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A TASTE OF SOLITUDE



GOLDEN DRUM

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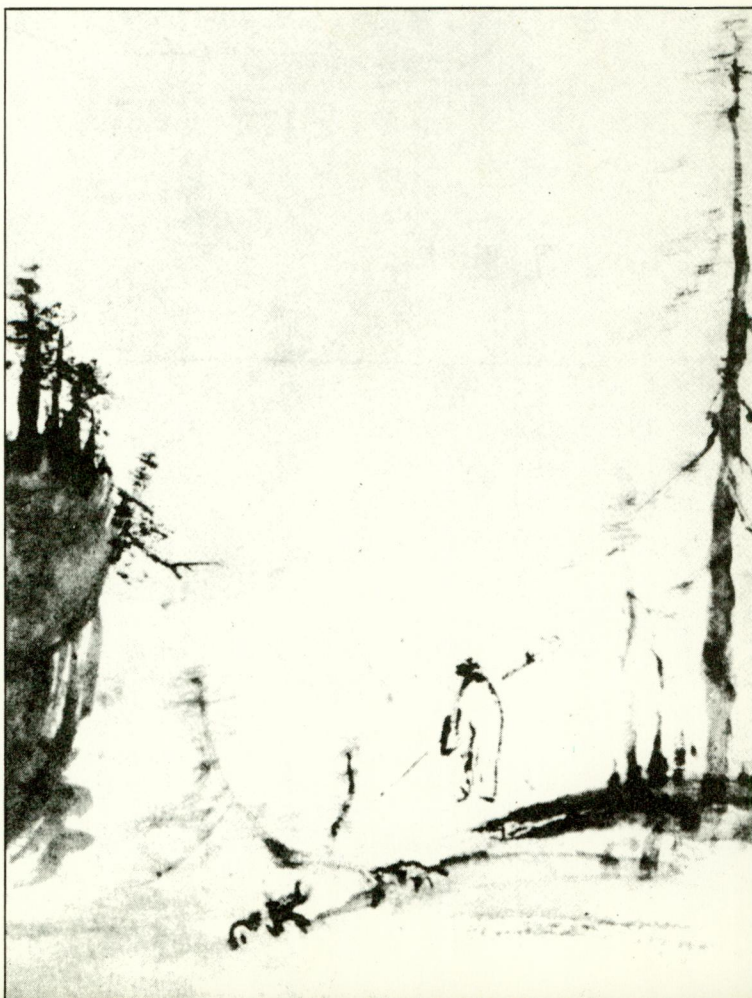
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A TASTE OF SOLITUDE

Daring, dangerous, precisely co-ordinated: it was the kind of operation that should have brought glory to its executors. Down in the sea, a flotilla of launches crept round the coast towards the rendez-vous position; above, half a dozen climbers inched their way down an almost sheer rock-face towards the cave: This, according to locals, was where a strange man had recently taken up residence. Strongly built, very 'casually' dressed, without doubt a practised climber, the most disturbing thing about him was that he seemed to spend all his time in the cave, hardly ever appearing in daylight, never talking to anyone.

When all was ready, the squeak of a sea-borne megaphone detached itself from the hiss and thump of ocean noise:

'You are completely surrounded. You have no chance of escape. Come out now, with your hands in the air'. . .

. . . It took a slightly bemused Dharmachari some time to convince his visitors that he was not an escaped prisoner, not running from the law in any way or for any reason.

But his interrogator persisted, 'Then what *are* you doing here?'

Twinkling mysteriously, and rising rather self-consciously to the drama of his situation, our hero replied, 'If you *really* want an answer to that, come back here tonight, *alone*'.

This incident took place in 1974. But even today it can be hard to explain why anyone should choose to spend a month, or even so much as a day or two, completely alone, perhaps in very basic conditions, with no TV or radio for company, no newspapers, nor even any light reading to distract or entertain. And yet, an increasing number of Order members, mitras, and Friends count a substantial spell of this kind of solitude among the essential elements of a sane and healthy year-plan. A good many Western Buddhists (FWBO and otherwise) make an annual pilgrimage to Osel Ling, the FPMT's solitary retreat facility in Spain; our own Guhyaloka Retreat Centre will soon include a number of solitary retreat huts; 'ideal' shacks, caravans, batches, and bothies, in India's Western Ghats, the Scottish Highlands, or in New Zealand's Southern Alps are being tracked down all the time, precisely calibrated in terms of their 'remoteness factors' and eagerly booked—sometimes a year or more in advance.

So what is the appeal? Why do people do it? For if we take a look at the world around us, it's hard to imagine that human beings are in any way 'designed' for solitude and silence. In modern, industrial societies, we live, move, and earn our bread amid a flux of world-wide economic and electronic connections, and accept technologically generated noise, visual imagery, and printed, recorded, and spoken words as a ceaseless accompaniment to the process of drawing breath. Those who inhabit more traditional societies perpetually enjoy the intimate buzz of family life and that of their immediate social group; chatter, gossip, laughter, and argument fill the air with noise. In most human societies, periods of physical solitary confinement are regarded either as an extreme punishment, or as a form of asceticism based on an active disgust with everything the world has to offer.

It therefore has to be said that most people embark upon their

first solitary retreat simply to find out what it is *like* to be alone, and to discover whether or not they can actually cope with the experience!

When, on the Western Buddhist Order's first Convention, Sangharakshita suggested that all Order members might consider arranging a month of solitary retreat within a year of their ordination, the idea seemed exquisitely daunting, and those first pioneers who returned from the Welsh hills, with their diamond dark eyes and strange baggage of often untellable tales, were objects of a special awe and an instinctive form of respect.

However, what soon became apparent was that a few weeks of solitary retreat were not going to drive any mature human being mad, nor, unfortunately, were they enough—despite all those inspiring stories of Zen, Tantric, and Theravadin mountain and forest-dwellers—to get your average Westerner fully Enlightened.

A solitary retreat is *not* the practice to end all practices that we once thought it might be, and that most people setting out on their first 'solitary' probably hope (or fear) that it might be. But it is, all the same, something special and quite essential.

A solitary retreat in the right setting naturally offers an excellent opportunity to take one's meditation practice deeper, or to engage with the Dharma texts on a more existential level than usual.

Such a retreat also gives one a chance—and this is often the hard part—to become a little more familiar with the less obvious contents of one's psyche: to encounter some of the deeper preoccupations, fantasies, and obsessions that normally lie just a little way out of sight, yet which colour and motivate much of one's experience. It is thus a time for taking stock: for reviewing the way in which the superficial facts of our lives harmonize with, express, and (for better or worse) amplify those deeper forces and feelings.

Perhaps the most important thing that can happen on a solitary retreat—something which our meditation, study, and introspection will feed and be fed by—is that we get a chance to experience ourselves in an absolutely simple and basic way, free in body and mind from our normal connections, responsibilities, and entanglements. It is a meeting with ourselves as we fundamentally are, momentarily stripped of all obligations, roles, and masks. An experience like this can help clarify what we really want to achieve in life, and bestow an appreciation for what we uniquely have to contribute. The experience may erupt out of the silence like a breakthrough of epic proportions, or it may accumulate slowly, almost imperceptibly, as the most natural and obvious thing that has ever happened to us.

Either way, an occasional taste of solitude is powerful medicine. Once they've tried it for a few weeks, most people are quite happy to return to the world of people, activity, and friendship. But they usually do so wondering how they ever got along without knowing what they were like when on their own.

Nagabodhi



A SOLITARY RETREAT

What does one get out of a solitary retreat? What exactly happens? As Vessantara explains, you don't always get as far 'away from it all' as you might expect.

As the stocky Welsh train bustled along, taking me closer to my solitary retreat, I found myself reflecting that many people in modern society have perhaps never been further than a few hundred yards from the rest of humanity. Some people in cities spend most of their lives within earshot of someone else, being constantly reminded, by the sound of traffic or the television programme coming through the wall, that they are part of the human hive. So there is much to be said for occasionally getting far enough away to be able to feel yourself as a separate entity, free to think your own thoughts.

You don't need very much to do a solitary retreat, in fact it makes you realize what the essentials of life really are. You just need food, shelter, warmth, and an absence of people. The physical distance may not necessarily be very far, but you need to create the conditions so that you will not

meet, or be directly influenced by, other human beings.

In my case, I was staying in a cottage in North Wales, on a quiet country track. Ten minutes' walk in either direction would bring me to an FWBO community, so whilst I was completely alone and would not be disturbed during my month's stay, I also felt the 'stereophonic' spiritual support of other meditators.

I spent the first few days of the retreat settling in. On one level that meant cleaning and tidying, setting up a shrine, and trying to befriend the wood stove, so that it didn't throw tantrums and refuse to light. On a deeper level, 'settling in' meant my consciousness quietening down. With the lack of stimulus and interaction with other people, and oceans of time to shape as I pleased, I found myself spending long periods just sitting quietly, gazing out of the window at the tracery of cloud hanging over the distant hills, or watching raindrops race each other down the window panes, something I hadn't done since I was a child.

Just through being alone, as time goes on, you find your emotional responses to things becoming more subtle, and less clouded by preconceptions.

To start with, the sheep on the hills with their little lambs had a sort of 'chocolate box' prettiness. But then I began to notice that the lambs were forever losing their mothers, and bleating plaintively, peering short-sightedly at the woolly masses around them. Some days, all the longing and pain of separation of the world seemed to be in their bleating. Then, many of the sheep had rotting hooves, which made them lame. No, as I began to really look and feel, it wasn't such a pretty picture after all.

Another of my preconceptions was that I would be living on my own in the cottage. I soon recognized that I wasn't. In reality, I had joined a large community, which included spiders and mice, and things that went 'bump' in the night. I was simply the biggest and most potentially dangerous of the living beings trying to coexist in that space.

As the days pass in solitude, you develop more of a feeling of being an experiencing consciousness. More self-awareness creeps in. Not only do you feel yourself as conscious, you start to feel the texture of that consciousness, and how it changes—the different worlds which it creates out of the basic raw material of experience. You



become as sensitive to its fluctuations as to the subtle changes in the weather. You can watch your mind moving round the different realms of experience which Buddhism acknowledges as possible for consciousness. Sometimes in the realm of Hungry Ghosts, sometimes amongst the blissful Devas.

For example, I rapidly became aware that over the last few years I had become addicted to reading. Sitting quietly, doing nothing, experiencing my own mind, my eye would light upon the sumptuous display of books up in the bedroom. Idly and carelessly I would begin to browse . . . Two hours later I would be struggling to stop reading, painfully aware that the time I had set for my afternoon meditation was long passed. The bookshelves had dragged me down to oblivion like a mariner caught by a mermaid.

But then, on another day, coming back after a walk in the hills I stopped in my tracks. From the yellow moss on its drystone wall to the rusting, unused TV aerial poking through the barn roof, the cottage was perfect . . . I walked into the kitchen. There were two tubs of margarine sitting on the table: white, with red and blue print. They were

the most exquisitely beautiful things I had seen in my life. The pokey kitchen of this small Welsh cottage was Paradise, a Pure Land, and I found myself in tears, grateful for the practice, grateful to my spiritual teachers and friends, grateful to everyone who had ever helped me, grateful to the Universe. I spent a long time just gazing at things, seeing them all for the first time. Finally, my mind began working a little more conceptually, and I quietly began cooking a vegetarian lasagne for supper. By the time I had finished, the gates of Paradise had closed behind me again.

Although I was on my own, free to experience my own world more deeply, I never felt cut off or alone. Indeed, a certain amount of distance from people allowed me to see them more clearly, appreciate them more, and take them less for granted. My fellow Order members, friends, and family all felt vividly present in my meditation.

Indeed, I felt more for the human race as a whole. I hadn't gone on solitary to 'retire from the world' but in order to go back, strengthened and more effective. I had 'cut myself off' to give myself the chance to experience my own

humanity more deeply; and the more I did so the more I felt a certain solidarity with all human beings. My struggles with myself were not in any sense unique. I felt like a representative of Humanity fighting the battles which all men and women fight to become more truly human. In my practice of the *metta bhavana*, or 'development of loving kindness', I had the overwhelming certainty of a connectedness between people—that in doing the practice as concentratedly as possible I was having an effect on the world, subtle and immeasurable, but undeniable.

The fact of my interconnectedness was most vividly brought home to me some two weeks into my retreat, when I received a note from one of the nearby communities. Apparently there had been an accident in a Russian nuclear plant, at a place called Chernobyl. The fallout from the accident had affected northern Europe, and the water supply in my cottage could be contaminated.

Not owning a radio or TV, I had no way of telling how bad the accident had been. For all I knew, half the population of northern Europe might be dead or dying, maybe large areas of Russia were now uninhabitable. My first reaction was one of great sadness and sorrow, compassion for people who played with fire without understanding. Now, perhaps, the world would never be the same again.

In the following days, many thoughts etched themselves on my being. I realized more clearly how we all create a world to live in out of our basic experience. Looking out of the window before reading the note, the grassy hills and passing galleons of cloud had looked idyllic and friendly. Now, the same scene was sinister and oppressive. Had the rain deposited fallout on the grass? What horrors did the clouds bring? Yet the scene itself hadn't changed at all.

And, yes, I saw even more clearly how one cannot be alone, in the sense of unconnected to other people and unaffected by them. Once upon a time news would take weeks to travel even from London to Wales—now news and death can travel around the entire planet in minutes. I

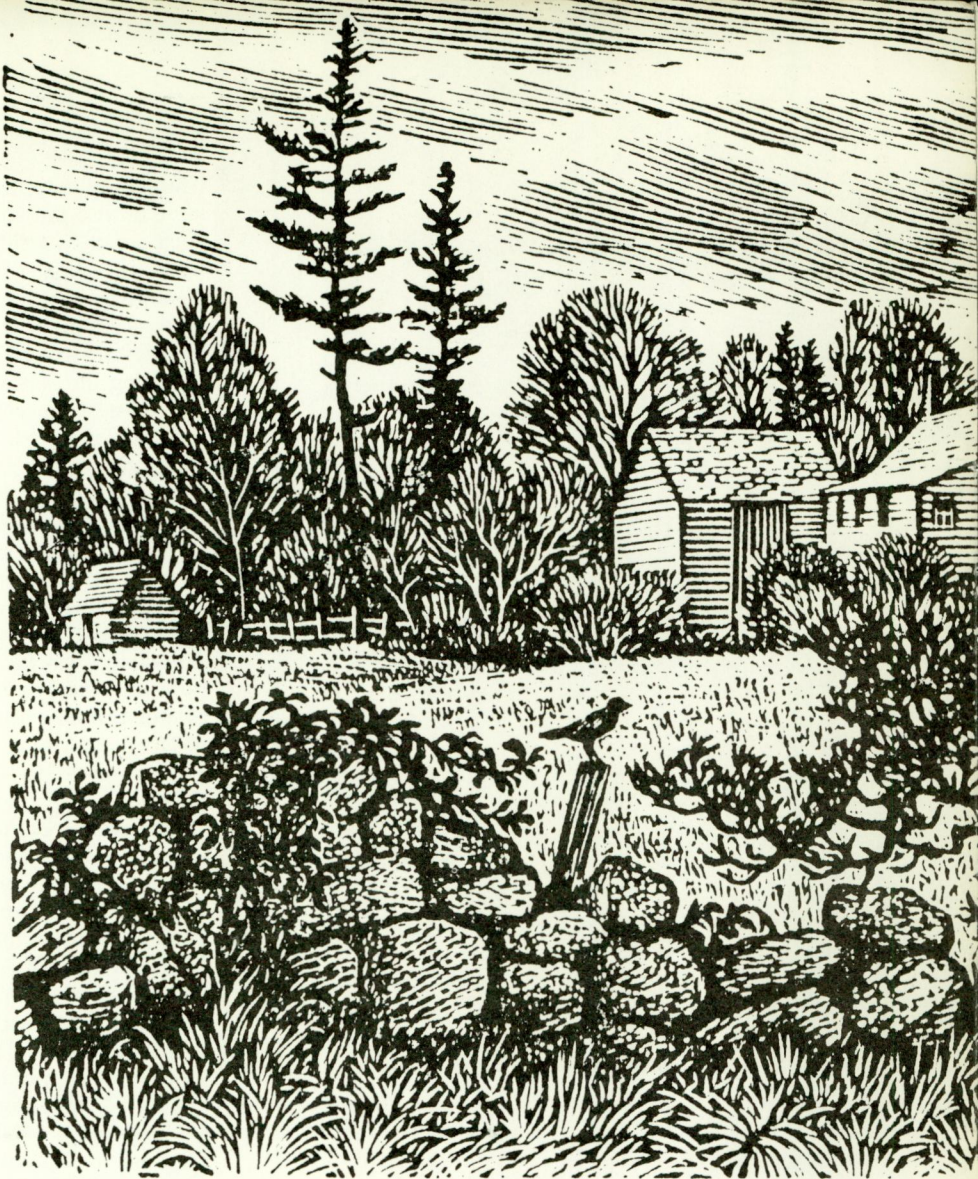
had retreated to the Welsh hills, but the actions of some technicians a thousand miles away could affect my life forever.

