

# GOLDEN DRUM

A Magazine for Western Buddhists. Price £1.25 May—July 1988 (2531) No. 9



THE FWBO  
COMES OF AGE

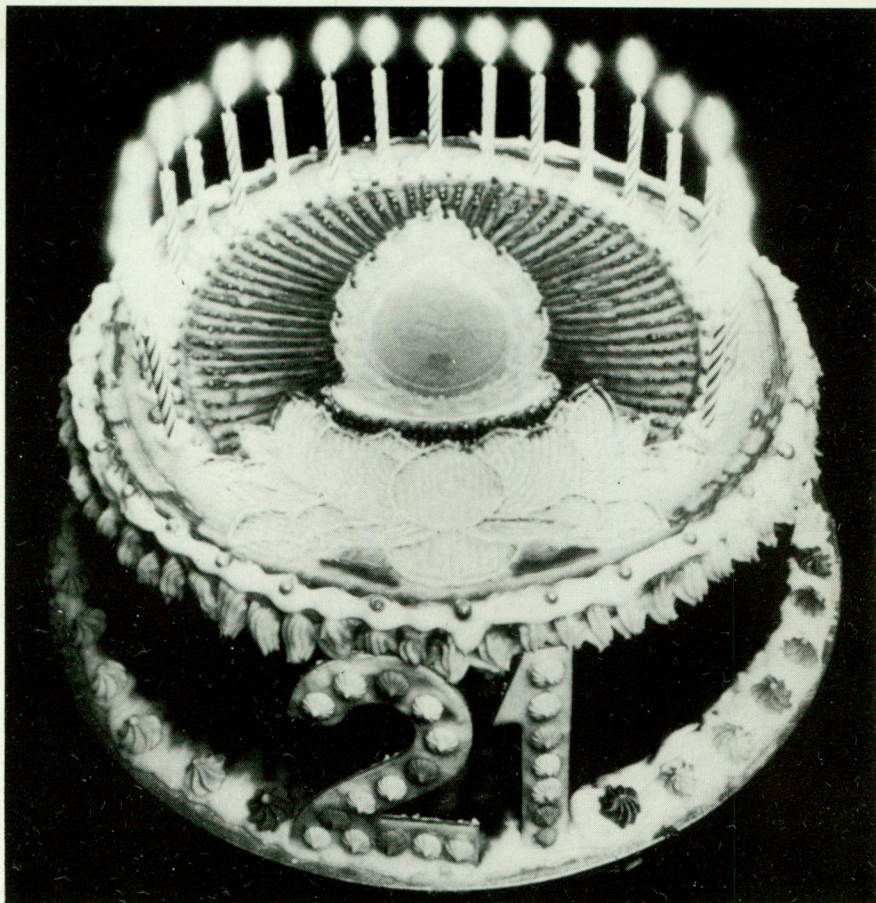


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MAY—JULY 1988 (2531)

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**Editor** Nagabodhi  
**Editorial Assistance** Shantavira  
**Design** Paramabodhi  
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The cake in our cover illustration was made at Hockney's Restaurant, Croydon. It was decorated by Devaraja, and photographed by Vajradipa. Concept by Padmaraja

Our thanks to the Croydon Friends for their generous help with this cover.





there were many 'spiritual tourists'. But still, a 'hard core' did emerge for whom the FWBO definitely became 'home ground', and for whom the experimentation gradually petered out, along with the long hair and flared trousers, as they settled down to the more serious practice of the Dharma which led to many of them becoming Order members.

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strong bonds of spiritual friendship were already developing.

Had you been in Monmouth Street on a Tuesday or Wednesday evening, perhaps browsing in 'Sakura', the Japanese craft shop, or drinking coffee in 'As You Like It', the chances are you would have seen Sangharakshita walking briskly along, his long hair and cloak billowing behind him. The eyes would be downcast and the expression concentrated, as though he were intent on getting to his destination—a narrow doorway marked No. 14—as quickly as possible.

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Today it is a major event if Sangharakshita visits a centre even for a few hours, but in the old days it was a twice-weekly occurrence. It was not uncommon either for him to accept or extend invitations to lunch or dinner, or even to see the occasional avant-garde film or event. He was not the distant, almost mythical figure he has necessarily become today in a far larger and more complex movement, but someone very approachable and much more available. This meant that many of us were able to get to know him in a way that isn't possible today.

Inevitably though, and perhaps ironically, this very familiarity led to a certain amount of 'contempt': an inability to see and appreciate just what we were being given, just what Sangharakshita was. So, perhaps it's not such a bad thing that he is less in the public eye today, if it means that he and his teachings are being taken more seriously.

Having said that, however, I don't for one moment regret having been around in those early days, but instead feel grateful and privileged, not only for my contact with Sangharakshita, but for having experienced at first hand the early development of the FWBO. Can it really be only twenty-one years ago?



Twenty-one years ago, Buddhism in the West was predominantly made up of scholars, members of societies, and the followers of oriental schools. Few of the, scholars had any personal commitment to Buddhism, the societies catered but for the interested sympathizer, and the oriental schools usually presented Buddhism deeply embedded in their own original culture.

Today, in a number of Western countries, it is possible to dedicate oneself fully to the Buddhist life, living and working with other Buddhists, and gradually affecting the wider society. The FWBO has played a major part in making this possible.

I have been invited to prophecy what will happen to the FWBO over the next twenty-one years. What a prospect is revealed to me!

Of course I see many more centres the world over, greater diversity of institution and activity, and far higher standards of excellence. But that future, it strikes me, probably includes my own most productive years, before I start to tail off towards old age and death. I anticipate them being years of fulfilment and happiness, and hope that they will be crowned with some measure of real wisdom. For this is the nub of it. It is our own futures that will make the future of the FWBO, and it will grow if *we* grow.

What will make us grow, of course, is the clarity of our perception of the Dharma and the intensity of our spiritual practice. Over the next twenty-one years, the FWBO's expression of the Buddhist teachings will be very greatly refined and deepened. There will be a clear and systematic presentation of the Dharma at all levels of involvement, uncompromisingly distinguishing the Dharma from the fashionable ideas of the moment. But Buddhism will also be more easily communicated, free from the obscurities and irrelevancies of the cultures it has passed through. The Buddhist voice will ring out clearly and convincingly, able to address the problems of the day and to speak to each man and woman in their own particular life.

Along with a brighter and purer shining of the light of the Dharma will come a blazing up of the fires of practice. Many more people will be personally familiar with higher states of consciousness. There will be more 'specialists', devoting themselves full-time to meditation for a few years. Institutions in which they can do this—like Vajraloka, Taraloka, Guhyaloka, and Aryaloka—will become much more stable and mature, and there will be many more of them.

An aspect of intensified practice I see

# A BUDDHIST FUTURE

*The FWBO—and Western Buddhism—are here to stay. Subhuti, author of Buddhism for Today and The Buddhist Vision, envisages Buddhism for tomorrow.*





# THE FWBO COMES OF AGE

On 10 April, some five hundred people gathered in a hall in East London to celebrate the twenty-first anniversary of the founding of the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order (FWBO). The next day, more than a hundred Dharmacharis and Dharmacharinis attended a reading of Sangharakshita's paper, 'The History of My Going for Refuge', to mark the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the Western Buddhist Order (WBO) itself.

These were extremely joyful occasions: there were balloons to release, outsized, colourful offerings for an outsized, colourful shrine, streamers, banners, musical interludes, slide and video presentations, exhibits from a few of the FWBO's centres and ventures, and—above all—there were people, a representative assembly of those who now constitute the FWBO. We had come from all over Britain, from Europe and Australasia; there were Order members too who had recently returned from India, Malaysia, Africa, and America.

For a couple of days we meditated and performed pujas together, listened to talks, clapped our hands, raised our voices in roars of delight and thanks, and enjoyed a thousand reunions. There seemed, and was, so much to celebrate. In twenty-one years the FWBO and the WBO have grown steadily out of Sangharakshita's once-lonely vision, and taken form as a Movement capable of reaching out in ever more ways, through its increasingly diverse institutions, to every corner of the world as an effective and immediate channel for the Buddha's teaching.

Speaking to a gathering of Order members on the night before the FWBO-day celebrations, Sangharakshita reflected that the FWBO's history has not been without its difficulties and even heart-aches. But despite them, and often because of them, he felt confident that he had managed to communicate the spirit of his own commitment to the Three Jewels to others: he had, as he put it, found others who like to dance the way he dances. Many of us, he suggested, could now be dropped into an entirely new situation (he mentioned the forests of Brazil!) and left to create a Buddhist movement from scratch, just as he has done. Where we would have an advantage over him, he quietly added, would be in the fact that we now have a model upon which to base our efforts.

Some of us were no doubt daunted even by the suggestion that we might find it in ourselves to recapitulate Sangharakshita's accomplishment. He is Sangharakshita, after all, the 'Protector of the Order', founder of our Movement, and the unique genius behind its now evident success. How can we hope to parallel his vision, his clarity, or his warm determination?

But such thinking will not get any of us, or the FWBO, very far. Admittedly, twenty-one years is a decent length of time; the FWBO is

now quite widespread, and even gathering influence. But twenty-one years does not even add up to one percent of Buddhist history! We don't yet have centres in all of the major towns in Britain, and there are many countries still with no FWBO presence at all. On the very day of our anniversary, an estimated 200,000,000 people worldwide tuned in their radios for a running commentary not on our celebrations, but on the 'Grand National'—a horse race! There is a tremendous amount still to be done: a lot of teaching, a lot of centre building, a lot of fund-raising, and, above all, a lot of spiritual practice.

The talks and exhibits at those anniversary celebrations paid tribute to our urban Dharma centres and retreat centres, our meditation and devotional practices, the residential communities and co-operatives. It was exciting and immensely encouraging—it always is—to stand back for a few hours just to look at them and rejoice in the existence of the FWBO as a kind of total organism. But, when the weekend was over, we had each to return to our own little corner of the Movement: to our own centre, community, or Right Livelihood situation, to our own practice.

And that, surely, is when the real celebrations began. For isn't it by pouring ourselves into our spiritual practice, and in using the FWBO's facilities to the full, that we can best honour and celebrate the FWBO? It is good that we should feel proud of the FWBO, proud of our mutual achievement in bringing something so valuable into existence. But our pride should be the sort of pride that urges us to *live* it wholeheartedly, contribute to it, and enrich it.

Unless we are able to count our blessings and make full use of them *every day*, unless we keep looking for ways to share them with others, then our gatherings will be little more than displays of empty triumphalism, and the FWBO may not outlive its founder. Just as Sangharakshita's commitment and qualities have brought the FWBO thus far, it will be our commitment, our qualities, and our ability to embody the ideals of Buddhism, that must now see it rise from its splendid foundations.

Since *Golden Drum* was launched, two years ago, the costs of paper and printing have risen considerably. Although we have tried to absorb these increased costs for as long as possible, we are now obliged to announce a rise in cover price, from £1.00 to £1.25.

As our sales and subscriptions seem to be on the increase, we should be able to hold this price for a fairly long time, during which we hope to make *Golden Drum* bigger and better.

Nagabodhi



# A BACKWARD GLANCE

*As the FWBO comes of age, Mangala, who has been involved for 20 of its 21 years, offers us a (last?) glimpse of earlier days.*

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In twenty-one years the FWBO has developed into a multi-national movement with activities on five continents. Today these activities are fairly well known and documented, but the interested newcomer must surely sometimes wonder what it was like to be around in the early days. So what better time than now to take a quick backward glance and see how the FWBO looked all those years ago?

First of all, of course, it was very much smaller and infinitely less complex, as a glance at the few duplicated sheets which constituted the early *FWBO Newsletters* would have shown. There was only one 'Centre' . . . two small basement rooms in the West End of London, where a couple of nights each week Sangharakshita would teach meditation, answer questions, and hold informal discussions. You didn't need to book in advance or ring up; there wasn't even any charge, but only what seemed then to be a rather quaint object . . . a dana (giving) bowl by the door. Twice a year retreats were held in the Surrey countryside and occasionally Sangharakshita would deliver a series of lectures: and that was pretty much it.

There were no Right Livelihood businesses, no mitra System, no publications, no single-sex activities, only one community (mixed), and very few Order members, to mention but some of the elements which constitute the FWBO as we know it today.

What one encountered was a very small, friendly, informal group of people; a movement very much in its formative stages. But what was a Western Buddhist movement supposed to be like? How was a Western Buddhist supposed to live? No one really knew. After all there was no tradition to follow, no precedent. Even Sangharakshita didn't really know. His concern had been to set up a movement in which people took Buddhist teachings seriously and tried to apply them. But exactly how this was to be worked out in practice even he couldn't know. It wasn't surprising therefore that it was some time after ordination before Mike, Steve, Brenda, Paul, Smudge and co. even started using their Buddhist names!

