

# LOTUS REALM

*a new voice for buddhist women*

Women Speaking Out

SUMMER 1996 \$2 US \$4

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*Aung San Suu Kyi  
Ayya Khema  
Annie Besant*

*Interview with Srimala,  
Author of "Breaking Free"*





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**MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

Dharmacharinis Viryaprabha, Kalyanaprabha  
Vajrapushpa, Varabhadri, Kalyanavaca and Varaprabha

**EDITORS**

Vajrapushpa and Kalyanaprabha

**NEWS EDITOR** Viryaprabha

**ASSISTANT NEWS EDITORS** Kalyanaprabha and Jackie Cole

**REVIEWS EDITOR** Vajrapushpa

**PICTURE RESEARCH AND PRODUCTION** Penny Morris

**DESIGN AND LAYOUT** Sophie Brown

**ADMINISTRATION TEAM** Jackie Cole

Penny Morris, Kay Stubbs

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16/20 Turner Street, Manchester M4 1DZ, UK  
**Tel:** 0161 839 2060, **Fax:** 0161 839 4815  
**email:** lotus @c-vision.demon.co.uk

**LOTUS REALM** *A New Voice for Buddhist Women*

*"Just as in a pond of blue, red or white lotuses some lotuses  
grow in the water, some rest on the water's surface and some  
come right up out of the water..."*

So the ancient texts describe the Buddha's vision of  
humanity – individuals struggling to grow beyond the  
circumstances of their births towards that complete  
unfoldment which is Enlightenment.

A symbol of spiritual growth and development, the  
image of the lotus is known throughout Buddhist  
tradition. We think not only of the Buddha's great vision  
after his Enlightenment, but of Mahapajapati Gotami  
joyfully taking up the eight 'rules of training' 'like a  
wreath of blue lotus'; and we are reminded of the many  
Bodhisattva figures of the Mahayana tradition, young,  
beautiful, bedecked with jewels and seated on lotus thrones.

The realm of the lotus is the realm where spiritual  
values reign supreme: where all the circumstances of life,  
both individual and collective, conduce to spiritual  
development. Buddhist tradition depicts such a realm in  
a mythical way in its descriptions of the archetypal Pure  
Land, Sukhavati.

In 1967 Sangharakshita founded a new Buddhist  
Movement, the **Friends of the Western Buddhist Order**  
(FWBO or TBMSG as it is known in India). At its heart is  
the **Western Buddhist Order**, a spiritual community of  
men and women committed to furthering their own and  
others' spiritual development through traditional  
practices of meditation, devotion, study and the develop-  
ment of spiritual friendship, within the context of a  
germinal New Society which the movement seeks to  
bring into being. Order members, Mitras (those wishing  
to further their involvement with the movement and the  
Order) and Friends (those who participate in any way in  
the activities of the FWBO) often live together in residen-  
tial men's or women's communities; work together in  
team-based Right Livelihood businesses and co-operate  
together to run rural retreat Centres and city-based  
Buddhist Centres where people can come into contact  
with the Dharma. Some of those involved in the move-  
ment are concerned with the development of the arts;  
whilst others – especially in India – are engaged in social  
work projects.

In living out Buddhist values in the midst of  
contemporary society, members of the Western Buddhist  
Order and their friends hope not only to bring about  
radical change within themselves, but also to effect a  
change in contemporary life through their efforts to  
bring into being a 'lotus realm'.

Since the time of the Buddha women have Gone  
for Refuge to the Three Jewels, living a life committed to  
the practice of the Dharma. However, their numbers have  
been few (in comparison to men) and records of their  
lives and realizations even fewer.

The technological and other changes in the  
modern world have made it more possible than ever  
before for women to take up the challenge of spiritual  
life. Dharmacharinis, women members of the Western  
Buddhist Order, who have participated fully with their  
Dharma-brothers in pioneering this new Buddhist  
Movement, have gained considerable experience in the  
leading of the spiritual life under modern conditions. It  
is this experience which they hope to share through the  
pages of this magazine – for the benefit and interest of  
all who may choose to read it.



# Freedom to Speak...

I STILL REMEMBER the red flags; the stirring sound of the *Internationale*; speaker after speaker prophesying, promising, demanding the death of capitalism, and appealing for a socialist revolution. All this in a peaceful and relatively affluent country with an increasingly comprehensive welfare system. In the late 1960's and early 1970's in Finland, it was difficult for any self-respecting teenager or student not to identify, however marginally, with the dominant radicalism of the day, not to respond to the call for change.

The speakers at those political meetings knew the power of argument and persuasion, the power of words and their resonances. Speaking out – stating one's beliefs and convictions, objections and observations firmly and without fear – can be a catalyst for change. By speaking out for human rights, for democracy, for change in legislation, and in attitudes, many individual women and men throughout history have shaped the course of other people's lives, and the destinies of whole nations.

Those of us fortunate enough to live in a democratically governed country enjoy a high degree of freedom of speech. In fact, we may have come to take it very much for granted. We expect the media news coverage to be neutral and comprehensive. Access to a wide range of views and opinions is deemed desirable. We are spoilt for choice – we can now look forward to a multi-channel (hundreds of them) digital future.

Sadly, when the truth is less vital to the survival of the integrity of the individual and the integrity of the nation – as has happened in Russia and in other ex-communist countries – freedom of speech becomes quickly commercialized and trivialized. The tenuous lifeline offered by the clandestinely published dissident samizdat literature has been replaced by an abundance of pornographic magazines and books on occultism.

In modern society journalists are all too easily able to abuse freedom of speech. On the other hand, it is often journalists who have the motivation and the courage – as well as the opportunity – to disclose a truth that might otherwise remain hidden. The British journalist John Pilger, who visited Burma recently, has revealed some of the atrocities committed by the rulers of that country which the outside world knew little about – because television cameras hadn't filmed it. John Pilger interviewed Aung San Suu Kyi, the leader of the Burmese democracy movement, featured in this issue of *Lotus Realm*, and shares her concern for media coverage: "News comes and goes like fashion. After the people rose up in 1988 and paid the price in bloodshed, we slipped from the headlines. It will be a pity if we slip again."

We may do well to remember that the freedom to speak out – whether in the public or private arena – brings with it responsibility: a responsibility to strive for accuracy, honesty; to think more widely and deeply, to learn, to listen, to reconsider. This is the truly ethical position for a Buddhist to adopt. In fact we all need to speak out – to make full use of the freedom to do so publicly when appropriate, and to cultivate the courage to speak out in situations in which we would prefer to remain silent.

In the last issue of *Lotus Realm* we invited our readers to send in letters commenting on issues raised in the magazine – or other issues of relevance to Buddhist women. Alas, we received no letters. Not prepared to write them ourselves (although the thought did cross our minds!) we await your contributions. Here is your opportunity to speak out. □

Vajrapushpa

## WOMEN SPEAKING OUT

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# WOMEN SPEAKING OUT

## Vidyavati

*"With a great company seated round her, (Sukka) taught the doctrine in such wise that she seemed to be giving them sweet mead to drink, and sprinkling them with ambrosia. And they all listened to her rapt, motionless, intent."<sup>1</sup>*

**Vidyavati  
has worked  
for the FWBO  
in Australasia,  
England and  
America. She is  
currently based  
at Aryaloka  
Retreat Center,  
New Hampshire,  
USA**

**W**hat greater use of speech is there than to communicate the Dharma to a receptive audience? In this instance, Sukka, a woman disciple and eminent teacher who lived at the time of the Buddha, was preaching to a gathering of five hundred bhikkhunis (or nuns). She herself had attained Enlightenment inspired by the teachings of the bhikkhuni Dhammadinna: on hearing the great teacher give a discourse, Sukka had been *"thrilled with emotion, and renounced the world under her."*

Already in the Buddha's lifetime women were communicating their understanding and experience of the Truth to other women who, moved by their teachings, took up the practice of the Dharma, seeking to gain Insight themselves.

In Buddhism, perfected speech or speech *par excellence* evidences three things: it emanates from an Enlightened mind; it communicates the path to that state in a clear and immediate manner; and it is appropriate and accessible to the listener. Insight *can* communicate itself through the most bumbling and inept attempts at communication, but if we really want to become an effective vehicle to communicate the Dharma, we need to prepare ourselves so that by the time we have realized the Truth of the teachings for ourselves, we have the means whereby we can communicate them as effectively as possible. Before she was Enlightened, Sukka had already become *"learned, proficient in the doctrine, and a ready speaker."* As well as knowing the teachings and clarifying our thoughts, preparation also involves cultivating positive states of mind that are conducive to skilful speech.