But then all living beings and their environment have always been intimately connected. Our bodies are composed of earth, water, and air from the world around us. If our water is no longer drinkable, if the food chain has been affected, if there is radioactive dust in the air, we can't simply decide to give up eating, drinking, and breathing. If the elements of the world around us are affected, we are affected. The relationship of all living beings with the world, and with each other, is intimate and total.

After a few days of peering uneasily at shepherds going about their business on the hills, I came to the conclusion that the accident could not have been catastrophic, and that life was going on as normal, at least in Wales. But I had learnt a lesson. A few days later, I was mowing the back lawn with an electric lawn mower. As it snarled and snapped at the nettles, I reflected that quite probably the electricity I was using had come from a nuclear power station just a few miles down the road. It was very convenient to be using the mower, it would have taken me all day with a scythe, but I think I would have put up with the blisters if it meant that that power station could close.

At the end of my month I walked down the road to Vajrakuta. Some Order members there were having a meeting, but they seemed quite happy to stop and chat. It felt strange to be talking again. Speech was a wonder. I found myself trying to choose just the right words, and laughing a lot. Not talking for a month, you realize what strange magic human communication is. They told me more about Chernobyl; but life goes on, and it was already rather old news.

Soon I was sitting in a cafe near a Welsh railway station, feeling perplexed by the stag's heads mounted on the walls, and Madonna's voice blaring from the radio. I was back in the world once more. But then, as I had seen so vividly, I had never really been away.



STEPPING TO THE MUSIC ONE HEARS

Abhaya rejoices in the merits of a Western pioneer of the quiet life, whose words make inspiring reading for the solitary retreatant.

From his solitary hut in the middle of a dense forest, the Zen poet Ryokan wrote to his friends: 'If you want to find the meaning, stop chasing after so many things.'

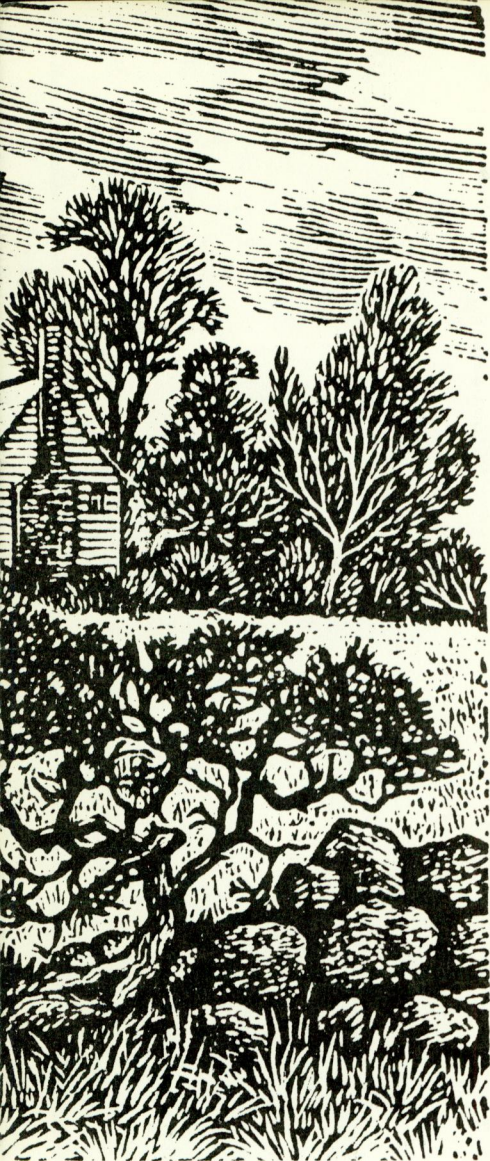
His younger American contemporary, Henry David Thoreau, would have appreciated that, for he was a man who certainly stopped chasing after so many things. For two years he lived alone in the wooden house he'd built on the shores of Walden Pond, a tranquil lake surrounded by thick forest near Concord, Massachusetts, gathering his own fuel and baking his bread, and following a very simple lifestyle. He later wrote about his experiences in a book called *Walden*, which is now ranked as a classic of Western literature.

Thoreau did not take to the woods just to experiment with self-sufficiency; that was only by the way. He went there chiefly, in Ryokan's words, 'to find the meaning' and, in his own, 'to front the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach'. When it

was time to die, he did not want to discover that he had not lived. In *Walden* he offers some of the fruits of his experiment with solitude in the form of penetrating reflections and insights into the human condition as well as several uplifting descriptive passages—beautifully simple evocations—distilled from solitary observations and reflections on nature.

Reading a good book can be like meeting and getting to know another person. *Walden* offers an intimate glimpse into the life of a man who was very much an individual, who had no qualms about refusing to subscribe to group values, should they threaten his personal liberty. In this respect, Thoreau has a lot to teach us about fostering the noble spirit of 'going forth from home into homelessness' though he, of course, did not express himself in Buddhist terms. His references to Eastern ways of spirituality, in *Walden* at least, are restricted to the Vedas, the *Bhagavad Gita*, and the *Analects* of Confucius.

He clearly had a strong sense of the need to shake off what he called 'the golden and silver fetters' which we ourselves have forged, and to leave behind the ways of the world and, as he saw it, those 'lives of quiet desperation' which the mass of men lead. In the more reflective passages, Thoreau's style becomes highly aphoristic, his insights faintly Nietzschean in tone: 'If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music he



hears . . . For it is those with the courage to step to the music they hear, who are the true spiritual fathers and mothers and not the mere philanthropists—to whom he contemptuously refers as the 'kind uncles and aunts'.

The solitary retreat has become an important practice for those seriously involved in the FWBO. Terms like 'to be on solitary' or 'going on solitary' are now current coinage, even though on first hearing they may seem to suggest a bit of a sentence! There is no doubt that—before one actually embarks on the experience—one occasionally views the prospect in terms of what one is leaving *behind* rather than what one is going *to*: no friends to visit, no cinema to go to, not even—if one's preparations have been thorough enough—the distraction of a little shopping spree! But it is not long, certainly in my own experience, before the craving for distraction drops away; one stops thinking in terms of deprivation and starts actually enjoying oneself, intermittently at least. (One must also allow for those 'somethings' that one might have to 'go through'!)

Living in solitude for a time provides a wonderful opportunity to remember—if one has in fact forgotten—that the spiritual life is actually enjoyable. *Walden* reminds me so much of this. It is true that Thoreau did not live in strict isolation from his fellow men for the duration of his retreat; he occasionally allowed himself a stroll to the village or enjoyed an evening chat with a friend.

But one never has the slightest feeling that he takes these little diversions in order to get away from himself or because he lacks stimulation. His pages abound with the fruits of his delighted observation of the life around him, both vegetable and animal. He speaks of the 'inexhaustible entertainment which the country offers' and is well practised in the simple art of doing nothing, which the mass of men have certainly lost. From the vantage point of his solitude he realizes that one of the motives for gossiping is to produce a certain numbness, an insensibility to one's inner pain.

No doubt Thoreau's long periods of quiet observation of the life around him did not spring, initially, from purely spiritual motivations. He did not consciously take up the practice of mindfulness as such. Being a naturalist by inclination, it was not difficult for him to be aware of nature. But he does in places speak quite deliberately of the need to keep awake, and it is here that his language most closely approaches that of the Dharma. There is an echo, for instance, of the Buddha as 'the Awakened One' when he says: 'I have never yet met a man who is awake. How could I have looked him in the face?' He also urges the necessity of being forever on the alert, 'the discipline of looking always at what is to be seen'.

There is another echo, in *Walden*, of a typical experience of the solitary life. In a long passage near the end, Thoreau



explains how he was in touch with two sides of himself, the lower and the higher, the beast, if you like, and the angel. He became acutely aware, as one does in such circumstances, of what he was growing out of as well as what he was growing into, awakening to that emergent sense of the entire evolution of consciousness and man's significant place in it. He calls these two sides of himself 'instincts': 'the instinct for a higher, or as it is named, spiritual, life, and another toward a primitive, rank, and savage one, and I reverence them both'. The word 'reverence' is significant. He does not experience the two aspects in terms of conflict; he acknowledges his participation in Nature 'red in tooth and claw' but aspires to grow beyond it. For a while he unashamedly exploits his instinct for fishing, but later, realizing it is not in accord with his higher self, leaves it behind.

Thus solitude reveals to us our innermost selves; that, no doubt, is why so many avoid it. When the rhythms of that different drummer are clearly heard repression is impossible, and the only way ahead is through change, the spiritual transmutation of the base metal into gold. The book draws to its close with another kind of alchemy, with Thoreau in poetic mood chronicling the death of winter, the gradual melting of the ice and snows at Walden Pond, and the birth of spring. He shows how this serves to mirror that inner spiritual change which solitude gives birth to, the joyful rediscovery of the vision we had lost. The final note is one of optimism: 'I learned this, at least, by my experiment: that if one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavours to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours.' If one had to choose just one piece of literature, outside the Buddhist scriptures, to have as a source of inspiration on a solitary retreat, one could do worse than take *Walden*.

Walden and Civil Disobedience by Henry David Thoreau. Penguin Books, 1986. (First published in the USA in 1854)



SOLITUDE: A FACT OF LIFE

As human beings we are all essentially alone. But Kulananda sees no reason why that should make us feel lonely.

To be human is to be alone. I am not speaking here of loneliness—a sense of not having anyone to talk to or confide in: rather I am speaking of a deeper existential state inherent in the human condition itself.

In evolutionary terms, human consciousness—which distinguishes us from lower forms of life—is a relatively recent phenomenon. Our rational capacity, and our capacity to be aware of ourselves as entities separate from our surroundings, place us in a unique position on the evolutionary ladder. So long as we are human we cannot be completely unaware, we cannot return to the blind 'at-oneness' of nature and the animal kingdom.

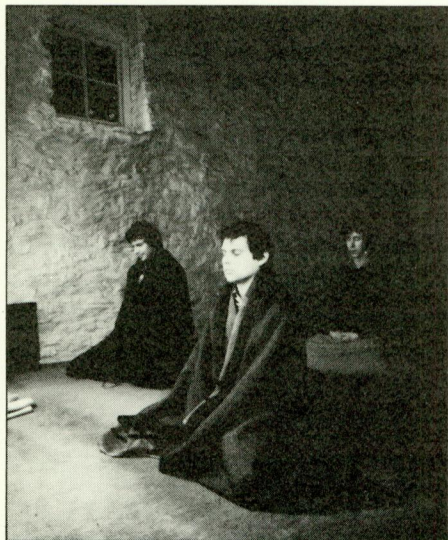
Yet this does not mean that we always feel comfortable and secure with our self-awareness. In one way or another, we all probably know what it is like to yearn for the comfort and instinctual solidarity of pre-human consciousness. We can feel cut-off from each other, cut-off from our surroundings, and much of our more 'neurotic' behaviour can be interpreted as a quest to regain that lost sense of pre-human 'wholeness'.

Much of the time we look for ways to avoid facing the discomfort of our separateness, and try to deaden the pain, turning to drink or drugs, mindlessly losing ourselves in the television, in shopping, in unnecessary eating, or in any number of stupefying activities which dull rather than enhance our state of

consciousness. But then, having dulled ourselves into semi-lifelessness, and finding *that* state unsatisfactory, we try to counter it with exhilaration. From rock-climbing to watching horror films, we try anything that can generate an emotional 'buzz' to counter the tediousness of daily life. Of course, some exhilarating activities can be extremely positive and healthy, but so long as we are merely caught up in the process of rebounding between the twin poles of stupefaction and exhilaration we will not find any lasting resolution to the problem.

Another way in which we seek to deal with our fundamental aloneness is through conformity. Here we seek to replace a deep feeling of separateness with a *comparatively* superficial feeling of solidarity and belonging. Thus we may identify strongly with our social or national background, we join groups and clubs, and we adopt the behavioural norms of our current environment in a passive unthinking way, hoping thereby to blend comfortably into the human landscape.

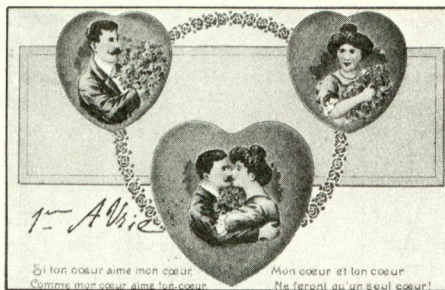
But the deeper existential fact of our human aloneness must inevitably re-assert itself against any attempt to smother it in conformity. Make what alliances we will, behave and blend as we will, we are in the end each of us alone. No matter how much we may seek to eliminate the differences between ourselves and others, some of those differences are bound to remain. To be human is to be different from others. To experience that difference is to experience our separateness. In the end it is unavoidable.



Clarification through meditation

Then again, we may try to obviate the discomfort of existential aloneness by trying to 'fuse' psychologically with another person. This is the sort of state that is often spoken of as 'being in love'. Although it is possible that we may thus temporarily suspend our sense of painful separation, the state of ease is never more than temporary, and often leaves in its wake a habitual, mutually dependent relationship between two people who wonder what they ever saw in each other in the first place. Although we may try to overcome our sense of separateness by binding ourselves to another, it is surely not possible to find in any one person all the things that we feel we lack when we sense our separation from the rest of existence!