There was a very free and easy atmosphere, and experimentation was the order of the day. This was after all the late sixties and early seventies. Most FWBO 'regulars' would visit other groups, and it was not uncommon to hear of several of them, Order members included, going to a Zen sesshin, a Tibetan centre, or to one of the many gurus around at that time.

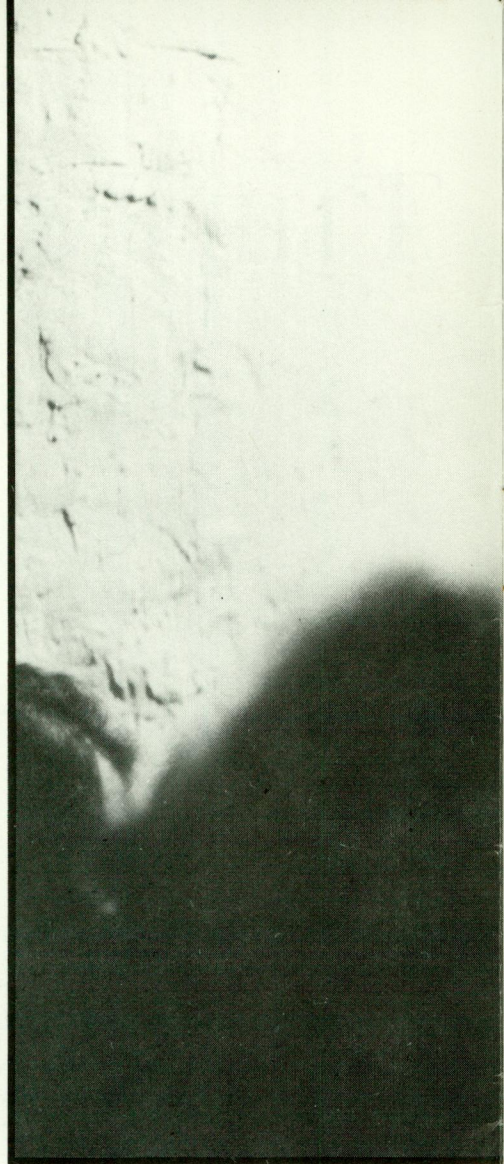
Apart from the religious and spiritual groups, there were also a great number of alternative therapies, and these too had to be checked out—and were: rolfing, gestalt, bio-energetics, encounter, dream groups, Enlightenment Intensives, and so on.

Then again there were the experiments in communal living. These were made

possible by the vast number of empty houses in the North London area which were taken over and used to full advantage by many FWBO regulars, especially after the Centre moved from the West End to Archway. Here, of an evening, you could sit down to your bowl of brown rice, vegetables, and miso sauce—which as far as possible would be organic and cooked with love. Carrots would be cut into large matchstick shapes rather than rings, as this apparently gave a better distribution of yin and yang. Mindfully eating this with your chopsticks, seated on a mattress on the floor, the chances are you'd be talking about macrobiotics, last night's 'dream group', or the Tibetan Book of the Dead, while John Lennon or Ravi Shankar provided the accompaniment.

Retreats too were not quite what they are today. For one thing there were far fewer of them, probably only two every year. So, if someone asked you if you were going on the retreat, you didn't say 'Which retreat?', or 'Who's leading it?': there was only one retreat, and of course Sangharakshita would be leading it. These retreats were always for both sexes and the programme was fairly 'light'. Not too much was demanded of you and there was usually time for a few 'extra curricula activities', be it afternoon tea in the village, a musical soirée, or simply falling in (or out of) love.

So, much of the interest in those early days was casual and experimental, and







there were many 'spiritual tourists'. But still, a 'hard core' did emerge for whom the FWBO definitely became 'home ground', and for whom the experimentation gradually petered out, along with the long hair and flared trousers, as they settled down to the more serious practice of the Dharma which led to many of them becoming Order members.

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flashing more brilliantly in my crystal ball is ceremony. Over the years, our pujas and ceremonies have gained immeasurably in strength and depth of feeling. But compared with those of the future they are pale and timid. As people devote themselves more wholeheartedly to the ideals of Buddhism, forms will arise which will allow people to pour forth spontaneously their reverence for the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. In such a puja we will feel that we are in direct contact with the very roots of life, beyond time and place.

So we will see the Dharma brought more vividly to life and spiritual practice bearing tangible fruit. But for this to come about, more time must be dedicated to study and meditation. This will require money which will come from Right Livelihood activities.

Order members will be running several highly successful businesses, some by then household names. There might be a chain of language schools worldwide or of top-quality restaurants in every major town in Britain and perhaps in several cities throughout the world. These businesses would be a completely new concept in the modern commercial world: very profitable enterprises operating on a large scale and competing successfully in 'the marketplace'—but run entirely on idealism, with all workers taking less than the normal wage. Workers will be able, at company expense, to spend perhaps a third or a half of their time on retreat, or studying, or in some creative pursuit. The profits of these businesses will be used to spread the Dharma or to fund cultural activities or social projects. Financial analysts in the City of London or on Wall Street will be baffled by operations which are so successful but which run principally on inspiration. They will have to recognize that ethics is not incompatible with commercial success, or caring with efficiency!

Of course not all FWBO Right Livelihood enterprises will be on such a large scale. There will still be some of the shops, design studios, etc. attached to individual centres—all much better managed and far more successful than at present. But there will be a new emphasis too on 'ordinary' jobs as Right Livelihood: perhaps a third of Order members and mitras will be employed outside the Movement in work which is ethical and socially useful and, if possible, highly paid. A substantial proportion of their incomes will be donated for the work of the Movement. But they will also be in a position to influence the people they work with and, through their work, society at large.

Perhaps this is the most striking

development we will see: the FWBO twenty-one years hence will have a significant impact on society. Without any compromise, Buddhist principles will be carried into the heart of the world because many Order members and mitras will be very actively engaged in transforming it. The Buddhist voice will not only be heard telling people about the Dharma, but giving a more specific commentary on the current affairs of the day, speaking up for genuine ethical and cultural values. And that voice will be listened to because some Order members will deliberately cultivate the communications media and will try to make contact with the influential in society. Some Order members may be actively engaged in politics, albeit at the more human level of the local council.

Some Order members and mitras, perhaps in conjunction with other Buddhists, will have started welfare projects with funding from the charity 'Karuna', which will be operating not only in the 'Third World' but amongst the needy of the developed nations. There will be medical projects, combining Western medicine with effective 'alternative' treatments and with methods of helping people to cope with the stresses of modern life. There will also be hospices, drug addiction centres, counselling services. Because this work will be founded on the Buddhist vision of human potential it will be uniquely successful and will attract a great deal of sympathy and support.

Education will be a major area of development. There will be at least one college of Buddhist studies, where scholars will be able to pursue their researches in a context of committed practice. Well-trained and experienced teachers who have completed courses at the colleges will be teaching the Dharma at local centres throughout the world. But the Movement will also embrace general education at all levels, perhaps with an especial emphasis on adult education. There will be cultural centres connected with most Buddhist centres which will promote an understanding and appreciation of what is best in world culture. Here will be seen the early glimmerings of a distinctive movement of Buddhist artists and writers, some of whom will be working within the traditions of modern art to express their Buddhist values while others use their talents to adorn Buddhist centres.

Because of the FWBO's wider social impact there will be a very large pool of people who participate in its activities, whether overtly Buddhist or not, and who are sympathetic to it without considering themselves Buddhists. Within this broadest community of Friends will



**Building a better future: the Karuna Trust**

be a smaller group—although still large by today's standards—of those who consider themselves to be Buddhists but who do little more than receive *Golden Drum* (by then circulating 50,000 copies) or attend festivals. At the heart of the Movement will be a growing body of the deeply committed.

The greatest strength of the Movement will still be in its single-sex communities, of which there will be many. But for those with families a new alternative will have clearly emerged, a kind of 'open community' around each centre which will enable parents to spend much of their time in single-sex communities whilst still fulfilling their parental duties.

The Order itself could have as many as 5,000 members, a major proportion of them in India. Half the nations of the world will be represented, and by then it will probably be called the United Buddhist Order to signify its transcendence of all the barriers of race and nation. A number of mature and experienced members, in close harmony with each other, and having the confidence of the whole Order, will have taken up responsibility for ordinations from Sangharakshita (who will be in the Spanish hills, still writing!).

But the most striking change we will see is one of spirit. People in the movement of the future will be animated by a much greater wholeheartedness, confidence, and vigour. They will be less oppressed by doubts and fears, less concerned about their worries and problems. They will be active and alive, concerned for the world around them, well cultured and versed in the Dharma.

All this could be—very likely will be. But only if we now realize the urgency of the world's crisis, the desperate need of many people for the vast horizons of the Dharma: only if we *now* go beyond our own immediate self-interest, even our own personal development, narrowly conceived. Only then will there be an FWBO like this in twenty-one years time.





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## SPREADING OUR WINGS

*Most of the Western Buddhist Order's activities are now 'single sex'—either for men or for women. Sanghadevi, founder of Taraloka, remembers some early strains, and assesses the benefits.*

A distinguishing feature of the FWBO is its emphasis on the value of 'single-sex activities', that is, separate activities for men and women. We have 'single-sex study groups, retreats, Right Livelihood projects, communities, and retreat centres.

These single-sex activities do not in any way preclude 'mixed' activities, as those who have attended the FWBO's city centres anywhere in the world will realize. Our centres are run wherever possible by teams of men and women, and offer classes, events, and retreats for men and women together. At a certain point in their involvement, however, most Friends usually find themselves being encouraged to 'move on' to single-sex activities. So how did this emphasis on single-sex activities come about?

When Sangharakshita first returned to the West in the mid-sixties he did not envisage that there would be any need for separate activities for men and women, even though this was regarded as quite necessary in the Buddhist East where social conditions very much supported, even demanded, this. In the

early days of the FWBO, therefore, all activities were mixed. However, certain drawbacks gradually became apparent. Underlying sexual tensions clouded some events, and we began to recognize that, while spiritually immature, men and women can mutually reinforce certain aspects of their conditioning counter-productive to the underlying aim of the spiritual life: namely, to become free of all subjective limitations and conditionings.

Given that the Movement was young and charged with an air of experimentation, it seemed quite natural when Sangharakshita suggested that we try out a single-sex weekend retreat or two. Some men and women did this (separately of course!), and the experiment was subsequently repeated. These retreats took place at the end of 1972 and in early 1973. Overall the experience was found to be beneficial. Before long the 'experiment' was extending out to other areas, and the now familiar pattern of single-sex activities began to be established. The first single-sex communities emerged.

Of course this shift in emphasis away



**A mixed class at the LBC**

from mixed activities to more single-sex activities was not an entirely smooth transition. There were confusions and uncertainties on both sides, and there were some who found it positively painful. On the one side were the tangible benefits of time spent in the company of members of one's own sex; on the other, for some, was the sense of losing enjoyable companionship with members of the opposite sex.

Speaking personally, I felt happy to live in a women's community and to attend women's retreats. In January 1976 I moved into what was the first women's community just six months after it had been established. Nevertheless, I remember feeling unhappy that our Movement looked at this stage as if it were becoming increasingly single-sex overall. It was not easy at that time to get a very clear picture of what was happening from the men and women who were more deeply involved with the FWBO than I, for they were often in the midst of a process of personal change which they did not yet fully understand, or necessarily trust, themselves. I interpreted what was happening as a sign





**Building Amaravati**

that the Movement might end up primarily monastic, something that had few positive associations, thanks to my early experience of a Roman Catholic education.

Overall, however, I had respect for Sangharakshita and his exposition of the Dharma, as well as for what the Order stood for as a whole. I was prepared to plunge in regardless of the things I did not like, and have ended up being intimately involved with an important part of the early 'single-sex history' of the FWBO's women. Whilst I am very pleased that those days of uncertainty are now behind me—behind us—I feel sure that they were a necessary stage through which at least some of us had to pass.

In those earlier days I had had no involvement in the wider 'women's movement'. Even so, I sensed that we were undergoing an 'enforced' crash course in women's liberation. We were forced back on ourselves and had to find the emotional support, spiritual nourishment, and inspiration—to say nothing of certain practical skills—from other women. And it worked! Women did begin to value other women ever more deeply. It was exciting and enriching to come together and explore our interests and aspirations on those early women's retreats and in the early women's communities. We began to realize too how much we had taken our measure from men in the past simply because they were men, how much we had sold ourselves short.

Two of these early communities, 'Amaravati' and 'Mandarava', became something of a focus for women involved in the FWBO, not only in the UK but as

far away as New Zealand. The original *Dakini* magazine was produced from Amaravati and became a vehicle for sharing women's news and views around the world. For women in the UK, the two communities gave focus and direction at a time when a lot of the men's energy was going into the completion of the London Buddhist Centre and Sukhavati Community. Amaravati was based in Wanstead, East London, and averaged twelve members. Its sister community was smaller, averaging three to four members, and based as it was in the Norfolk countryside, it offered a retreat facility for women. Many women who are now in the Order lived for a while at Amaravati, whilst Mandarava gave us a taste of the positive benefits of a permanent retreat facility. From these communities we moved on to develop new ones.