The well-spoken word is tactful, timely and appropriate. While what one is saying may challenge others' views, one does not wish to put people off either by the content of what is said or in the manner of saying it. Our manner should remain polite, courteous, harmonious,

agreeable and sensitive. We communicate with our state of being as well as the content of our speech.

### SPEECH – THE CHILD OF THOUGHT

Speech has the power to transform our mental states, our actions and even the society we live in. For some people the mere sound of the Buddha's name was enough to heighten their receptivity to the Truth. However, for most it required him to *"teach, and incite, and arouse, and*



*gladden...with Religious discourse."* Communication based in clarity and positivity can have an effect on our minds similar to meditation. Skilful speech can prepare the ground for Insight, both in the speaker and the listener. In order to speak skilfully we need to know what we think, have reflected upon topics deeply, and organized our thoughts in a coherent way. Our thinking processes require the qualities of *vitarka* and *vicara*, i.e. alighting creatively on a subject and then following a thread of continuity in our thoughts, exploring the assumptions on which that idea is based and the conclusions we may draw from it. In order to be affected positively by speech, we need to be able to grasp what is actually being said, unfiltered by our conditioned views, undigested assumptions, and



emotional reactions. For Bahiya, it required the Buddha to simply say, “in the seen only the seen, in the heard only the heard, in the cognized only the cognized,” for Insight to arise – because he was receptive; he wanted to know the Truth and he was prepared to hear it.

**SKILFUL SPEECH**

Speech is one of the three modes of action that as Buddhists we seek to purify (along with those of body and mind). As the medium which manifests to the world the content of our mind and explains to others our physical actions, it can become a channel for purifying the other two. Our speech must be transformed multi-dimensionally. Are our words true or false? Is the tone of our expression kindly and gracious? Is our intent to be helpful and create harmony or be obstructive and divisive? Is our motive in speaking pure? How would we speak when our motive is pure? sGampopa says:

*In a pleasing and coherent way  
Making the meaning clear and acceptable,  
Without passion and anger,  
In a mild and moderate manner.<sup>2</sup>*

Pleasing speech is attractive and encourages communication. Coherency makes it easier to follow and understand. We can make the meaning clear once we have clarified our own thoughts, and thereby it is more likely to be accepted. While it is obvious that anger, vehemence or insistence would not be conducive to skilful communication, it may be less easy to see that passion, too, gets in the way. When overtaken by passion, we are under the sway of desiring something, whether it be a person, an ideal or an outcome. In that state we are less aware of others as we seek to convince them. A mild and moderate manner is one devoid of negativity, deriving its strength from the conviction of standing on the Truth.

**SPEAKING OUT – UNEARTHING VIEWS**

Speech can be powerful and fascinating. The words of an inspiring orator can hold us spell-bound, while a single harsh word can leave us devastated. Speech can be used to reflect our inner world as well as influencing the outer one. We all have many more thoughts than we ever express. Unspoken, our thoughts people our private domain creating a universe of subjective impressions to form a world view particular to us. Once uttered, our subjective thoughts take a form accessible to others. Our views and assumptions can then be held up to the yardstick of Right View. Unearthed from the dim crevices of our mind, we may discover all kinds of treasures and demons previously unnamed. Only when revealed can we decide

whether they are to be valued or discarded. John Stuart Mill argued that freedom of speech should extend to all views because once expressed, they can then be debated, challenged



or developed. Since our aim in the spiritual life is to see things as they really are, then all things must be open to view in Buddhist practice. How many of us assumed that ‘more was better’ until we encountered the Buddha’s teaching of living the simple life with few possessions? How many of us have imbibed the romantic myth that a sexual relationship will be the most fulfilling relationship in our lives – until we experienced the depth of communication possible in a spiritual friendship? How many of us took the pro-choice stance on abortion, influenced by convenience, until we encountered the Buddhist understanding of rebirth and the continuity of sentience from one life to the next?

**SPIRITUAL BENEFITS OF SPEAKING OUT**

Speaking out is a particular form of speech, undertaken with intentionality and usually some degree of forethought. Behind it lies a sense that there is something that needs to be said, to be brought to people’s awareness.

Speaking out can bring many spiritual benefits. We will become more self-aware, for in expressing our thoughts, we will come to know the contents of our mind more deeply. We will be required to think for ourselves and develop our understanding of issues. Speaking out cultivates individuality: the courage to be oneself and speak from one’s experience. Strength of character and robustness is developed when we must defend our views. Integrity is deepened when we say what others ignore or don’t wish to

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hear. Friendships are enriched when we can expose habitual patterns that hold us back or private thoughts that conceal who we really are.

In the private arena of one-to-one relationships, speaking out has the potential to alter ways of relating. It may expose unhelpful habitual tendencies of collusion and compromise or aggression and resistance. It can dissolve boundaries and bring us into more open contact with another human being. It makes manifest that which is sensed. Once the unspoken is revealed, change must follow even if it is only that each knows that the other knows.

In speaking out in the public arena, there is less direct relationship to our listeners, so we are not so immediately affected by their responses. However, there is the challenge of revealing the thoughts we identify ourselves with to a wider

audience. Concern conspired with circumstance to generate in pioneering women a sense of their place in this new world alongside men. In the forming of a new political system some women saw the need to be represented and sought more active involvement in the management of public affairs.

Generally, however, it seems that for women, speaking out, particularly in the public sphere, can be challenging. We tend to find more comfort in the relational, ensuring everyone is engaged and in concert, rather than entering the bracing arena of communicating and defending ideas. The thrust and parry of a vigorous exchange of views is more likely to appeal to men than women. Our language itself is likely to be more hesitant, more qualified and inclusive. Our expression is more populated

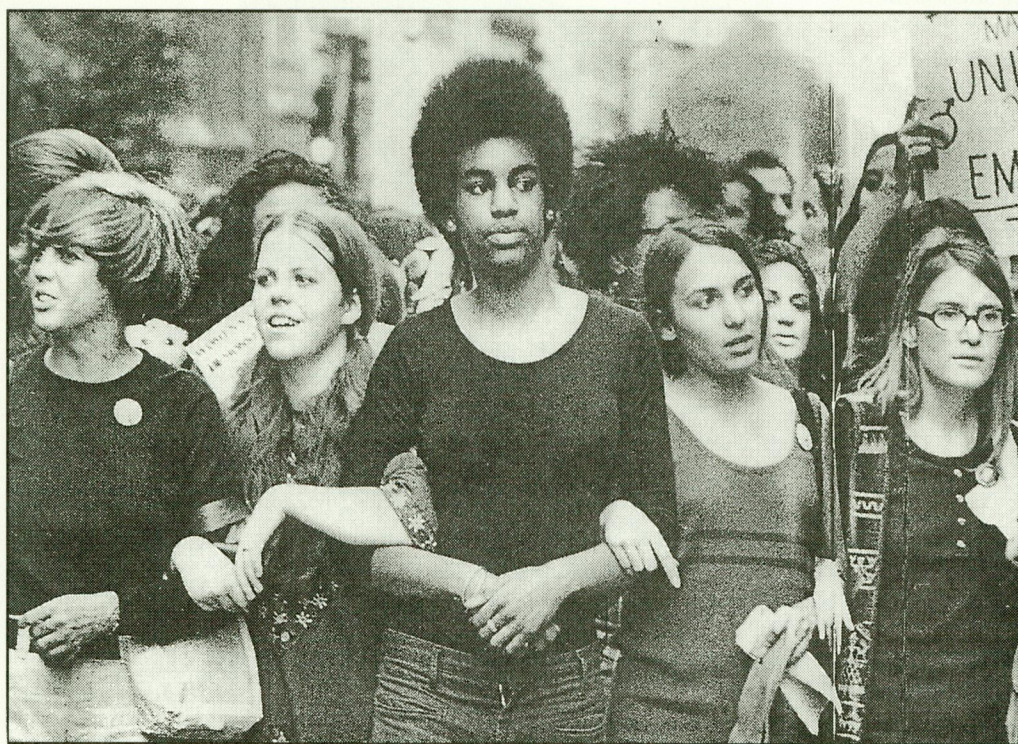
with, 'I feel' than, 'This is what I think.' Our nature tends more towards harmony, safety and security. Do we feel confident to risk our views in public? How easy is it for us to rock the boat of even an unsatisfactory personal relationship? Are we able to stand our ground publicly?

