, and create a healthy, 'integrated' human being.

In the early days of the FWBO, Iyengar Yoga was taught in addition to meditation at most centres, and courses in basic massage techniques were also introduced. There are now about ten Yoga teachers regularly teaching courses within the movement and seven massage teachers. In the last few years karate and T'ai Chi have become firmly established among FWBO activities, and Alexander

simplest level there develops awareness of where the body is in space: where the right arm is, where the left leg is. Such awareness allows us to move them in co-ordination with each other. On a deeper level, though, what is being created is greater awareness of the self.

As a result of the mind/body split, we tend to think of ourselves simply as our minds, that is, the opinions we have, the ideas, the thoughts. If we bring our bodies into the picture at all it is because we are concerned about the way we look, and how others see us. If our image complies with the current notion of what is fashionable or beautiful, we 'are more or less accepting of it, or strive in one way or another to make it even more acceptable; if not, we tend to reject or cut off from our bodies altogether, focussing even more on the attributes of our minds—striving to become more learned, more witty, more articulate. In both these cases, however, we are missing out on actually experiencing our



Alexander Technique

bodies and, therefore, on knowing ourselves more deeply.

The mind is a slippery fish. Having given it such precedence we have become skilled at self-deception. We can argue ourselves out of almost any situation; we can even deny that we have experienced, or felt, the most obvious things. But the body does not lie in this way. In registers fear, joy, shame, anxiety, desire, anger, pleasure. It blushes, tenses, trembles, feels aroused, faint, exhilarated, hot, and cold. If we are in touch with our

bodies (and it is no accident that 'in touch' is common parlance for 'aware of') then all this information about ourselves is available to us. Knowing our responses and feelings in various situations we can see ourselves and begin to accept not an image but a person—and so begin to change.

Without this awareness we lose touch with our bodies and emotions—and we experience only the strongest physical responses such as hunger, pain, and sexual desire. The force of these responses, unbalanced by more subtle awareness, can be such that we may retreat from them even further (especially if they don't fit in with our idea of ourselves) and so wilfully override them. Thus, instead of being a friend, the body becomes a servant; we make use of it without respecting it, expecting it to perform and function until it breaks down in some way (so that the resulting crisis traumatically forces us to change, if we are not already too late).

It is also no accident that three of our techniques, Yoga, T'ai Chi, and karate, originate from pre-industrial India and China, from a time when the spiritual dimension of life was much in evidence. T'ai Chi and karate derive from exercises performed by monks to alleviate the stiffness of long periods of sitting meditation. Yoga was an integral part of spiritual practice followed in India for centuries. The art of massage is still today more widely practised in the East than in West. These (traditionally) more balanced societies have developed practices which further integrate the mind and the body. Their practice brings about a releasing and focussing of energy—while the 'keep-fit' activities of the West release energy but do not focus it.

Concentrating the mind on the movements and sensations of the body begins the process of healing the mind/body split, creating a 'psycho-physical unity' as F. M. Alexander called it. The mind becomes sensitive, the body

becomes intelligent, and as the process continues with regular practice, we can experience the happy states of 'neighbourhood concentration', and even the first *dhyana* (or 'state of meditative absorption'). As in meditation, when the breath and the breather cease to be separate and there is the experience of unity, so too can this occur during the practice of these activities.

In the practice of meditation itself, which can lead to more expanded states of consciousness, an increased awareness of the body enables us to locate the places in which we are tense, to experience the thoughts and feelings behind those tensions, and so pursue our practice in a relaxed, harmonious way, without the distractions of pain and worry.

With intelligent bodies and feeling minds we can respond to life with our whole being, aware of our 'gut reactions', filtering them through an open heart and a mind which has empathy with others.



LOVE AS A SOCIAL FORCE

*We may think about
changing the world,
even dream about it. But
we won't do much until
we want to change it.
Kamalashila introduces
the Buddhist practice of
cultivating creative
emotion.*

I have come to think that there is a quality which characterizes those associated with the FWBO. It was first brought to my attention some years ago, while visiting a Tibetan Buddhist group. A nun told me she could usually tell visitors from the FWBO on account of their spontaneous warmth and friendliness. This was not in any way contrived, not perceivable as odd, or merely sentimental; it was clearly an actually felt concern for another person, expressed in an easygoing, natural way.

Of course it would be a gross exaggeration to say that Buddhists are happy and friendly every hour of the day. In one sense there's no difference between a Buddhist and anyone else—all of us are subject to fits of grumpiness, meanness, and all the rest. The difference is that a Buddhist accepts responsibility for these states of mind. A Buddhist tries to develop positive mental states to counteract his or her particular quantum of negativity, through meditation practice and through simply trying to be less negative. And this effort has an effect. Since that visit, the same characteristic has been brought to my attention more than once—most recently by a shopkeeper in our small, local town.

But why should people notice this about Buddhists, rather than anything else? Sadly, the answer seems to be that happiness and friendliness are rather unusual. When people manifest these forms of emotional positivity, it is something remarkable, a phenomenon others notice. What a pity this is—what a shame that so many people are habitually negative, so often carpingly critical, resentful, unfeeling. If such straightforward friendliness and openness were more common, what a better place the world would be.

I am not talking about the

vague well-meaningness which we sometimes see in conventionally 'charitable' people (that is so often rooted, actually, in self-interest). If people could somehow develop a genuine interest in others, a genuine desire for whatever would make them happy, surely the majority of our social and political problems would be considerably reduced. Think of the global consequences, just to give one example, if people could co-operate with each other a little more!

Simply to become more emotionally positive possibly sounds like an easy solution to human problems. But simple solutions are not always so easy to put into practice: we are talking about changing some very deeply ingrained habits indeed. Can it really be done?

Religions have offered similar solutions in the past. Christ said 'love thy neighbour', but gave no method of actually achieving such a thing. Buddhists are extremely fortunate to have been given meditation methods.

There are a number of practices which enable us to work with the contents of the mind and directly develop such qualities as love, compassion, joy in others' happiness, etc. The most basic of these is taught at all FWBO centres and is known as the *metta bhavana* or development of friendliness. The traditional method goes back to the Buddha himself, and is frequently referred to in the Pali Canon. An oft-repeated formula goes:

*'He abides suffusing one quarter
with a mind of
friendliness: likewise the
second, the third, and the
fourth; above, below, around,
everywhere. All as
himself, the whole wide world
he abides suffusing
with a mind of friendliness—
abundant, grown great,
immeasurable, free from enmity,
free from ill will.'*

This describes the final

stage of the practice, in which the meditator first develops *metta*, or friendliness, towards himself or herself (this, at first, is the most important and often the most difficult stage), before directing it towards a good friend, an emotionally 'neutral' person, and finally towards a disliked person—stretching the ability to feel friendliness until all barriers have been broken down and *metta* can be radiated outwards to every quarter of the universe. It is an exercise that stretches not only our concentration and our creative imagination, but attunes us with our higher emotional potential. Its effect is to make us increasingly aware of our feelings about ourselves and others, and to bestow a certain emotional robustness. It definitely does not make the practitioner empty sentimental. It creates an expansion of awareness, and it is this increase of awareness which makes us feel more interested in other people.

Modern life is increasingly stressful. Most people are self-centred, and they lack *metta*. These two facts are connected, and I believe that the world's current state is a direct result. The present mess is the product of the actions of those who have influenced it in the past: it continues as a result of the people who influence it now.

Those of us in the West are in a particularly powerful position to influence the future—our individual actions are an example to others, and there is little that is as truly impressive as friendliness and concern for others.

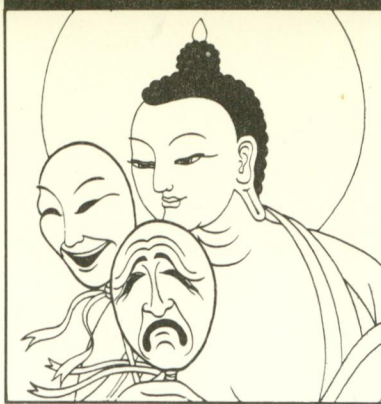
*Worse of the two is he who,
when he is hated, hates in
return;*

*He who, when reviled, does
not revile, is surely the
winner of the fight.*

*For the benefit of both he
exerts himself,*

*Who calms his wrath,
knowing the other is
angry.*

Samyutta Nikaya I.222



Anyone seriously trying to practise Buddhism must constantly examine the fundamental circumstances of their lives and ask themselves, 'How does my living situation affect me in my attempt to live according to the Buddha's teachings?' Because so many situations thus examined are found to be wanting, the FWBO has been gradually unfolding its vision of a new, more Dharma-based, society.

Just recently, a handful of people have been directing their attention to the world of *art*—in particular to the world of the performing arts—in an attempt to see how Buddhism and the performing arts can work together. The first small steps towards the exploration of this aspect of the Movement's creative maturation were taken at a recent 'performing arts retreat', which I organized at Padmaloka.

During this week-long event, Order members, mitras, and Friends investigated the disciplines of drama, mime, video, design, music, and puppetry, exploring the creative possibilities these fields have to offer as methods of personal development and as means of communicating the Dharma to a wider public.

Inevitably, our investigations led to the discovery of many rich sources of untapped creative potential—and in turn, set us wondering why Western art seems currently to be in such a poor, even degenerate, state.

Looking around us we see clear evidence of the cultural poverty into which our civilization has fallen. Western society has long since ceased to be a traditional Christian Society; the family has been greatly undermined as an institution—as witnessed by the ever increasing divorce rate; schools and colleges—the main transmitters of knowledge and culture from generation to generation—are in ferment; even life-long

employment—once an incontestable 'right'—seems no more than a vague historical memory.

Of course there are many new 'systems': psycho-analysis, sociology, and various forms of 'scientism', Marxism, and so on, which have arisen, attempting to replace the old, 'implicit' traditional values. But if we look closely at this proliferation of 'systems' and 'isms', we see that they present us not with a new vision of life, but with further evidence of the progressive disintegration of modern society and modern man.

To those living in a society that lacks any sense of living tradition, life can seem meaningless: anarchy seems to reign. One does what one likes because, in the end, nothing really matters. Death seems a valid solution and the suicide rate increases. Escape from a meaningless reality becomes essential, and drugs, drink, and placebos like television become universal escape routes. By dulling the senses one ultimately feels less. Eventually, only the very crudest emotional experiences, such as physical and sexual violence, are sufficient to provide any sense of 'real' or 'human' contact at all. In the world of art, this cultural decay manifests in the adulation of distorted, caricatured emotion, cold intellectualizing, discordance, fragmentation, and even downright ugliness.