Now, sitting in my caravan-office, overlooking the green fields at 'Taraloka', the FWBO's first women's retreat centre, which I helped establish some two-and-a-half years ago, I see how far the women in the FWBO have come, just how much we have to celebrate, and how different things are for women getting involved with the FWBO now, as compared to how they were when I first came along.

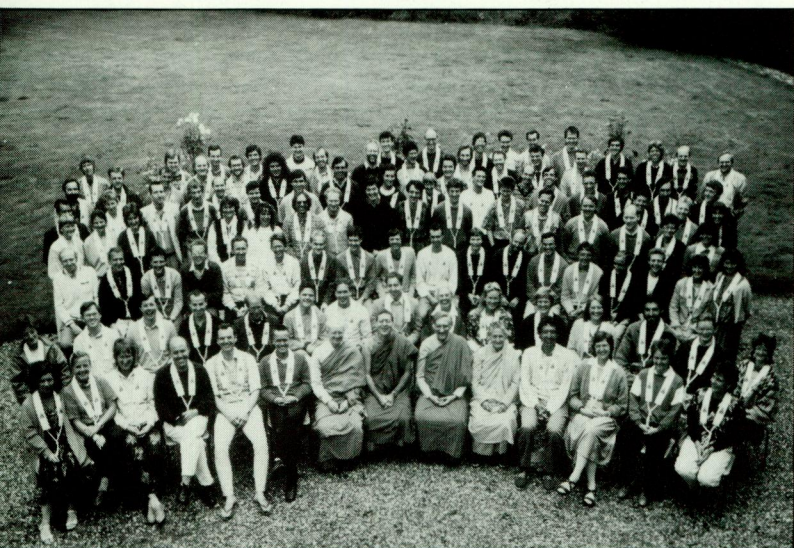
Although the women's wing of the Order is by no means as large numerically as the men's wing, we have built up a depth and maturity of practice over the years which women newly involved in the Movement cannot but meet. They find a confidence and assurance which encourages them to take up the challenge of spiritual growth. And that confidence and assurance has

undoubtedly grown in part *because* of our practice in single-sex situations, rather than in spite of it. Indeed, it is true to say the women who are more deeply involved in the FWBO, whether they be Order members or mitras, positively value other women's company and experience women as spiritual catalysts.

Nowadays we have many women's communities, as well as several Right Livelihood projects. We have a great deal of experience in the field of retreats, and we have a permanent retreat centre with a substantial community of five Order members and five mitras, offering a variety of retreats throughout the year. At city Centres, women Order members run classes, give talks, and lead study. In fact, women are contributing in all areas and at all levels of the Movement's work. A team of three Dharmacharinis has even conducted women's ordinations in India on behalf of Sangharakshita. Soon we hope to see our first book produced: an anthology of life-stories of some of our Dharmacharinis, sharing their spiritual quest with the wider world.

As the FWBO expands, an increasing number of women are getting involved. We have now a rich and colourful pool, world-wide, from which a modest yet steady number of women are emerging each year as Order members. I suspect that we will see a much larger number of women entering the Order during the coming twenty-one years as compared to these first twenty-one years. It is as if the groundwork has been done and we can now begin to fly, fly with ever increasing confidence alongside our brothers in the Dharma, as one Order with two wings.





# AN EVER WIDENING CIRCLE

10

*Is ordination what it used to be? Vessantara, who has been leading men's Ordination Courses for the past six years, shares some reflections.*

On 7 April 1968, Sangharakshita gave a lecture to an audience including the dozen people who, later that day, would become the first members of the Western Buddhist Order. The lecture was called simply 'The Idea of the Western Buddhist Order and of Upasaka Ordination'. Of course, for Sangharakshita, the Order was much more than an idea, it was a vision. But his modest title reflects the fact that the twelve prospective ordinees were still very much at the stage of getting the idea. Despite their strong desire to go deeper into Buddhism—to live it—there were in 1968 no Western models of a spiritual community for them to follow.

The Buddha had said that spiritual fellowship is 'the whole of the spiritual life'. Yet, in 1968, to find true spiritual fellowship you had to go to the East. In the West there were groups of people interested in Buddhism, but not committed to it. You could glean information from Buddhist groups, but finding the *spirit* of Buddhism was another matter. So Sangharakshita, and those friends who wanted to take things further, were going to form a *sangha*, a spiritual community. In his talk, Sangharakshita declared that the occasion was an historic one, probably the most important step yet taken in the English Buddhist movement.

Now, twenty years on, there are more than 300 Order members on five continents. If they could meet, would the original twelve and the 300-plus recognize one another as members of the same Order? Would their understanding of what it means to be an Order member be the same? Would they have the same expectations of one another?

In essentials, Order members then and now would agree on what it means to be an Order member. In his talk, Sangharakshita outlined what was to be expected of Order members. They were to Go for Refuge—commit themselves to

the Path to Enlightenment—and to follow ten precepts (he actually called them 'vows'). In this respect the Order hasn't changed at all. Since the beginning, the Going for Refuge and ten precepts have formed the bedrock on which the Order stands. The Order's twenty-year history has been the story of the progressive deepening of our commitment to Enlightenment and actualizing of the precepts.

Although the basic principles haven't changed, in practice nowadays far more is expected of Order members. In his talk, Sangharakshita mentioned some other things which would be expected of the new Order members, though these were to be left to people's individual discretion. They would be expected to attend a monthly meeting of the Order, to make 'at least some effort' in the direction of vegetarianism, to practise Right Livelihood and have a simple lifestyle, to meditate daily, attend a weekly Buddhist class, and go on retreat once a year. They would also continue giving help to the FWBO, both financial and otherwise. All these, Sangharakshita said, represented 'a very definite degree of commitment indeed'.

Twenty years on, these expectations seem the barest of minimums. In fact most mitras (who are involved in the FWBO but not yet fully committed Buddhists) are doing as much as was expected of Order members in 1968. Nearly all are vegetarian, and most go on more than the 'annual retreat' expected of that first generation. As for the monthly meeting of the Order, there are now weekly local meetings of Order members, which act as 'spiritual workshops', as well as regular larger gatherings. There are also communities of Order members living together.

This greater application of our commitment hasn't happened all at once. There have been some important stepping-stones along the way. The Order has had growth spurts and growing pains, as



we started to see deeper implications of the short but beautiful ceremony in which each of us had become part of the Order.

Looking back, some of these periods of realization and what we might call 'creative crises' are easy to chart, others are subtle and harder to pinpoint. A major one was the period in the mid-seventies when it began to dawn on us that following the Bodhisattva Ideal would involve hard work and 'getting our hands dirty'. In fundraising for, and building, the London Buddhist Centre, the Order dropped its laid-back ex-hippy cool and discovered heroism and hard work.

In the mid-seventies we also discovered the value of single-sex situations and began to recognize the spiritual dangers of dependent sexual relationships. At this time the hitherto homogeneous Order sprouted a 'men's wing' and a 'women's wing'. It was a painful separation, and for a while the two wings seemed to be trying to fly in different directions. Now, as last year's mixed Order Convention demonstrated, our two wings relate very harmoniously.

In the early days of the Order, Sangharakshita did nearly all the teaching. As years passed, other Order members began taking on increasing responsibility; they began giving lectures and leading classes and retreats. As time went on, they took responsibility for setting up Dharma centres, and even for taking the Dharma to new countries and continents.

Another significant development came in 1981 when people were ordained in the context of intensive Ordination Courses lasting three months. These gave new Order members a much more thoroughgoing preparation for their new life than ever before. About a third of all existing Order members have now been ordained on these courses, and each year they have poured fresh enthusiasm and inspiration into the Order.



The Ordination Course is just the final stage of a process of preparation lasting a number of years. Now the average new Order member has probably been involved with the FWBO for about five years before attending his or her Ordination Course—which is why the observation has been made that it is far easier to become a monk or nun in the East than it is to become an Order member, or even a mitra, within the FWBO.

The latest development in the Order has been the passing-on by Sangharakshita of responsibility for giving ordinations to other Order members. This is a definite sign of our maturity, and suggests that the Order is no longer dependent upon Sangharakshita for its continued spiritual impetus.

These increasing applications of the commitment involved in Going for Refuge haven't always happened smoothly. Occasionally we have lost Order members who were not prepared for another 'Great Leap Forward'. Many of the original twelve resigned or lost contact with the Order in the early years. We have lost some good people. However, with every step forward we have attracted more men and women who were excited by the movement we were creating. With each step we have made it possible to live a more wholeheartedly Buddhist life in the West, and to offer

people better facilities for setting out on the Buddhist path to happiness and freedom.

When giving his lecture in 1968, Sangharakshita envisaged four levels or grades of ordination, from that of lay follower to Bodhisattva and bhikshu (or monastic) ordination. However, Sangharakshita subsequently realized that having grades of ordination would 'obscure the wood with trees'. What is of prime importance, the great centre-piece of Buddhism, is the Going for Refuge. The Going for Refuge embraces commitment both to gaining perfect Enlightenment and to the Bodhisattva Ideal.

Becoming a monk or nun is simply a matter of adopting a certain lifestyle, not of making any fundamentally different commitment.

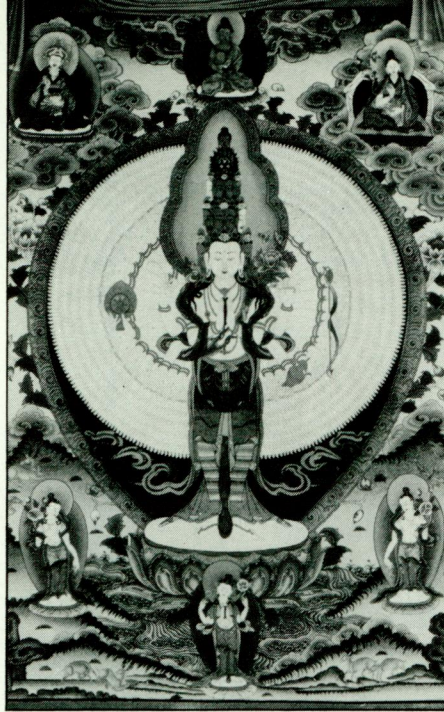
So we have dispensed with any ideas of higher grades of ordination. All Order members, men and women, Go for Refuge and receive the same ordination. As we have Order members living a wide range of lifestyles from the more 'lay' to the more 'monastic', we now style ourselves Dharmacharis (*m.*) or Dharmacharinis (*f.*), which simply means 'followers of the Dharma'. In this way we acknowledge that what unites us—our common commitment to the Path to Enlightenment—is far more important than our different ways of living a

Buddhist life.

The Western Buddhist Order has come a long way in twenty years. We have delineated some important principles, and developed some very effective modes of operation for a sangha working under modern Western conditions. We have grown in numbers and in personal experience of the Buddhist Path. At the same time, we are not ready to rest on our laurels. Outside India, growth in the men's wing of the Order is slowing down. There could still be more kindness and harmony within the Order as a whole. We have much more to learn in our next twenty years.

Before considering the next twenty years though, I'm sure that on its anniversary the Order will have enjoyed stealing a backward glance to those original dozen people about to Go for Refuge. We have much to thank them for. Even having heard Sangharakshita's lecture, they had no real way of knowing what they were letting themselves in for. They had to leap in the dark, and some of them fell, or landed badly. However, as a result of their courage to commit themselves to living Buddhism, they provided a first small ring of Buddhist practitioners. That ring has expanded in an ever-widening circle until now, twenty years on, it has encircled the globe.





The Thousand-Armed Avalokiteshvara

## REACHING OUT TO THE WORLD

*Tejananda introduces a potent symbol from the East—one that perfectly expresses the aims and spirit of the FWBO.*

Visitors to some recent national FWBO festivals and celebrations in London may have been struck by a large and impressive painted 'thangka' looming above the speaker or shrine. From a distance it appears to depict a white standing figure floating above clouds, wearing what looks like a tall and rather extraordinary head-dress and surrounded by an immense white aura.

On closer inspection, the image may seem positively bizarre: the white aura proves to consist of innumerable hands, and the head-dress isn't a head-dress at all, but ten extra heads!

An image so unequivocally 'Eastern' may seem an odd choice for a Western Buddhist movement to give pride of place to. What on earth could it be—and why not choose something a bit more comprehensible to Westerners?

Despite the initial strangeness of its appearance, this figure has come to be seen by members of the Western Buddhist Order as a potent and apposite symbol of the Order and the FWBO itself. It is the 'thousand-armed' form of Avalokiteshvara, the 'transcendental' Bodhisattva who embodies above all the quality of Great Compassion.