Do we as women hold each other back from speaking out? Do we 'not expect too much?' Does jealousy undermine initiative? Or can we wholeheartedly rejoice in seeing a sister confidently take a public platform? Women's strengths are in their supportive, empathetic nature, but should we shun the atmosphere of healthy competition that men seem to thrive on? Perhaps a little more of the 'masculine

spirit' would give form to thoughts that arise in our minds that we could, after all, do more and be more.

Speaking out suggests conflict. One may have to go against popular opinion, address an area of oppression, take up the sword in defence of another's character, enter into a topic of debate or controversy or speak out to try to settle a quarrel. This may not be easy or even pleasant. However if we are true daughters of the Buddha, we must not shrink from the challenge to speak clearly from the basis of compassion. Awareness carries the responsibility of compassionate action. If we see clearly, then to ignore is to abandon.

It is important that as women we do stretch ourselves by speaking out, both for our own spiritual well-being and the welfare of the spiritual community. For instance, we can only



audience. We must pin our colours to the mast and come out as we really are. Some people may disagree, be better informed on some issues, or simply not understand what we are trying to say. Moreover, some may criticize us, as well as our views. We will need the courage of our convictions, and must be prepared to enter into dialogue to support our views. *"Wherever he was Gotama preached...no matter what threads of belief or unbelief ran through his audiences."*<sup>3</sup>

### WOMEN SPEAKING OUT

The facility to speak out is conditioned differently in different cultures as well as in individual temperaments. My own experience suggests that in those countries populated in the last few centuries by European settlers heading out to a new life in a new world, there have been more opportunities for women to take initia-



be a spiritual friend and enjoy genuine spiritual friendship if we know who we are and what we think. There can only be genuine spiritual community when we are able to say what we think without that fear of approbation which characterizes 'the group'. And most importantly, for others to hear the Dharma, we need to be able to communicate it clearly, effectively and at any appropriate opportunity.

## WOMEN IN HISTORY

The voices of women are not as audible as those of men as they come down to us through history. Few women have expressed their experience in lasting form. Women have rarely been the opinion leaders or shapers in society. Up until a hundred years ago it was rare for women to participate openly in public affairs. When they did so, it was more likely to be privileged women who had some status in society, either by birth or marriage, since they were most able to speak freely and had greater opportunities for their writings to be recorded.

It is also more likely that women will speak out at periods of transition in society or in times of war as in North America during the War of Independence when women formed vocal patriotic groups, wrote articles urging independence and were active in campaigns. Until this century, women have mostly been excluded from the professions of law and medicine, from universities and from religious ministry. Women have therefore had little opportunity to gain confidence through experience. Instead they have been preoccupied bearing numerous children and working in the home. Furthermore, until this century, and still in some areas, their literacy rate has been much lower than men's. Rather than writing history books, women's province has been to recount the oral history of the culture to their children.

There have been some notable exceptions. Margaret Sanger, an American woman in the early part of this century, was the first active campaigner for education on, and access to birth control methods for women. She issued a magazine, distributed a pamphlet promoting family limitation, and wrote many books, as well as being an international speaker on this cause. Despite considerable opposition from the medical profession, legal difficulties (she was jailed twice for opening the first US birth control clinic and indicted for mailing her pamphlet) and initial social resistance, she persevered and changed both legal restrictions as well as social and medical opinion, and the conditions of many women's lives.

Many feminists like Mary Wollstonecraft and Margaret Fuller focussed women's public voices on the legal, educational and vocational rights for women. In nineteenth century North America, women were also speaking out in the

reform movements.

Of course their goals of freedom could not be ultimately achieved in a framework limited to the secular, but they did have the courage to speak out on issues that would change the lives of women in the West. Whilst the emancipation movement focused women's public voices on the



legal, educational and vocational rights for women, some women in nineteenth century North America were also speaking out in reform movements against slavery, temperance, restrictive female dress styles, and prison conditions. Frances Wright, a Scotswoman and writer who emigrated to North America in 1824, fought for the emancipation of slaves, birth control, and sexual freedom for women, as well as free education for all children over the age of two. Rachel Carson published the controversial *A Silent Spring* in 1962, years before the damage our society was wreaking on the environment became more widely apparent and acknowledged.

## BUDDHIST WOMEN

In Buddhist history, too, women's voices are far less numerous than men's. Perhaps if women had spoken out more, the lineage of fully ordained nuns would not have died out. Perhaps more of their stories and teachings would have survived. Factors determining the scarcity of recorded teachings by and to women in the early sangha are complex. Without the extraordinary memory of Ananda, the Buddha's companion who memorized thousands of discourses, few teachings per se might have survived. But the implications for contemporary women practitioners of the scarcity of historical records of other women practising and teaching are evident.

Perhaps we should ask ourselves, are we recording our experience for others? Are we speaking out to clarify views within the sangha? Are we prepared to speak out on topics like physical violence, stress in people's lives, and women resorting to abortion, in order to

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**"For a woman seeking Enlightenment, the crucial measure is, will my speaking out conduce to greater understanding and compassion?"**

improve conditions in society to make it more conducive to spiritual growth? Do we value the gift of the Dharma that we have received sufficiently to take up the challenge of speaking out?

### **SPEAKING OUT BRINGS CHANGE**

There are many reasons why women have not spoken out in the public arena over the centuries. But today, and especially within the positive culture of the sangha, there should be little to hold us back. Of course we need to have something of value to say, informed by a depth of spiritual practice. With this, and a motive of concern for the welfare of all beings, one could say it is our duty to speak out and attempt to reduce the suffering in the world. Perhaps we are over-cautious of missionary zeal or have a false idea that Buddhism is a passive religion. On the contrary, the Buddha urged his Enlightened disciples to go forth and teach his radical message for the weal of mankind. Perhaps we fear disapproval or appearing unconventional? Perhaps we fear speaking prematurely, before we are fully clear. However this can be a false hesitation, for until we are Enlightened, our views are more than likely distorted. The process of speaking out can move us closer to realizing the way things really are.

For a woman seeking Enlightenment, the crucial measure is, will my speaking out conduce to greater understanding and compassion? In Tibetan Buddhist practice, fierce vigorous debate is a means to clarifying views through challenge and direct response. We could engage with opposing views as if they were koans, that is, profound spiritual riddles. The Zen and Indian traditions are replete with Enlightened teachers who broke through to Insight after grappling for many years with a puzzling teaching. When we encounter something in the Buddha's teaching that conflicts with our view, do we take it up avidly, discussing it with others, not putting it down until we understand, or do we conveniently forget about it? If we are not bringing a degree of intensity to these conflicting views, are we really practising?

Speaking out can lead to change, and change is the lifeblood of spiritual practice. We are not satisfactory as we are. We must change to become Enlightened. Remaining encumbered in our subjective mental perspectives of the world, we move slowly. When we expose our views to the objective light of collective reality, we are more likely to see our delusions. We must speak out to grow spiritually.

### **WOMEN DISCIPLES SPEAKING OUT**

Queen Mallika, wife of King Pasenadi of Kosala, decried animal and human sacrifice, still an accepted practice in India at the time of the Buddha. Through her persuasive arguments, she managed to persuade the king to release the animals he was holding for this purpose. This incident of her speaking out had a powerful effect on his kingdom for the actions of the king strongly

influenced others. Both Mallika, and Samavati, one of the wives of King Udena, converted their husbands to become followers of the Buddha. Their influence facilitated the spread of the Dharma, for the example of the king and queen were closely followed by the common people.

In the stories of the Theris Mutta, Sujata and Rohini, we find these women speaking out in order to convince their husband or parents of the sincerity of their faith in the Buddha and their desire to leave home and practice with the bhikkhunis. Rohini, who became a Stream Entrant upon hearing the Buddha teach, convinced her parents to let her leave by teaching them the Dharma. Punna was a slave who, after becoming a Stream Entrant, converted a Brahmin and thereby won her Master's esteem. He was moved to grant her her freedom so she could enter the order of bhikkhunis.