So what are we to do about this uncomfortable position that we seem to occupy on the evolutionary ladder? Buddhism suggests a radically different approach to the problem than those cited above. Rather than trying to regress to a pre-human level of consciousness, Buddhism suggests that we should each take our destiny into our own hands and evolve: move *up*—rather than down—the



A case of psychological fusion?

ladder. Rather than running in fear from our sense of aloneness we can cherish it as the basis of our particularly human state of consciousness: the point from which we can grow further.

Each of us is unique: we have our own particular history, our own way of behaving, of feeling, and of thinking. In the soil of our essential aloneness lie these seeds of our nascent individuality, which can be cultivated through spiritual training and practice, and which can manifest as ever higher levels of mental clarity, emotional positivity, and freedom of action.

On the basis of accepting our essential solitude we can begin to recognize all the layers and levels of conditioning that have fashioned our thoughts and beliefs.

Thus we can begin to think for ourselves, reflect with reason upon our own unique experience. This process of clarification will be greatly enhanced by meditation, through which we can develop a more concentrated and effective mind.

Grasping our essential solitude we can begin to develop ethical autonomy. Rather than merely conforming to social norms we start to take responsibility for our actions—to move our lives in the direction we ourselves want them to go, and to judge our own and others' actions by our own considered values, and in the light of our own deepest experience and vision, rather than by the received values of any group.

Having a sense of our own aloneness and independence, not needing the approval of others, we can also begin to develop fearlessness. We know all the time that, if need be, we can and will go it alone rather than sacrificing our integrity to the judgements of others. Such a state of positive aloneness is in fact the root of emotional freedom, and that is the basis of real friendship. It is the state from which we begin to develop 'independent', autonomous emotional positivity. We can cultivate *metta*: non-exclusive feelings of loving-kindness, through which we can empathize with all living beings rather than seeking to bind ourselves in psychological dependence on one particular living being. Taking up meditation practices such as the *metta bhavana*, we learn to develop *metta* more systematically. Thus we begin to develop in ourselves the emotional warmth and independence which is the prerequisite for strong, healthy friendships.

In such ways, the recognition and acceptance of our fundamental aloneness is the starting point for the path of higher human development: the spiritual life.

Once we accept the challenge of our aloneness in this way, it may well be that we will discover others around us engaged in the same task: others who have adopted the same approach to the human predicament, others also trying to cultivate their independence of spirit. With such people we can enter into a particular quality of communication, a particular kind of friendship: *kalyana mitrata*—true, 'spiritual' friendship. This, surely, is a more interesting and inspiring prospect than that of trying to blend back into the undifferentiated pre-human fabric of natural consciousness.



LEVELS OF SOLITUDE

If you think solitude means simple physical isolation from others, read on. Ashvajit believes that solitude has several aspects, which add up to a kind of path.

10

There are four or five different kinds or degrees of solitude: physical, emotional, spiritual, and absolute.

So far as physical solitude is concerned, two or so hours of it a day ensures the maintenance of a reasonable level of comfort and sanity. And one month per year—more if possible—of sustained solitude should enable one to contact, or re-contact, the levels of the psyche which are vital to the process of individual integration and 'spiritual' development.

Emotional solitude is healthy psychological independence from the affections, even the positive ones, of others. As Kulananda has implied in his article, it is a readiness to act, if necessary, without the emotional support of the group, and a willingness to be separated, occasionally at least, from groups of all kinds. One should perhaps doubt one's supposed healthy emotional independence if solitude is not resorted to and enjoyed from time to time. From one to three months is found by most people to be sufficient to contact or re-contact the deepest levels of one's being, and that, for the time being at

least, is enough.

Spiritual solitude is closely connected with, but not identical to, emotional solitude. Spiritual solitude includes such ideas and feelings as freedom from religion, from all dogmatisms, from preconceived ideas, systems, and habits. It is a very positive state, and not a reaction against groups, people systems, philosophies, or religions. Spiritual solitude includes a caring awareness of the fate of others.

Mental solitude is the ability to see one's own thoughts as one's own (self-originated) thoughts, and to see how one's thoughts affect others. One therefore learns to control and direct one's thoughts altruistically. This faculty is covered to some extent by the Pali technical term *Dhamma-vichaya*, or the sorting out of mental states and contents. It depends very much upon the cultivation of the previous solitudes.

To 'define' absolute solitude we have to resort to the paradoxical language of the *Diamond Sutra*. The Buddha, engaging in dialogue with Subhuti, replies to the question whether, when the 'Good Doctrine' is about to collapse, it will be possible to

understand the words (and presumably the import) of the *Diamond Sutra*. The Buddha replies that it will indeed be possible, and gives the conditions. It will be possible if (1) No perception of a self takes place. (2) No perception of a being is there. (3) If there is no perception of a soul, or (4) of a person. Neither will there be (5) a perception of a dharma, or (6) of a no-dharma. Furthermore there will be (7) no perception and (8) no non-perception in those Bodhi-sattvas 'gifted with wisdom'.

Therefore, there can be no question, ultimately, of solitude or no-solitude, or both or neither. This Absolute solitude cannot therefore be sought or found. Nevertheless, without its realization one is fettered, and all one's previous dwellings in solitude are hindrances. Which is why it is necessary to work so hard for its realization.

Let the Buddha (in my own translation, with all its limitations) have the last word: 'Solitary and peaceful minded, inconceivable is the delight of one clad with forbearance, who sees the wonderful Truth.'

(*Dhammapada*, Bhikuvaga, v. 14)

A SOLITARY RETREAT

*waking up
between Africa and Europe
the Mediterranean
and the Atlantic*

*between
the sea and the ocean
in a mountain hut*

*the sun's times
summer breeze
the earth crawling
with life*

nowhere to go

*but upwards
the dangerous pathway*

*through clouds and
the stars*

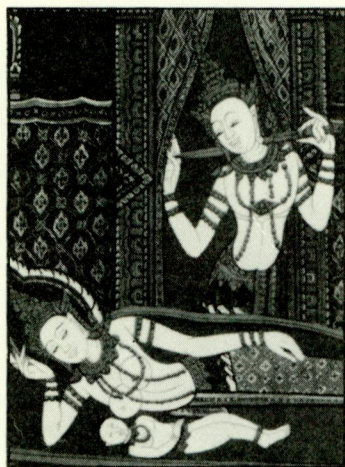
*to be given
a glimpse
of bliss*

of the blazing flames

*'colder and purer
than snows
and the dawn'*

Shridevi

LAST WORDS ON SEX



Despite hearing a great number of (predominantly favourable) remarks, and receiving several brief notes simply thanking us for publishing an interview with Sangharakshita on sex and spiritual life, surprisingly few readers took up the invitation to make fuller comment. Thanks, anyway to those of you who did. We are only sorry that we have had to select from the pile, and to edit—sometimes drastically—those we have included.

It is perhaps worth mentioning that some of the points made seemed to indicate—to an almost alarming degree—that a few of our correspondents had not read the interview as carefully as they perhaps might. Sangharakshita was accused of (or thanked for) promoting homosexuality—and promoting it as a traditional Buddhist teaching, of suggesting that women have no interests beyond bearing children, of prescribing a complete denial of sexual activity. The FWBO was thought to be anti-sex, anti marriage . . . and so on.

As published, the interview was a fairly short and perhaps crude document. We could offer little more than an outline of Sangharakshita's thoughts on this complex subject. There is much more to be said, and much more that Sangharakshita did in fact say in the original interview—which will eventually be published in a fuller form. It is nevertheless clear that many readers might find it a valuable exercise to go back and re-read the interview a couple of times! We were obviously dealing with a highly charged, and often muddled area!

If you don't have your own copies of these issues, back-issues are available from Windhorse Publications.

FWBO Newsletters have been a great source of inspiration to me for many years. We used to get them in Ladakh and still do. Now we have *Golden Drum*, which is the only BUDDHIST magazine in the West so far.

The article on 'Buddhism, Sex and Spiritual Life' responds to the most relevant and demanding need in this degenerating period of spiritual crisis. According to Tibetan Buddhist tradition, the present era is the era of five degenerations: of Time, Life, Beings, Kleshas, and Views. Therefore this is a timely shower.

The great Lamas of all schools of Tibetan Buddhism have instructed their disciples to follow the ten precepts with special emphasis on giving up sex, alcohol, and meat . . . (because) these things are highly charged with craving. In his commentary to the *Bodhicharyavatara*, Lama Kunsang Paldan writes: ' . . . If you indulge in these things (along with smoking), you create an endless round of momentary pleasure-dissolution-craving . . . Craving and grasping are the parents of becoming; if there is no craving, one will not be reborn in Samsara, even though one has accumulated bad karma.'

Another prominent feature of Tibetan Buddhism is that the most prominent enlightened teachers among men have been both Bhikshus and non-Bhikshus, while among women not Bhikshunis but married women.

Ngawang Tsering, Dharmakirti, W. Germany.

Is the best way of dealing with the neurotic states of desire, frustration, and oppression found in our Western society to focus the mind on other things? It seems important not to reject or repress, but to transform this [sexual energy] so that it becomes something which assists in the progress of mankind.

At what point does this transformed sexual energy cease to be called sex? Does sex always imply sexual intercourse? Tantra seems to express sexuality as a fundamental force that can

be channelled along different pathways. The difficulty in referring to Tantra could be in a potential misinterpretation of the forms of its expression, because of its different cultural and historic context (*as we saw in our last issue—Ed.*). But the essence, the fundamental, unavoidable importance of the cosmic male and female principles, beyond the individual man or woman, and in their interaction as an act of creativity—not separate from spiritual life but as part of it—could be vital to the development of our society.

Fromm, in *The Art of Loving*, says that a society's concept of God is related to its current level of evolution and psychological maturity. The same could be said of a society's concept of sexuality. Jung equates the achievement of a spiritual view of life with the attainment of male/female integration within oneself so that each person may be whole and strong and able to love fully and unselfishly outside of themselves.

To avoid a potentially healthy need for communion with the opposite sex because of the dangers inherent in it seems to imply a mistrust of humanity, that it is not capable of transforming its neurotic energies without control. But surely we think that it is.

Joan Holbourne, Cornwall

Along with Jung and Fromm, Sangharakshita spoke of the need to harmonize the 'masculine' and 'feminine' elements of our being. But, like them, he used the terms 'masculine' and 'feminine' to denote psychological principles. To elevate these principles to the 'cosmic' level is another thing entirely, surely, and takes us onto some highly problematic ground (the traditional Buddhist view is that actual sexual differentiation occurs only on the lowest, kama-loka, level of being)—as does your inference that 'communion with the opposite sex' is the same thing as, or a part of, cultivating the qualities and aspects of one's own opposite psychological 'sexual' pole.

We have tongues for talking, and yet a Buddha communicates

on many different levels. We have eyes for seeing, yet a Buddha has an eye of insight to see with. Are we to stop talking and seeing? No of course not. We have to develop these senses to the full to go beyond them. The same with sex. I disagree with Sangharakshita and believe that the sexual urge is separate from the need for procreation. This is for a reason: maybe it is so we can work with it specifically without affecting our future continuation. By exploring the experience to its fullest we can refine the experience, as with sight to insight. If we deny this process, how will we be able to deal with the next stage?

. . . Any energy that is built up will, if not expressed, clearly be released sideways and be destructive; sexual energy is no different. Orgasm is the medium of sexual release, as tantrum is with anger or frustration, and laughter is with joy. The joy and transcendental feeling after orgasm is nothing to do with the innate quality of orgasm, but simply comes from a clear release of energy.

. . . As for falling in love, my experience is that this is a state of feeling able to express myself completely and without hindrance in whatever mood, to another, knowing I will be accepted without projection, and that I will be challenged as to the unskilful and encouraged with the skilful. A heavy task for anyone. It is NOT a sexual experience. It can occur with someone I meet on a train (Intercity 125's especially!) or after years of mundane communication, etc. . . . The reason why sex wrecks so many beautiful love situations is not because sexuality is inherently destructive, but merely inappropriate.

Kathy Sassoon, Manchester

If the link between 'sight' and 'insight' were more than a poetic one, a good pair of spectacles would do the job of the spiritual life! Surely, many people, uninhibited by religious considerations, explore their sexuality very fully indeed without refining it, or any other aspect of their lives, at all.

Perhaps a koan to meditate on is this: When we are lucky enough to

find ourselves in the kind of beautiful love situation you describe, why do so many of us wreck things so often by introducing to the situation something as 'inappropriate' as sex?

I feel I am psychologically female whilst being biologically male, or at least I feel a greater leaning towards the female than the male. Consequently, I find the FWBO's tendency to emphasise [sexual] segregation rather hard to cope with for two reasons:

Firstly I find that I am moving more towards the female pole, and in that sense becoming more polarized. Secondly I find that 'all-male' events stimulate me sexually. Mixed events are less sexually stimulating, and it is therefore a lot easier to get on with spiritual practices at them. The FWBO tends to make the assumption that everyone is well adjusted sexually, and that everyone is heterosexual.

[Name and address supplied]

You are not the first person to find single-sex retreats difficult for this reason! The glib answer would be to suggest that you concentrate on mixed retreats. Another answer is that you should examine your communication—with women as well as with men. For example, are you really treating all men as sex objects, or allowing them to treat you that way? Are you really more 'masculine' when you are with women? The goal for all of us is to transcend sexually polarized behaviour and communication—and thus self-experience—of any kind, whether sparked off by our own or by the opposite sex.

I was very pleased to read the article in *Golden Drum* discussing this topic in a frank and open way. A couple of months ago I made the decision to let people know that I am homosexual. I saw this, however, as an admitting into consciousness of a greater attraction for intimacy with men—regardless of any sexual involvement. In practice, I feel my capacity for intimacy with both sexes has improved.

Another benefit has been the shedding of the myths and

morals of a Christian society and background. I don't feel I have to make a pretence of wanting a wife and children any longer. It's freed me from the role I may have been cast to play as a marriage partner and procreator of children.

I also feel free to define appropriate behaviour now, neither the cold, emotionless man, nor the camp, effeminate homosexual, but whatever I desire, and which leads to harmony with other people.

Michael Nixon, Wellington, New Zealand

Touching is a lost instinct. To put one's hand on another's shoulder can convey sympathy, encouragement, and healing. It is a mutual thing. Touch, between two people who might even be strangers, is, within the human realm, a source of health and true communication. It has to be experienced to be understood. However, touching, in a normal way, has been scuttled by what D. H. Lawrence called 'sex in the head'. . . The fact that we have lost touch with touching is a tragedy. I would go further and say that, if touch was still used as it was meant to be, a lot of illness could be nipped in the bud.

Rosemary Milward, London

What foxed me slightly was some use of the words 'chaste' (abstaining from unlawful or immoral or all sexual intercourse or behaviour) and 'celibate' (vowed or resolved to remain unmarried for a specific time or for life).

As the word 'celibacy' is generally understood, one would not speak of 'minor breaches of celibacy' but of minor acts of unchaste behaviour in the celibate state. A breach of celibacy would be marriage and nothing else. However, the word 'chaste' in general usage can also be applied to loving and responsible sexual behaviour within a marriage.