Avalokiteshvara is one of the most prominent and popular Bodhisattvas of the Buddhist Mahayana tradition. Representations of him can be seen in ancient shrines and temples all over the 'old' Buddhist world, from the caves of Ajanta to the great stupa of Borobudur—even in Sri Lanka and Thailand. In China and the Far East, he, or rather, by this stage, she, gained a vast following as the female Bodhisattva Kwan Yin.

But it was perhaps with the Tibetans that Avalokiteshvara struck the deepest chord and found the strongest veneration. It is in Tibet, or wherever Tibetan Buddhism is now found, that the mantra of Avalokiteshvara—OM MANI

PADME HUM—can be seen everywhere: carved into stones, walls, and rock faces, copied millions of times into 'mani wheels' and constantly heard on the lips of ordinary Tibetan Buddhists.

Given such strong feeling, it is not surprising that Avalokiteshvara became 'patron Bodhisattva' of Tibet, and seen as manifesting his compassionate activity in no less than 108 different forms by Tibetan Buddhists.

According to one Tibetan story, it was on account of his Great Compassion for the people of the Land of Snows that Avalokiteshvara gained his thousand-armed and eleven-headed form. Finding two arms and one head unequal to the task of converting the unruly Tibetans to Buddhism, he spontaneously manifested a thousand helping arms, each with a 'wisdom eye' in its palm, and eleven heads, so that he could see and act on the needs of beings in all directions of space simultaneously.

This and similar stories—and the thousand-armed form of Avalokiteshvara itself—are not of course to be taken literally: they belong to the realm of myth and symbol. As such, their meaning needs to be contemplated and reflected on rather than explained away.

However, the iconography of this form of Avalokiteshvara does highlight one or two points about the Bodhisattva Ideal itself, which should help explain the special regard in which it is held by members of the Western Buddhist Order.

Like all Bodhisattvas, Avalokiteshvara embodies—in a sense simply is—the Bodhichitta, the 'will to enlightenment for the benefit of all'. The thousand arms vividly illustrate the fact that the Bodhichitta, when it arises in a human being, always manifests as compassionate action. At the same time, the 'wisdom eye' in the palm of each hand suggests that true compassion is never separate from wisdom: compassion is the activity of

wisdom.

But is it really possible to conceive of a single being—even one in whom the Bodhichitta has arisen—as acting in a 'thousand' ways simultaneously? Here, especially, the danger of taking symbols over-literally has to be avoided. In this form, Avalokiteshvara does not represent an individual being in the ordinary sense. What he does represent could be described as simply the 'Bodhichitta' or, in Sangharakshita's terminology, the 'Bodhisattva principle'—the principle of perpetual self-transcendence—as it actually manifests in a particular spiritual community.

To the extent that human beings are consciously engaging in the process of self-transcendence—Going for Refuge—they are 'participating' in the Bodhisattva principle. So, while any individual member of the Western Buddhist Order may not be a Bodhisattva in the full sense, any person who Goes for Refuge could be seen as at least an arm, or a hand (or maybe just a mere finger!) of Avalokiteshvara. The spiritual community as a whole, then, could be seen as adding up to 'a Bodhisattva'.

This is why the thousand-armed Avalokiteshvara seems such an apposite symbol for the Order itself. In the thangka, Avalokiteshvara's hands grasp many different objects, suggestive of the innumerable ways in which the Bodhisattva expresses compassion for living beings. Similarly, different Order members express their Going for Refuge in different ways, but in so doing, each makes his or her own particular contribution to the 'welfare of the many'.

All the same, it would not do to think of the thousand-armed Avalokiteshvara as signifying a 'state' already realized—even collectively—by the Order and the FWBO. Avalokiteshvara is a constant reminder of the Bodhisattva principle: perpetual self-transcendence. Even after twenty-one years, the FWBO is still a 'novice Bodhisattva'. But whenever we contemplate the thousand-armed form of Avalokiteshvara, we can gain a vision of what—individually and collectively—we aspire to become.



**ANANDA** "It is wonderful  
Lord, Friendship  
is one half of the  
Spiritual Life!"

**THE  
BUDDHA** "Say not so  
Ananda, say not  
so. It is the  
whole of the  
Spiritual Life"

# Padmaloka

BUDDHIST RETREAT CENTRE FOR MEN



**Friendship** is the most important thing we can develop to ensure the spiritual vitality of our movement. This is especially so since each FWBO centre functions autonomously. To appreciate the full richness of the movement we need opportunities to come together with people from other centres.

At Padmaloka practising Buddhist men from all parts of the movement can meet and develop friendships. Padmaloka's retreats offer men from all round Europe, or further afield, a strong taste of *Sangha*.

## When can you come to Padmaloka this year?

Some events coming soon at Padmaloka . . . .

May  
13 - 20

Study seminar — on two important texts  
— *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* with Subhuti  
— *The Bodhicaryavatara* with Nagabodhi

20 - 22  
27 - 30

Karate and Meditation Weekend  
Three Day "Men's Event" — *The Three Refuges* — including talks by  
Subhuti, Kamalsila and Suvajra.

June  
10 - 12  
19 - 26  
26

Weekend Break — *Gestures of Tranquillity*  
Working Retreat (the cheapest event at Padmaloka)  
Open Day — a chance for *anyone* (men and women) to come and look  
round Padmaloka without going on retreat.

July  
8 - 10  
15 - 5 Aug

East Anglian Men's weekend — for our more 'local' Buddhists  
Padmaloka Summer Retreat — The Major retreat for men this summer,  
led by Subhuti on the theme of *Great Buddhist Heros*

You will be able to find out more details of these events by contacting us at  
Padmaloka.

During the second half of the year the programme of events at Padmaloka will  
be more dedicated to men who have asked for Ordination.

If you would like your name to be on our mailing list send us your name and  
address and we'll send you our programme as soon as it is printed.

**Padmaloka**  
Lesingham House, Surlingham, Norfolk NR14 7AL  
TEL: 050 88 8112

Retreats For Men...



# SETTING ART IN A SPIRITUAL CONTEXT

## The Religion of Art

by Sangharakshita  
Published by Windhorse  
pp. 130. Paperback  
price £5.50

In an increasingly materialistic and utilitarian society of the sort that we have to suffer in the West, art (which includes literature, drama, and music, as much as the purely visual arts) is increasingly required to serve a social and even sometimes political function. This function, circumscribed by governments and public alike, has largely become that of both academic study and entertainment. Literature and painting, for example, are either something we study at school or college to get another paper qualification, or else, later on perhaps, a leisure activity we indulge in on Sundays as a relief from the serious business of making money. In either case, art need not directly upset our normal routines or values too much.

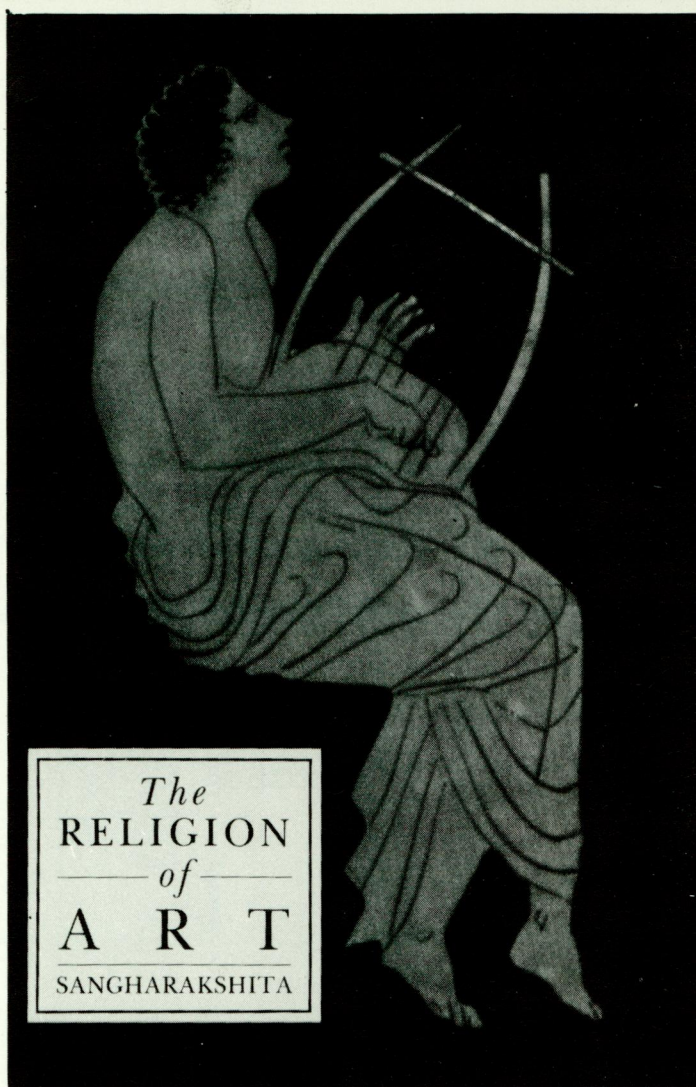
Given this context, it is particularly pleasing to see the timely publication of Sangharakshita's thinking on the subject of art in a new volume from Windhorse entitled *The Religion of Art*. This collection of essays consists of a long essay of the same name, as well as three shorter ones on the same subject: 'The Meaning of Buddhism and the Value of Art', 'Advice to a Young Poet', and 'Paradox and Poetry in *The Voice of the Silence*'. All four were written in the 1950's in Kalimpong, but this is the first time they have appeared together in the same volume. They make up a pattern of coherent thinking on the subject of art and the spiritual life and how these two activities relate one to another.

The most comprehensive of the four is 'The Religion of Art' itself, which opens by exploring what is actually meant by the term 'religion', in the light of Buddhist teaching.

In fact, Sangharakshita's concise and vigorous scrutiny (sweeping aside several inadequate definitions on the way) provides an excellent summary of the spiritual life from a Buddhist point of view. We are then hurried along to the subject of art. Here again the notions of art as mere amusement or else as aesthetic self-indulgence are given short shrift. As well as rejecting as unsatisfactory several current definitions of art from modern writers and critics, Sangharakshita arrives at a definition of his own, a definition of what he calls 'true art':

*Art is the organization of sensuous impressions into pleasurable formal relations that express the artist's sensibility and communicate to his audience a sense of values that can transform their lives.*

It is this radical definition of art that is the primary contribution of the essay, if not of the whole book, placing as it does the entire field of artistic and creative endeavour in a new and primarily spiritual context. For anyone even mildly interested in the spiritual life and at the same time attracted and nourished by the fine arts, it clarifies and illuminates the whole rather confused issue at a stroke. Questions such as 'Can I be a Buddhist and still paint pictures/write novels/play music?' find themselves answered almost as if by magic. It is the 'sense of values'—and by this he means specifically spiritually positive values, to which Sangharakshita refers—that becomes our yardstick. We can learn to distinguish between true art and the plethora of books, films, plays, and music, that bombards us and panders to our negative emotions, usually in an attempt to prevent us thinking for ourselves. In short, we are encouraged by this essay to discriminate, to judge in the light of our spiritual experience.



*The*  
RELIGION  
— of —  
ART  
SANGHARAKSHITA

Nor is the book short on practical advice on how to put this discrimination into practice, either as originator or audience; how, in fact, to practise the religion of art:

*What practical difference does this prohibition make in the aesthetic life of the art lover? . . . It will compel him to protect himself from bad art as carefully as he would take precautions against being infected by a particularly dangerous and virulent disease . . . The devotee of the Religion of Art should be as much ashamed of being found with a sensational tabloid newspaper in his hand, a pair of unsightly factory-produced vases upon his mantelshelf, or with two or three volumes of cheap fiction in his bookcase, as he would be if he was caught picking someone's pocket.*

Far from being divorced from 'real life' (whatever that might be), or, more importantly, from the spiritual life, 'true art' is inextricably involved in it and should obey the same ethical criteria.

Elsewhere, in 'Advice to a Young Poet', we find more practical advice on how to follow the life of a true artist, in this case a poet. While

admitting the necessity of earning one's living, Sangharakshita warns us against prostituting our creative impulse:

*If a young poet desires an avocation which, while not unconnected with his literary interests, will nevertheless involve no degradation of his art, he can perhaps do no better than adopt an academic career, and teach languages and literature, history, or some other humane subject. Otherwise, farming or bricklaying is preferable to journalism.*

The pursuit of true art, far from being a Sunday activity, is a life's work. This reference to the dangers of 'hack' writing (or hack painting or hack film-making for that matter) is reminiscent of Cocteau's Orpheus who, when asked what he meant by giving his occupation as 'Poet', replied, 'I write, without being a writer'. It seems particularly appropriate that this new volume of essays should have for its front cover an ancient Greek vase painting of the poet Orpheus himself. Long may his and Sangharakshita's song continue.