In a society that is underpinned by a strong spiritual tradition, however, all aspects of the individual are experienced and acknowledged as parts of a whole, every branch of knowledge, every kind of daily activity is unified by the metaphysical order of that tradition, and life has a meaning beyond the merely mundane.

During our performing arts retreat we found that by combining regular meditation and puja—traditional spiritual

practices—with artistic activity, we were able to expand those areas normally considered the province of religion, and to charge them with new creative purpose. Buddhism provides a rich and living source of spiritual tradition, while the world of art provides a means of practising creative skills. The combination of these two activities fills our lives with meaning, and gives us a definite direction in which to strive, to help not only ourselves, but others as well, and to improve the aesthetic quality of the world we live in.

Some inroads into this realm have already been made. The Croydon Arts Centre has for some time been presenting its audiences with the works of artists whose views accord—at least to some degree—with the Dharma. A recent season dealt with the vision of H. G. Wells, and was an attempt to offer an introduction to the more universal aspects of Wells's art and its relevance to the ideal of higher development.

Valuable though this is, it is but a partial step on the way to presenting the Buddhist Vision through the medium of art. For, possible though it may be to interpret Western artists from a Buddhist point of view, no Western artist—yet—has been entirely inspired by Buddhist ideals and values.

In time we may witness the development of a tension between the spiritual tradition of the Western artist and the spiritual values of the Buddhist Tradition. It is here, at this point of strain, that the world of art will offer exciting potential, for to give adequate expression both to the spiritual tradition we have espoused and to our own understanding of the Dharma, we will need to create a truly Western, Buddhist Art.

CULTURE AND CREATIVITY

Could Buddhism hold the key to an artistic and cultural renaissance?

Kovida, who recently organized our first 'Performing Arts Retreat', believes that it does.

THE DOCTOR'S DILEMMA

Those who work in the 'caring professions' have much to give, but face special challenges.

Virabhadra celebrates the refreshing benefits of 'Doctors' meetings'.

In the early days of my involvement with the FWBO, in the mid-1970s, the Movement was quite small. Most people seriously involved with FWBO activities were leaving their jobs and coming to help full time, whether in the fledgeling wholefood or restaurant businesses, or in centres—doing administration, taking classes, and giving talks, or in the massive new building project at Sukhavati, in Bethnal Green. There seemed little scope for pursuing any kind of career while expressing one's commitment as a Buddhist simply because of the overwhelming demands of the emerging movement. There was a constant shortage of manpower in almost every

thinking. From the time I had decided I would like to be ordained, I received nothing but encouragement from Sangharakshita and from my close friends within the FWBO to continue with my studies and think ultimately in terms of practising medicine within an FWBO context.

These thoughts remained abstract until 1978 when Lokamitra left for India and the FWBO re-established close links with the Buddhist movement founded by Dr Ambedkar. Sangharakshita outlined his vision of a Buddhist medical project, and a concrete programme began to take shape which culminated in the *Bahujan Hitay* projects. (See last issue.)

On my return from India in the spring of 1986 I was astonished to discover how many doctors were now involved with the FWBO. A quick head-count revealed eleven people in Britain. I immediately felt that it could be useful if we met together and shared our experience. The first meeting saw nine

we all have in common: a busy job which sometimes crowds out spiritual practice. The group may not have any instant solutions to offer, but it can at least show some understanding.

After reporting-in we discuss 'business'. There are a few projects in preparation of relevance to doctors in the Movement about which news is presented. For example, there has been considerable interest in the proposal for a Buddhist hospice (a means of caring for the terminally ill) initiated by Dennis Sibley. This is an extremely worthwhile venture which we are keen to support. It also offers an opportunity for Right Livelihood which is not so easy to find within the wider Health Service.

General Practice has more flexibility in terms of working arrangements than the institutional environment of hospital medicine, and members of the group are looking at the possibility of extending the principles of Right Livelihood into this sphere.

The most important health related project under way in the Movement is the *Bahujan Hitay* Dapodi Project, in India. Recently, some technical support to the project laboratory has been provided. In addition, Aid For India has adopted proposals for a broadening of its scope to include fundraising for educational, health, and social programmes outside India. This could well lead to new projects which members of the Doctors' Group will be in a position to support.

The afternoon session is taken up with a seminar, usually with invited guest speakers. The object of each seminar is to explore a topic of interest to Buddhist doctors which is not covered by standard medical education. On one occasion, 'alternative' therapies were presented, and practitioners of homeopathy, acupuncture, osteopathy, and Alexander Technique within the Movement gave us talks and answered questions on their methods. Professor

Adam Morton of the Philosophy Department at the University of Bristol took another seminar on Medical Ethics, which provided us with a basis for further seminars on this broad and urgent topic. As Prof. Morton pointed out, it is often the case that, as one starts to look into a particular ethical dilemma, new and wider questions are raised.

The most recent seminar was taken by Dharmachari Surata, who has recently qualified as a counsellor. Apparently, he was not alone in having enrolled in his course from a religious background: among his fellow students were two priests and a nun. A central issue in counselling seems to be how to avoid creating dependency. Surata explained how the counsellor tries to encourage clients to solve problems for themselves by developing awareness and emotional positivity: qualities to which Buddhists are no strangers!

Modern Western society has removed many of the traditional means of practical and emotional support for people with difficulties; and the advice of the priest is no longer acceptable to the many who reject his philosophical position. A wide range of personal problems have been 'medicalized' to the point at which people resort either to their doctor for some pharmacological support or to one or another of an ever-proliferating range of neo-therapies. Perhaps there is a bright future for the 'Buddhist counsellor'—someone whose specifically religious background and personal spiritual practice gives him or her the wider vision and psychological maturity necessary to help others effectively.

The FWBO has become large and is developing a specific approach to many new aspects of social and public life; I hope that the Doctors Group will help this process as well as cultivate our own appreciation of spiritual fellowship.



Keeping disease at bay in Dapodi area.

It was not uncommon in those days to hear the question 'When are you going to leave work/college?' asked of mitras, and almost inevitably the path towards Ordination was also the path towards full-time involvement with Centre, Co-operative, and Community.

I started to train as a doctor in the year that I first attended an FWBO meditation class, but for some reason the possibility of leaving college to become a 'full-timer' never impinged seriously upon my

doctors gathered from different parts of the country, all of them interested in some kind of regular programme of meetings.

Over the next two meetings a framework for the 'FWBO Doctors Group' was worked out. We now meet about once every two months. The day begins with meditation and concludes with a puja. The first event is 'reporting-in', in which we generally say what we have been doing at work, before getting on to more personal topics. This reflects an aspect of our lives which

HISTORY IN THE MAKING

Ambedkar and Buddhism

by Sangharakshita.

Published by Windhorse Publications.

pp. 181. Paperback. Price £5.95

Born at the turn of the century, Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar's prospects were, to say the least, hopeless. As a *Mahar*, a member of the largest sub-caste of 'Untouchables' in west central India, his divinely appointed lot was to live as an object of universal contempt and to perform degrading tasks as a village menial.

His escape from that destiny: his struggle to win an unprecedented education and his success as a lawyer and statesman; his tireless work in the arenas of education, politics, and social work on behalf of India's downtrodden millions (and, here, that old cliché has precise relevance) deserve—and still await—the efforts of a first-class biographer.

Meanwhile we are fortunate to have a new work by Sangharakshita which concentrates on the aspect of Ambedkar's life and mission which found full expression when, just seven weeks before his death, he converted to Buddhism and initiated a movement of mass conversion which, at one stroke, brought the Buddha-Dhamma back to the land of its birth.

Although hardly known in the West, Dr 'Babasaheb' Ambedkar is one of the towering figures of our age, preoccupied as it has been with human rights issues and with the ideologies of social equality.

In a society that had countenanced the severe repression and degradation of one tenth of its population for more than a millenium, he won a succession of crucial victories. In a century stained with the blood of violent revolutions, Ambedkar—who had the power and influence to call millions of desperate people to arms—instead asked his followers to practise the Buddha's teachings and thus take a radical and unique level of responsibility for their



Dr B. R. Ambedkar

destiny. In this way, Ambedkar proffered an extraordinary, and utterly unsentimental, manifesto for non-violent revolution.

Although he knew from personal experience that religion could be used to give sanction to all that was most base and heartless in man, Ambedkar believed that religion alone offered the essential ingredient that made human society human. Virtues such as 'Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity' were, in his view, of spiritual rather than social origin. But which religion offered such pure fruits? Which religion would he choose?

Ambedkar chose Buddhism, even though it had no political, material, or financial advantage to offer him or his people, and even though few if any Buddhists were teaching on the Indian sub-continent. He chose it simply because it alone offered practical teachings, and a vision of human potential, which bestowed dignity and hope.

Ambedkar did not choose Buddhism immediately, lightly, or, indeed, uncritically. His thoughts and views on Buddhist doctrine and practice should therefore be of urgent interest to anyone who senses that the world could be a better place—or who believes that Buddhism has relevance to the modern world.

Sangharakshita met Ambedkar on several occasions. His involvement with Ambedkar's movement of mass conversion extends from its earliest days in the fifties to his present work as head of *Trailokya Bauddha Mahasangha Sahayaka Gana* (as the FWBO is known in India). Like Ambedkar, Sangharakshita is intimately concerned with the relevance and transmission of Buddhism to the modern world.

In this book he provides a moving introduction to Ambedkar and to the depressing world of 'graded inequality' that Ambedkar sought to comprehend and change. He then reviews and assesses Ambedkar's thoughts

on—and his significant contribution to—the heritage of Buddhism.

Although moderate in length, the book is gratifyingly informative and often deeply moving. Sangharakshita rarely wastes a good opportunity to broach difficult or controversial issues, and readers from East and West, Buddhist and non-Buddhist, will find his sympathetic interpretations and level-headed amplifications of Ambedkar's thoughts extremely challenging.

Ambedkar's *Dhamma Revolution* is still in its early stages, but there can be no doubt that it is unfolding with increasing vigour and effect. This book, by providing invaluable background material and by bringing timely clarity to a number of traditionally blurred areas will doubtless help take Ambedkar's work a few stages further. This is not just a book about the Dhamma Revolution; it is a living part of it.