Marianne Allen, London

During our interview, Sangharakshita was using the words in their more everyday sense, where they are

virtually interchangeable. If he did have a distinction in mind at that time it was between the lifestyle aspect of abstention from sexual activity (celibacy), and the more psychological aspect (chastity).

I think the myth of 'love' between men and women is the most dangerous collective sexual 'chain'. Mythically, love between man and woman represents a sort of salvation, and it is certainly the most popular and also the most institutionalized of all the pseudo solutions to the human existential crisis.

Nowadays I find it enjoyable to be wholeheartedly celibate even for periods of three months or more. But the only thing which could make this kind of life satisfying is my utter conviction that sex is *not* a mystical way to express the Great Love. I have found it necessary to accept sex in itself, just as it is, with an open mind and positive emotion.

As a son of an atheist family I have found it much more natural to give up sexual indulgence since I grew up in an atmosphere which is sexually permissive, and which held no fundamental taboos with regard to the expression of sexuality. When I compare my sexual attachments to those of my Christian friends, it is as if they are constantly obsessed with where their next sexual experience is coming from, and whether their (pre-marital) 'merely' sexual encounters (i.e., those not based on pure love) are 'dirty'.

[Signature illegible] Helsinki

Your articles on sex seemed to consider that there are only two possible life-styles—the two extremes of (1) forgoing all forms of sexual activity and becoming a nun (or monk), and centring entirely on the spiritual life, or (2) married life in a nuclear family, and being on the periphery of Buddhist activity.

To bridge this gap, how about some form of mixed community as a viable middle way? This is not a new idea. This is not suggesting sexual licence, nor is it saying that single-sex communities are wrong, quite

the contrary; they are right and good. However, they only contribute two colours of the rainbow—where there could be many other colours on display.

Can we forge a means of living with other like-minded people whose lives are focused on Buddhist living and Buddhist activities? There would be many ways of doing this:

- (a) Three or four or more partners sharing flats in the same building.
- (b) A single-sex community sited adjacent to a community of partners and offspring.
- (c) Partnership communities.
- (d) Two separate communities sited near one another, sharing shrine room, (internal, not business) work-rooms, dining room.
- (e) Several groups living close to Right Livelihood projects.
- (f) Theme communities: eg., Aid For India, medical, artistic.

Such arrangements would depend on the people and circumstances involved. There would need to be a reasonably formal means of accepting people into a community so that agreements could be made about length of stay, number of hours per week allocated to community life, and financial arrangements, times and extent of spiritual practice, probationary time, etc.

Sally Glendenning, Bristol

Did Sangharakshita really offer just 'two extremes', of monkish abstention and the nuclear family? Surely, much of our conversation dealt with what he described as a gradual, and very individual progression—in infinite gradations—from one 'extreme' to the other.

In the spirit of such a view, there is a very wide range of communities within the FWBO context. Many of your suggested situations are in fact being tried already. Around the FWBO nobody is told what kind of community to live in or to establish. People come together to set up the situations they want. Over the years, several people have attempted to establish 'mixed' communities. Few of these have survived because their members, of their own accord, succumbed either to the attractions of more intense single-sex communities, or to the 'nuclear state'.



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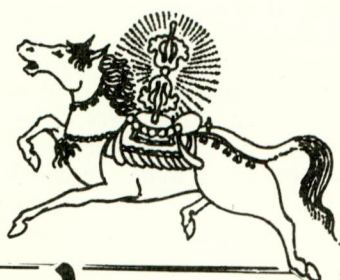
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FEMINISM AND NON-DUALITY

Meetings with Remarkable Women. Buddhist Teachers in America.

by Lenore Friedman, Published
by Shambala (Boston and
London) 1987, pp.288.
Paperback, price \$12.95

The inspiration for this book arose out of Lenore Friedman's need to find herself some modern female role models within Buddhism. Through this record of interviews, centres visited, and retreats attended, we are introduced to seventeen American women Buddhist teachers. This is a personal book, in that the women's Dharma lives and characters are communicated vividly. In most cases, we discover how they became Buddhists, what sort of practices they have performed, what sort of relationship they have enjoyed with their teachers, how they became teachers themselves, and how each in her own way now transmits the Dharma.

Half the women interviewed teach within the Zen tradition, the others within the Theravadin and Tibetan traditions, some having trained in all three. Many of them have been practising for twenty or thirty years, and one cannot but be impressed by the intensity of their practice, their devotion to their teachers, and the hard work they have put into setting up and administering new centres in America. Thus we not only gain a glimpse into these individual women's Dharma lives, but also into the history of American Buddhism, within which these women have been pioneers. As Friedman says in her Introduction, American Buddhism is coming of age; many of the original teachers have passed on the teaching work to their American disciples, and many crucial questions are now being faced.

One such issue concerns the relevance of Buddhism's many traditional cultural forms. To what extent do these need to be preserved? Should they be

changed? Is it always easy to distinguish between cultural forms and spiritual essence?

A number of differing views are expressed here. Toni Packer, the Dharma heir of Philip Kapleau Roshi, wished to change many of the Rochester Zen Centre's traditions, at a rate that seemed too fast for Kapleau. The result was a split at the Centre. Joko Beck, on the other hand, acknowledges that Zen must adapt in the West, but believes that this must not happen too quickly. She too has changed her way of teaching, no longer solely offering classical Koan practice, but responding to the needs of her students more individually.

Sharon Salzberg, a Vipassana teacher, expresses her concern about the same issue when she says, 'If we decide for the sake of American culture not to mention Enlightenment any more, in a hundred years the word won't be in our vocabulary.' Yvonne Randal trained in the Zen tradition but, using a variety of practices, tries to deal directly with questions of authority and projection which arise in America within more traditional forms of Buddhism. She wants to introduce peer group meetings for teachers, (which sound rather like Order chapter meetings in the WBO) in which there is a commitment to self-revelation and openness, to criticism and feedback. This, apparently, 'would be revolutionary in most traditional Zen settings, and certainly at Zen Centre.' Karuna Dharma, a bhikshuni in the Vietnamese tradition, wonders how to modernize the monastic rules, removing those precepts which no longer apply, as well as changing the status of bhikshunis so that they take the same number of precepts as bhikshus and are no longer subordinate to them.

Such issues are the concern of all Western Buddhists. Yet, although they are raised in the book, Lenore Friedman does

MEETINGS WITH Remarkable Women

Buddhist Teachers in America

LENORE FRIEDMAN



not, as compiler, tackle them very satisfactorily. Her approach is predominantly feminist in that she sees the problems as being the outcome of a patriarchal system which must be changed by women. The women we meet in the book, on the other hand, reveal a spectrum of views ranging from the liberal to the conservative.

Each woman is asked whether she has found it difficult to be a woman practitioner and teacher within Buddhism. Although a variety of answers are given, Friedman seems, in her Introduction, to wish to impose a feminist view upon her subjects. And yet, although talking about feminism and maintaining that the basic inclinations and teachings of her subjects are consonant with feminist values, Friedman never really defines the term, or critically addresses those aspects of feminism which might conflict with Buddhist teaching. She acknowledges that the stance of her subjects generally 'reflects an underlying vision of non-duality,' and agrees that most do not technically consider themselves to be feminists, but claims all the same that we need to ask why they do not.

While I agree that we need to examine our view of ourselves and our specific conditioning as women within the framework of our practice, I do not agree with what seem to be Friedman's conclusions that to be a woman Buddhist, one must also be a feminist, not least when the term has still to be very carefully defined.

Also, Friedman seems more interested in the fact that these women have become teachers *per se*, rather than in providing the reader with a clear idea of what *commitment* within Buddhism actually means to them. We are given a glossary of key terms, but it might have been helpful if we were also provided with some sort of in-depth analysis of the ordinations undertaken by the women she has interviewed.

The book, though marred by the loose feminism of its compiler, will nevertheless make very interesting reading for women and men. It not only puts the reader in touch with a number of prominent American women teachers, but also provides us with an insight into the development of, and some current issues and problems within, Buddhism in America.

Dhammadinna

EARLY WORDS FROM THE HEART

Crossing the Stream

by Sangharakshita
Windhorse Publications,
pp. 215, price £5.50

It is often difficult to credit that the essays contained in this volume are the work of someone in his early to mid-twenties. This is not so much because of their sometimes rather 'Victorian' literary style, as because of the extraordinarily mature insight into fundamental Dharma principles that so many of them embody.

The 32 essays fall into two main sets. The first 21 were originally written as short, pithy editorials for the magazine, *Stepping Stones*, founded by Sangharakshita in Kalimpong. The final 11, written for various journals, are on the whole more substantial in length and scope.

A collection of this sort might be expected to be of a rather general nature, and Sangharakshita does address a wide range of issues—from questions of 'Orthodoxy' and 'Rights and Duties', to 'Getting Beyond the Ego', and 'The Way of Emptiness'. However, on reading the collection through, an 'inner structure' does seem to emerge. Most of the essays revolve around a few issues of absolute centrality to the Dharma: desire and egotism (or 'separative selfhood'), egolessness, 'interpenetration', emptiness and compassion, and the importance of avoiding literalism and formalism in the understanding and practice of Buddhism.

The book has a cumulative effect, each essay providing a different perspective, or representing a different facet, of the Dharma Jewel. Only one or two 'sparkles' of the gem can be noted here.

One of the finest of the essays deals with 'The "Problem" of Ahimsa'. Sangharakshita first demonstrates that *ahimsa* (non-violence) only represents a 'problem' when understood literalistically and superficially as the adoption of

a predetermined non-violent 'stance' in relation to purely theoretical 'violent' contingencies ('Would you use violence to protect the chastity of your sister?' etc.). To appreciate the real meaning of non-violence, it is necessary to understand why we have a tendency to be violent in the first place. Violence is an expression of *dosa*—hatred. *Dosa* arises directly from *moha*—ignorance, which is our clinging-belief in our own 'separative selfhood': 'Because men think and feel themselves to be little hard cores of separative selfhood, with interests and ambitions which differ from, or at times even directly clash with, the interests and ambitions of all the other millions of similarly constituted 'selves', they naturally behave and act as such . . . It is not difficult for a child, even, to understand that *Atmavada*, egoism, or, in plain Anglo-Saxon, selfishness . . . is the root cause of all the wickedness, and therefore of all the misery, which has ever been, or which ever will be, in this or in any other world'. (pp. 158-9)

This is a good sample of Sangharakshita's ability to express the immediate human significance of the supposedly more 'abstruse' Buddhist teachings. From here he proceeds to the unavoidable conclusion that true non-violence can only arise from the total eradication of ego-belief—from the realization of 'the purely transcendental activity of ineffable emptiness [which] manifests in the world of relativity as compassion.' (p. 162)

In case this should beguile us into some merely sentimental, metaphysical musings about 'nice compassionate bodhi-sattvas' and the like, another essay, 'An Old Saw Resharpener', serves to bring us down to earth with a bump by recalling 'the sad truth . . . that it is far less troublesome to indulge in ecstasies of love and admiration for some

bloodless abstraction like 'Humanity' than it is to love for one moment sincerely, unselfishly, and above all practically, even a single imperfect human being, with all his unreasonable demands, his baseless suspicions, his little misunderstandings and petty jealousies.' (p. 103)

If any overall theme emerges from this collection, it is the question of egotism, self-view, or separative-selfhood, and how it is to be overcome. 'Getting Beyond the Ego' outlines the many ways, coarse and subtle, in which egotism manifests. The 'central problem of the spiritual life' is the fact that the more we struggle to eliminate the ego-sense, the stronger it becomes. In 'The Way of Emptiness' Sangharakshita aphoristically notes, 'To want to become a Buddha is the surest way of remaining an ordinary man', and continues, 'Even if it were possible to "attain" Buddhahood we should still remain in bondage. For the

spiritual life does not consist in the addition of any thing to the ego . . . but in the subtraction of the ego from all things.'

How, then, is this to be overcome? 'We should vow to liberate all beings, to serve all Buddhas, to realize all truths, to eradicate all passions; but we should remember that in reality there are no beings to be liberated, no Buddhas to serve, no truths to realize, no passions to eradicate. To the extent that we realize their essential voidness our spiritual practices will liberate us, while to the extent that we do not realize it, they will bind us.' (pp. 207-8)

This is a book for those who wish to see the Dharma-Jewel in its essence, and to practise it. It is a book which may (as I can attest) be read with profit again and again by relative newcomers to Buddhism and Buddhists of many years standing alike. Highly recommended.

Tejananda

15

CROSSING THE STREAM SANGHARAKSHITA



A SALUTE TO THE FOUNDING-FATHERS

How the Swans Came to the Lake
by Rick Fields
Published by Shambhala,
pp. 445. Paperback,
price \$11.95

In the second edition of *How the Swans Came to the Lake*, Rick Fields demonstrates that he has researched his subject well. He has produced a history book that flows like a novel—particularly in Book One, which takes us from the time of the Buddha to the beginning of the twentieth century.

However, for this reviewer, he has done more than provide a well researched, highly readable history of Buddhism in America: he has produced a document that is an inspiration to anyone actually involved in the

establishment of Buddhism in the United States. In his history, as Fields describes the successes and failures of a few dozen American Buddhist pioneers, one is reminded of the many arms with which Avalokiteshvara works for the development of beings.

We meet the translators: from Sir William Jones, whose *Asiatic Researches* were published in the late eighteenth century, to Robert Thurman, who practises what he translates from the Tibetan. We meet the hermit Philangi Dasa who for seven years published *The Buddhist Ray* in the hills near Santa Cruz, the great publicist and world traveller Colonel Olcott, the beat poets, the scholars, the meditators, the organizers of movements, the Zen masters

and Tibetan gurus and, quite frankly, the charlatans; they all played their part. Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Indian, Burmese, Sri Lankan, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Thai, Mongolian, Tibetan, Russian, English, Italian, and, of course, American men and women have all worked to bring the Dharma to this nation.

Fields has set out to trace the development of a uniquely American Buddhism, and probably for this reason does not introduce his readers to the Buddhist organizations of the Chinese, Japanese, Cambodian, and Vietnamese communities. However, when he says—on page 244—that the Buddhist Church of America, which incidentally is probably the largest Buddhist organization in the USA, 'has attracted a few Americans', one wonders how thousands of Japanese Americans might feel about being considered non-American.

Still, his broad intention is clear. He recognizes that Buddhism changes its form whenever it encounters a new culture, and he wishes to trace the beginnings of the creation of that new form. The interaction of Western cultural conditioning—with its Judaeo-Christian roots, and its emphasis on industrialization and materialism—with the Enlightened mind, as expressed by the Dharma, will be a complex dialectical one. Eventually that culture will be transformed into a completely new one. It is the beginnings of this revolution that Mr Fields has recorded. The Dharma revolution is only just beginning, and in this book we meet some real Freedom fighters. This record of their struggle will undoubtedly inspire the next generation to do even better.