Khemaloka



# A CONTINUING DIALOGUE

## Beyond Therapy

by Guy Claxton  
Published by Wisdom  
pp. 352 Paperback  
price £9.95

**G**uy Claxton has put together here an interesting collection of essays which explore 'the impact that the spiritual traditions are having on the work of psychologists and psychotherapists' (p. 7). All the contributors are professional psychologists and most of them have some personal experience of Buddhism. This, then, is the frame of reference for many of the essays though the work of Rudolf Steiner is also explored, as are the 'new religions', as they are termed.

The book is divided into two main sections. The first eight chapters are largely concerned with the ideas of the spiritual traditions, and attempt to convey these in psychological terms. Parallels are drawn between them and the thoughts of some Western psychologists, notably Carl Jung, George Kelly, and G. H. Mead. Colette Ray and David Fontana both point out that the starting point in the Buddha's teaching is *dukkha* ('suffering' or 'unsatisfactoriness') and that a path is then prescribed by the Buddha which leads to the elimination of suffering through the maximum development of consciousness. For David Fontana 'the most obvious reason for psychologists to interest themselves in Buddhism, therefore, is the issue of psychological health (their own as well as that of their clients!)' (p. 35).

The second section is more concerned with the application of these ideas, both in relation to working with unhappy or disturbed people, and as a means of growth and development for the so-called normal person. Ian Wray (Advayachitta) highlights the different aims of

psychotherapy and Buddhism. The aim of psychotherapy, he says, is to establish emotional health, whereas in Buddhism the attainment of emotional health is seen only as a first step—albeit an important one—on the path of human development. He also mentions the 'relative limitations of doing spiritual practices outside of a spiritual community' (p. 169), without denying the fact that meditation and other practices can be beneficial in overcoming neurosis, an area which is explored by other authors in this section. Malcolm Walley stresses the importance of kindness

towards oneself and others, and describes what we in the FWBO know as the *metta bhavana* practice. Padmal de Silva talks of meditation techniques that are used for curing headaches, insomnia, general tension, and many other things besides, and Michael West in 'Meditation: Psychology and Human Experience' details some results of research on meditators, at the same time pointing out the shortcomings of such research. Stephen Parry and Richard Jones talk about the need to redefine the role of the therapist, whilst Malcolm Walley describes the work of the Maitri Project in

Colorado set up by Chogyam Trungpa, which is applying the principles of Tibetan Buddhism to the problems of mental disorder.

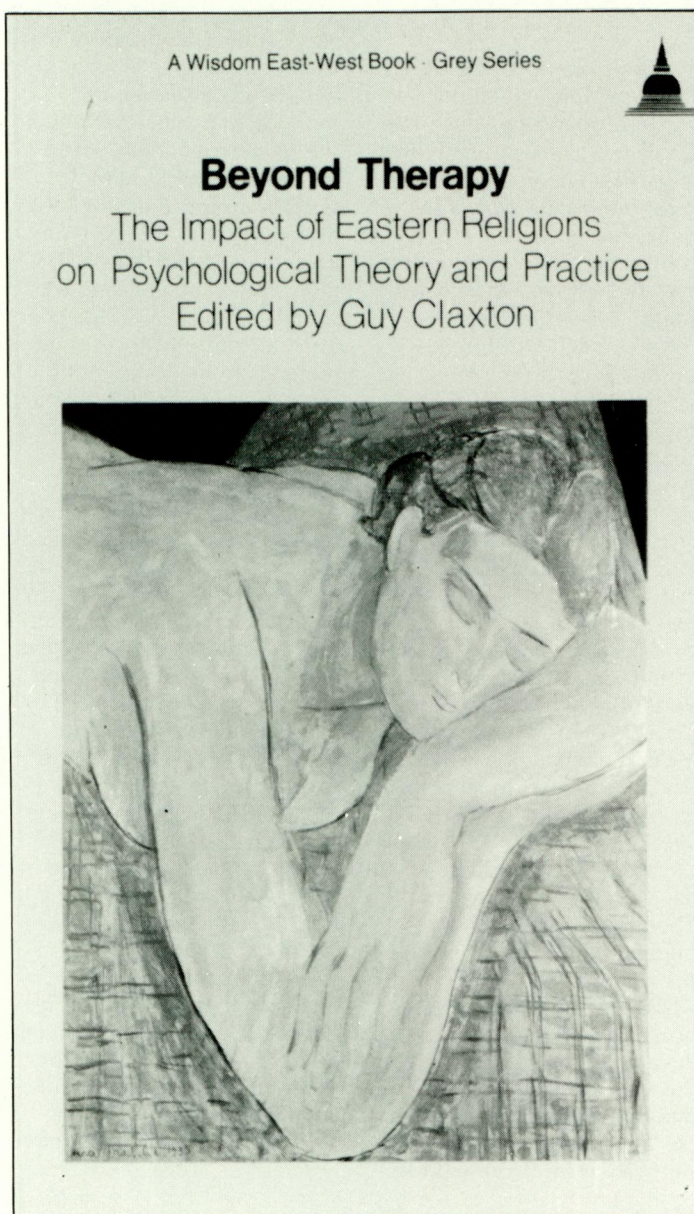
This is a book that must be read discriminatively, particularly in the case of the two chapters dealing with the new religions in which Rajneesh and Werner Erhard ('EST'), among others, are discussed, not least because such key terms as 'religion', 'spiritual', and 'enlightenment' are used rather vaguely.

Most of the essays have been written in straightforward, non-clichéd language, making them easily accessible to anyone with little knowledge of either Buddhism or psychology, as well as to those with an interest in, and knowledge of, both. In line with Wisdom's usual high standards, this book is attractively and clearly laid out and contains comprehensive notes including many suggestions for further reading.

This is a book with a wide range of appeal but one which needs to be read with a certain amount of critical caution. Yes, opening up a dialogue between such practices as psychotherapy and the spiritual traditions can be fruitful but, as Guy Claxton and Advayachitta are both at pains to point out, although they may share certain features, the one cannot be equated with the other. For example, we need to realize that certain spiritual teachers were not simply using a 'family therapy technique', as David Brandon, writing about the seventeenth century Zen master, Bankei, might lead us to think.

However, if we bear all this in mind we may find the book stimulating and challenging: challenging in terms of the way we think about and conduct our lives, as well as in our work with others, regardless of whether we are therapists, clients, meditators, or a combination of all three!

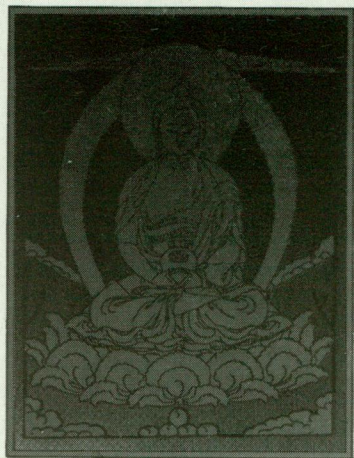
Sobhana





# The Buddhist Handbook

A Complete Guide to  
Buddhist Teaching and Practice



## A HYBRID HANDBOOK

**The Buddhist Handbook: A Complete Guide To Buddhist Teaching And Practice**

by John Snelling,  
Published by Century, London,  
pp. 373. Paperback  
price £6.95

Modern Buddhists are faced, as never before, with Buddhism in its totality. Information is available to us on most of the schools and traditions of Buddhism's 2,500-year history, and modern Buddhists of whatever practice increasingly occupy a Buddhist global village. There is thus a great need to come to terms with Buddhism *as a whole*. John Snelling's book is an admirable attempt to do just that.

This substantial volume is written in a very clear and approachable style, well suited to the newcomer. The material presented is well organized and provides a useful, if somewhat superficial, overview of the whole history and development of Buddhism.

The first chapters give an account of the Buddha's life, carefully set against the background of his times. There follows a very brief and somewhat lifeless account of the basic teachings and practices of Buddhism. We are then taken on a rapid survey

of Buddhism down the ages, following through all the different routes by which the Dharma was transmitted. This is perhaps the strongest and most interesting part of the book, since it is so comprehensive, not excluding a section on the little known Buddhism of Central Asia.

The section which follows, on Buddhism in the West, is far too brief, even for a book for beginners. Indeed, the chapter on Buddhism in America is so sketchy it could well have been left out. The chapter on Buddhism and Psychotherapy is, however, refreshing, soundly setting the two in their respective contexts. Finally, the Who's Who in modern Western Buddhism is very useful, if perhaps inevitably selective.

On the whole, Mr Snelling has tried to give equal respect to each tradition or group he speaks of, offering a relatively impartial account. He does have a tendency to accept the Theravada view of itself as the original Buddhism, preserving the Dhamma in its purity—which it very obviously does not in the literal sense, having developed and changed down the ages as much as any other tradition. Regrettably Mr Snelling's impartiality also slips rather in discussing the

FWBO. After giving a somewhat glib account of the FWBO, he suggests that the Order is trying to force the pace of developing a Western Buddhism and that we are trying to change Buddhism to suit ourselves before we know what Buddhism really is. These comments are rather sneakily thrown in, without any real substantiation and on the basis of an evidently shallow understanding which has led him to juxtapose the FWBO with the *ci-devant* Scientific Buddhist Association. No doubt, in giving such a rapid and sketchy account of the whole of Buddhism, it is almost inevitable that the author's own views should obtrude to a certain extent, but it is doubly unfortunate since the book is aimed at newcomers and does an injustice to a major section of the modern Buddhist scene.

Carefully written and skilfully arranged as the book undoubtedly is, it is very much a hybrid, a sketch for two or three books rather than the complete guide to Buddhist teaching and practice it pretends to be. It cannot be recommended first reading for newcomers to Buddhism since its account of Buddhist teaching and practice is so brief and bald as to be virtually useless. As a handbook hailed as 'an essential addition to the library of every practising Buddhist' it is too superficial and general. It might be useful as a first, orienting reference work in which one could pinpoint some particular topic before looking it up in more detailed and precise works. I suggest that really there are two works here: one for newcomers and one for the British Buddhist world. I would recommend that Mr Snelling employs his considerable talent for organizing and presenting his material to give us one or both of these books. Certainly they are needed, and this present book will not do.

Subhuti

### ALSO RECEIVED

**One Arrow, One Life**  
by Kenneth Kushner  
Arkana

**The Gem Ornament**  
by Kalu Rinpoche  
Snow Lion

**Bardo Teachings**  
by Lama Lodö  
Snow Lion

**An Idealist View of Life**  
by Radhakrishnan  
Unwin

**The Hindu View of Life**  
by Radhakrishnan  
Unwin

**Hara: The Vital Centre of Man**  
by Karlfried Graf Dürckheim  
Unwin

**The Way of Transformation**  
by Karlfried Graf Dürckheim  
Unwin

**C. G. Jung: Lord of the Underworld**  
by Colin Wilson  
Aquarian

**The Soul of Things**  
by William Denton  
Aquarian

**The Buddhist Way of Life**  
by Christmas Humphreys  
Unwin

**The Early Writings of Alan Watts**  
edited by Snelling/Sibley/  
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Century

**The Path of Perfection**  
by Bahram Elahi  
Century



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# A 'BUDDHIST UNION'?

Members of the Western Buddhist Order are always happy to make friendly contact with other Buddhists in Europe and to co-operate with them whenever appropriate. It was for this reason that the WBO joined the European Buddhist Union (EBU) at a very early stage in its history.

This October, at a general meeting in Paris, the Union will adopt a new constitution, and, as a member of a committee delegated to draw up a draft of that constitution, Subhuti found himself in enthusiastic agreement with much that the committee proposed when it met in London this January. However, in one fundamental particular, he was unable to endorse the draft: it does not require that the membership of the European Buddhist Union should consist of Buddhists.

The Union is made up of a number of member-

organizations, each of which has its own members. For the Union to be the European Buddhist Union, he argued, those members of member-organizations should surely all be Buddhists. To avoid lengthy and perhaps divisive discussion as to what is a Buddhist, he suggested that it should be required of member-organizations that their members should be 'professed Buddhists'—in other words, they should at least call themselves Buddhists.

This view was not accepted by the other members of the committee, and there were even some who found the WBO's attitude narrow-minded and intolerant.

But this is an issue of fundamental importance. If the Union is to work for the benefit of Buddhism in Europe, it must surely be controlled by committed Buddhists. For no matter how sympathetic to Buddhism some non-Buddhists may be, they must evidently

have reservations about the Dharma—otherwise they would be happy to call themselves Buddhists! Since it is the members of member-organizations who ultimately appoint the delegates who vote at Union meetings, it is they who control the Union. And if those members are not Buddhists their influence on the running of the Union may reflect their own reservations. There is, quite possibly, a place for 'associate members' of the EBU—people sympathetic to Buddhism while not committed to it. But can it really be intolerant of us to hope and ask that such people will let clearly committed Buddhists have ultimate control over their own Union?

In a letter to all of the Union's member organizations, written after the committee meeting, Subhuti stressed that this is no merely theoretical concern: in recent times, a number of prominent 'Buddhist' organizations world-

wide have been controlled by non-Buddhists, some even hostile to certain aspects of the Buddhist tradition. We must make certain that the EBU does not become diluted or perverted in this way.