Nagabodhi

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Heart of Wisdom

by Geshe Kelsang Gyatso
Published by Tharpa, London
pp. 200. Paperback. Price £6.95

The *Vajracchedika*, or 'Heart Sutra' is one of the most popular—and one of the most profound—of all Buddhist canonical texts. One could speculate that its popularity has more to do with its extreme compactness than the accessibility of its 'message', given that it contains in a mere twenty-five Sanskrit *slokas* ('lines') the essential teaching of the entire corpus of the 'Perfection of Wisdom' sutras.

It is inevitable (if slightly ironical) that such a pithy text should require lengthy elucidation. A number of longer or shorter, more or less useful, commentaries have appeared in English over the years; some from traditional sources, such as that by the seventeenth century Chinese master Han Shan, translated by Charles Luk, and some from modern writers and teachers, both Western (e.g. Edward Conze's 'Buddhist Wisdom Books'). and Eastern, as in the case of *Heart of Wisdom* by Geshe Kelsang Gyatso—a Tibetan teacher, now resident in the UK.

Geshe Kelsang's commentary is possibly the longest and most detailed yet published in English. It is, in fact, an edited translation of an oral commentary which Geshe Kelsang delivered at the Manjushri Institute. In both form and content, however, it is thoroughly traditional.

Formally, apart from the introduction and conclusion (which are in any case omitted from the short form of the sutra), Geshe Kelsang's exposition is presented in terms of the Five Mahayana Paths—of Accumulation, Preparation, Seeing, Meditation, and No More Learning—each of which corresponds to a particular section of the Sutra. In terms of content, his main emphasis is on an exposition of the approach that the *Prasangika*-

Madhyamika school takes to the Sutra. In fact, the book is effectively an introduction to the main tenets of this particular school—regarded by the Gelugpa sect, to which Geshe Kelsang belongs, as the most perfect expression of the *Madhyamika*, itself a distillation of the Perfection of Wisdom 'approach'.

Little justice can be done here to the intricacy, not to say complexity, of this commentary. Probably the most useful part, for most people, will be that dealing with the first two Mahayana paths, in the section of the Sutra starting, 'Form is empty, emptiness is form'. Here, Geshe Kelsang outlines the *Prasangika* view of emptiness, which is that it is an emptiness of inherent existence. Unenlightened beings labour under the delusion that phenomena do inherently and truly exist 'within themselves'. This can easily be seen (at least in theory!) to be a false assumption. If something did exist 'within itself', it would exist unchangingly, and quite independent of other phenomena. It is fairly self-evident that phenomena do not exist in this way, in that they change and inter-relate all the time. As Geshe Kelsang says, 'The question of whether objects exist inherently or not is extremely important because all our sufferings and dissatisfaction can be traced to our clinging to the inherent existence of ourselves and other phenomena.' (p. 30)

The usefulness of this part of the book lies in the detailed information it contains for establishing an actual meditation on emptiness. This is approached uncompromisingly via the use of the intellect: 'Until we achieve the path of seeing we need to rely on logical reasons to realize emptiness.' (p. 30). Throughout the rest of the commentary, Geshe Kelsang applies the principle of emptiness of inherent existence to all phenomena, right down to the very subtlest wrong view about the nature

of reality, the eradication of which gives rise to the path of no-more-learning: perfect Enlightenment.

However, as Geshe Kelsang makes clear, logical thinking alone is not sufficient to give rise to real insight. Once an intellectual appreciation of emptiness has been gained, the next stage is to utilize this in one-pointed 'placement meditation', i.e. a form of *vipassana* meditation, which enables the significance of emptiness to penetrate the depths of one's being. Obviously, this is not a practice to be undertaken unless the capacity for one-pointedness has already been developed through *samatha* meditation.

One or two slight reservations about the book do need to be expressed. In some passages (e.g. pp. 48-50) the literary style is so convoluted as to obscure rather than

clarify what Geshe Kelsang is trying to convey. Also, some of the translated terminology is rather idiosyncratic and occasionally clumsy (e.g. 'superior seeing observing emptiness' seems to mean no more than 'insight into emptiness'). It would also be a help to many readers if, in future editions, the glossary could include Sanskrit as well as Tibetan equivalents.

All the same, this is a book worth grappling with, and anyone who aspires to 'grasp the nettle' of emptiness by the way that begins with the intellect (this, of course, not being the only way to Wisdom) could well find this commentary very useful. The presentation of the book, incidentally, including a beautiful set of line drawings of the eight principal bodhisattvas, among others, also deserves congratulation.

Tejananda



Cover illustration from *Heart of Wisdom*

THE PEOPLE'S SAINT

Is That It?

by Bob Geldof with Paul Vallely.

Published by Sidgwick & Jackson and Penguin Books. pp. 443. Paperback. Price £3.95

Bob Geldof was the man responsible for 'Band Aid' Christmas records and the global rock concert, 'Live Aid', which together raised some £80,000,000 for Africa's famine victims during 1984 and 1985. Inspired or shamed by his example, many show-business and sporting celebrities, and thousands of ordinary people have since initiated fund-raising schemes of their own which have probably doubled the Band Aid figure. *Is That It?* tells the story of Bob Geldof's life and of the hectic months surrounding the 'Band Aid' phenomenon.

'Band Aid' and 'Live Aid' have won a place in history. We therefore approach this book with questions lodged in our minds. What is so special about Bob Geldof? Why was *he* the one to do something nobody else had done before? How did he manage to get so many people from such a (reputedly) self-seeking and self-centred arena of human activity to work together so unselfishly for so long? Whence comes the extraordinary pluck with which he beards prime ministers and presidents in their lairs, asking the embarrassing questions that no one else has dared to ask?

The life story offers few clues. A lonely, miserably defiant Catholic childhood prepares the ground for an aimless, drug-hazed adolescence. A desperate leap into Canada's broader horizons, and an invigorating experience of New World opportunism bestows some confidence, vigour, and an affirmation of worth that Ireland denied.

Almost accidentally, he gets involved with some old friends in setting up a pop group. The group succeeds beyond all its dreams, thanks partly to Geldof's voice and song-writing skills, and partly

to his instinctive skill with the logistics of self-promotion (a talent which offers a commercially happy balance to his unfailing, vulgar, and occasionally brutal outspokenness).

When the group's fortunes begin to wane, and when Geldof is immersed in salvage schemes, a television news report on the Ethiopian disaster instantly sets his worries in a new perspective. Like millions of others, he feels sickened, horrified, and guilty. . . Like millions of others, he wants to do something that will help. Alone, he realizes, he can achieve very little. He talks to a few friends. . .

The rest is history—though not before he has thrown himself into a fifteen month frenzy of activity that almost wrecks his health, does wreck his bank account, which stirs every branch of the commercial media industry around the world, and which leaves the reader breathless.

The 'Band Aid' adventure—and the book's narrative—brings him right up to the present, in which he is being showered with honours, medals, and VIP receptions. He is a friend of politicians

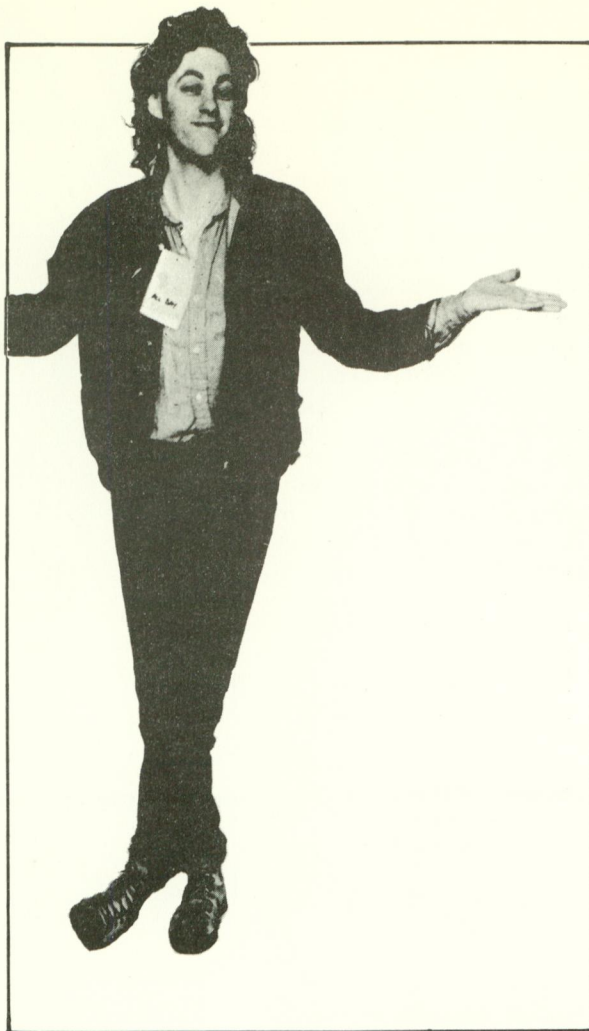
and royalty. He is dubbed 'St Bob', nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. . .

But he is no saint in any conventional sense. His background, as the book has revealed, is hardly inspiring. His insights into himself and into 'life'—though refreshingly honest and unpretentious—are sometimes challenging, sometimes banal, occasionally even questionable. He is not above physically hitting someone who irritates him, nor using his book to settle a few old scores. He is the first to admit that he has a long way to go, a lot to learn.

Even so, when he saw something that aroused his compassion, he acted to the utter limit of his abilities to do something about it. One would be satisfied, and would applaud this book's drive and underlying sentiment, were its central character a fictional creation. The fact that he and his story are real gives the book considerable importance.

Despite—indeed precisely because of—Geldof's unlauded and unironed humanity, there is an unambiguous lesson here for all who dream of a better world.

Nagabodhi



ALSO RECEIVED The Fortune

Teller's I Ching by Martin Palmer, Kwok Man Ho and Joanne O'Brien. Published by Century. £10.95

How the Swans Came to the Lake (Second edition, updated) by Rick Fields Published by Shambhala. \$14.95

Health Through Balance by Dr Yeshe Donden (ed. Jeffrey Hopkins) Published by Snow Lion. £9.50

BRAZEN STUPIDITY

'Do you seriously want lots of money NOW? Then starting immediately and continuing for as long as you rub THE BUDDHA, you'll have this sensational opportunity to possibly rub away your financial problems forever! Forever!

Imagine the excitement and thrill of turning your cash situation RIGHT AROUND merely by rubbing THE BUDDHA'S belly. . .