These women had to speak out against conditions that limited their ability to practice. The force of their experience of Insight compelled them to find a way to gain the permission they needed to Go Forth. They did this not so much through argument or persuasion, as through their example and their evident understanding of the teachings. Cala speaks out to defend herself against Mara:

*The Threefold Wisdom have I gotten now  
And done the bidding of the Buddha blest  
On every hand the love of sense is slain.  
And the thick gloom of ignorance is rent  
In twain. Know this, thou Evil One, avaunt!  
Here, O Destroyer! shalt thou not prevail!<sup>4</sup>*

She confidently proclaims her attainment against his challenge and banishes him from her presence by her confidence, for Mara can only continue to exist in conditions of uncertainty or doubt.

Several of the Theris such as Dhammadinna, Patacara, Mahapajapati, Thullananda and Sukka became eminent teachers, giving both public discourses and entering the women's quarters in local houses to teach. Some, such as Khema, gained a reputation as a brilliant speaker. The highest level of speaking out is that which conduces to the highest goal, Enlightenment itself. The songs of the Theris which are collected in the *Therigatha* are their Lion's Roar, their inspired utterances of their experiences of Insight and Freedom. With neither false humility nor egoistic pride, the words burst forth in inspiration and joy, as with Patacara:

*Today my heart is healed, my yearning stayed,  
Perfected the deliverance wrought in me  
Lo! I for refuge to the Buddha go.<sup>5</sup>* □

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# Author in Search of a New Beginning

VAJRAPUSHPA MEETS SRIMALA, PUBLIC PRECEPTOR AND AUTHOR OF A RECENTLY PUBLISHED BOOK

**S**RIMALA HAS BEEN A MEMBER of the Western Buddhist Order for twenty-one years. During that time she has brought up two daughters – mostly as a single parent – worked actively with women involved in the FWBO, and grown in psychological and spiritual maturity. It is these experiences that she describes in her autobiographical book, *Breaking Free – Glimpses of a Buddhist Life*.

The style of her writing is attractively simple, the account of her life honest, both revealing and austere. She manages to disclose a great deal of herself, including many of the tensions, conflicts and confusions she experiences as she struggles to understand and to express her needs – her yearning for intimacy and meaningful communication, her dreams of greater freedom outside the home, her efforts to overcome inner

restrictions and inhibitions. The book also offers a glimpse into the early history of a Buddhist movement with its collective idealism, enthusiasm and lack of experience.

Srimala is now one of the Western Buddhist Order's preceptors – someone whose responsibilities include conferring ordinations on women joining the Order, witnessing their Going for Refuge; as well as guiding, supporting and encouraging them in this process.

I met Srimala at 'Madhymaloka', the Preceptors' College in Birmingham, where she was spending a month together with her fellow preceptors and other members of the College Council. As we sat by the bay window, with warm sunshine pouring in, squirrels jumping about on the edge of the garden and huge bumble bees bumping against the window pane, we talked about her book and the new

phase which is opening up in her life now that her daughters are finding their feet in the world. Srimala will soon be moving to Birmingham to live in a community with her fellow preceptor Sanghadevi and her good friend Sinhadevi. The obvious enthusiasm is tempered by caution:

*I have to be very careful when talking about 'the new phase' ...thinking that it will be completely different. It will be the same old me! Right now I can't think very far ahead. My 'future' is attending the ordination retreat in June and then moving to Birmingham.*

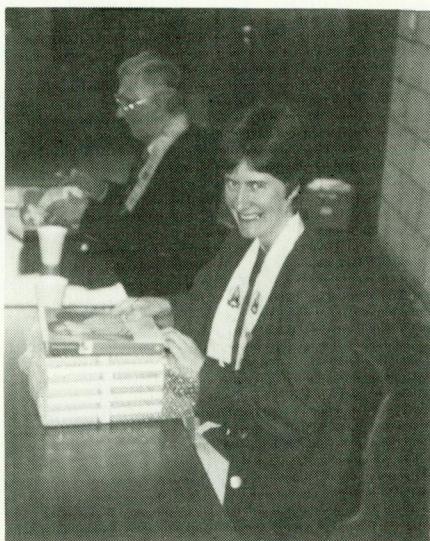
Writing and publishing the book has been a kind of rite of passage, marking the transition from being a mother and a wife and a lover to being a preceptor, a spiritual friend – being more 'herself'. Life and art merge into one another, for she is still in that transition, still inside the second half of her

book, as it were, which describes events and experiences over the last few years, too involved in the process she describes to be able to say very much about it.

Srimala writes 'beyond the ending', searching for an ending that would be a new beginning, that would allow her to find a new identity. She writes imagining herself into a new self, 'an intrepid explorer', 'more of a man' – driving a tractor – and returns to the more immediate task of relinquishing and fulfilling, in turn, her duties as a mother.

The autobiographical book *To the Is-land* and *An Angel at My Table* by the New Zealand writer Janet Frame had given Srimala the initial inspiration to write.

*There were two things in particular that inspired me: first of all the way she wrote, which I found delightful, and secondly the fact that she had been through such a struggle and shown such determination.*



**Book Launches on FWBO Day: Srimala alongside Sangharakshita**



Did she perhaps identify particularly with the experience of being misunderstood which was so striking in Janet Frame's life?

*Oh yes, there was that. And she, too, came through... And did writing give Srimala the clearer perspective on her life that she set out to find?*

*Yes, – although that doesn't mean that I'm able to express that clarity to you now without thinking more about it. I'm still a bit close to it all. Although I know I've gained more perspective and the writing was an extremely valuable thing to do, I'm too close to the process of producing the book to be able to say in specific terms what has become clearer. I FEEL I've changed. I feel a certain confidence and I feel 'bigger'. But the process I describe is still going on and I want to continue to clarify things for myself.*

Srimala wrote the book during a sabbatical year in France when she left the family home for the first time. The events in the first half of the book – the birth of her daughters, her time as a young mother and new Order member, her husband Sona, leaving home – were easier to write about simply because they are now more distant.

*I enjoyed writing about those little incidents; they are like complete stories. I could relive some of those experiences, take my time over it all, and let go of it. Whereas the second half of the book was much harder to write. I could feel my resistance to what was actually going on – for example, moving towards celibacy – as I was writing about it.*

In her book Srimala conveys a sense of herself as a shy and retiring sort of person – as someone who has found it difficult to express her thoughts and feelings, to participate in conversation. Perhaps she saw the book as an opportunity to say what had been left unsaid before? But why do it publicly?

*Initially the most important thing was just to write...I don't know when the idea that it could be a book came in. I certainly didn't want to write too much from the point of view of trying to make it into a book because I knew that would inhibit me. In the end I did want to share it more publicly. Perhaps you could say the writing was for me first, then I wanted to express myself to friends, and finally I felt confident that hearing about my experience could be helpful to other people.*

*I've been quite aware that I've had a particular experience as a Dharmacharini (woman Order member) with children. At times I've been surprised, in a way, that people haven't known about my experience. I suppose that must mean that I haven't spoken about it!"*

Now Srimala has to keep remembering that many of her friends have read the book and that she can't therefore hold back quite so much any more! She is ready for more dialogue, keen to discover what sort of things other people find interesting or helpful in her book – and to talk about it with them.

Why has it been so difficult for her to express her thoughts and feelings? Is it due to fear? Srimala laughs! It is not a dismissive laughter – it is a sort of yes, I think. (In fact she laughs a lot and easily.) She continues in a quieter voice:

*I suppose it is because of lack of experience; added to my own particular nature or character. From early on I had to respond to the needs of other people – for instance leading groups when I had hardly been in groups at all. I could have done with just participating. I was such a shy, retiring creature and yet I was in quite a prominent position, which I was able to take on, but at the same time I think I missed out on something.*

The word 'struggle' comes up frequently in our conversation. Srimala's adult life, as she tells it, has often been a struggle. Above all, Srimala wants her story to offer encouragement to others. In any case, 'life is a struggle, and spiritual life is a struggle too.'

During her early years in the Order, Srimala simply took on responsibilities because things needed to be done. In a sense she had to take on too much responsibility too soon, which made her susceptible to self-doubt. When she accepted the biggest responsibility so far, by becoming a preceptor, she felt as if she was being turned upside down.

*My doubting of myself came out immediately and in a way that I couldn't hide. I needed to express the self-doubt – although it might have appeared to others as if I was crumbling completely – and that was part of helping me to move on. Within all that, I haven't perhaps expressed the little flame of confidence which has actually always been there.*

Another important theme in the book is the distinction between attachment and having one's needs for intimacy and friendship satisfied. Srimala's temperament, her circumstances – particularly as a young mother – and her tendency to look towards a partner for support and inspiration kept confusing the issue. When a likely person did come along, a potential friend, too much was loaded onto her.