There can be little value for the WBO in remaining in the Union if it is not to be a true Union of Buddhists. Should the General Meeting opt for the constitution as drafted, the WBO will withdraw from the Union, and make it clear to those bodies to which the Union presents itself as representing the Buddhists of Europe that it does not truly do so.

Naturally, should the EBU cease to function as an effective union of European Buddhists, the FWBO will develop contacts with communities of committed Buddhists throughout Europe with a view to forming a Union more truly in accordance with the principles and spirit of the Dharma.

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# THE 'RIDDLES' AFFAIR



Dr Ambedkar

Last October, the State Government of Maharashtra published the fourth volume in a series of collected writings and speeches of the late Dr B. R. Ambedkar.

The new volume, entitled *Riddles in Hinduism*, greatly angered the orthodox Hindu community. In examining the religious, political, and social aspects of Hinduism, Ambedkar unearthed twenty-four 'Riddles', such as, 'The Difficulty of Knowing Why

One is a Hindu', 'The Contents of the Vedas: Have They Any Moral or Spiritual Value?', and 'Brahma is not Dharma. What Good is Brahma?'

While these might have been thought provocative enough by any Hindu, it was in an appendix, entitled, 'The Riddle of Rama and Krishna' that Ambedkar was considered to have gone too far, for, drawing on material from the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, Ambedkar highlights the immoral nature of these two highly revered figures.

A Hindu youth organization, outraged by this, publicly burned the book, and threatened the Maharashtra government with dire consequences if the appendix were not withdrawn. Other Hindu organizations soon added their own voices to the uproar. The book was consequently withdrawn, and then reissued without the offending appendix.

Now it was the turn of

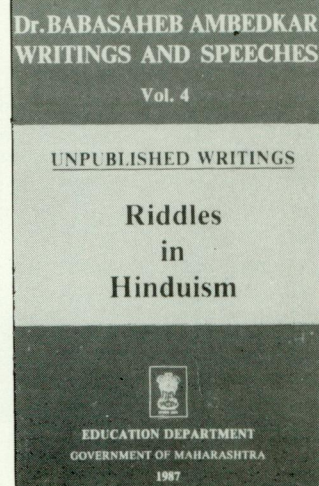
Ambedkar's ever-loyal followers from the Buddhist and ex-Untouchable communities to respond. For here was not only an attack on the freedom of the press, but also something dangerously resembling naked caste prejudice.

Demonstrations and counter-demonstrations continued, in a cycle that seemed to be going from bad to worse. There were fears of violent reprisals in the villages where Ambedakrite Buddhists are strongly outnumbered by Caste Hindus. However, in a single, massive show of solidarity, 400,000 Buddhists gathered in Bombay in February to demonstrate their refusal to back down.

The outcome was a high level meeting, and a compromise essentially favourable to the Ambedkarites' cause. The book would again be reissued, with the appendix reinstated, but with a brief footnote that would make clear the State

government's disagreement with Ambedkar's comments on the Hindu gods.

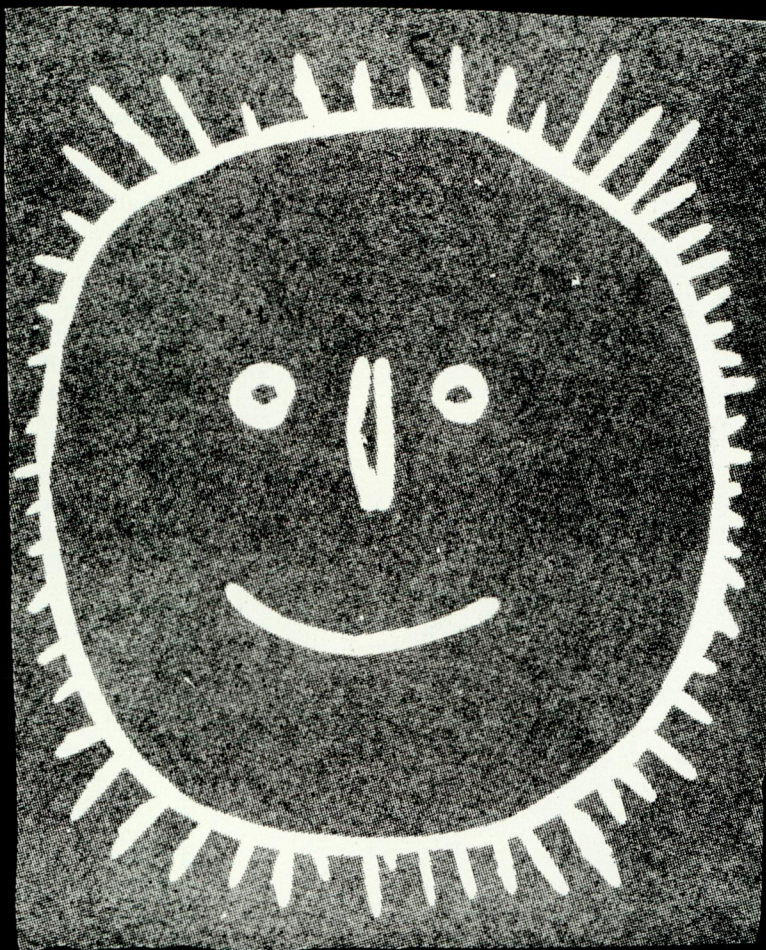
This incident suggests that for Buddhism to survive in India, its adherents must strive to attain and display unity in the face of considerable opposition from the Hindu majority. Otherwise, committed as they are to the ideal of non-violence, they may be dismissed as 'easy prey' by their opponents.





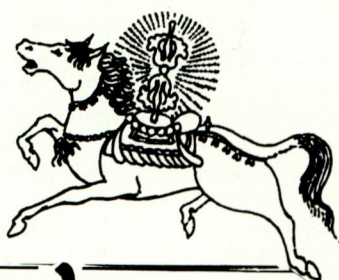
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Subhuti at Padmaloka

## 20 THE NEW PADMALOKA VISION

Big changes are taking place at Padmaloka which will make it the main focus for the men's wing of the FWBO in Britain. The Retreat Centre, already Sangharakshita's residence and the location of the Office of the Western Buddhist Order, will now serve as the base in Britain for the preparation of men for ordination.

The principle reason behind this development is the need to strengthen the unifying factors in the FWBO. Padmaloka will be a meeting point for men from all the different centres in Britain, and perhaps from Europe too. Friendships developed on its events by men from centres all over the world will help to link the Movement in the future.

To make Padmaloka more effective as a unifying force, its basic conception is changing. Until now, it has been a retreat centre run by a community which leads a life separate from the retreats it services. There will be a very different Padmaloka in future, however, to which the English words 'retreat centre' and 'community' will not really do justice. The traditional

Buddhist term, *Sangharama*, 'Abode of the Sangha', captures more exactly what Padmaloka is to be. There will be no hard separation between the retreats and the community: Padmaloka will simply be a place where people come to experience themselves as part of the Sangha. There will still be an organized programme for guests—of seminars, meditation retreats, etc. which will be published every few months. However, guests and community members will join together in the basic daily programme of meditation, meals, and puja. Permanent community members will look after the running of the place, although everyone will help out to some extent with the daily work. In such ways the Padmaloka team hope to develop much more of a sense of a living spiritual community in which friendships may flourish.

Subhuti and Chittapala have already moved into the Retreat Centre community, relinquishing their responsibilities in the Order Office. They will form the nucleus of a team of senior

Order members which will be completed by the end of the year when Suvajra, Sona, and Surata move in. This team will run the Ordination Training Course for men and lead events in a full and interesting new programme.

Subhuti, author of *Buddhism for Today* and *The Buddhist Vision*, and founder of the London Buddhist Centre and Guhyaloka Retreat Centre, is an experienced study group leader and speaker, and is the Chairman of Padmaloka. Suvajra will be handing on his post as chairman of the Manchester Buddhist Centre, where he has been for the last seven years. He has, with Subhuti and Kamalashila, conducted ordinations in India on Sangharakshita's behalf. Sona, a former Padmaloka chairman, has spent seven years in Sweden, developing Buddhist activities there, and will be returning to that country for some months each year for retreats and courses. Surata is a well-known and much-appreciated retreat leader, noted for the lively and friendly style of his retreats.

Besides the regular features of the Padmaloka programme like the Summer and Winter Open Retreats, there will be a number of seminars on selected Buddhist texts, as well as retreats aimed at specific groups, such as mitras, study group leaders, and of course men who have asked for ordination. The popular Men's Events will also continue to offer an important opportunity for the men in the Movement in Britain to come together from their different centres.

As soon as finances permit, work will commence to upgrade the facilities at Padmaloka. Sona, who has long experience in the building trade, will be preparing a new overall plan for the retreat centre which will make it a much more comfortable and attractive place. He is determined that all the work should be done to a high standard.

Subhuti hopes that many men will use the 'new' Padmaloka. By doing so, they will not only be able to benefit from the retreats and courses but will help develop Padmaloka as a true and fitting abode of the Sangha.

## LBC THRIVING

To start the new session's activities, the London Buddhist Centre held an 'open week' this January. The events arranged introduced people to the whole spectrum of the Centre's activities. 167 people came to these events, with the result that all the introductory courses in meditation and Buddhism were fully booked before the end of the week! Generally speaking, classes at the Centre have been well-attended this session, and there is virtually no weekday night when all the space at the Centre is not being fully used: if the LBC increases its activities at the Centre only slightly, more space will need to be found.

In a previous issue of *Golden Drum* it was reported that the LBC was on the point of buying a property in Suffolk. The purchase went ahead without any difficulties, and since the end of January there have been retreats there virtually every weekend. Very many people in the years ahead will benefit from being able to go on retreat at 'Water Hall'. The buying and setting up of Water Hall has been made possible by a large number of people's very considerable generosity: a lot of people have given money both to purchase the property and to equip it; others have given time and energy to decorate it and make it pleasing for those going there on retreat.

The Centre itself is to have a facelift. Tejamati has secured a grant for £85,000 from 'English Heritage' and Tower Hamlets Council to refurbish the outside of the old fire-station.

The final news item of note from the LBC concerns the media attention which the centre has received over the last few months. Dhammarati was featured on the front cover of the magazine *New Society*, which contained an article about the Centre and meditation. Parami has been interviewed twice: for a programme on TV's Channel Four, in which she spoke about Buddhism and vegetarianism, and for Woman's Hour, which had a feature on women and Buddhism. Journalists from the 'London Evening Standard' and TV South have also visited the Centre.



# THERAPISTS MEET

For five days in March, twelve Order members with experience of, or special interest in, the techniques of psychotherapy, met at Brancaster Staithe in Norfolk for a 'Skilful Communication Retreat'.

The event, led by Advayachitta—who works as a behavioural psychologist in a

community psychiatric unit, was a preliminary meeting, allowing the participants to discover and discuss areas of common concern.

Chittapala reports, 'One purpose of the retreat was to open up discussion on what a Buddhist perspective has to offer psychotherapeutic aims and methodology, and to

examine the extent to which psychotherapeutic methods can help Buddhists.

'There were a number of practical sessions involving the use of Rogerian counselling skills. We also aired a number of central issues: the realms of the psychological and the spiritual from the Buddhist perspective, counselling and kalyana mitrata, and the potential uses and abuses of psychotherapy in the

Movement.'

Combining between them such skills as psychosynthesis, stress management, occupational therapy, counselling, massage, acupuncture, and psychiatry, the retreatants also shared their overviews and evaluations of different psychotherapeutic disciplines.

Another retreat is planned for the autumn.

## MEDITATION AND HEART DISEASE

The experience of having a heart attack and the hospitalization it usually entails is traumatic. It is a time of great change in a person's life: one is forced to review and re-order one's entire lifestyle, diet, type of work, relationships, social habits, and self-view. It is thus a time when life can take on a different and more significant meaning. But often this opportunity is lost in chaos, anxiety, and a feeling of helplessness in the face of fate.

The Royal Preston Hospital, in the North of England, has recently initiated a self-help group for the victims of such attacks, an important element of which is the meditation instruction offered by Anthony Sharkey—a doctor at the hospital and a mitra associated with our Manchester Centre.

Anthony writes: 'The group has been going for ten months now and is very successful—about fifty people come every month. We all meditate, then have a lecture, and then discuss what has happened to us during the past month.

'Feedback from the patients is very encouraging, particularly with regard to their meditation. Many report remembering, in moments of high anxiety, to concentrate on the breath. I am sure that the *metta bhavana* (the "development of universal loving kindness" meditation) has increased the feelings of warmth and support that pervade our meetings.

'The group is unique in England. Although there are several coronary self-help groups, none feature meditation. This is surprising now that meditation is recognized as beneficial in counteracting stress—a major factor in coronary artery disease.'