Manjuvajra

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by H. H. The Dalai Lama,
Tsong-ka-pa, and Jeffery
Hopkins
Snow Lion

Tantra in Tibet

by H. H. The Dalai Lama,
Tsong-ka-pa, and Jeffery
Hopkins
Snow Lion

Tibetan Phrasebook

by Andrew Bloomfield and
Yanki Tshering
Snow Lion

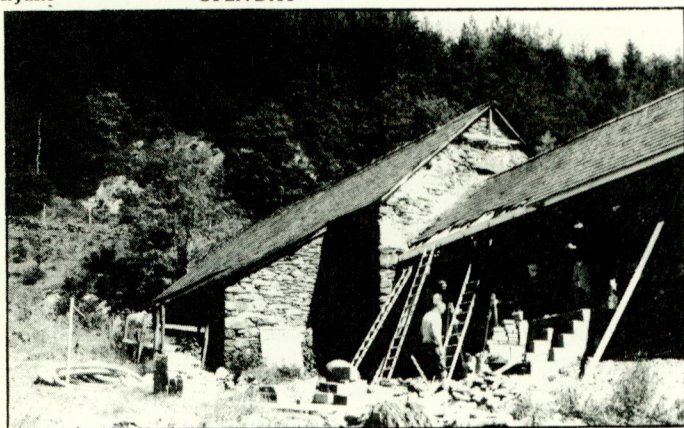


Cover illustration from *How the Swans came to the Lake*

VAJRALOKA 1988

MEDITATION RETREATS

- General Meditation Retreats**
 2nd – 30th Jan MEDITATION RETREAT (Vajraloka)
 1st Aug – 2nd Sept SUMMER MEDITATION RETREATS (Vajraloka)
 22nd Sept – 6th Oct MEDITATION RETREAT (Vajraloka)
 10th – 20th Dec MEDITATION RETREAT (Vajraloka)
- Foundation Courses in Meditation**
 9th – 23rd April FOUNDATION COURSE IN MEDITATION (Vajraloka)
 20th Oct – 3rd Nov FOUNDATION COURSE IN MEDITATION (Vajraloka)
- Mindfulness Retreats**
 16th – 1st March MINDFULNESS RETREAT (Vajraloka)
 25th April – 10th June MEDITATION AND ACTION RETREAT (Vajraloka)
 16th – 30th July MINDFULNESS RETREAT (Vajraloka)
 8th – 22nd Nov MINDFULNESS RETREAT (Vajraloka)
- Sesshins**
 3rd – 13th Feb WINTER SESSHIN (Vajraloka)
- Brahmaviharas Retreats**
 8th – 19th Oct BRAHMAVIHARAS RETREAT (Vajraloka)
- Mitra Retreats**
 19th Dec – 2nd Jan 1987 MITRA RETREAT (Vajraloka)
 23rd Dec – 6th Jan 1988 MITRA RETREAT (Vajraloka)
- Order Retreats**
 19th Dec – 2nd Jan 1987 ORDER RETREAT (Vajrakuta)
 2nd – 12th March VISUALISATION RETREAT (Vajraloka)
 14th June – 12th July ORDER MEDITATION COURSE (Vajraloka)
 25th July – 4th Aug POST ORDINATION RETREAT (Vajrakuta)
 9th – 19th Aug PADMASAMBHAVA RETREAT (Vajrakuta)
 23rd – 2nd Sept TARA RETREAT (Vajrakuta)
 6th – 20th Sept WOMEN TEACHERS (Vajrakuta)
 13th – 27th Sept MEDITATION TEACHERS LEVEL 1 (Vajrakuta)
 24th Nov – 8th Dec MEDITATION TEACHERS LEVEL 2 (Vajraloka)
 23rd Dec – 6th Jan ORDER RETREAT (Vajrakuta)
- Working Retreats**
 9th April – 7th May WORKING RETREAT (Vajrakuta)
 25th April – 10th June MEDITATION AND ACTION RETREAT (Vajraloka)
 2nd – 19th Dec MEDITATION RETREAT (Vajraloka)
- STUDY RETREATS**
 8th – 16th Feb SATIPATTHANA SUTTA SEMINAR (Vajrakuta)
 2nd – 13th March TAPE STUDY COURSE 1 (Vajrakuta)
 The Higher Evolution of Man
 13th – 24th March TAPE STUDY COURSE 2 (Vajrakuta)
 Aspects of the Higher Evolution of the Individual
 25th March – 1st April BASICS OF STUDY COURSE (Vajrakuta)
 14th – 24th May SUTTA NIPATA SEMINAR (Vajrakuta)
 31st May – 10th June DOOR OF LIBERATION SEMINAR (Vajrakuta)
- SPECIAL EVENTS**
 13th March – 8th April CLOSED
 11th June OPEN DAY



MEDITATION AND ACTION RETREAT

25th April – 10th June 1988 at VAJRALOKA

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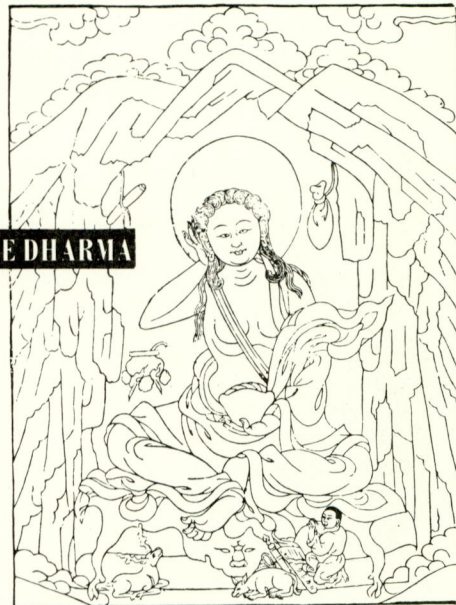
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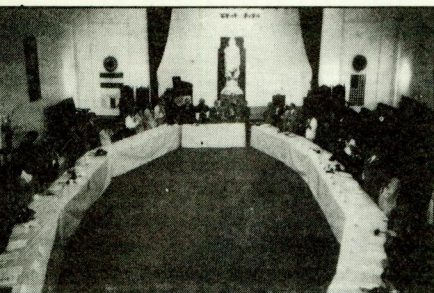
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ABC – NOT SO EASY



The ABC in session

From 10th to 12th November 1987 a little over seventy 'delegates' from forty-seven

Buddhist centres attended the inaugural meeting of the American Buddhist Congress at the Kwan Um Sa Korean Temple in Los Angeles. The goal of this meeting was to adopt a constitution, elect officers, set membership fees, agree a budget, and table and vote on a number of resolutions.

The first day and a half were given over to discussions on the Congress's constitution. The American Buddhist Congress (ABC) is envisaged as a 'truly national and representative body of Buddhists in America', and its three co-chairmen could have the authority to represent the Congress, and therefore—at least seemingly—all Buddhists in America, with the press, governmental bodies at home and abroad, and with national and international agencies of all sorts.

The constitution was discussed extensively: how would membership be defined, how would meetings be governed, who would be on what council or sub-committee? But it was eventually passed, with only minor changes, by an overwhelming majority. The meeting then went on to agree a budget for 1988 of \$42,000 for administration, travel, and a computer, although with dues set at \$200 a year per member organization, it is difficult to see where this money will come from. Finally, resolutions

were tabled and passed urging the formation of local Buddhist Councils, encouraging combined celebrations, condemning human rights abuses in Tibet, praising the accomplishment of Bishop Yamaoka in obtaining the right of Buddhists in the military to have Buddhist ministers (but see 'Mixed Blessings'—Ed.), and urging the election of Rev. Karl Springer as the vice-chairman of the World Fellowship of Buddhists.

Although it was clear that all of those present at the meeting were interested in friendly contact and co-operation with other Buddhists, the main purpose of the Congress seemed to be to establish a body that would give its elected officials authority to represent the views of 'America's Buddhists'. But by no means everyone wanted to become involved in a political organization—albeit a democratic one—which would put forward selected Buddhist leaders with a kind of politically established authority. The objections were varied. Some delegates were concerned that the big organizations would swamp the smaller ones; some held that there was not yet sufficient co-operation between American Buddhist organizations, and that the formation of such a national body was, in fact, premature. Indeed, there were some notable absences from the meeting, in particular the Buddhist Churches of America, the oldest and most firmly established of all American Buddhist organizations, as well as representatives of most of America's Zen and Tibetan Buddhist groups.

Several of those at the meeting were doubtful about the very principle of elected people 'representing' the views and interests of Buddhists. Buddhists can perhaps best influence the society in which they live by personal example and permeation of the society, rather than by achieving positions of power in a

democratic scrabble for position. After all, nobody can really represent the Buddhist community, which is a free association of individuals, and not a group (or group of groups) whose members merely happen to conform to common norms. Perhaps Buddhists who have evolved spiritually could act as spokesmen for Buddhism, but the selection of such men and women would necessarily involve far more than a show of hands.

For the time being, my own belief is that the first priority is that American Buddhists should simply meet frequently and in large numbers—as the Buddha suggests in the *Maha Parinibbana Sutta*. We should communicate with friendship and listen to one another—as some of us did at the conference arranged by Samu Sunim in Ann Arbor (see 'Outlook' last issue); and perhaps in this way some common 'Buddhist views' may emerge and become more widely perceived. If ever the need should arise for involvement with governmental or non-governmental agencies, then such representations could be perhaps arranged and made on an *ad hoc* basis—but on the foundations of trust and mutual understanding gained at less politically flavoured gatherings.

My overwhelming experience of this meeting was to wonder what it all had to do with Buddhism. In the conference room I was continually reminded of my past when I was deeply involved in student politics. In Los Angeles the meeting was more orderly, better conducted, and pervaded by a spirit of friendliness and co-operation. I personally enjoyed the meal times, and the visits I made with friends, old and new. It is in these personal contacts that I believe the real strength of American Buddhism is to be found.

Manjuvajra

MIXED BLESSINGS

This October the US Defence Department decided to let Buddhist Chaplains serve in the armed forces, making America's Buddhists the first religious grouping other than Christians and Jews to be represented in the military chaplaincy.

As was acknowledged at the American Buddhist Congress, this reform was largely the achievement of Bishop Yamaoka, whose 'Buddhist Churches of America' ministers to the oldest and largest grouping of Buddhists in America: some hundreds of thousands of US citizens of Japanese ethnic origin.

Perhaps it is a cause for rejoicing that America's Buddhists should be taken so seriously, and that an ethnic minority who were once regarded with such deep distrust as were the Japanese should be leading the way in gaining this kind of social acceptance for what is still a predominantly refugee or minority community. But before we feel too good about it all, should we not at least pause to ask ourselves a few questions?

For instance, under what conditions should, or could, a practising Buddhist join—or fight in—an army? Would we need Buddhist ministers in the world's armies were there no Buddhists fighting in them? How are we to countenance the arising of a situation in which practising Buddhists should be ordered to kill each other? Where would be the Sangha ideal then? Let's hope that Buddhist congresses, wherever on earth they take place, will put time aside to consider such issues.



Monks call for support in Lhasa

A CAUSE FOR CONCERN

While the experts continue to debate and disagree over the technical legality of the Chinese occupation of Tibet, nobody can fail to be moved by the cultural, spiritual, and human dimensions of the tragedy so evidently being enacted in that land.

We are therefore happy to offer the hospitality of our columns to Ken Jones of the UK Buddhist Peace Fellowship, who believes that Western Buddhists need not stand altogether helplessly, on the sidelines:

Writing in the *Washington Post*, John Avedon, author of *In Exile from the Land of Snows*, has tried to remind the world that 'As a direct result of the Chinese invasion, 1.2 million Tibetans—one seventh of the population—have died, 6,254 monasteries have been destroyed, and an estimated \$80 billion in precious metals, religious art, and statuary

extracted. To secure its dominion, China still keeps 20,000 Tibetans in the region's 84 prisons. Those arrested for "anti-state" activity, though, number 3—4,000. Of these, Amnesty International has publicly adopted three, including Tibet's most famous dissident, the Buddhist monk Geshe Lobsang Wangchuk.'

However, Chinese policy is now extending beyond military occupation to systematic ethnic 'burial' and degradation of the Tibetans. The government has encouraged over 7.5 million Chinese to emigrate to Tibet, where they now exceed the indigenous population by 1.5 million. Whereas the Chinese are assured jobs and schooling for their children, the US *Congressional Record* concludes that, 'There is every danger of Tibetans being turned into a backward and illiterate community devoid of any real culture and education.' (16 June 1987, H 5060). Chinese

policy extends to active destruction, as well as displacement and degradation. There is evidence across the country of thousands of forced abortions and sterilizations. John Avedon writes, for example, that 'In Lhasa, many Tibetan women have heard their new-borns cry, only to be told later that the infants died at birth.'

Tourism is one means by which the Chinese government hopes both to pay for its occupation and at the same time legitimize it in the eyes of the world. In 1986, 30,000 tourists were 'used' in this way. In addition, by superficial refurbishments of Buddhist culture and religion here and there the Chinese have attempted to gain some further political credit. If we settle for no more, do we not 'pity the plumage but forget the dying bird'?

Surprisingly, the fate of Tibet has aroused comparatively

little interest in either Western news media or among democratic politicians. Contrast, for example, the lavish coverage and frequent denunciation of the situation in Afghanistan. One reason is the expedient concern in some quarters about upsetting the Chinese government. This is shared variously by the American State Department (which sees China as a valuable counter to the USSR) and even by highly placed Buddhists such as those who avoided trouble by apparently omitting H. H. the Dalai Lama from the list of 300 delegates invited to the Kathmandu conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists in December 1986.

Happily there are signs that the fate of Tibet is at last beginning to affect the world's public conscience. Jason Newman reports in the *Vajradhatu Sun* that 'on June 18, 1987 the US House of Representatives unanimously passed a measure contained in the State Department appropriations bill that condemns Chinese abuses of human rights in Tibet and directs the State Department to look into how it can help Tibetan refugees'. Moreover, 'one of the amendments strongly condemned the continued Chinese occupation of Tibet'. Newman reports that a similar policy statement is in preparation in Western Germany and he quotes evidence that the American press is now also becoming interested in the issue.

The present Chinese government is very much concerned to open windows to the West and to project a liberal and humane image. There is evidence that it is very sensitive to criticisms of its treatment of the Tibetan people and their culture. Western Buddhists constitute a small but potentially influential constituency on the world scene. Will you who read this therefore give an hour of your time and energy to writing a letter to your newspaper, and sending copies to the Chinese embassy and to your Foreign Minister?

SANGHARAKSHITA DIARY



The stupa at El Bloque

recognition by the Dalai Lama of a Spanish child as the reincarnation of a prominent Tibetan teacher. First of all, he said, reincarnation is accepted Buddhist doctrine in all schools, and there is nothing unusual for Buddhists in the idea of someone being reborn—indeed we are all reborn! However, the fact that someone may be the reincarnation of a teacher is no guarantee of his spiritual attainment. There are thus two issues: Is the child in question a reincarnation of the lama in question? And is he of high spiritual attainment? We must be careful not to accept blindly any affirmation by 'spiritual authorities' of either of these questions, and form our own judgement on the basis of our own experience. In the case of a young child, this largely means that we must wait and see. It will be possible to see if he really is what he is said to be by getting to know him when he is older.

Sangharakshita was interviewed by a journalist from a leading provincial newspaper, *Levante*, who was interested in the idea that Eastern culture might be producing a new renaissance in the West. The article appeared as a back-page spread with a colour photograph and contained Sangharakshita's pronouncements on a number of current world issues: AIDS (he thought it could be considered as a modern plague like those of the Middle Ages), world peace (there were encouraging signs but it was too early to say), Gorbachov (probably genuinely wants peace—but peace from a perspective which is Communist and Russian) and Ronald Reagan himself (one must not forget that he used to be an actor . . . 'a very mediocre man in a very important job!').