Thus ran a typical passage from the mail-shot that recently dropped into Dharmachari Ratnottara's mailbox in Cleveland, USA.

The directors of a company called 'The Buddha' were promising (their pledge backed by a money-back guarantee) that anyone prepared to pay \$15.00 for a gold-plated, lucky Buddha statue would receive immediate and substantial financial windfalls. A page of testimonials bore witness to the statue's awesome powers (powers that seem to reveal themselves to particular effect in the field of bingo.)

Further, anyone sharp enough to take immediate advantage of this offer would receive a free book on: 'How to Secretly Hypnotize Anyone, Anytime! . . . Reveals how you can get anyone to do anything you want any time you want. Permits you to dominate—secretly!'

It is hard to think of any words or notions that depart more completely and foolishly from everything the Buddha stood for. The Buddha devoted the greater part of his teaching life to helping people overcome craving and empty materialism; he spoke out against all games of chance; he encouraged people to relate with each other on the basis of love and openness; and he forbade his disciples from having anything to do with miraculous displays—even in the service of their Dharma-teaching work.

There are now a great many sincere and serious Buddhists in America. Let's hope somebody does something about this offensive and misleading sales gimmick.

Strangely enough, despite the fact that Buddhism is gaining followers and increasingly serious sympathy in the West, it is still necessary to take issue with these brazenly silly things: now, perhaps, more than usual.

A number of rich, and famous people have been getting interested in Buddhism lately. Frankly, their publicly stated motives seem rather similar to those being preyed upon by the 'Rubbing Buddha's' salesmen. It would be a terrible thing for the image of Buddhism in the West were they to start too much of a trend.



CHRISTIANS FIRST?

'The first hospitals, the first schools, the finest music, the greatest works of art, the most beautiful buildings were all produced by men and women who had heard the message of the angels and who found in the Christ Child a new way of living.'

So what about the glories of the Classical world of Greece? What about the artistic marvels of China?

What about the stunning beauty of Islamic art and architecture? What about Ashoka's hospitals—even his veterinary hospitals? What about so many wonders, so many achievements that owe nothing whatsoever to the message of Christ and his angels?

Certainly, the Christian tradition has born some beautiful and noble fruit. But how—in this day and age—can

NOW—Just when you need a REAL Money Miracle . . .

RUB THE BUDDHA FOR MONEY!



Do you need money desperately? Are you up to your neck in overdue bills and worrisome debt? Are you struggling along just trying to make ends meet—with no light in sight?

Dear Friend:

Finally, here's the good news you've been hoping and praying for all your life!

Now, for the very first time, you can possess the long-renowned BUDDHA... acclaimed by many for its magic powers of attracting GREAT wealth and unbelievable riches to anyone who gently rubs his belly.

And now, it is your lucky turn to do just that!

But before I go on, let me ask you this:

How much money do you REALLY want?

\$100.00, \$1,000.00, even \$10,000.00—or more?

TELL ME FRANKLY—



A wonder of the pre-Christian world

its followers manage to persist in such ignorant (and implicitly intolerant) chauvinism?

Believe it or not, the words quoted come not from some cheaply produced missionary tract, but from Canon John Oates's leading article in the Christmas edition of the prestigious *Illustrated London News*.

BUDDHIST FUNERALS

After conducting what they believe to have been the first ever Buddhist funeral service in Finland, Helsinki Order members are currently investigating how an individual can *guarantee* that he or she be given a proper Buddhist funeral. They are also trying to ascertain whether the law requires such a service to take any specific form.

Arne Edelmann began attending the Helsinki Centre in 1984. When he died last September at the age of forty, his mother, being sympathetic to his Buddhist interests, was prepared to arrange a Buddhist funeral service. However, coming under severe

pressure from other relatives, she agreed in the end to their demands for a 'proper' Christian funeral. Wishing nevertheless to honour Arne's own wishes, she made provision for a small Buddhist service to be held immediately before the main event.

The 45 minute service—which was held in the small cell where the coffin had been locked overnight—consisted of a talk on the Buddhist attitude to death, a short puja, which included the reciting of the Refuges and Precepts, and mantra chanting. Arne's mother, and those relatives who attended, were pleased and impressed by this Buddhist service.

Happily, we have so far been able to place funerals, indeed most death-related matters, fairly low on our list of priorities for attention. But as the Movement attracts people from an ever wider cross-section of the public, and as we ourselves get older, we are obviously going to have to pay far closer attention to this side of life at all of our centres.

At the very least, anyone with any doubts as to their relatives' feelings about their Buddhist outlook is strongly advised to make out a will, clearly stating their desire for a Buddhist funeral service.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS

The Buddhist Society's magazine, *The Middle Way*, recently published a photograph of Ven. Mahesi and Sister Siripanna standing with their mother soon after their ordination into the Chithurst/Amaravati Sangha. The picture caption described them as 'The first brother and sister to be ordained into the Sangha in Britain.'

Had the caption appeared

in a Chithurst/Amaravati Newsletter, it would have been obvious that by 'Sangha' was meant the Chithurst/Amaravati Sangha. In *The Middle Way*, however, the caption takes on another significance, and could be seen to suggest (once again) that in Britain the word 'Sangha' is used to denote only the Chithurst/Amaravati Sangha.

In fact, the first brother and sister to be ordained into the Sangha in Britain were (probably) Dhammachari Lokamitra and Dhammacharini Shrimala, who have been members of the Western Buddhist Order for many years. Does anyone know of any more brothers and sisters in the Sangha?

19

ORDINATION – A CONSCIOUS ACT

'A Buddhist funeral is a ceremony in which the newly-dead person or animal is given ordination and offered up to the Buddhas and Ancestors.'

These words were taken from the news section of the Autumn edition of *The Journal Of Throssel Hole Priory*. Perhaps some clarification is necessary.

In the Buddhist context, 'ordination' is the (admittedly inadequate) English word used (by scholars, by the FWBO, and by most other Buddhist movements in the West) to denote the act of 'Going for Refuge to the Three Jewels'. This is a conscious commitment of body, speech, and mind to the ideals

embodied by the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha, made by a responsible individual after much thought and mature reflection.

In any truly Buddhist sense, the notion of 'posthumous' ordination cannot but be meaningless—and probably rather confusing to those new to Buddhism.

RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

Sarkharov freed from internal exile; limited tolerance for private enterprise businesses and a crack-down on official corruption; a new mood of 'openness' abroad in the land: what is happening in Russia? Are radical changes taking place, or are we simply witnessing another turn in the perpetual East-West propaganda war?

Press commentators in India certainly seem to have been impressed by Mikhail

and Raisa Gorbachev during their recent trip to the subcontinent. The weekly news magazine *India Today* enthused at some length on the Party Secretary's knowledge of, and sympathy for, his hosts' cultural traditions.

In Delhi Mr Gorbachev even '... quoted the words of the Buddha: "The greatest victory is one in which nobody is defeated, and all can share in that victory."'

Perhaps the quotation

became scrambled in translation, since Mr Gorbachev was possibly reciting lines from the *Dhammapada*: 'Though one man conquer a thousand times a thousand men in battle, he who conquers himself is the greatest warrior.'

Mr Gorbachev seems set to make a great many changes. But could he really be planning a Dhamma Revolution? We shall have to wait and see.

RECORD ATTENDANCES IN INDIA

While most retreats organized in recent months were 'normal' FWBO retreats, offering a mix of meditation, study, communication, and puja, some were more specialist in tone. The new Rivendell Centre, in Sussex, has been offering 'gardening retreats', Padmaloka hosted the Movement's first 'Performing Arts Retreat', and Aryaloka, in New Hampshire, held a weekend 'Writers Seminar'.

No matter what their theme or slant, however, few of these retreats would have catered for more than 20 to 30 people. Not so in India, where some truly massive retreats have just taken place.

While visiting the Vidharba region of Maharashtra, Lokamitra found himself leading a retreat for 250 people! This must suggest that TBMSG could soon be far more active in Vidharba, traditionally seen as the Ambedkarite movement's heart region.

During that retreat, Padmashuri led a 'study group' for 83 women. Padmashuri is now half-way through her present visit to India, and is very busy giving talks and leading retreats at all of our centres there. Although Mrs Lebhane, a mitra from Aurangabad, has recently started leading day retreats in the Buddhist caves just

outside the city, Padmashuri is the only Dhammcharini leading women's retreats in India. No wonder her retreats are fully booked. A hundred women attended a day-retreat that she led in Bombay during November.

Order members from Bombay and Ulhasnagar were expecting 80 people to attend their 'Diwali Retreat'—a weekend event designed to 'rival' a major Hindu festival. To their amazement, no fewer than 161 people turned up. The team were delighted, though such numbers put the water supply under serious strain.

Seven mitra ceremonies took place during the retreat, and attendance at Bombay's regular weekly class has doubled. 200 people now gather at Siddharth Vihar—one of the People's Education Society's premises—for a meditation session and a talk.

The People's Education Society was founded by Dr Ambedkar, and has often offered TBMSG the use of its premises. When 86 people turned up for a weekend retreat at a PES school in New Bombay recently, the Order team struck on an excellent way of thanking the school's proprietors for the use of the building. Since water supply had been a problem here too, they gave the school a capacious water tank.

HIGH STANDARDS OF RIVENDELL

Rivendell is a Victorian vicarage, situated in a small East Sussex Village in view of the South Downs. Acquired by the Croydon Centre at the end of 1984, it has taken Rainbow Builders fifteen months to create the new Retreat Centre. Financially, the project has been made possible through the generosity and hard work of people working in Croydon's Right Livelihood businesses.

The building team aimed for the highest standards, and the house has now been beautifully decorated and furnished. A benign atmosphere pervades the house and its five acres of grounds. Rivendell even has its own full-time chef, Tjoan Thung, a mitra from Holland who trained as a chef in Paris.

The first retreat was held at Rivendell at the end of 1985—the annual Aryatara Christmas Retreat—but it was not until July last year that work was finally completed. Since then, quite a large number of retreats have been held: a month long women's ordination retreat, an Order retreat for the Croydon Chapter, and numerous weekend retreats for beginners and Friends.

Being just forty miles from Central London and sixteen miles from Brighton Rivendell

is able to provide a retreat venue for all four centres in south-east England.

From the evidence of retreats held so far it is clear that Rivendell has much to offer. A weekend on retreat can have a spiritual impact equivalent to months of weekly attendance at centre classes.