## NEW U.S. CENTRE

Last November, a group of Friends, mitras, and members of Aryaloka community established a centre in Portsmouth, New Hampshire—the nearest small city to Aryaloka, from which much of the interest in FWBO activities conducted at Aryaloka has come.

The idea of the new centre was to help those already involved at Aryaloka to deepen their involvement, and

of course to attract new people along to a more 'visible and independent' public centre.

Twenty people attended the opening of the two-room Portsmouth Buddhist Centre, which is housed in an office and apartment building off one of the town's main streets.

Phil Travis reports that three classes are being held there each week, plus 'movie nights', and day events such as Communication Workshops.

As a result of these activities, he says, larger numbers are now attending retreats at Aryaloka.

In May, however, the Centre will shift location to a less expensive set of rooms. 'We hope to put the energy retrieved from efforts to pay for the current spot into making our practice, activities, and friendships more rich and inspired', says Phil.

## A CENTRE FOR STUDY

Ten minutes walk from the Vajraloka Meditation Centre stands Vajrakuta, a large, attractive (and now centrally heated) old farmhouse. As well as housing a growing men's community and an administrative office for Vajraloka, Vajrakuta has recently been launched as a major centre for Dharma study in the FWBO.

This year the new centre will be offering tape study courses, where mitras will be able to concentrate on Sangharakshita's lectures as part of their three-year mitra course. There will also be a series of seminars, led by Prakasha, on the *Satipatthana Sutta*, the 'Great Chapter' of the *Sutta Nipata*, and Geshe Wangyal's *The Door of*

*Liberation*.

At the end of March, Ruchiraketu led a short course entitled, 'The Basics of Study'. This short course was designed to examine the way people approach study. Looking at a number of study methods, its purpose was to help people clarify their thinking and understanding.

## INTO NOTTINGHAM

FWBO activities in the English Midlands region continue to expand. The beginning of February saw the first course held in the city of Nottingham. This means that regular activities are now being held in three Midland cities: Birmingham, Leicester, and Nottingham. The Nottingham course, led by Vimalavajra, attracted thirty people to learn meditation and listen to a series of talks on basic Buddhism.

According to Satyapala, the Midlands team—based in Birmingham—have no firm plans at the moment to start a permanent FWBO centre in Nottingham, though it is clear from the response that when they do it will be very popular. For the present they will organize a course there every few months.



Vimalavajra



# SANGHARAKSHITA DIARY



Sangharakshita with Kulaprabha (l.) and Kulashri (r.)

Since his return from Spain in mid-October, Sangharakshita has been primarily occupied with writing. First came a long paper to be read at the twentieth anniversary of the Western Buddhist Order, on 10 April. This task occupied him for three months or so, during which time he remained at Padmaloka, his base in Norfolk, immersed in the intellectual and creative effort involved. The paper has now been published by Windhorse, as *The History of My Going for Refuge—Reflections on the Occasion of the Twentieth Anniversary of The Western Buddhist Order*.

The day after completing this work, he left Padmaloka to attend a five day women's retreat on the Norfolk coast. On this retreat two women from Glasgow were ordained: Kulaprabha and Kulashri. This was a significant step, for it means that there are now two women Order members based in Scotland, whereas for many years there have been none.

After this short interlude, Sangharakshita was again back at his desk writing another paper. This shorter one was to occupy his mornings and some of his afternoons for the next five weeks. It will be delivered in Manchester soon after the

FWBO/WBO celebrations in April. The occasion is a weekend 'school' on Criticism in Crisis, held by Manchester University's Extra-mural Department. Keith Sagar, the D. H. Lawrence scholar, is organizing the weekend and will be giving a paper, as will Peter Redgrove, the poet and co-author of 'The Wise Wound'. For his talk, Sangharakshita has chosen the topic, 'Literary Criticism, East and West'.

In addition to his writing, Sangharakshita has also made time to receive visitors at Padmaloka—over a hundred of them during the last three months!

In early March came the annual dinner for the dozen Norwich women who now compile *Mitrata* magazine. *Mitrata* and *Golden Drum* are the two principal magazines produced by the FWBO. *Golden Drum* contains general news, views, and articles, while *Mitrata* contains selections from Sangharakshita's teachings, compiled by the Norwich team. Over dinner, Sangharakshita spoke naturally enough about literature and the part it can play in the spiritual life, emphasizing that good literature can convey spiritual values.

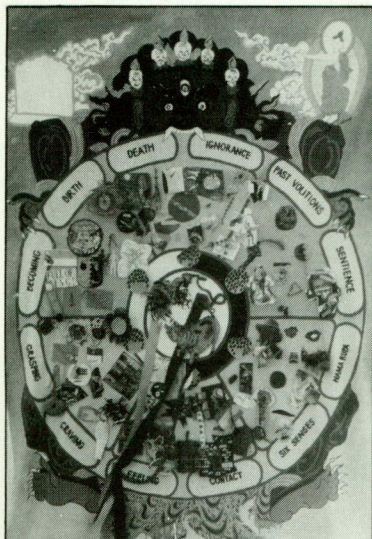
Sangharakshita also chaired

the talks at a Padmaloka men's event and read a chapter, 'Discovering Dhammapala', from his coming volume of memoirs. Soon he has a TV interview for a series on 'Why We Are Here', and then a public interview-cum-conversation with the scholar and poet Kathleen Raine at 'Independent Arts' in Croydon.

These days, Sangharakshita's writings are appearing rapidly in print. *The Religion of Art* and *The History of My Going for Refuge* were launched recently, and his first volume of memoirs, *The Thousand-Petalled Lotus* is to be republished on Buddha Day.

A week after the conference in Manchester, Sangharakshita will travel to Spain to spend four-and-a-half months at the Guhyaloka Retreat Centre. This will be his second summer there, but will represent his longest period away from the UK since 1979. In that year he spent five months travelling in Asia and Australasia (see his book *Travel Letters* for a full account). This long sojourn in Spain, however, will involve very little travel. Instead there will be plenty of opportunity for reading and reflection, and—above all—for the activity Sangharakshita favours so much: writing!

## WOMEN AND THE WHEEL



Co-led by Jayashri and Dharmanandi, a women's summer retreat took place near Auckland this January. Nineteen women attended.

The theme of the retreat, the Wheel of Life, was approached by way of talks, study groups, readings from Subhuti's 'Endless Round' series of

*Mitratas*, and some very special pujas.

Jayashri writes, 'In the pujas we gradually built up a huge Wheel of Life on the back wall of the shrine room, night by night. We had been studying the different realms in the morning groups, looking imaginatively at our personal contacts and connections with each realm, and devising resolutions for the future. So, as each person came forward to make their offering in the puja, they would first place a symbol of their experience of the day's realm onto the wheel. Then, as they made their offerings to the shrine, they would place a resolution—written on a leaf—into a bowl. On the final night, these were taken down and cast into the river.'

On the final day of the retreat a mandala of the five Jinas was created on the shrine, at the end of a spiral path which led from the Wheel.

## FIRST SESSION IN ESSEN

The first permanent FWBO centre in Germany, in Essen, is still very new, but Friends there are already realizing what a boon it is to have a centre of their own.

The first session has been an extremely busy one with seven regular events taking place over four evenings each week. Two 'firsts', an Open Day and a Study Day, were both well attended. While these activities continued, the Centre was still taking shape: cushions, curtains, and shelves appeared, as if by magic, between classes and events.

The highlight of the session was the celebration of Parinirvana Day—the anniversary of the historical Buddha's death. Friends came not only from Essen but from the south-west and north-east of Germany for the Centre's first festival celebration.

## ACTION IN AURANGABAD

TBMSG (FWBO) activities have been steadily on the increase in the Marathwada region of Maharashtra. Four Order members: Nagasena, Jnanashuri, Sanghapriya, and Sammachitta, are now regularly leading classes in Jalna and Nanded, as well as in Aurangabad where TBMSG has a centre and runs a hostel for school children.

As well as running retreats every month, the team conduct eight classes and study groups a week, catering for all levels of involvement, from beginners to mitras. Among these are four for women, led by Jnanashuri.



Jnanashuri at home in Aurangabad



## ACTIVITIES INCREASE IN VIDHARBHA

TBMSG Poona has just opened its fourth students' hostel, in rented premises in Wardha.

Twenty-five boys are currently living in the hostel, but in time the hostel, in its own Aid For India-funded building, will house sixty to seventy children from poor Buddhist families, as well as from scheduled castes and tribes.

Bodhidhamma reports that a plot of land has been bought in a Buddhist locality, where people are expected to be highly supportive of the venture and of the children who benefit from it. Building work began on 1 February, and is progressing well.

As well as providing the children with accommodation, the hostel will contain a library, a cultural centre, and exercise facilities.

The Wardha branch of TBMSG, which organizes activities in the Naga-Vidharbha region of Maharashtra, is becoming livelier every month. The Centre's chairman, Vimalakirti, writes that general classes in Wardha and neighbouring towns are now attracting more than a hundred people each week. So great has been the

demand that, even though a number of mitras—as well as Order members—are going out to give talks, there are still many localities wanting more contact.

In the context of such enthusiasm, retreats are predictably popular and heavily booked. No less than ninety-seven women attended one retreat led by Padmashuri and Jnanashuri in February. Vimalakirti reports that some retreats are being held in open fields, since it is proving very difficult to rent appropriate facilities in the region. No doubt plans will soon emerge for a Vidharban retreat centre to match the one at Bhaja.

On 20 February, Vimalakirti conducted a conversion ceremony for 120 ex-Untouchables. On the day of the conversion ceremony, Vimalakirti gave two talks, one on the twenty-two Vows devised by Dr Ambedkar, and another on 'Dr Ambedkar's Dharma Revolution'. The new converts were received 'with great attention and admiration.' Vimalakirti writes: 'Many more people are willing to become Buddhists, especially from amongst tribals and Harijans.'

## A GENEROUS GRANT

In November last year, Padmashuri presented her slide show on the work of TBMSG in India at the Institute of Buddhist Studies in Berkeley, California. The Institute forms part of the Berkeley Theological Union, and receives much of its support from the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA), the largest and oldest American Buddhist organization.

With the encouragement of some officials from the BCA, Padmashuri and Manjuvaja applied for a grant to help with the development of the Bhaja Retreat Centre in Maharashtra. Early this year the project received a generous donation of \$4,000 from the Social Welfare Committee of the BCA.

This donation represents a truly international effort, writes Manjuvaja. 'Through the fund-raising efforts of English Buddhists, Japanese Buddhists in America are supporting the new Buddhist movement in India. This speaks well of the potential for mutual help, support, and friendliness among modern Buddhists worldwide.'

## A TANTRIC FUTURE

For over two years our regular magazine *Mitrata* has been devoted to the theme of 'The Bodhisattva Ideal'. During this time an extremely dedicated team, centred on a nucleus of women based in Norwich, has been editing Sangharakshita's lectures and searching through literally thousands of pages of seminar material to produce a body of teachings that do excellent justice to the subject.

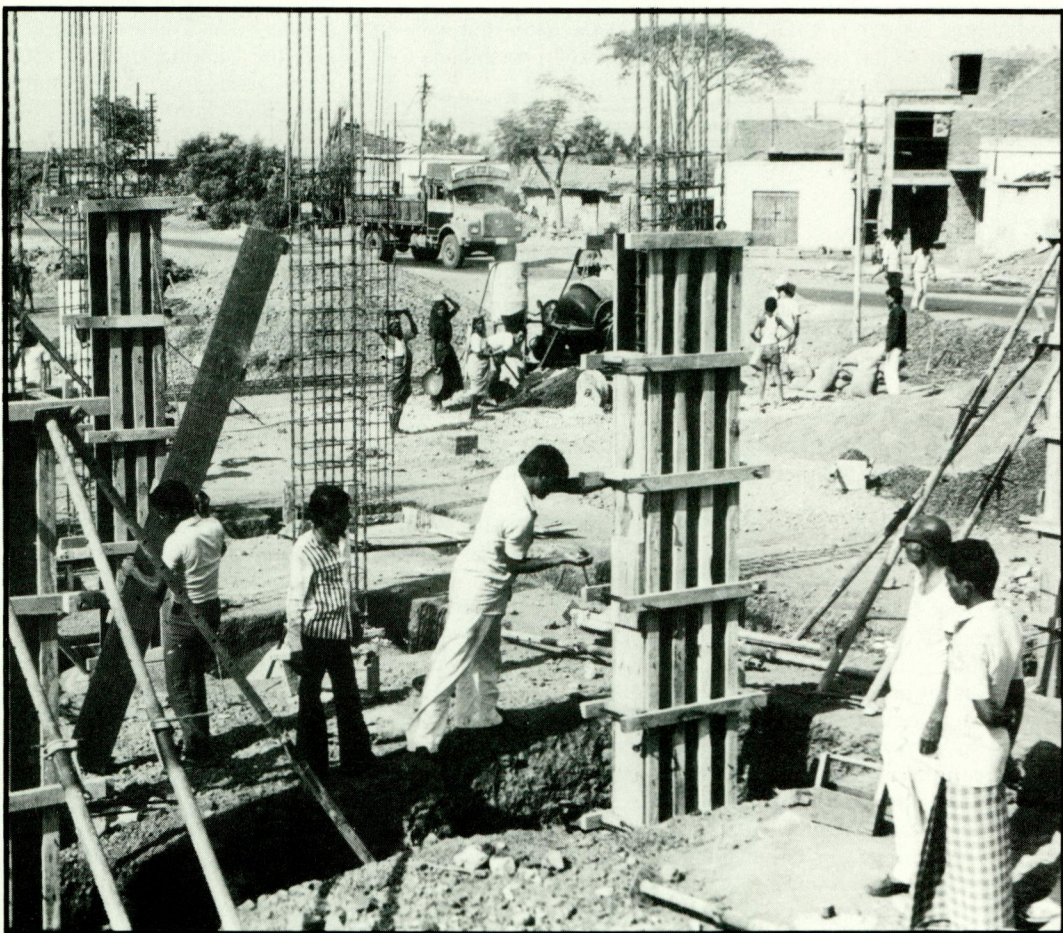
Back issues of the sixteen booklets that comprise the series are still available from Windhorse Publications at £1.75 per copy. Some back issues of the previous series devoted to 'The Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path' are also available, but don't delay—stocks are now running out.