Sangharakshita also had an hour-long interview on a programme called 'Third Degree' on Radio Intervallencia. The interviewer, a practising Catholic, warned that she was accustomed to probing interviewees quite deeply. However she had no need to press at all on this occasion, and an interesting exchange ensued, translated by Spanish mitra, Belen Alonso Garcia. The interviewer tried at one point to accuse Sangha-

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Guhyaloka, the retreat centre in the Spanish mountains near Alicante, was originally purchased with money from the 'Sangharakshita Sixtieth Birthday Appeal'. It is intended as a quiet location where Sangharakshita can get on with his writing for a few months each year, undisturbed by the demands of the burgeoning movement he has created.

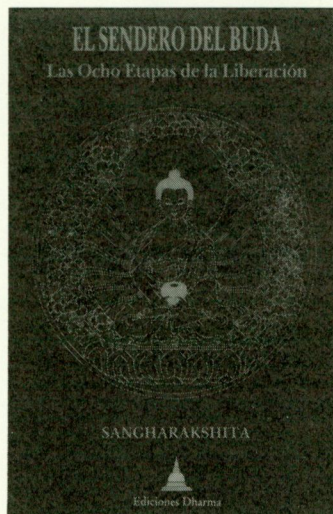
His two and a half months in Spain in 1987 therefore inaugurated the Centre, which proved an admirable location for more intensive literary work. Sangharakshita has a small bungalow in the middle of the valley, about half a mile from the main retreat centre buildings, where the men's ordination retreat was taking place during his stay. Although working on his second volume of memoirs he was thus able to take meals with the retreatants, and hold daily discussion sessions either for with whole retreat or with smaller groupings.

Towards the end of his stay, Sangharakshita made a brief Dharma tour of some Spanish cities, following up the highly successful tour made in 1986, and launching *El Sendero del Buda*, a Spanish translation of his lectures on 'The Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path',

originally published in English in *Mitrata* (and now also available in one volume in Malaysia, published by the Young Buddhist Association of Malaysia).

His first appearance outside Guhyaloka was at El Bloque, the centre for psychotherapy and the like run by friends who helped us to establish the new mountain retreat centre. Here Subhuti and Vajrayogini had been holding the third annual beginners' retreat, the most successful so far. Sangharakshita was able to admire the stupa which the retreatants had built in the centre's grounds.

Sangharakshita gave public talks in Alicante, Benidorm, and Valencia, translated by mitra Chris Pauling. In the former two towns, numbers were disappointing, but some 65 people attended the talk at the Philosophy Faculty lecture theatre in the University of Valencia. In addition, he was kindly invited to the 'Centro Nagaryuna', in Valencia, run by the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition, continuing their hospitality of the previous year. Once again, we have found Spanish Buddhists to be unusually friendly and co-operative. Here, as after his



public talks, Sangharakshita answered a variety of questions, favourite topics being: the place of women in Buddhism, the Tibetan tulku system, and God in Buddhism. Sangharakshita was able to affirm unequivocally that Buddhism teaches that women can gain Enlightenment, and that in the FWBO there are very good facilities within which women can pursue their spiritual development. He expressed his hope that a Dharmacharini would soon be visiting Spain to underline the point.

Several questioners wanted to know what Sangharakshita thought of the recent

rakshita of compromising by not wearing robes. He pointed out that robes were not essential to being a committed Buddhist—and if they had been then he would not have wanted to be a Buddhist! He even managed to shock her mildly by pointing out—as an example of cultural relativity—that in some Buddhist countries polyandry is quite acceptable. She wanted to know whether Buddhism was more in tune with capitalism or with socialism. Sangharakshita said that from a Buddhist point of view there were strengths and weaknesses in both approaches. Did this mean that Buddhism is anarchist? In a sense yes, he said, although it was an anarchism strictly of the non-violent kind. However, for there to be true anarchy there had to be a society of people who were fully ethically responsible. Buddhism tries to help people to become the sort of individuals who can live in an anarchist society.

Another interview was in fact transmitted by an anarchist radio station, 'Radio Klara', anarchism being a significant political force in Spain. The interview started a quarter of an hour late, after the interviewer had had to eject the previous broadcaster from the studio. Questions centred mainly on the need for people to make real changes in their lives if they are to develop and work for a widespread change in society. Once more Sangharakshita stressed the necessity of keeping one's own independent judgement and not following others simply out of blind faith. The programme closed when the interviewer put on a record and told his listeners that he was off to answer the door!

The last event of the tour was a question-and-answer session with a Buddhist group run by

the publisher of *El Sendero del Buda*, Xavi Alongina of 'Publicaciones Dharma', who has proved a very good friend to us ever since we arrived in Spain. Novelda, the town where the group meets, has a population of but a few thousands, and yet twenty people gathered to discuss Buddhism with evident interest and enthusiasm. Here was confirmation indeed that Spain is ripe for the Dharma. Regular FWBO activities are now being held in Valencia, co-ordinated by Belen Alonso Garcia.

Since his return from Spain Sangharakshita has been installed at Padmaloka once more, writing a paper for the twentieth anniversary of the Order—this April—on the theme of 'The History of my Going for Refuge'. This will be published in April, just a couple of weeks after the launch of the complete edition of *The Religion of Art*. As well as *Crossing the Stream*, *El Sendero del Buda*, and the Malaysian edition of *The Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path*, the end of 1987 also saw the publication by Tharpa of a very handsome new edition of *A Survey of Buddhism*.

Whilst writing, Sangharakshita also manages to keep up his many duties within the Movement. In December he received the Venerable Bhikkhu Dhammaratana from Singapore at Padmaloka—the Venerable Dhammaratana is urging him to visit Singapore where his work is well known, and he is keen to go at some point. He also conducted in the shrine room at Padmaloka the Anagarika ceremonies of Dharmacharinis Aniketa from New Zealand and Gunavati from Finland. He intends to remain at Padmaloka for the next few months until he leaves for Guhyaloka once more in April, where he will remain until September.

GUHYALOKA — THE COMMUNITY SETTLES IN

Since the end of the Ordination Course, a small community of Order members have been 'holed up' in the mountains here, working, meditating, savouring the sunsets, and trying not to worry too much about the severe shortage of pesetas in our bank account. We have done running repairs to the buildings, picked the olives, pruned the almond trees, and continued making friendly contacts in Sella, our nearest village.

We have also spent much time nursing our aged Land Rover back to health. In bad weather it is our link with 'civilization', and suffered the trauma of being driven off the road and landing on its roof, after its brakes failed during the Ordination Course. (The hairpin bend where it parted company with 'terra firma' is now known as 'Clinton's Leap' after its luckless driver.)

Vessantara, who leads the

Ordination Courses, has been writing the first draft of a book, and paying visits to Valencia, where a group of 'Amigos' is forming. Belen Alonso Garcia, a mitra from Madrid who moved to Valencia to help us start FWBO activities, is now holding meditation evenings in her flat.

In October, Vessantara and Mokshananda led a Dharma Course in the centre of Valencia, followed by a weekend retreat. The retreat was held at 'Llaurant la Llum', a rehabilitation centre near Valencia, where they work with ex-prisoners and alcoholics using Hatha Yoga, meditation, and a healthy diet. The weekend was very successful, and on a recent visit to Valencia, Vessantara found everyone coming back for more, and had to arrange a meditation day at short notice in response. There is clearly much potential for the FWBO in Spain.

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THE RELIGION OF ART

An exciting series of events to launch the new edition of Sangharakshita's *The Religion of Art* is coming to the Croydon Centre.

Firstly, Abhaya will be delivering a series of three lectures on art and the spiritual life, exploring some of the themes in Sangharakshita's book and discussing its importance. His first lecture, on 15 March, will be entitled 'Forging the Link Between Beauty and Truth'. In the present age art and religion are seen as quite distinct fields. Abhaya intends to show how Sangharakshita's writings on the subject bring to light the vital connection between them. The second and third lectures will be concerned with the Romantic poet, Shelley, discussing him in the light of Sangharakshita's ideas: did Shelley in any sense participate in the spiritual life, and does his poetry succeed in raising our level of

consciousness?

Following Abhaya's lectures, on 7 April, Sangharakshita will himself be coming to Croydon, to appear in conversation with Kathleen Raine. Kathleen Raine is the author of many volumes of poetry and numerous important critical works—in particular she is an internationally respected scholar of William Blake and W. B. Yeats. Like Sangharakshita, she looks at art from the point of view of its spiritual value, and indeed she is the co-founder and editor of *Temenos*, an arts review dedicated to the propagation of this approach. She and Sangharakshita have for some time been interested in each other's work, but they have never met, so the interview should be a fascinating one. No doubt the ideas in *The Religion of Art* and related themes will be thoroughly discussed, and the book well and truly launched.



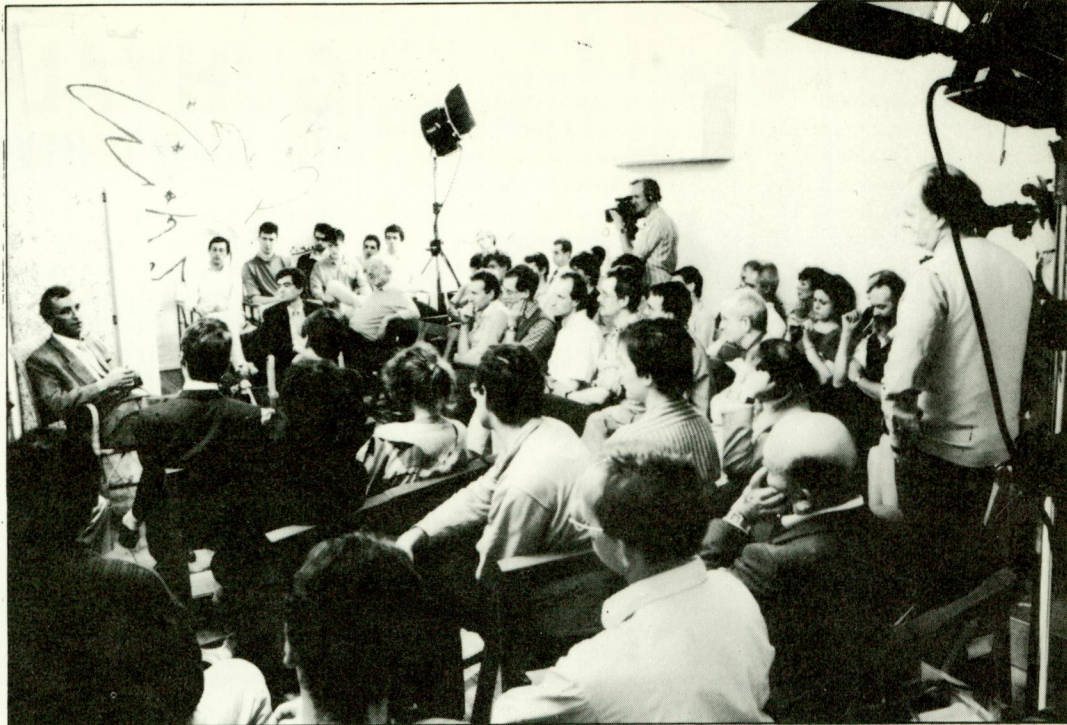
The anagarika ceremonies

'One glance at the programme put out by "Independent Arts" . . . proves that you have established something of special value here . . . in fact we can muster nothing as good as this up in the North of London.' So spoke Claire Tomalin, a former literary editor of the *Sunday Times*, when she visited the Centre to launch her biography of Katherine Mansfield this November. And, indeed, many people have been coming from far afield to attend some of the Centre's events.

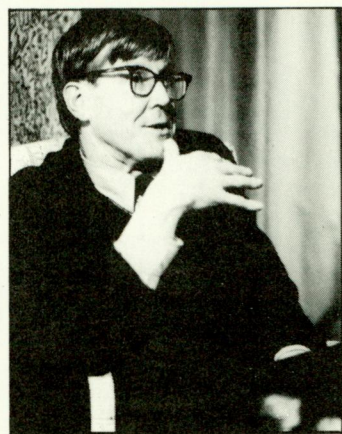
Among the highlights of the 1987 autumn season were the interviews with painter and print-maker Patrick Prockter, with Bloomsbury writer Frances Partridge, and with playwright Alan Bennett.

Patrick Prockter, who has had two exhibitions showing in London this autumn, was interviewed by art historian Marco Livingstone, former deputy director of the Museum of Modern Art in Oxford, and author of books on contemporary painters such as David Hockney and Kitaj. A film crew recorded the occasion, during which Prockter spoke of his life and work, and about friends such as Cecil Beaton and Stephen Tennant. Extracts from the interview will be seen in a TV documentary entitled 'Patrick Prockter's Britain' soon to be broadcast in the UK.

Alan Bennett is the author of numerous stage and television plays, and of two recent film



INTERVIEWS AT INDEPENDENT ARTS



Alan Bennett interviewed

scripts: 'A Private Function' and 'Prick up Your Ears'. Many of his plays are comedies and his delightful sense of humour ran through much of the interview which was conducted by theatre director Patrick Garland.

Bennett's father was a butcher, and a memorable anecdote from the evening concerned a customer who happened to become mother-in-law to the poet T. S. Eliot. Mrs Bennett came home one day and said to Alan, 'I ran into Mrs Fletcher down the

road. She wasn't with Mr Fletcher, she was with another fellow—tall, elderly, very refined looking.' It was not until some time later that Alan realized that 'without it being one of the most momentous encounters in Western literature, my mother had met T. S. Eliot. I tried to explain to her the significance of this, but *The Wasteland* didn't figure very largely in her cosmogony. I said, "Well, he won the Nobel Prize for literature," and she said, "I'm not surprised—it was a beautiful overcoat."'

NEW COURSE STRUCTURE AT THE LBC

For some months the team running Dharma activities at the London Buddhist Centre have been reviewing their entire beginners' level class and course structure. Classes and Dharma courses have naturally always been a feature of the LBC's programme—and that of all FWBO centres. But the team's present hope, according to Khemavira, the Centre's secretary, is that they will be able to offer 'a more comprehensive introduction to meditation, Dharma, and devotional practice, and a more integrated route for people to follow as they progress.'

Autumn therefore saw a first time run of what is now intended to be a regular programme of courses to be run each four month 'session'

throughout the year. The new structure provides for courses in meditation and in basic Dharma study at two levels: for complete beginners, and for those who have completed the beginners' 'Level 1' courses.

Meditation courses are largely based on material derived from current approaches to teaching being pioneered at Vajraloka. 'Level 1' course participants receive a handsome ring-binder crammed with printed information sheets. Dharma courses too are being systematized. Courses on the Wheel of Life and the Five Precepts have just been completed, and further courses on the Three Jewels and the theme of Individuality are now in preparation.

VAJRALOKA'S "OTHER HALF"

When Prakasha and Devapriya bought a large and slightly derelict farmhouse ten minutes walk from Vajraloka, nobody was quite sure how best the property might be used. At different times it has been mooted as a retreat centre—more 'public' and diverse than Vajraloka, a study/literary community, and an 'overflow' community for Vajraloka.