Soon Srimala will be moving to live with fellow Buddhists in a community, which will no doubt prove both challenging and supportive. Delighting in the imminent fulfilment of this particular dream doesn't make her regret the life she has had as a mother. *I can't imagine I would have got to this point without my children.*

Srimala was a little nervous about her daughters reading the book. After all, it includes all the things you never wanted your daughters to know about sex – that is, their mother's sexual relationships! Shanti and Sundari didn't seem too perturbed by those references, however. They were more keen to discover part of their own history through the book; and to point out to Srimala that during her first trip to India they had cried at nights, missing her!

Now that she has very nearly left the family home and left behind the 'romantic myth', she would like her vision of the Transcendental to become stronger. In moving to Birmingham, she is obviously keen to live in pleasant surroundings, a 'nice house'; and, through her vision of brahmacharya (the practice of celibacy) to dwell more in the realm of archetypal form, the *rupaloka*, closer to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. □



# COURAGE & Compassion

## *the Life and Work of Aung San Suu Kyi*

JULIE CARTWRIGHT-FINCH

**BETWEEN AUGUST 1988** and July 1989, in the face of extreme opposition, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of the democratic opposition in Burma, gave over 1000 speeches to mass audiences throughout her country. Since her release from six years under house arrest, she has addressed informal gatherings of thousands of her compatriots each weekend outside her home. She speaks of peaceful means for establishing a society based on an appreciation of human dignity and worth. Her words inspire her audiences to brave the intimidation and arbitrary brutality of the ruling junta whose forces are ever present, bearing arms against the people they were intended to serve. Her voice, direct, modest, has summoned up in the hearts and minds of many Burmese people the confidence to search out and follow their own consciences, refusing to submit to 'the humiliation of a way of life disfigured by corruption and fear.'

This way of life has been perpetuated to no small degree by the restrictions placed on free expression by the military councils which have ruled since 1962. With the nationalization of daily newspapers in 1964 and the institution of the Press Scrutiny Board whose approval is required before the publication of any material, independent voices in the public arena have been effectively stifled and the press has become a medium for the promotion of misinformation and propaganda. The prevailing climate of fear and indecision is exacerbated by a culture of informants, where neighbour is divided against neighbour, just as the individual who succumbs to social pressure becomes divided from his or her own conscience.

It was against this background that the 1988 democracy movement arose, first among college students, but soon gathering citizens of all classes, ages and both genders to its ranks. Following brutal suppression by security forces of thousands of demonstrators, the voice of Aung San Suu Kyi became a focus and a harmonizing element through which the disparate parts of the democracy movement were brought together under her banner of human rights, unity and discipline.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's task was to lend her voice to enable people to make a reality of their inner, unarticulated vision of what their nation could become. She wanted them to emulate her

father, independence leader Aung San, who was loved and respected throughout Burma 'not merely as a warrior hero but also as the inspiration and conscience of the nation.'



Foremost among Suu Kyi's ideals is the establishment of a society founded on universal respect for human rights, recognizing the inherent dignity and worth of all. Following traditional Burmese thinking based on the Buddhist scriptures, she holds up the ideal of the righteous king who rules for the good of his people – a far cry from the current situation where the leaders' ego-centred interests rule supreme.

Suu Kyi's unique contribution to the democracy movement in Burma lies in her call for resistance to the ruling junta to take the form of non-violent civil disobedience. The crowds who gather to hear her speak do so in the face of a law that has criminalized political meetings of more than four people. Security forces are always present at these meetings – and frequently hostile – but

*(continued on page 13)*

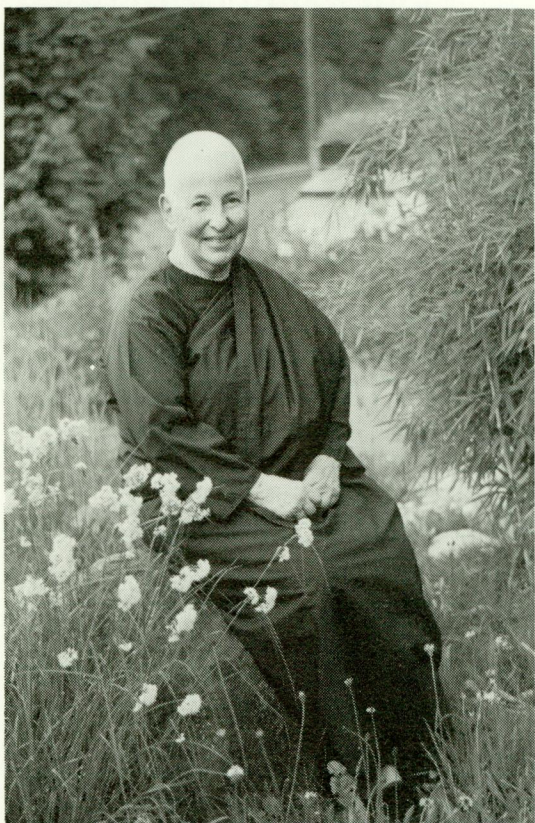
**"Her voice,  
direct, modest,  
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many Burmese  
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confidence to  
search out and  
follow their own  
consciences"**



# DEDICATED TO THE DHARMA

## *The Life and Work of Ayya Khema*

KALYANAPRABHA



**THE SHORT,** sturdy figure with shaven head, swathed in the plain brown robes of a Buddhist nun is a familiar one in many parts of the Buddhist world. For the past twenty-three years Ayya Khema has been practising the Dharma, and for twenty she has been teaching it to men and women all over the world. Perhaps dedication characterizes Ayya Khema's life more than anything else: dedication to her chosen path, dedication to the Truth, dedication to her work in

whom she travelled to Australia and later Pakistan. Her husband's sense of adventure took her to other parts of the world: tours of Europe, Asia and even the Amazon jungle where the family spent one month living 'native'! Eventually they returned to Australia, bought a farm where they grew all their own food organically, and bred Shetland ponies.

It was here she met Venerable Khantipalo, an English Buddhist monk, and for the first time came across the teaching of the Buddha. She had already learnt to meditate ten years previously during a visit to the ashram of Sri Aurobindo in Pondicherry, India. Although she had taken to meditation 'right away', it had not been taught as part of an entire path which she could follow. She wanted a teaching she could put into practise in her own day-to-day life. The Buddha's teaching she found pragmatic, realistic. Learning, for instance, about the Five Hindrances she immediately set about the task of working on her own mind 'in order to get rid of them'!

From this point her life changed course entirely. For a while she kept up her practise whilst living within the family circle, but the time came when she wanted to Go Forth. Her children were grown, her daughter married, and her husband did not object. In 1979 she was ordained in Sri Lanka as a sramaneri or nun by Venerable Narada Maha Thera, then the abbot of a large temple in Colombo. In 1987 she received full bhikkhuni ordination at the Hsie-Lai temple in Los Angeles, along with about 250 Chinese and 12 other Westerners. (As is well known, full bhikkhuni ordination is difficult to obtain in most countries since the necessary lineages have long since died out. The ordinations in Los Angeles were something of an historic occasion.)

Shaving her hair and donning the monastic robes was a joyful experience of liberation: 'The moment I put on these robes and got rid of my hair, I felt, 'Whew! Wonderful!' And afterwards? 'It's been like that ever since.' To wear the robes is to feel 'I do not have to be anybody, I do not have to be beautiful, attractive, interesting or rich. I can just put on these robes and do the best I can.'

What Ayya Khema has accomplished in the twenty odd years she has been practising the Dharma is admirable indeed. In 1978 she and

spreading the Dharma – dedication, and preparedness to do what is difficult.

But how did a woman born into a Jewish family in Berlin in the 1920's come to take up the practice of the Dharma almost fifty years later on the other side of the world?

Ilse Kussel was the only child of a wealthy family. On the eve of the outbreak of the Second World War, she was sent by her parents to safety in Scotland. Two years later she joined her parents in Shanghai whence they had fled Hitler's persecution of the Jews. Here her father had established himself in business. With Japanese invasion, however, the family was interned in a prisoner-of-war camp, along with 18,000 other Jewish refugees. Sadly, the father died there before the end of the war.