In October a new series of *Mitrata* will start, devoted to 'Creative Symbols of the Tantric Path to Enlightenment'. There will be four issues a year, each one a small book with 70—80 pages. A year's subscription will cost £16.00. More about this in our next issue.

For Windhorse Publications generally, 1988 promises to be the busiest year ever. *The Religion of Art* and *The History of My Going for Refuge* are already out. The coming months will see a booklet on meditation posture by Kamalashila, an Introduction to the FWBO by Vessantara, a new, updated Windhorse edition of Subhuti's *Buddhism for Today*, a new edition of *The Three Jewels*, and Nagabodhi's long-awaited book on the Buddhist movement in India: *Jai Bhim! Dispatches from a Peaceful Revolution*, which is to be a co-production with 'The Parallax Press' in Berkeley, California.

## DHARMACHARINI TARASHRI

Just as this edition of *Golden Drum* was going to press, we heard the sad news of the death of Dharmacharini Tarashri. We will include a full tribute to her in our next issue.



The building site—Wardha





## ORDINATIONS IN INDIA

On 25 December, several hundred people from Sri Lanka, England, Germany, and America as well as from India gathered at the Bhaja Retreat Centre to celebrate the public ordination of eighteen Indian men.

According to Padmavajra, the occasion had a fair-like atmosphere, and some enterprising Order members had established stalls selling tea, incense, candles, and books. The crowds gathered around a green and red awning beneath which stood a large shrine bedecked with orange marigolds and red

roses.

Whilst final touches were made to that shrine, the Dharmacharis-to-be sat in meditation in the shrine room 200 yards away before walking silently and slowly in single file to the place of the public ordination ceremony. All wore the now familiar dress of the Indian Dharmachari, the sky blue shirt (known there as a *kirta*). Years of preparation at their local centres and on a number of retreats had led up to these last steps towards ordination, but the last ten days had provided the final touches in the form of a

meditation retreat. During those ten days the private ordinations were conducted by Kamalahila and Suvajra who had flown out from Britain to attend the event.

Immediately after the ordinations came a two day all-India Order gathering—highlighted by a musical event—and, some weeks later, an Indian Order Convention. This latter was a decidedly business-like occasion with discussions on all aspects of TBMSG's work, and a series of evening talks. On the final evening, Lokamitra reviewed the Order's achievements throughout the year, and inspired the gathering with an outline of the possibilities for 1988.

## EXPLORING JAPAN'S NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

Last year, Dharmachari Jnanavira, who is studying theology at Cambridge University, received a grant to visit Japan and research a dissertation on 'Buddhism in Modern Japan'.

Since the war, a host of *shinko shukyo*, or 'new religious movements', have arisen there in response to rapid social changes. Many of these movements look back to traditional forms of Japanese Buddhism for inspiration. Among these is the Soka Gakkai (Value Creation Society), a lay division of Nichiren Shoshu, one of several sects which regard the Buddhist priest Nichiren (1222—1282) as its founder.

Jnanavira was escorted round Taiseki-ji, the group's head temple, set in beautiful

parkland at the foot of Mount Fuji. As many as six thousand worshippers visit this temple every day, as a yearly pilgrimage is considered important for all of the Soka Gakkai's ten million Japanese followers. The temple precinct also houses the Fuji Art Museum where both Japanese and Western art is displayed. Back in Tokyo, Jnanavira was taken to see a dramatic performance by members of the Gakkai youth division. The Soka Gakkai prides itself in presenting Buddhism not simply as a religion, but as a broad cultural medium.

Jnanavira also met priests and monks of many other Japanese Buddhist movements, visiting their temples and sometimes participating in their ceremonies. Popular

Japanese Buddhism is primarily concerned with funeral rites and practices directed towards the popular reverence of ancestors; some of Jnanavira's contacts seemed quite bemused to hear that the FWBO does not concern itself with these things!

Although many of the rural Buddhist centres still maintain practising monastic communities, where archery and gardening feature on the programme alongside meditation, Jnanavira was left with the impression that, for better or worse, the greatest vitality is to be found with the new religious movements in the heart of the city, where a curious fusion of Japan past and Japan present is taking place.

Jnanavira hopes to return to Japan after the completion of his Cambridge course in order to look more closely at these new developments.

## FUND-RAISING DRIVE IN W. LONDON

The first FWBO centre in West London was established over ten years ago. Known as 'Mandala', it was to be found in the Fulham area. Since then the Centre has existed in several different places: Swiss Cottage, Baker Street, and the present building in Notting Hill Gate. It has also functioned from time to time in hired rooms in the West End.

During these years a number of Right Livelihood projects have been associated with the Centre: bicycle renovation, house removals, and the present health-food and gardening enterprises.

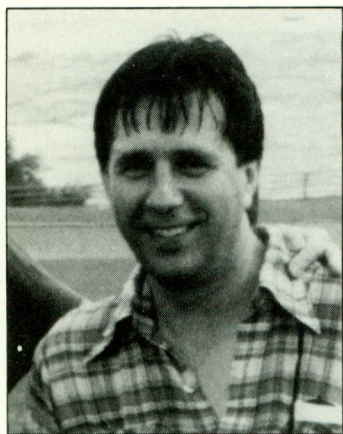
The continuous development of the West London Centre was the theme of a month of fund-raising this March. To launch the month's activities, Ratnavira—the Centre's chairman—gave an illustrated talk on the changes that have taken place over the years. Pointing out that the Centre had 'gone up in the world' over the years and is virtually unrecognizable from what it had once been, he stressed that, from another point of view, absolutely nothing has changed since the aims and objects of the Centre remain exactly as they have always been. Those aims are to give the Dharma to those who are interested in it and to help those already involved to deepen their practice.

The fund-raising month consisted of a benefit evening of music, drama, and dance, a Sponsored Massage Event—where a number of people paid £5 for a half hour massage—and a sponsored walk from the London Buddhist Centre in the East End, via London's network of canals, to the West London Centre. According to Ratnavira, the month was a success 'both in terms of raising money and bringing people together in a common enterprise.'

During February, the Centre staged a series of talks on the theme of basic Buddhism. The talks, held at Kensington Town Hall, introduced the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. Given by Ratnavira, Sudhana, and Bodhiruchi, the talks were a new venture for the Centre, whose workers intend to take the Dharma out more and more from the confines of the Centre itself.



## ON THE WEST COAST



Manjuvra

In February and March this year there was a flurry of FWBO activity in California, USA. In February, Vajradaka visited Anne Parks, an old friend, who lives in Santa Barbara just north of Los Angeles. She organized a weekend workshop and two talks on meditation which Vajradaka presented to an enthusiastic group. At the end of February he flew to New England and led a weekend workshop at Aryaloka. One day later I flew out to San Francisco to deliver a series of talks at Stanford University.

Dr Alan Sponberg, a professor in the Department of Religious Studies at Stanford, had organized a workshop and a series of talks and discussion groups. Stanford University boasts three excellent Buddhist scholars, Carl Bielefeldt and Anne Klein completing the trio, all of whom have had extensive experience of living Buddhism. Consequently, the department presents a number of lecture courses on Buddhism which are regularly attended by 100–150 students.

Some of my time at Stanford was taken up in talking to Alan Sponberg's class on the subject of the FWBO. I gave a lecture and then met with groups of ten to thirty students to answer questions and engage in more concentrated discussion. I also presented the inaugural lecture—'Opening the Wisdom Eye—the Theory of Buddhist Meditation' in a series 'Buddhism in the Modern World' which was co-sponsored by the Dean of the Chapel at Stanford and the Northern California Buddhist Council. Under their auspices I also led a day-long workshop on meditation.

I took full advantage of my time in the Bay area to visit old friends and establish some exciting new contacts. In Berkeley I visited Arnie Koetler at the offices of Parallax Press and the *Buddhist Peace Fellowship Newsletter*, and Dr Ronald Nakasone and Venerable Seelawimala at the Institute of Buddhist Studies. In Marin County I visited Tam and Maya Glessing who were students of Lama Govinda during his final years in Mill Valley, and on another occasion I was invited to the house of Sylvia Boorstein to meet with Jack Kornfield, Jamie Baraz, Howie Cohn, and Carol Wilson—all of whom are prominent vipassana meditation teachers who have recently 'discovered' the works of Sangharakshita. In San Francisco I took a delightful walk through the eucalyptus trees in Golden Gate Park with Ananda Dalenberg, who has had a long association with Buddhism in San Francisco. We talked of his early days with Alan Watts and the Dharma Bums, and of various events in the life of the Zen Centre. Later in my stay Ananda introduced me at a meeting of some forty senior students of San Francisco Zen Center, where again the topic of discussion was the FWBO.

On the last evening of my stay, Alan, Forest—a Buddhist neighbour of Alan's,—and I drove to Santa Cruz to meet with the American Bodhisattva Club. After a drive down the magnificent coast road we turned up into the mountains and the dark redwood forests to a small cabin where we met with the three women and four men who make up the American Bodhisattva Club. They were bright, enthusiastic, and intelligent—truly aspiring Bodhisattvas. Their perspective on Buddhism, which was influenced by Lama Govinda, and that of the FWBO were in deep resonance. I was reminded of my early days in the FWBO when we met in small groups of friends who wanted passionately to 'do' Buddhism—to make it a powerful influence on our lives. It was a brilliant ending to a busy but very rewarding two week visit to California.

Manjuvra

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*English will be the working language of both events.*

For further information, contact Dharmapriya or Dhammaloka at:-

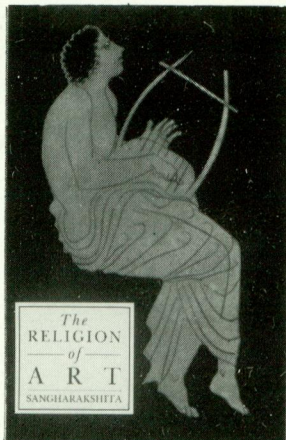
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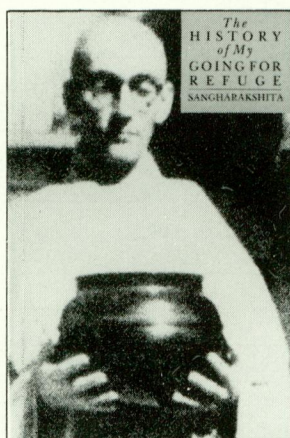


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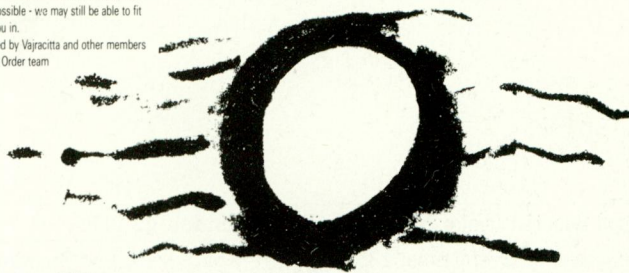
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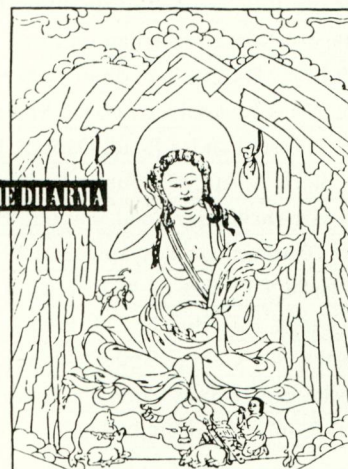
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