What is now beginning to emerge is something of a combination. Seven men now live there, some of them alternating between spells at Vajraloka, some engaged in Dharma study, and some handling all of Vajraloka's administrative affairs.

At Vajraloka itself, there seems to have been a steady

increase in the number of visitors. A good number were attracted to a first 'Brahma Viharas Retreat', where the emphasis was firmly placed on the cultivation of *Metta*, *Mudita*, *Karuna*, and *Upekkha*.

In December, another working retreat—the second held so far—saw an old stone barn re-roofed. At Easter there will be another such retreat when it is hoped that the barn will be brought into service as a dining room and kitchen. Immediately after this retreat came another first: a retreat exclusively for men *mitras*. On this event, which will doubtless be repeated, Vajraloka Order members gave talks and detailed instruction in meditation.

CENTRE SOUGHT IN SRI LANKA

During September, two retreats were held in Sri Lanka. The first, for eighteen friends and mitras, took place at Rockhill Hermitage, near Kandy, the second, for our four mitras, was held in a rubber estate mansion called Paradies, near Panadura, the town where the Buddhists won a famous public debate with Christians in 1873.

During the latter part of 1987, both Anagarika Padmavajra and Devamitra paid visits to Sri Lanka. According to Ashvajit, both enjoyed a refreshing dip in the blue waters of the country's golden-sand-and-palm-fringed lagoons, as well as participating in various more obviously Dharmic activities. Their

presence and mature support were very welcome.

The work of the FWBO (TBMSG) in Sri Lanka now seems to have reached the end of a chapter. On completion of a three-month visit to our Indian centres, Ashvajit intends to work in a new way. He writes, 'We shall be looking for accommodation in Colombo early in 1988, in which to house a more regular centre and community. We shall also be holding weekly meditation classes and giving public talks. Contact with our South Sri Lanka friends will also need to be re-established and maintained on a regular basis. It is an enjoyable prospect.'

Ashvajit conducts a Dharma class



PADMAVAJRA VISITS MALAYSIA

After spending five months back at Aryatara in England, Padmavajra set off for the East again at the beginning of October. He did not however go straight to Bombay, where he is now based for half the year, but instead flew to Penang, to spend a month as guest of the Young Buddhist Association of Malaysia.

The Association had organized a nationwide lecture tour, but because of political tensions in the country, this had unfortunately to be cancelled. Padmavajra therefore stayed with Jayapushpa at her small centre, and spent a pleasant month leading study groups on Sangharakshita's *The Ten Pillars of Buddhism*, giving talks, and leading a two-day seminar on the twelve *nidanas*.

Jayapushpa and YBAM were excellent hosts', Padmavajra writes. As well as meeting many of Jayapushpa's friends, he was also pleased to meet a number of local Chinese Buddhist monks and laymen, and was impressed by the strength of some of the Dharma practice he encountered.

Padmavajra also gave talks about the work of TBMSG in India, at the Bayan Baru Buddhist Association—started by Nu Kah Tong, a good friend of the FWBO, and at the headquarters of the Kuan Yin Contemplative Order, in Kuala Lumpur.

Padmavajra arrived in Bombay at the end of November, and immediately gave a number of talks in connection with the death-anniversary of Dr Ambedkar. However, over the coming months he intends to give less public lectures and to concentrate instead on leading study groups and courses. The most active public speaker in Bombay right now seems to be Bodhisen, who has been giving talks in Goa as well as in Bombay.

A new resident at the Bombay Centre/community is Dhammchari Akshayamati, who recently moved there from Ulhasnagar. As well as instituting new classes, Akshayamati has also found time to decorate and renovate the apartment.

— AND IN IPSWICH

From Ipswich, Rex Smart reports that the FWBO's busiest 'informal Centre' continues to grow and consolidate.

Although the Centre has no base, and no resident Order members, regular classes now take place on four and sometimes five nights a week, in hired rooms or in regulars' homes, and an increasing number of day retreats are being held. Rex's house is now a men's community known as 'Tiratanaloka', and a women's community, 'Mitrakula' has also been formed. Rex reports that two of the group's regulars, one of whom is a mitra, are now actively seeking ordination.

A number of Order members, from Aslacton and Norwich,

have helped out by running classes for a while or leading courses on 'The Ten Pillars of Buddhism', 'The Wheel of Life', and 'The Three Yanas', but most teaching is done by the Centre's mitras.

A fundraising campaign has just begun with a view to providing Ipswich with a permanent base. Rex writes, 'We have also started a poster campaign to attract more people to the beginners' class. More study courses, events, retreats, and contact with other FWBO centres will surely take place in 1988. Ipswich is likely to need an enthusiastic, resident Order member to guide and inspire us.

'He or she will in return find a small but strong sangha of keen, friendly individuals.'

CENTRE FOUND IN ESSEN

Dharmapriya reports that on 1 January the FWBO took up a five-year lease on a property in the heart of Essen. This will be the FWBO's first permanent public centre in Germany. Although he and Dhammaloka have concentrated on travelling around Germany's major cities, meeting people for weekly or monthly classes, and leading retreats, for the past years, it has been obvious for some time that a core of regulars was beginning to form in Essen. The 200 square metre property therefore marks something of a new departure, and perhaps heralds a more consolidated approach to establishing an FWBO presence in Germany. Conversion work on the building's two upper floors began immediately after the Order members finished leading two well-booked Christmas retreats. The Centre opened its doors for a day retreat on 16 January, after which began a very full programme of four evening classes a week, yoga classes, weekend events, and country retreats.

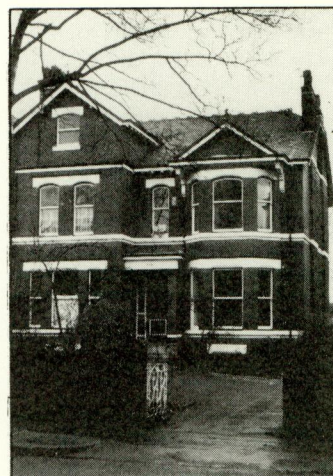
Back in the summer, the publishers O. W. Barth Verlag brought out *Was Ist Buddhismus?* a German hardback edition of Subhuti's *The Buddhist Vision*. The book, which was translated by Dhammaloka, can now be found in bookshops all over Germany.

— AND IN MANCHESTER

After a lengthy search, Friends in Manchester report that they have now found, purchased, and moved into new premises. The property is a large, double-fronted semi-detached house in a good area of Manchester, about four miles from the city centre.

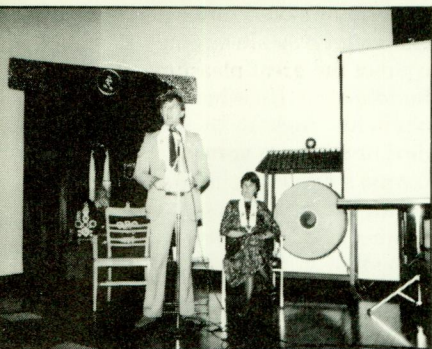
The house has sixteen large rooms and a basement which will probably be made usable later this year. This means that there will be space for public centre facilities, an office, a library, and a videotape archive on the ground floor, and for a community of ten men in the two upper floors.

Classes began at the new Centre in December, almost as soon as the first residents moved in. Beginners' meditation courses were due to start in late January, once the shrine room was in operation.



Manchester's new Centre

FUNDRAISING IN THE USA



Manjuvra introduces Padmashuri

At the end of September Dharmacharinis Padmashuri and Ratnadakini and I set out from Aryaloka, New Hampshire, on a ten thousand mile tour of the United States. We were to visit eleven major cities in the US and Canada, and talk to people in fourteen Buddhist Centres, as well as two universities and a Catholic social work organization.

At each of these venues Padmashuri gave a talk, illustrated by slides, of TBMSG's work in India. After the talk, and a period of questions, I invited the

audience to pledge their support for the work through regular donations.

In her talk, Padmashuri described the Hindu caste system, and explained how many—now officially 'ex-Untouchable'—people still suffer under the traditional prejudices. She spoke of work done by FWBO/TBMSG to relieve the health problems and educational disadvantages suffered by these people, work that has been so successful because Buddhists are working with Buddhists. She outlined the brilliant life of Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar, and conveyed his view that Buddhism was essential to the uplift of his people. Finally, Padmashuri explained the importance of the study and practice of Buddhism, and how, together with the social work, it was setting in motion a revolution—a peaceful revolution—in the lives of some six million New Buddhists in India.

The tour was organized as a

result of the enthusiastic response to Nagabodhi's presentation at the conference on North American Buddhism, organized in July 1987 by Samu Sunim (*see last issue*). Many of the participants there, who generally were familiar with the new Indian Buddhist movement, encouraged us to go ahead with a tour of the USA to publicize our work further. As a consequence of this encouragement and offers of help, Ratnadakini organized the tour from London—with the help of myself and Marilyn Coakley in New Hampshire. However we would not have succeeded without help from a number of other individuals and organizations. In particular we were helped by Karl Springer and Bea Ferrigno (Vajradhatu), Meg Gardinier (International Catholic Child Bureau), Samu Sunim and Richard Hayes (Zen Lotus Society), Dharsan Chaudrey (Toronto Ambedkar Mission), Dr Sunthorn Plamintr (Chicago Buddhadharm

Meditation Center), Randy Baker (Chicago Zen Center), Dharmacharis Aryadaka and Baladitya, Dr Maung Tinwa (Theravada Buddhist Society of America), Bishop Yamaoka, Dr Ronald Nakasone, and Rev. Don Castro (Buddhist Churches of America), Ananda Dalenberg (San Francisco Zen Center), Arnold Kotler (Buddhist Peace Fellowship), and Rev. Karuna Dharma (International Buddhist Meditation Center), as well as many others, too numerous to mention, who provided us with publicity, transport, food, and shelter.

The tour was very successful in raising the general awareness of the Buddhist movement in India. The response from those who heard the talk was extremely favourable; many people expressed great admiration for the work that was being done, and for Padmashuri's unassuming demeanour and outstanding dedication. We were also grateful for over \$10,000 in donations and pledges of help.

Manjuvra

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FWBO PRESENCE IN KATHMANDU



Amoghachitta and friends in Kathmandu

Over 200,000 travellers visit Nepal each year, and the numbers are rising dramatically. Many of these people, after passing through Thailand, Burma, Tibet, and Nepal itself, find themselves developing an interest in Buddhism.

It was with such people in mind that Amoghachitta and Bodhananda visited Kathmandu in October 1976. They wanted to see what sort of response they would get were they to set up a base in a local hotel and offer courses and classes in meditation and Buddhism.

The results were encouraging, and a year later the two Order members returned to

Kathmandu, this time for a six month stay and with a more comprehensive programme in mind.

So far things have gone well. The 'Centre's' sessions are attracting people who hail from Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Sweden, Israel, the USA, and seemingly all points West. Obviously, the team's hope is that at least some of these people will look up the FWBO's centres when they return to their native lands.

Amoghachitta and Bodhananda are already planning another six month stay, starting in October '88.

ULHASNAGAR NETWORK EXTENDS

From Ulhasnagar, a semi-rural suburb 55 km from Bombay, Chandrashila reports that the affairs of TBMSG are shaping well.

Classes and courses are now being held in the main centre, 'Dhamma Chakra Vihara', in local houses, in rooms in neighbouring localities, and in nearby towns as well—notably at Kalyan where the number of long-term men and women regulars could soon provide the basis for another fully established centre.

The AFI-funded students hostel at Ulhasnagar is now well established, as is Kirana Stores, a locality-based food and provision store—one of several being initiated by Bahujan Hitay, the 'social wing' of TBMSG in India.

A four day retreat during October, at Ambarnath, attracted 134 people, most of them already involved with TBMSG to some extent. Such large numbers meant that study sessions on Sangharakshita's published lecture, *Going for Refuge*, were conducted in four large groups. A special feature of this retreat was a puja during which Chandrashila conducted four mitra ceremonies.

A week or so later another retreat was held in the region, beside a pleasant lake at Vaitarana. This event was directed specifically at beginners, and was led by Anagarika Ashvajit who was on a visit to India from his base in Sri Lanka.

Returning to Ulhasnagar after this retreat, Ashvajit gave a lecture to the local mitras—after which he answered a total of twenty-four questions, most of which focused on the theme of 'readiness for Ordination'.

Chandrashila reports that the centre team have arranged a network of Sunday meetings in their area for the recitation of Puja and Vandanas. 'Although the experience is inspiring,' he writes, 'attendances are still very small. However, during the past two months our Order members and mitras have been receiving an increasing number of invitations to perform religious ceremonies such as weddings, name givings, and the like. Now almost all such ceremonies, in Ulhasnagar and in our surrounding area, are conducted by us. These events do attract large numbers of people, so our public outreach is definitely on the increase.'

BUSY AUTUMN AT TARALOKA

The autumn session saw five weeks of intensive meditation retreats at Taraloka, with fifty-five women attending overall. Anagarika Ratnashuri, who lives at Taraloka (as does Anagarika Aniketa, one of our newest anagarikas) led two of the weeks. These meditation courses at Taraloka have greatly benefited from the input of those Dharmacharinis who have attended 'Meditation Teachers' Courses' at Vajraloka. Other major events have included two ten-day study seminars, on *The Bodhicharyavatara* and *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation*.

At the end of November came the Centre's largest ever Introductory Weekend Retreat. Of the twenty women who took part—many of whom came from the English Midlands and from Wales—only one had had any real contact with the FWBO before.

For this event a 'workshop approach' was employed, which proved very stimulating. An extended session on meditation posture was greatly appreciated, as were the frequent opportunities given to people to share their thoughts on the experience with others. A follow-up weekend will take place in February for those women who took part in this and similar events in 1987.

Meanwhile, outside of Taraloka, Vidyavati and Kathryn Boon were busy spray-painting Christmas designs on shop windows in nearby towns and cities, to raise funds for the Centre. Once this enterprising campaign had come to an end, a team of three Taralokans set out on a fundraising tour of five FWBO centres with a talk/slide presentation and photographic exhibition.



Tessa Harding reports that the tour was a success, '... making some necessary funds and inspiring audiences with our work. Our evening in Norwich was doubly special, since Sangharakshita lent his support and read some poetry—either by or about women—during our evening there.

A NEW COMMUNITY



Sahayata's founder members

The city of Bristol, in the south west of England, has a new FWBO Centre and a new women's community. Michelle Dalby's account of 'Sahayata' offers a glimpse of the factors that contribute to the birth of an FWBO community.

The first meeting of the potential 'Sahayata' took place three years ago when we found ourselves in the same corridor of a student hall of residence. That initial tenuous link was to become gradually firmer and by our final year we were living together in a 'student flat'.

During that period we had each started going to 'Meditation and Buddhism' beginners' classes. An initial vague interest deepened, so that FWBO Bristol gradually became an integral part of our

lives.