Mother and daughter emigrated to the United States where Ilse worked for the Bank of America, married and brought up a son and daughter. After twelve years the marriage dissolved and she journeyed to a health farm in Mexico. There she met her second husband, a school-mate from Germany and Scotland, with

**"...dedication**

**characterizes**

**Ayya Khema's**

**life more than**

**anything else:**

**dedication to her**

**chosen path,**

**dedication to the**

**Truth..."**



Venerable Khantipalo established Wat Buddha Dharma at Wiseman's Ferry, New South Wales, Australia, a forest monastery where she lived and taught for five years. In 1982 she founded Parappuduwa Nuns Island in Ratgama Lake in the South of Sri Lanka next to Polgasduwa Monks Island which Venerable Nyanyatiloka had established in 1911.

Parappuduwa Nuns Island is a centre for Buddhist women, especially those training as Buddhist nuns, where they can study, meditate and practise the Dharma in the context of an intensive monastic lifestyle. The establishment of this place of retreat was by no means easy: the heat, the jungle, the political climate.

After seven years based in Sri Lanka, during which time conditions became more and more difficult, she decided to return to her native land on the invitation of some of her German students. As someone who had been forced to flee the Nazis losing all family belongings, and who had lost most of her family in the holocaust, she wanted to be able to show the German people it is possible to forgive completely. She set up base in a converted farm-house which she called Buddha-Haus. Set in beautiful pasture-land, near Kempten in the Allgau, it is here that Ayya Khema now lives and continues her work of spreading the Dharma.

A life is as much a message as the spoken and written word – perhaps more so. Nevertheless, Ayya Khema is well known for her lectures and meditation courses, many of which have been gathered together and published. Of 23 publications, some of which have been trans-

lated, probably her best known in English are *Being Nobody, Going Nowhere* and *When the Iron Eagle Flies*.

Of Ayya Khema's many contributions perhaps the most lasting will prove to be her teaching of meditation and contemplation. Over the years she has taught thousands of people through her courses, lectures, and retreats, as well as through her books and tapes, introducing them to the fundamental Buddhist practices of mindfulness and loving kindness, and the change of consciousness made possible through the higher meditative absorptions (*jhana*).

Ayya Khema teaches with uncompromising insistence on the traditional practices, on the need to make effort if there is to be progress on the spiritual path, on the importance of training over many years, and of the real possibility of attaining to the goal of liberation.

It has sometimes been said that Theravada practice is oriented towards self development, whereas Mahayana schools emphasize concern for others. Ayya Khema's life and practice within a traditional Theravadin context manifests a deep concern for others. Today in her seventies, Ayya Khema suffers from cancer. Sometimes after a long day or even week of teaching she finds herself exhausted – but she doesn't mind. What is left to her, she says, is to give to others what she herself has found, namely the most precious jewel, the Buddha's Dharma. □

Note 1:  
*Walking on Lotus Flowers*, Martine Batchelor,  
Thorsons 1996, p42

*With thanks to Ayya Khema for her help in preparing these biographical notes.*

**"A life is as  
much a message  
as the spoken  
and written  
word – perhaps  
more so."**

Suu Kyi has kept unceasing vigilance to ensure a bloodbath is avoided. Her insistence on what Martin Luther King called 'the indivisibility of justice' – justice extended to the oppressor as much as to the oppressed – suggests a deeply-felt compassion. She shows remarkable patience as she speaks week after week to those who gather outside her home, pushing back the hindering veils of ignorance inch by inch, helping herself and others to a clearer enunciation of truth amid the surrounding hypocrisy.

We can all make a difference to the efforts of those who seek justice in Burma. Several Western companies – Texaco, Unocal, Total, Dunhill, Pepsi Cola – are investing in Burma, enabling the military rulers to extend their arsenal and army while cutting spending on health and education by 80%. Boycotting the purchase of products from these companies – and letting them know why – may have an effect. The democratic opposition in Burma has asked that tourism is

also boycotted. According to Amnesty International, 'tourism in Burma is inextricably associated with slave labour, forced relocation and the deflection of limited resources away from basic necessities.'

In Suu Kyi's analysis, the course of a nation's development is shaped by the mental attitudes and values of its citizens. It is the intellectual conviction of the need to bring about a change in attitudes and values that lies behind 'the quintessential revolution of the spirit' which she leads. □

**Bibliography:**  
Aung San Suu Kyi, *Freedom from Fear*, Penguin 1991  
June Jordan, *Moving Towards Home*, Virago 1989  
*Index on Censorship*, vol 23. no. 3, 1994

*Julie, a Mitra from Cambridge, UK had many years involvement with the human rights organization, Amnesty International.*

*the Life and  
Work of  
Aung San  
Suu Kyi*



# A Woman of Substance?

## *The Life and Work of Annie Besant*

VAJRAPUSHPA



Annie Besant

**ANNIE BESANT** (1847-1933) was a pioneer, a 'phenomenon', a campaigner for social and political rights, a theosophist, a seeker after spiritual truth. Epithets abound – and even the facts of her compulsively busy life leave the reader of her biography breathless – only able to speculate, along with her biographer, on what it was that motivated her. Rosemary Dinnage calls her 'the pioneer of pioneers'. In her life she was ahead of her time, and now, after her death she has, in a sense, been left behind by the modern world.

Annie was always happiest when working frantically; periods of inactivity led to depression. It is as if she disappeared from herself too.

Annie married the clergy man Frank Besant at the age of twenty. In 1873, having lost her Christian faith, she left her husband, taking her youngest child with her. She soon teamed up with Charles Bradlaugh, the head of the Freethought movement, who recognized Annie's talents as a campaigner, writer and public speaker. Her new belief in the possibilities of socialism and atheism was no less ardent than her former Christian faith:

*"My heart revolts against the spectre of an Almighty Indifference to the pain of sentient beings. My conscience rebels against the injustice, the cruelty, the inequality, which surround me on every side. But I believe in Man. In Man's redeeming power; in man's remoulding energy; in man's approaching triumph through knowledge, love and work."*

Her heart revolted equally against war, against poverty, against royalty, imperialism and capital punishment. Speaking out on these issues made her both hated and admired,

vilified and respected. For her, speaking out was a matter of conscience, of personal integrity, as well as a matter of social and political awareness. The combination of her logical mind and her passion made an effective tool for her public activities.

When initially faced with loss of religious faith, Annie had even considered suicide. However, with her typical boldness and integrity she approached the well known-theologian Edward Pusey in Oxford. Pusey was shocked by Annie's views which he considered blasphemous. 'It is not your duty to ascertain the truth', he is reported to have said to her. But it was exactly the pursuit of truth that propelled Annie to move forwards at each stage of her life, prepared as she was to "*plunge into a new vortex of strife...and fight again, the weary fight for an unpopular truth.*"

Annie lost the custody of her daughter Mabel after being prosecuted, along with Bradlaugh, for publishing a book on contraception: the book was labelled 'obscene' and Annie deemed unfit to be a mother. She sought relief for her bitterness and despair not only through writing and lecturing, but also from a study of science. She was among the first handful of women who were admitted to study degree courses at the University of London.

Annie rose to further fame by exposing police brutality at the public demonstration on 'Bloody Sunday', November 13 1887; and by exposing the appalling working conditions of women in Bryant and May's match factory. She became their leader in an ultimately successful strike action. In 1888 she was elected to the London School Board in Tower Hamlets where she laid the foundations for school medical services and by the end of 1889 had, by her own estimate, 'conjured up...36,000 school dinners.'

At the point at which she reached the height of her success and fame in the public arena, Annie was also running out of faith and inspiration.

*"Where to gain the inspiration, the motive, which should lead to the realization of the*



*Brotherhood of Man?"*

She would find her answer in Theosophy and in occultism.

After a powerful encounter with Madame Blavatsky – which could almost be described as falling in love – Annie joined the Theosophical Society and committed herself to what she now perceived to be The Truth:

*"That one loyalty to truth I must keep stainless,  
whatever friendships fail me or human ties be broken.  
She may lead me into the wilderness, yet I must follow  
her; she may strip me of all love, yet I must pursue her;  
though she slay me, yet will I trust in her."*

It is a chilling declaration. Annie's ready eagerness to embrace the 'whole truth' left very little room for evaluating what she believed in, for emotional growth, or for the understanding that ideologies and beliefs don't, in themselves, give complete answers. It may be, as Don Cupitt claims, that she was 'no thinker', and that because she was, like many other women of her day, 'grossly under-educated in relation to her talents, she became vulnerable to crankiness and belief in occult revelations.'