As well as holding retreats along established FWBO lines, Satyaraja and Bodhimitra, Rivendell's directors, intend to adopt something of an experimental approach. Later this year there will be a Buddhist Summer School, led by Sthiramati and Sagaramati. This will be the first event of its kind organized by the FWBO, and could attract people from all over the country. Also next summer, Dharmapriya, from FWBO Germany, will be leading an international Yoga retreat. Other possibilities include vegetarian cookery courses and arts seminars.

Rivendell will probably serve as a base for public classes in the surrounding area, in particular in the local town of Tunbridge Wells. Tunbridge Wells is a bright, busy, and prosperous town, and would seem to be an ideal place to start FWBO activities.

Dharmaruchi

PROGRESS AT TARALOKA

Taraloka, the women's retreat centre in Shropshire, has just celebrated its first birthday. There is still a great deal of work to be done on the property, and money is scarce, but the Centre's activities are clearly being appreciated and well attended.

Sufficient conversion work has now been completed to

allow retreats to take place without using any of the resident community's facilities. Although community members support and organize retreats at Taraloka, the community 'in itself' will now be able to maintain a regular programme of its own, undisturbed by the busy retreat programme.

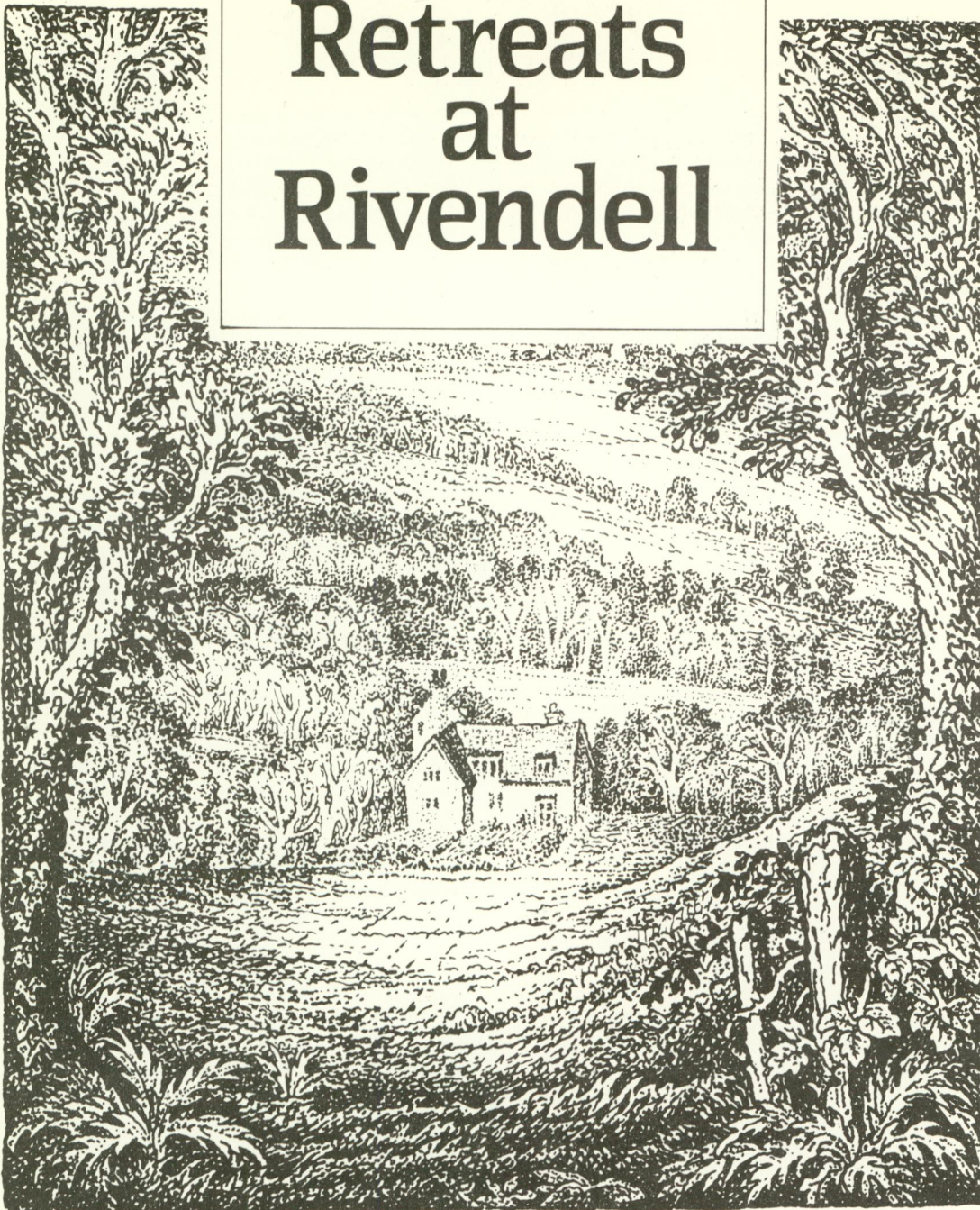


Padmashuri



Taraloka

Retreats at Rivendell



Rivendell is an old rectory set in large wooded grounds in the rolling countryside of Sussex, within easy reach of London by road or rail. The beautiful house and its quiet rural surroundings provide perfect conditions for retreats and courses of all kinds.

Weekend Retreats 27 Feb-1 Mar and 24-26 April. Open to all, including newcomers to meditation and Buddhism. Friday 7.30pm to Sunday 4.30pm.

Summer School 12-19 July. A seven-day course in the essentials of Buddhist thought which will also include instruction in the theory and practice of meditation. There will be talks, discussion groups, films, opportunities to pursue personal reading and to enjoy the local countryside, as well as time to talk informally with the tutors. All instruction will be given

by senior members of the Western Buddhist Order.

Yoga Retreat 22-29 August. A residential yoga course taught according to the Iyengar system by approved and experienced instructors. As well as yoga there will be meditation, talks, discussions and other activities. Open to both men and women, with or without previous experience of yoga. An excellent opportunity to develop your yoga practice.

Further details available from the address below

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SPAIN IN THE RAIN

Living up in the mountains in very primitive conditions, the community at Guhyaloka has been vividly aware of the elements. Throughout the summer months the sun's intensity made work after midday impossible. Then, in late September, quite exceptional rainfall—more than twelve inches in a single night—destroyed work already done and set the project back by almost a month. The road to the valley was cut, so it was several weeks before any useful quantities of materials could be brought in. A team of six new workers who arrived in the midst of the storm could not be properly accommodated, and found themselves in the damp and overcrowded corners. Further unseasonable rain in late November (there had been almost no rain at all for several years) fell at a crucial time—just before roofs were to be put on some huts.

In fact, the last few months have made more and more apparent the difficulties of working in an unknown land, far away from proper roads and telephones. Nonetheless, some very attractive two-man huts have been built from plastic sacks filled with earth and covered with arches of plaster, and a kitchen is nearing completion. Unless

nature plays more tricks, a temporary retreat centre for about thirty men will have been completed in time for the retreat next year.

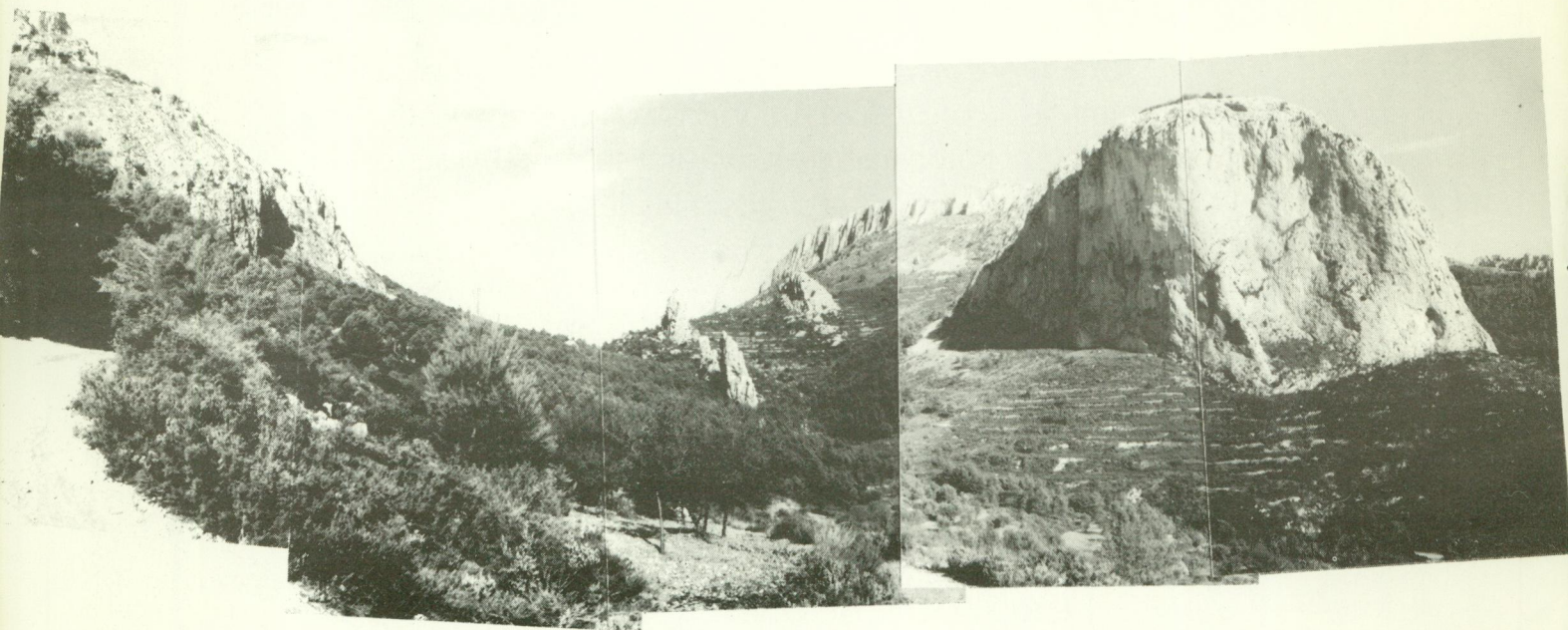
Apart from building a retreat centre, we have also been conscious of laying the foundations of a community, of which we are but the first members, and which will embrace a very large number of men in the future as the Centre grows. Community life in these beautiful and isolated surroundings has been very fruitful and, on the whole, enjoyable. There have been times when the set-backs and deteriorating conditions (it is now quite cold at nights) have got on our nerves, but even in these gloomy times we have managed to retain a sense of working together as a community—indeed more so than when things were going smoothly. It has certainly been very instructive to see what a crisis brings out in different people: some suddenly leap to the fore; others seem to fall to pieces.