The transition to Sahayata, and the birth of the first women's community in Bristol, occurred in July 1987. By formally stating that we formed a community, we created something to aspire to: another conscious reminder that spiritual practice isn't just a string of good ideas expressed in an aesthetically beautiful way, but a reality which has to be tackled. Community living is ideally another means to practise and express loving kindness, generosity, contentment, truthfulness, and awareness, an opportunity to transform our relationships with those with whom we live.

Our name was chosen by Sangharakshita when we asked him for one connoting friendship. He told us that *Sahayata* means 'intimacy' or 'togetherness'. This is important: we all share natural friendships, which generally means that our community is a warm, enjoyable, and easy place to be. But we all hold the ideal of true spiritual friendship in high regard, and see the great potential which our friendships have if we are consciously working at both giving to and receiving from one another within the context of our spiritual lives. Within

our Sahayata we have managed to reveal and come to know a little more of ourselves and one another, and so have been learning more of the great pleasures of practising the Dharma with others. We find too that the ideal of Sahayata spreads beyond our own community to the women's sangha in Bristol, where a core of women committed to the Dharma is steadily growing. More generally, we have found that a women's community creates a positive presence in Bristol; people coming into contact with the Bristol Buddhist Centre can immediately gain an impression that there are women seriously practising the Dharma here.

In December our community will be leaving Bristol to travel to India. The purpose of our visit is to share a pilgrimage to the sites of the main events of the Buddha's life, as well as visiting many other places of beauty. We will also visit a number of TBMSG centres, and gain a clearer impression of the FWBO's activities in India. The trip will be a great challenge to us all: we are giving up our house and leaving behind all that feels secure; taking what we hope will be a joyous leap into lands unknown.

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DHAMMA REVOLUTION MOVES TO KARNATAKA

For the first time in the history of Karnataka state, Bangalore, Mysore, and Gulberga Buddhists, and followers of Dr Ambedkar, celebrated Vijayadashmi—Dharmachakra Pravartana days. The celebrations were organized by Mr B. Basarlingappa, a former Home Minister of Karnataka state, and a current Member of the Legislative Assembly, who commands great respect among ex-Untouchables and Buddhists in Karnataka.

Lokamitra and Bodhidhamma, from TBMSG in Poona, were invited to the celebrations as chief guests. In Bangalore, writes Bodhidhamma, Sangharakshita's old friend, Ven. Acharya Buddhakarshita was also present at the event. '... Young, old, educated, uneducated, well-off and poor Buddhists and followers of Dr Ambedkar attended. The Ven. Buddhakarshita led the chanting of the Three Refuges and the Precepts, and explained what should be

done and what should not be done in order to become a true Buddhist. Lokamitra also spoke, about the significance of the day and of the 'Dhamma Revolution' started by Dr Ambedkar in October 1956.

'In Mysore, Lokamitra talked of the ways in which Buddhism has influenced the world's cultures, and explained how the practice of Buddhism leads to happiness for oneself and for all beings. He spoke on a similar theme in Gulberga too, but also encouraged those who did consider themselves to be involved in the Buddhist movement to really practise in order to set an example to others. He urged Buddhists, and those considering conversion, to attend retreats, and to find out in practice how Buddhism could affect their lives.

'These celebrations were a great success, especially when one considers how new was this sort of thing was to Karnataka. We really do need a Buddhist movement there.'

DISCOVERING FRIENDSHIP

Seven women from Holland and Germany gathered this October in eastern Holland for a study retreat on the theme of 'Spiritual Friendship'. Vajragita, who lives in Utrecht, led the retreat, but the study periods were conducted by Abhaya, who had travelled across from England. Texts studied included, Gampopa's *Jewel Ornament of Liberation*, and Al Ghazzali's *The Duties of Brotherhood in Islam*. Further readings came from the *Udana*.

Vajragita says, 'This was a very harmonious retreat. Most of the women who came live far away from FWBO centres and have little contact with Order members, so they enjoyed this opportunity thoroughly.'



Vajragita

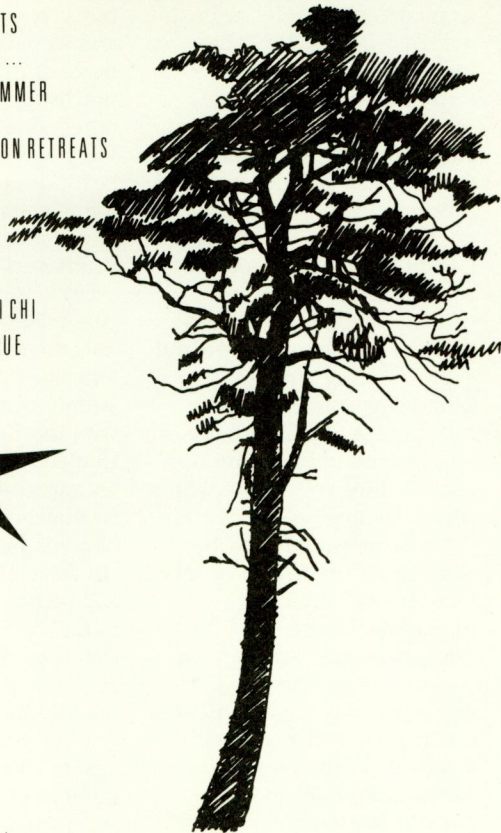
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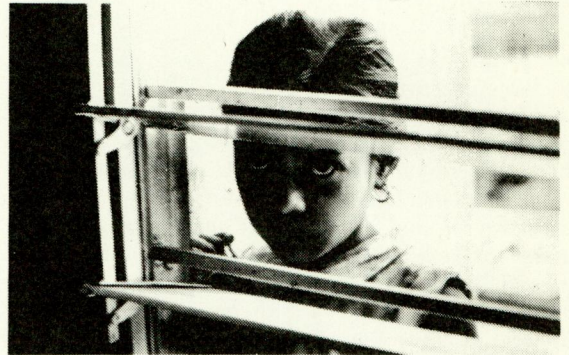
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FOUR GOOD REASONS TO VISIT PADMALOKA THIS SPRING

1

MEN'S EVENT
— “The
Dharma Door
to
Non-duality”
12-14 February
Including six
talks chaired by
the Venerable
Sangharakshita

2

**PADMALOKA
SPRING
RETREAT**
17-28 March
Relax and
meditate in ideal
conditions for
any 5 day period
or more

3

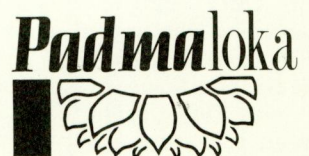
**LONDON
BUDDHIST
CENTRE
RETREAT**
28 March-
4 April
Open to all men
who attend
events at the
LBC

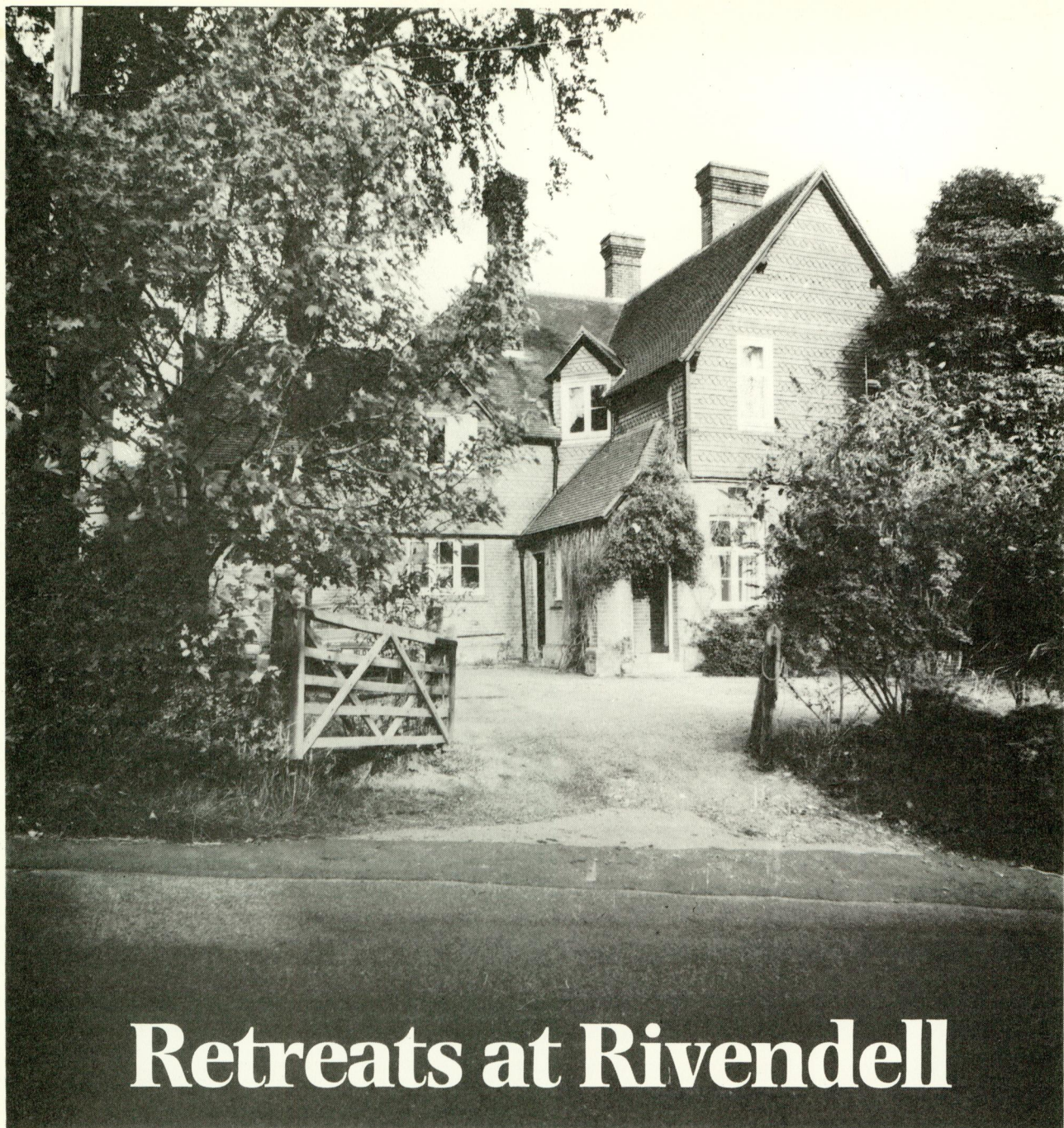
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MEDITATION
WEEKEND**
8-10 April
Learn Aikido in
an ideal training
situation — led
by Satyapriya

Padmaloka is the largest public retreat centre for men in the FWBO. If you would like our full programme of events or want to book or find out more about any of the events above, please contact the Retreat Organiser at the address below —

Lesingham House, Surlingham,
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Summer School 9-16 July. A seven day course in the essentials of Buddhist thought and 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.

Open Summer Retreat 23-30 July. This retreat is open to everyone and is especially suitable for beginners. The programme includes meditation with full instruction, talks and discussion on basic Buddhist

themes, and time to relax and explore the countryside. A real opportunity to have a taste of how Buddhist practice can bring about greater happiness, friendliness and understanding of oneself.

Yoga Weeks 6-13 August and 20-27 August. Taught by Anandajyoti and Prajnananda, two of the FWBO's leading yoga instructors. As well as yoga there will be meditation, talks, videos and free time. Open to both men and women, with or without previous yoga experience.

Further details available from the address below

CROYDON BUDDHIST CENTRE

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Rivendell is a centre of the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order, a worldwide, modern Buddhist movement, founded in London in 1967 by Ven. Sangharakshita, the seniormost English Buddhist.

Where to find us

MAIN CENTRES OF THE FRIENDS OF THE WESTERN BUDDHIST ORDER

London Buddhist Centre, 51 Roman Road, London E2 0HU. Tel: 01-981 1225

Birmingham Buddhist Centre, 135 Salisbury Road, Moseley, Birmingham, B13 8LA. Tel: 021-449 5279

Brighton Buddhist Centre, 15 Park Crescent Place, Brighton, Sussex, BN2 3HF. Tel: 0273 698420

Bristol Buddhist Centre, 9 Cromwell Road, St Andrews, Bristol, BS6 5HD. Tel: 0272 392463

Cambridge Buddhist Centre, c/o 17 Newmarket Road, Cambridge, CB5 8EG. Tel: 0223 329756

Croydon Buddhist Centre, 96-98 High Street, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 1ND. Tel: 01-688 8624

Glasgow Buddhist Centre, 329 Sauciehall Street, Glasgow, G2 3HW. Tel: 041-333 0524

Lancashire Buddhist Centre, 301-303, Union Road, Oswaldtwistle, Accrington, Lancs, BB5 3HS. Tel: 0254 392605

Leeds Buddhist Centre, 148 Harehills Avenue, Leeds, LS8 4EU. Tel: 0532 405880

Manchester Buddhist Centre, 538 Wilbraham Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Manchester M21 1LD. Tel: 061-860 4267

Norwich Buddhist Centre, 41a All Saints Green, Norwich, NR1 3LY. Tel: 0603 627034

West London Buddhist Centre, 7 Colville Houses, London W11 1JB. Tel: 01-727 9382

Padmaloka Retreat Centre, Lesingham House, Surlingham, Norwich, NR14 7AL. Tel: 050-88 8112

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

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

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

The Office of the Western Buddhist Order, Padmaloka, Lesingham House, Surlingham, Norwich, NR14 7AL. Tel: 050 88 310

Aid For India, 186 Cowley Road, Oxford, OX4 1EU. Tel: 0865 728794

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

FWBO Germany, Klopstockstr. 19, D 43 Essen 11, W. Germany. Tel: 0201 668299

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

Vasterlandska Buddhistordens Vanner, Hillbersvagen 5, S-126 54 Hagersten, Sweden. Tel: (Stockholm) 97 59 92

TBMSG Ahmedabad, c/o Bakul Bhavan, Behind Gujerat Vaishya Sabha, Jalampur, Ahmedabad 380001, India

TBMSG Aurangabad, c/o P G Kambe Guruji, Bhim Nagar, Bhausingpura, Aurangabad 431001, India

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

TBMSG Bombay, 25 Bhim Perena, Tapodhan Nagar, Bandra (E), Bombay 400051, India

TBMSG Pimpri, Plot 294, Ishwarlal Chawl, Lal Bhahadur Shastri Road, Pimpri, Poona 411017, India

TBMSG Poona, Raja Harishchandra Road, Dapodi, Poona 411012, India. Tel: (Poona) 58403

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

Bahujan Hitay, Raja Harishchandra Road, Dapodi, Poona 411012, India. Tel: (Poona) 58403

FWBO Malaysia, c/o Dharmacharini Jayapushpa, 29 Medan Mahsuri Satu, Off Jalan Tengah, 11950, Bayan Lepas, Penang

Auckland Buddhist Centre, P.O. Box 68-453, Newton, Auckland, New Zealand. Tel: (Auckland) 789 320/775 735

Wellington Buddhist Centre, P.O. Box 12-311, Wellington North, New Zealand. Tel: 04-787 940

Sydney Buddhist Centre, 806 George Street, Sydney, Australia

Aryaloka Retreat Centre, Heartwood Circle, Newmarket, New Hampshire 03857, U.S.A. Tel: 603-659 5456

FWBO Seattle, 2410 E. Interlaken Blvd., Seattle, WA 98112, USA