In Theosophy, Annie found what she believed to be original world Wisdom, the ultimate Truth. She probably found it liberating with its emphasis on the spiritual nature of all beings and the possibility of spiritual progress open to everyone.

Annie's ideas, though they might be described as 'fluid', nevertheless manifest their own logic and progression and encapsulate some of the significant currents in West-

ern society at the turn of the century: the questioning of Christian doctrine and morality, the pursuit of a more socially just and benevolent society, and the discovery of the Indian religions.

By the time she moved to India in 1894, to the headquarters of the Theosophical Society, Annie believed that the greatness of India and the happiness of her people could "*never be secured by political methods, but only by the revival of her philosophy and religion.*" Nevertheless, a few years later she was attacking caste and child marriage, working for educational reform and from 1913 onwards she played a prominent, if sometimes controversial role in

the struggle for Indian independence.

Years before Annie had made a thrilling discovery: whilst still a vicar's wife she had locked herself in to the empty church, climbed the pulpit and delivered a sermon to the empty pews. She realized how well her voice carried; and enjoyed the feeling of power that the experience gave her. When in 1917 she was elected president of the National Congress of India, she gave a speech in front of 9000 people. She was a woman who had not only found her voice, but her audience too.

In India, Annie became the guardian of a young boy, Krishna, who had been chosen to be groomed as the next leader of the Theosophical society – a role that Krishnamurti was eventually to reject.

*"You are all depending for your spirituality on someone else, for your happiness on someone else, for your enlightenment on someone else"* he told them when he publically disowned Theosophy – perhaps, ironically, pointing to a more liberating truth than had his guardian.

Annie's energy and commitment had set her free from many of the social and religious



Annie Besant  
addressing crowds

constraints of her time, and allowed others to follow a similar path. Lack of discriminative thought may have let her down at times, but underpinning her endeavours there was always a belief in the possibility of change, and a courage to discard what had become unsatisfactory. Ultimately she devoted herself to following whatever avenues she could find, pursuing for herself and for others what she hoped would be a better and more meaningful life. □

**Reference:**

Rosemary Dinnage, *Annie Besant*, Penguin 1986



# Shadows of Childhood

Sridevi

1

I reach out a hand,  
a thought, my voice.

Do you see  
the shadows moving  
in my eyes?

Do you allow  
the darkness to play?

Here?  
Now?

Is there space  
for the night  
to flee?

2

Perhaps you will  
not hear?  
Won't respond?

I will be alone,  
trapped  
by transience.



3

To be spacious,  
and wide open to that  
which is here  
right now.

To be real  
and connected  
with that which is,  
spaciousness in you  
and in me.

That same stream  
of air that passes  
through all.

4

I want to be  
more real to you.

Prepared to meet  
even hate, coldness  
and shame.

So that reality  
can happen  
between us.

5

I fear that  
everything I give  
is swallowed up  
by emptiness.

I will be lost,  
not met by anyone.

Fear dams up  
my strength.  
I will be drained dry  
and cold.





6

And yet,  
from the depths  
rises the courage  
to be naked.

To let you see  
my fear,  
let the tears  
flow.

Emptiness is  
full of perfection  
when my trust  
is strong.

7

Empty, I come  
to meet you.

And hear  
time flying within us.

Without grasping  
I hold your  
hand in mine,

as if I knew that  
tomorrow  
you will die.



These poems, translated from the Finnish by Sridevi, were composed for the film *Five Exercises in Openness*, produced by Tuula Mehtonen (1996).

Tuula Mehtonen is a Mitra from Helsinki, Finland.

*Lotus Realm* gratefully acknowledges permission to reproduce the English version of these poems granted by Mandart Production, Helsinki.



**RIGHT LIVELIHOOD** is the fifth member of the Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path. Working in team-based Right Livelihood businesses has become a central spiritual practice for some people in the FWBO. Working together intensively most days of the week calls for greater honesty, clarity, and courage to speak out, to create genuine harmony and effectiveness in the team.

**Members of the Croydon Wholefood shop in South London share their discoveries....**



## Varakhanti

**"I HAVE NOTICED** recently that my lack of self-confidence and irrational fear of stating an opinion that is different from other people's has begun to disappear. It is being replaced by an enjoyment of expressing myself, by self-appreciation and respect for what I have to say. I don't think this would have happened if I had not been working with other women in the shop team for the last seven years or so.

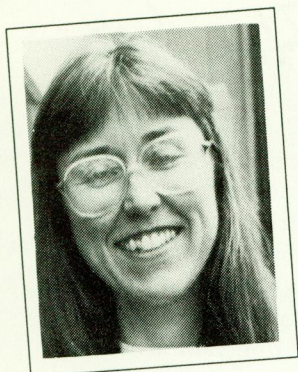
Before that, when I worked as a social worker, I used to present a confident exterior shell and didn't realize how much I was quaking inside. But that has all begun to change. I have learnt to say how I am feeling each working morning, and so take responsibility for what I am bringing to the team each day, I see my work taking place in a context of Dharma practice where we are trying to generate more and more

metta or loving kindness towards one another. The most important catalyst for change has been friendship – encouragement as well as challenge – with friends seeing me more clearly than I see myself and reflecting my potential back to me when I cannot see it. I have learnt, for instance, to curb my impulsiveness but without squashing my enthusiasm. I have learnt to overcome my difficulty in delegating ('If you want something done properly, do it yourself,' my mother used to say!) I am also realizing the benefits of practising exemplification. In expressing my views, I hear myself being clearer and more concise.

In this way the shell begins to break – by dint of the hammer blows, internal and external, but also because my new emerging self refuses to be contained any longer. It feels good!"

# RIGHT LIVELIHOOD LESSONS IN SPEAKING OUT WORKING GROUND





## Sue Barnikel

**"SPEAKING OUT** has been a major working ground for me since becoming involved with the FWBO about eight years ago. At that time I was afraid to express my feelings for fear of the reactions of others. Developing the ability to voice

criticisms has been a crucial

theme – not only learning to do so, but doing so with kindness. In learning to give criticism at first I just said what I thought, often in a hurtful manner, not really being aware of the effect my criticism might have on the other person. Sometimes I went to the other extreme, not saying anything at all, rationalizing my silence by saying to myself it was not an appropriate time to speak,

or that I should work on my end of the problem.

My working ground has been to find a balance in all this: to take into account the appropriateness of the time in speaking out, but not to use that as an excuse for dodging the issue. I have found that as my confidence and self-metta grow, so I am able to broach difficult areas in a more skilful fashion. I have also learnt to speak out more in the area of rejoicing in the good qualities of others, learning to express my affection for and appreciation of them.

Speaking out in both these areas has not been something I have kept only for my Buddhist friends. I have practised it with my family and non-Buddhist friends as well – and even with the customers in our Wholefood shop! I am grateful to have had the opportunity of working in a team-based Right Livelihood Business."



## Pauline Wilde

**"SINCE I WAS A CHILD** I have always liked helping people and doing things to make others happy. I became good at keeping the status quo, not rocking the boat, smoothing things over. In retrospect I would say I behaved like this out of fear. I was afraid that if I spoke out, saying what I really thought, others would be upset and would reject me – and I did not want to be alone. It gradually began to dawn on me that being 'nice' and pleasing others is not necessarily being kind. I often turned a blind eye to how things were because I wanted to avoid any unpleasantness – but if I avoid facing how things are, then I also avoid the possibility of changing and improving them.

It takes courage to speak out. Doing so is taking a step into the unknown since I cannot know what the outcome will be. But by holding back I find I am not in good communication with others. I'm not being completely

honest. I may not have told an untruth, but neither have I communicated truthfully.

I have learnt the importance of questioning. I am aware that sometimes I can make assumptions and then my mind gets into top gear and creates all sorts of scenarios which cause me to get angry or to feel hurt. But when I question I often find that I've caught the wrong end of the stick, and that actually there is nothing to warrant getting upset about.