We have now decided that, having been unable to get sufficient accommodation ready for everyone because of the rains, we will reduce the size of the community and let the work progress more slowly

over the winter months. There has been a great sense of relief and relaxation as we find ourselves with more space and less pressure from overcrowding in poor conditions. In March, when the spring comes, we will build up the size of the community again. We will then be looking for more workers with building skills.

We have slowly been building up contacts among Spanish Buddhists (many of whom have been quite outstandingly helpful to us) and others. Two Spaniards have joined the community for a while and we hope that more will do so before long. Xavi Alongina of Editoriales Dharma, a very good friend who has assisted us greatly from the outset, is arranging for the publication in Spanish, early next year, of *The Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path*, a series of edited lectures by Sangharakshita, which appeared originally in *Mitrata*. We plan, shortly, to commence occasional activities in Valencia, Benidorm, and Alicante. 'Los Amigos de la Orden Budista Occidental' is well under way.

Subhuti



Guhyaloka: the entire valley



IMPROVEMENTS IN EDUCATION

Bahujan Hitay's two latest *balwadis*, or kindergartens, are now up and running. In the Camp area of Poona, the 'Rahul Shidu Vihara' caters for thirty children. In Ahmedabad, the kindergarten at the Maitri Mangala Vihara now has its own Montessori teacher.

From Aurangabad, Jyotipala reports that the twenty-five boys living in the hostel established last year by Bahujan Hitay have all done

well in their first set of end-of-term exams.

And in West Bengal, Dhardo Rimpoche, one of Sangharakshita's close friends in Kalimpong, is at last able to devise ideal staffing arrangements, and start planning a new building for his school for refugee children. The £130,000 raised by Aid For India last year should guarantee its survival indefinitely, and will allow for some much needed expansion.

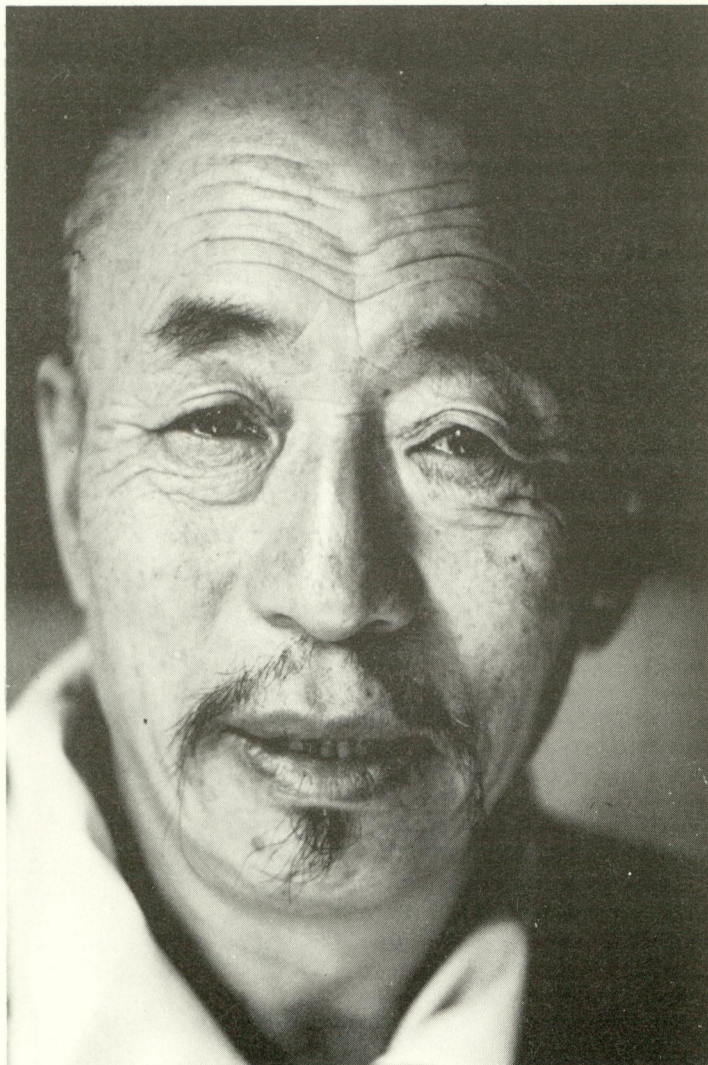
COMMUNITY OPENS

In a year and a half, Friends in Ulhasnagar, a town on the very edge of Bombay, have initiated a hostel for 25 students and a thriving Dharma centre. Now, on Sangha Day, they invited Lokamitra to open their first residential community.

Sarvagandha sugandha is a men's community and will doubtless have a remarkable effect on Buddhist activities in the area. In a world where any man beyond the age of twenty-five is expected either to be a 'monk' or to be married, the introduction of

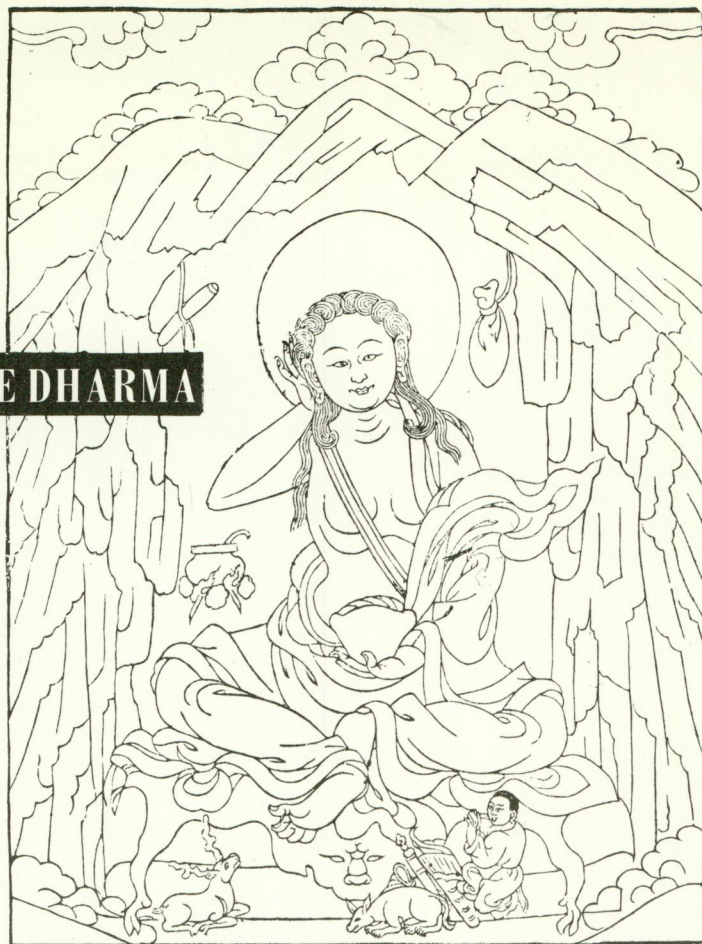
FWBO-style single-sex community living is a radical step, rich in possibilities.

Of the community's tongue-twisting name Chandrasila writes, 'I know the big name for a small community will not help much to communicate the Dhamma in India. But I hope my more than 300 Dharma brothers in the world will help me by visiting and adding perfume to the *kuti*, and expanding and refining the communication of truth in all quarters of India.'



Dhardo Rimpoche

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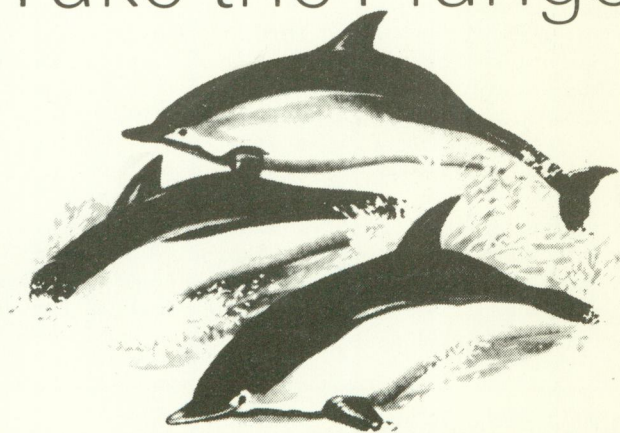
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SANGHARAKSHITA'S AUTUMN A START IN SPAIN

For much of September, October, and November, Sangharakshita was in Tuscany attending the sixth—and last—ordination course to be held there. He thus spent many of his evenings answering questions on the material being studied during the daytime. This included two chapters from *The Life of the Buddha* by Nanamoli, a short essay, *The Buddha and the Future of his Religion*, by Dr Ambedkar, and a study manual specially produced for the ordination course itself, *A Guide to the Buddhist Path*, which is based on Sangharakshita's lectures and study seminars. In addition, he was glad to be able to devote a large amount of time to his mounting correspondence. The climax of the course was, naturally, the ordination of eleven men into the Western Buddhist Order.

On his return to England, Sangharakshita chaired a meeting at Conway Hall in London to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the death of Dr B. R. Ambedkar, the man who inspired several million ex-Untouchables in India to convert to Buddhism. At this meeting, which was organized by the London Buddhist Centre, Windhorse Publications launched Sangharakshita's new book *Ambedkar and Buddhism*. Some 250 people attended this event, including Indian followers of Dr Ambedkar from London,

Wolverhampton, and Glasgow. (See review section.)

Being out of the country so much, Sangharakshita has obviously not been able to see as many visitors as usual. He was however able to receive Kabir Saxena, from the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT). Kabir is overseeing a project to build a Buddhist complex at Bodhi Gaya, close to the site of the Buddha's Enlightenment. He was interested to hear about Sangharakshita's experience with the ex-Untouchable Buddhists in India in the fifties and sixties, and about the work of TBMSG. Another welcome visitor to Padmaloka was Satish Kumar, editor of the magazine *Resurgence*, who interviewed Sangharakshita for a coming issue on Buddhism.

Another significant event this quarter was the departure of two women Order members from Britain to perform ordinations in India. Ratnashuri and Shrimala will be attending a women's ordination retreat near Bombay, and will ordain two Indian women on Sangharakshita's behalf. This will be the first ordination ceremony for women into the Western Buddhist Order not performed personally by Sangharakshita. It is therefore as great a milestone as was the men's ordination ceremony conducted by a team of three male Order members this time last year.



Sangharakshita speaks in Valencia

Guhyaloka community remembers recently launched a hasty publicity campaign in the Spanish towns of Valencia, Alicante, and Benidorm for three talks to be given by Sangharakshita, who visited Guhyaloka during the Christmas period.

Considering the singularly unpromising time of year, the events were surprisingly well attended, and stimulated interest from the local media.

Much preliminary work for the first talk—in Valencia—was done by Paco Verdu and Marivi Ribes, two friends who run a naturopathic clinic in the city. Additional help was given by the Nagarjuna Buddhist Centre, part of the FPMT, run by followers of the late Tibetan lama Thubten Yeshe.

When Sangharakshita took tea at the Centre on the morning of the talk, an interesting discussion arose about such matters as how to find a tantric teacher (Broadly, you don't try: you simply get on with the Hinayana and Mahayana stages of the Path and leave it to the guru to find you!), and about tantric initiation (Sangharakshita commented that when he had first known Tibetan lamas, newly arrived in India, it had been very hard to get initiation from them. Now it seemed to be very easy. . . Either they were right before and wrong now, or wrong before and right now!).

Several people were clearly preoccupied with the problem

of presenting the Dharma in the West, and were pleased to encounter a Western teacher. When asked about his plans for the development of the FWBO in Spain, Sangharakshita made it clear that he had no plans. We simply need to make contact with people, he said, and get to know the situation in the country. Then will we find out whether there is an opportunity for a Buddhist movement here, and what form it will take.

Despite the unpropitious hour of 5.30 on the Sunday afternoon before Christmas, more than a hundred people—from all walks of Spanish life—filled a tiny hall in the municipal gardens. People even sat on the floor behind the speaker and listened at the windows!

The talk was delivered in English and translated by Chris Pauling, a mitra working at Guhyaloka. After giving a short outline of his life, Sangharakshita offered a brief account of the Three Jewels. The audience seemed quite exceptionally open, and as the positive atmosphere developed, the speaker was able to say—when speaking of the Sangha Jewel—that the meeting itself was providing a taste of 'Spiritual Community'.

The next day's talk took place 120 miles south, in Alicante, where we had the free use of a very luxurious hall. For several days, teams from Guhyaloka had plastered the town with posters, and they were out in the streets



Launch meeting for *Ambedkar and Buddhism*

that afternoon, giving leaflets to passers-by. The audience of seventy or so—many of whom had decided to come at the last minute—represented a cross section of Alicante citizens. There was certainly not the same kind of atmosphere here as in Valencia, the speaker and translator having to work harder to reach the audience. Nonetheless, many left their names, requesting further information.

A number of local papers and radio stations featured the FWBO, and Sangharakshita gave interviews for the province's two main newspapers. The reporter from 'Informacion' was clearly impressed to see that Sangharakshita was not a guru in the Rajneesh mold: 'In relation to the image to which traditional "gurus" have accustomed us,' he wrote, 'one finds unusual this religious leader who laughs frequently and who dresses like a Westerner, more like a university professor than a man who is said to have more than a hundred thousand followers throughout the world.' The article has created quite a stir in our local village, where we have become overnight celebrities.

Sangharakshita spent a few days at Guhyaloka after the talks. There he was unfortunately taken ill, and returned to England prematurely. A scheduled third talk in the vegetarian restaurant in Benidorm had therefore to be given by Subhuti. It was attended by about sixty people, some of whom were foreigners from the town's large expatriate community.

All in all, it seems that there is some definite, widespread interest in such things as Buddhism—and, as yet, little to satisfy that interest. Even more encouraging is the fact that the interest seems to cut across Spanish society, not being confined to the 'alternative scene' alone.

These three talks, the first public activities of the FWBO in Spain, have added greatly to our growing circle of contacts. It is out of these contacts that a Spanish branch of the Western Buddhist Order will surely grow.

Subhuti

A FAREWELL TO TUSCANY

For the past six years, an old Italian monastery has played an important part in the life of the FWBO. Since 1981, the 'Convento di Santa Croce', on a hill overlooking the Italian village of Batignano, has been the venue for annual courses in which men from all over the Western world have been ordained into the Western Buddhist Order.

On the last three-month retreat, which ended in December, eleven men were ordained. This means that the building, which ceased being used as a monastery in Napoleonic times, has now seen the ordination of over a third of our Order. Altogether, nearly 140 Order members have spent time on courses there, practising the Dharma away from the concerns of the everyday world, against the picturesque backdrop of the monastery, with its cloister, walled garden, and olive grove.

Dharmacharis ordained in Tuscany are now spread around the world, teaching the Dharma in Britain, Canada, the USA, New

Zealand, and elsewhere. Their experience of participating in a Tuscany course, and the bonds of friendship which they forged during it, are helping to unify an increasingly far-flung Order.

Sangharakshita has usually attended the greater part of each course. Over six years he has answered many hundreds of Dharma questions, and has led study seminars on *The Dhammapada*, *Satipatthana Sutta*, *Diamond Sutra*, and many other texts. Prolonged contact with him in Tuscany has given a great impetus to the Dharma practice of all the course participants, both those being ordained and the more experienced Order members running the courses.

Since the first pioneering course in 1981, the 'process' of preparing people for ordination has gradually been refined. We have now instituted an entire system of preparatory retreats before the Tuscany course; the teams of Order members directing the courses have almost trebled in size; and similar ordination courses have been initiated for

women.

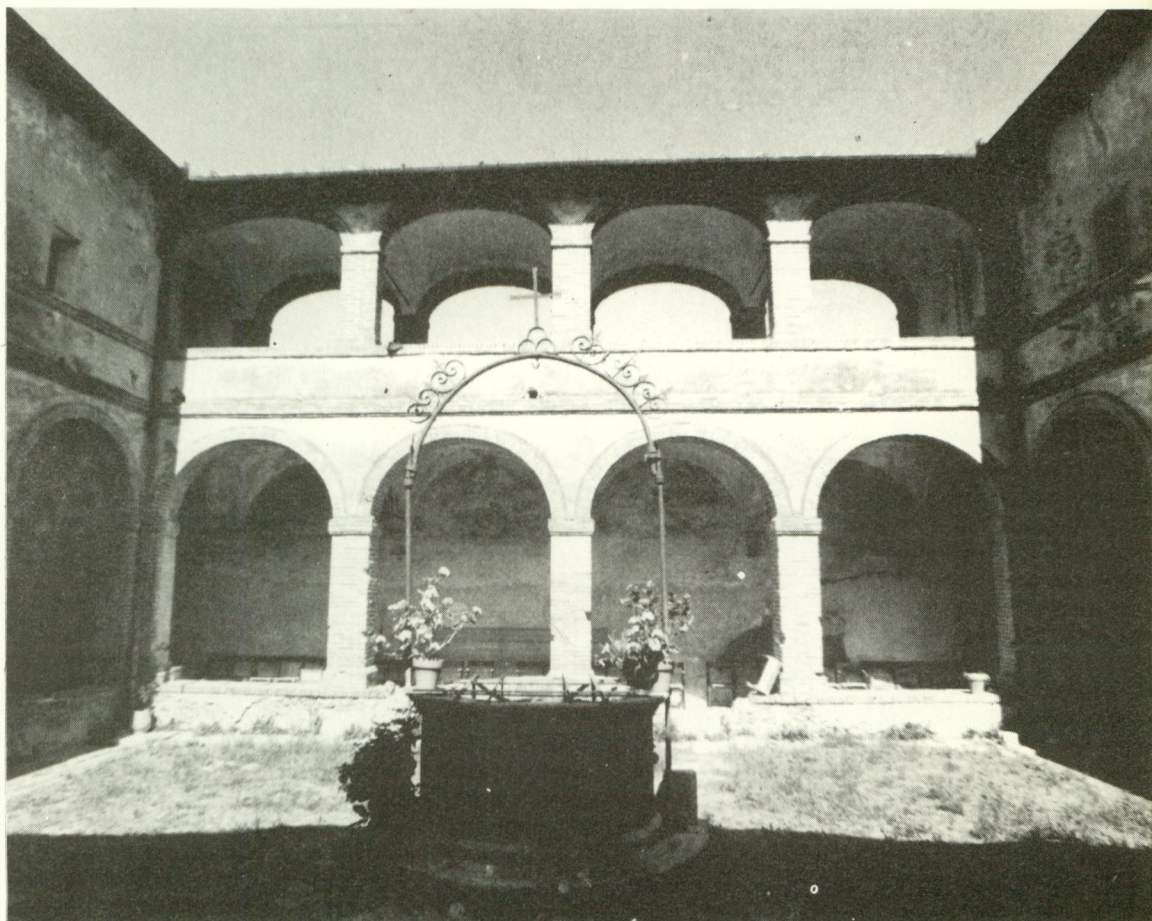
We are now preparing for a further development: in 1987 we plan to hold the men's ordination course at Guhyaloka, our new centre in Spain. Our recent 'journey to Il Convento' was therefore our last.

In Spain we shall be even more isolated and undisturbed (and more ascetic, at least to start with!) and we shall be able to lengthen the ordination courses.

Guhyaloka presents us with exciting new opportunities. Nonetheless, I shall be very sad to say goodbye to Tuscany and the 'magic monastery' in its wooded hills. I hope that the FWBO's links with the building will continue in some form in future, and I would like to thank Adam Pollock, the building's owner, for his kindness in making it available. Directly or indirectly, the whole of the FWBO has benefited from the use of his home.

Vessantara

Il Convento di Santa Croce, Tuscany



PIMPRI'S NEW CENTRE

A recent highlight for our Pimpri branch, near Poona in India, was the opening ceremony for Maitreya Vihara, the new purpose-built Centre located in the locality of Gautam Nagar.

People from Pimpri, and Friends from TBMSG centres in Poona, watched as Chandrabodhi, chairman of the Pimpri Centre, garlanded the statue of Dr Ambedkar in the town centre. Then, for two hours, the assembly processed through Pimpri, following the well-decorated truck which bore the Centre's new Buddha image.

Once Anagarika Jyotipala had installed the image at the Centre, a large public meeting took place in a square close to the vihara, attended by a number of Order members and a member of the Municipal Corporation, Mr Chabuskwar.

The new Centre has been completed just one year after Chandrabodhi acquired the use of a temporary shed in order to begin activities in Pimpri. He reports that people still appreciate—and use—the cassette recorder donated to the new Centre by Friends in England.

AFI MOVES

Aid For India, the charity which raises funds for our Buddhist activities and social welfare work in India, has been associated with London since its inception in 1980. Many of its fundraising appeals—which have now raised around £3,000,000—have taken place on the streets of London, and its administrative offices were based first at the London Buddhist Centre and then in Dalston.

Now, Aid For India has moved its base to the university town of Oxford. Here, as well as enjoying more spacious and pleasant surroundings, the AFI community of four hopes to act as the nucleus for a wider FWBO presence.

Fourteen men worked on two two-month AFI appeals last year. Now the AFI team are looking for people to take part in this year's appeals. If you are interested in this valuable and rewarding work, contact the AFI team in Oxford.

With activities under way in Cambridge and Edinburgh too, the FWBO has now established some significant beach-heads in Britain's oldest seats of learning.

Aid For India's new address is given on the back cover.

SYDNEY PEACE SEMINAR

At the invitation of Vipula and Rosemary Sharples, Purna left Auckland for a few days last November and attended a two day Buddhist seminar entitled 'A Strategy for Peace', hosted by the University of Sydney.

The seminar was devised as a gathering of Sydney's Buddhist organizations in celebration of 1986 as 'International Year of Peace'. It attracted 300 people to a

variety of talks, led practices, and ethnic exhibitions.

Purna's talk was entitled 'Breaking through the Illusion of Separateness'. He also led a discussion group and a session of meditation. The timing of this seminar was fortunate since it allowed Purna to celebrate Sangha Day with Sydney Friends, and to strengthen the links between our Australasian centres.

'LOTUS' BLOSSOMS

'Lotus Products' is the name of the much expanded wood-products business at Aryaloka, in New Hampshire, USA. Five of the six community members now work in the business, and Ratnapani reports that efficiency and productivity are rising all the time.

A 'work study' facility allows people to stay at the

Centre for a month, paying for one week's retreat by three week's work—a popular scheme in the USA. (*See last issue for more details.*)

As business improves, the Aryaloka team hope to be able to cut down on the working week, thus freeing community members to do other necessary work around the Centre.

PRISON VISITS

Several Order members in the UK are regularly visiting prisoners, either as chaplains or as Visitors. Angulimala, the agency established by bhikkhu Khemadhammo, that has been taking an initiative in this field, is now looking for more help. If you would like to help, contact Angulimala direct, or get in touch with Devaraja at our Brighton Centre.

Meanwhile, in New Zealand, Udaya has been for

some time leading a regular study group for inmates at Mt Eden Prison. Mt Eden, he says, 'is dungeon-like, and shocked visitors from the United States' penal institutions—who suggested that it was worse than Alcatraz.'

Udaya is making some meditation stools for the prison, since the floors are hard, and there are no cushions.

The record-breaking retreat in Wardha ▼



HELSINKI FESTIVAL

Order members from the Helsinki Centre recently participated in a 'Festival of Spirit and Knowledge'. This was organized by a co-operative body from 'the border areas of knowledge'—including Theosophists, Anthroposophists, and Christosophists. . .

The Helsinki Centre had a bookstall at the festival as well as a classroom for showing videotaped interviews with Sangharakshita and Mokshapriya's documentary record of a Tuscany retreat, 'Ordination at Il Convento'. Despite the difficulties of simultaneous interpretation, Sarvamitra reports that these tapes offered a very good way of conveying a wider sense of the Movement.

EXPANSION IN LEEDS

Aryamitra, chairman of the Leeds Centre, was all set for an autumnal lull in attendance at his classes. Instead, the reverse has been the case and classes have continued grow in size over the past months (perhaps because Aryamitra has been busy giving talks in the surrounding area).

Now, the community living at the Leeds Centre have decided to knock down a wall to make their shrine room considerably bigger. But that is only a temporary measure. The search is now on for a new, bigger centre in a 'more popular' area of Leeds.

NORWICH REUNION

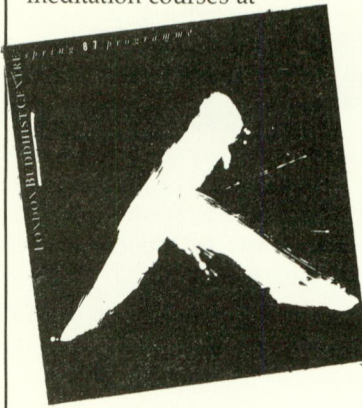
In September, the Norwich Buddhist Centre celebrated its tenth anniversary. At a 'birthday' celebration for those who regularly use the Centre, Abhaya (a former chairman), Kulananda, and Kulamitra (who moved there soon after the Centre first opened) gave a colourful and often moving account of the Centre's early days and of Devamitra's efforts in establishing the Norwich Meditation Centre, as it was then known.

The anniversary was further marked with an Open Day. Publicity for the occasion—which included a large window display in one of the city's main streets, and streams of eye-catching banners—brought many new faces into the Centre. The day event was followed by an evening of poetry and music which was attended by the Lady Mayor of Norwich.

BUSY SEASON FOR LONDON

A packed week of introductory public events has just heralded what promises to be the London Buddhist Centre's busiest session ever.

20,000 programmes, distributed all over London in January, will draw people to a programme which includes residential and non-residential meditation courses at



The LBC's programme

beginners' and advanced level. Two of these courses are to be led by teachers from Vajraloka Retreat Centre.

A series of talks on basic Buddhism in London's West End will no doubt attract many beginners, but Dhammarati, the Centre's new chairman, hopes that the coming programme will also inject new depth into the practice of the Centre's regulars.

A major new venture for the Centre is 'Bodywise', based at the substantially refurbished Annexe, just down the road from the Centre. Run by six women Order members and mitras, Bodywise is a kind of 'total health' centre, offering classes and courses in (so far): Yoga, massage, Alexander Technique, and dance.

The LBC has recently received some welcome 'free publicity'. It was favourably featured on the TV programme, 'Beyond Belief', and in an educational film for schools. The Cherry Orchard, the Centre's vegetarian restaurant, also took part in a BBC programme on Veganism.

Visitors to Glasgow

Among those attending an open day at the Glasgow Buddhist Centre on 26 November were a party from the Samye Dzong. Samye Dzong is a Tibetan Buddhist centre based in Glasgow, linked with Samye Ling, the widely known centre in Dumfries—one of whose

teachers also attended the day.

The sixty or so people who visited the Glasgow Centre on that occasion were given a chance to hear talks, receive instruction in meditation, and watch slides and video demonstrations, as well as meeting the Centre's Order members and regular Friends.

MIDLAND EXPANSION

Why start activities in the Midlands when there are so many 'exotic' places to go to, like Spain or Mexico? A major reason was that Virachitta and Satyapala believed there would be tremendous potential for Dharma teaching in the middle part of England. In 1983 the FWBO's activities seemed to be unevenly distributed, with most of our work centred on the South, some coverage in the North, but next to nothing in between.

Things moved slowly to begin with, mainly because the new 'joint chairmen' of FWBO Midlands had other responsibilities to fulfil: Virachitta at the West London Centre and Satyapala with Aid For India.

It was not until three years after their ordination in Tuscany that those early plans began to materialize, with public meditation classes starting in Birmingham in April 1986. By this time,



Virachitta and Satyapala had been joined by a third man (now ordained as Sunanda), and a successful computer business—Midland Orion—had been formed. The profits from Midland Orion, combined with some very generous personal loans, enabled them to buy the FWBO's first Midlands centre. It opened in January 1987 as the 'Birmingham Buddhist Centre', and now forms the headquarters for all our work in the Midlands, with regular meditation classes being held in Birmingham and Leicester. There are plans to open up in other cities as soon as resources permit.

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A START IN IPSWICH

In just ten months Rex Smart, a mitra from Norfolk, has created a base for the FWBO in his home town of Ipswich.

Attracting people to meditation classes by word of mouth and through a modest poster campaign, Rex has cultivated a core of ten to fifteen regulars, many of whom now want to delve further into Buddhism.

Although Dharmacharis Dharmamudra and Guhyavajra support the group's meetings on a regular basis, and several more Order members have paid occasional visits, Rex himself has done much of the initial teaching work.

Meetings for meditation, study, and puja take place in a converted bedroom at Rex's home, and Friends have been making country homes

available for day retreats.

In November the group came of age when a regular attendee asked to become a mitra. And, on a more material level, the weekly *dana* collection suggests that the Ipswich sangha now have the means—and the will—to find and run a proper centre. A search for premises is under way.

When Ipswich Friends venture into the area of Right Livelihood, their first business could well be a design studio. Rex—who works as a graphic designer—collaborated with other designer Friends to devise a logo for one of the Movement's newest businesses: 'Clear View', the aptly named window-cleaning business established by Friends at the Lancashire Buddhist Centre.

SOME MAJOR EVENTS AT PADMALOKA MEN'S RETREAT CENTRE

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MEN'S EVENT

'ENTERING INTO REALITY' 22-25 May

This event falls on the Spring Bank Holiday, and will last for three days. There will be three full-length talks on the three levels of Wisdom.

SPRING RETREAT 10-17 April

You are welcome to attend whether or not you have previous experience of meditation. A leaflet and booking form are available from the Retreat Organiser.



LBC RETREAT 17-24 April

A special retreat which is open to those who attend the London Buddhist Centre. For full details contact the LBC.

OPEN DAY 31 May

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The Retreat Organiser

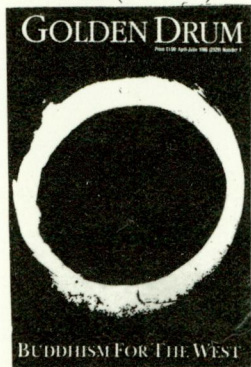
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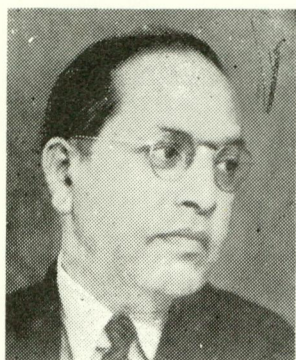
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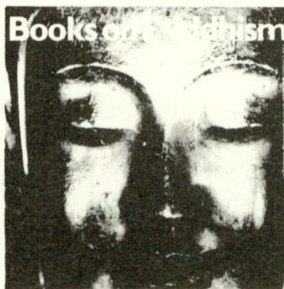
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