When I hold back in communication, I've discovered that my friends pick up on it. In the same way, I notice it when others are holding back in their communication with me. On one occasion I was with a group of friends to whom I put forward a proposal that I wanted them to consider. None of them objected verbally but one of my friends was holding her body very tightly! After some gentle questioning,

she blurted out that I could do what I wanted, but she wasn't at all happy about it. I was rather surprised by my own response which was to go and give her a hug. I wasn't bothered that she disagreed with my proposal. What I actually felt was a sense of relief – I knew where I was with her. This episode was quite a lesson to me. I am realizing more and more how my friends appreciate me when I am being myself – warts and all!

I am grateful to the friend who gave me a card a few years ago on which she quoted a line from *the Life and Liberation of Padmasambhava*. It is a line on which I often reflect:

*"Acting to please others, rather than as one should, is to sell the priceless doctrine."*



## Karen Fletcher



### "A FEW WEEKS

AGO I went to see the film *Sense and Sensibility*. I thoroughly enjoyed the dramatization of Jane Austen's famous novel. But some of the characters left me with a sense of frustration. What frustrated me? It was their inability to communicate their true feelings and thoughts. Instead they politely gave voice to what was socially acceptable. I wanted to give them a good shake in an attempt to get them to speak out a bit more honestly!

I think I felt like this because I, too, have a tendency not to say

honestly what I think and feel. It's an area I've been working on for the last few years, and it continues to be an ongoing practice.

I don't find it difficult to rejoice in the good qualities of my friends and to express my positive response to them, but I do find it difficult to express any negative reaction I may have to their behaviour or to what is going on between us. I want to go away on my own to deal with my negative reactions and return to the Sangha and present only my positive side. That makes me feel like a nice ethical Buddhist, 'owning' my own negativity and

not 'splurging' it over my friends. But what actually happens is that in not voicing my negativity I begin to believe it doesn't exist at all and so I don't work to transform it – and of course, just because I don't voice those thoughts doesn't mean they don't have an effect on my behaviour. Any unspoken negativity on my part will usually seep out in non-verbal communication and get in the way of real communication. In not speaking out I hide aspects of myself and so put a limit on how far my friendships can go. And I want to go beyond the limitations of Jane Austen's characters!"



## Prajinagupta

"WHEN I SPEAK, I reveal my inner world to the outer universe. When I speak truthfully and nakedly, it is

the manifestation of my subjective thought and experience exposed to the potential objectivity of a wider reality. This can be a delight with the realization of the liberation held within it; or it can be dark and fearful, as I resist the possibility that 'out there' may challenge my view of 'in here'. To expose a thought brings the deluded fear that that thought is 'me' forever, and the fear that others may label me and dismiss me: these are the shackles of Eternalism. Not to expose a thought because I think it will not make any difference, or because I will not be heard or understood, is the gag of Nihilism. To speak with an awareness of the ever-changing process that is myself and to trust that others will be aware of this also, is a freedom: freedom from my capacity for staleness, freedom from my dread of others' real or imagined reactivity and ill-will; freedom from my existing state of ignorance.

Increased willingness to speak out brings with it a wider perception of the universe – by being willing to see through the eyes of others I bring a greater objectivity to my own narrow subjectivity. It is sometimes delightful and exciting, sometimes humbling and confusing, but if coupled with faith, then whatever the feeling, my myriad views are held more and more lightly, and I find myself becoming purer.

Through speaking out I have learnt to become clearer; I have increased my capacity to forgive; I have opened my heart to greater compassion for others; and have found the courage to say 'I love you' to my friends. I have unhooked myself from the barbed wire of guilt through confession, and sometimes I have helped others by sharing my love of the Dharma. I have learnt to criticize more skilfully and to appreciate and rejoice in others' merits. And I have deepened my experience of human beings as transitory – and because so ephemeral, see that they are both fascinating and beautiful." □



## NEWS

## PUBLIC PRECEPTOR IN INDIA

Srimala, one of the Western Buddhist Order's Public Preceptors, reports on her visit to India earlier this year:

I went to India in January for a six week visit. For the last four years I have been visiting India regularly for a few weeks each year. The purpose of my visits is to help establish and consolidate the women's wing of the Order there.

In 1993 and 1994 nine women were ordained, bringing the total number of Dharmacharinis in India up to twelve. There was great excitement and rejoicing on these occasions. People felt the women's wing of the Order had now been established in India. A more substantial example was being shown to those hundreds of women who wanted to lead their lives in accordance with the Dharma.

Over the last two years there have in fact been no more ordinations. This has, perhaps, been a source of disappointment and even discouragement to some. However, I believe that we still have reason for great excitement and rejoicing. For the women's wing of the Order has begun and, even though it might not grow at a steadily increasing rate, there can be no doubt that it will grow.

While I was in India this year I led three retreats. The first one was for Dharmacharinis and it was held at Sadhamma Pradeep, the retreat centre at Bhaja. Punyavati, who has been working in India for six months of each year, had just finished leading a number of retreats at Bhaja and so she was able to warn me of the 'water problem'. The pump was not working properly and the water level was very low. This meant that the job of pumping water was even more strenuous than usual, and the water had to be rationed. The main thrust



Srimala (centre) on retreat in India

of the retreat was to deepen *kalyana mitrata*, spiritual friendship, amongst ourselves. In particular I wanted to see friendships within the Order becoming stronger as a basis from which to encourage the development of *kalyana mitrata* more widely. We incorporated the 'water problem' into our theme, and as it took up more and more of our attention we decided to study the *Water Sutta*.

The main point of the *sutta* is that no matter how conducive to spiritual practice our circumstances might be, there are always difficulties to confront. There are always obstacles to overcome. As the water situation became more serious, we reflected on the great opportunity we had for making more concerted effort in our practice.

The second retreat was for Mitras who had asked for ordination. The retreat centre community assured us they would do their best to keep us supplied with water. They had already ordered a couple of drums to be brought in by bullock cart from the nearby village. We managed for several days but

eventually, with much regret and some relief, we decided to cut the retreat short and so, after only five days together, we found ourselves saying fond farewells and wending our way across the dried up rice fields, to be picked up by jeep from the village or to walk on to the railway station.

The third retreat was at Bor Dharan Retreat Centre. It was another small retreat for Mitras who have asked for ordination from Nagpur and Wardha. I was very pleased to have the opportunity of visiting Bor Dharan and meeting the women there.

My last two weeks were spent in the women's Community at Vishrantwadi in Pune where I enjoyed getting to know the bright and lively members of the Community; and spending time with the two Order members who live there, Vimalashuri and Alokashri, with whom I was able to deepen my communication. I was left with a strong impression: How hard they all work, and how much they want to learn and understand the Dharma. □



# India REVISITED

**Padmashuri lived and worked for several years in India, both as community nurse and Dharma teacher. (Her experiences are recorded in her book, *But Little Dust.*) Recently she revisited the country after a five year absence. She writes:**

**DONNING MY SARI**, one of the first places I visited was Dapodi, one of the poorest areas of Pune, to meet the health and social workers. Women with familiar faces greeted me, beaming, and garlanded me. They introduced me to the new kindergarten teachers, locality health workers, creche 'mothers', and the recently appointed lady doctor. Some were surprised I could remember their names. I was surprised I had not forgotten how to speak Marathi. I met up with Sushila who has helped in various capacities on our project work in Pune since its

she informed me of new developments and pioneering work.

'Is that 'Sister' who used to work here?' one woman called out to Sushila, while scrubbing brass pots in the mud beside an open gutter that ran between ramshackle huts. Some of the young men and women were probably babies I'd vaccinated, or treated for fevers, threadworm or infected eyes and ears. Some, perhaps, were once on our 'red' list of malnourished children. So many seemed vaguely familiar, as were the sounds, the smells, the chatter. I was stepping back in time, not without some waves of nostalgia. Everywhere I went people remembered me, filled me in on family concerns and regaled me with anecdotes of times we'd spent together.

I stayed in the impressive women's community in Pune, set



**Padmashuri (right) with Vimalashuri, 1980's**

attached to the community, or else in various capacities in the social project based in Dapodi. Keen, bright, and as yet unattached young women, they are struggling to come to terms with living and working together in a way that is a radical departure from the norms of society – even more so than in the West. They work incredibly hard, as well as keeping up a meditation practice, attending community evenings, going on retreats and attending Dharma classes.

During my visit, I realized that with the experience I've gained over the last five years of working in team-based Right Livelihood in the UK, I had much to offer these women, so I arranged a couple of workshops on aspects of team building which were much enjoyed and appreciated.

I was left with the impression that there is much enthusiasm and receptivity to the Dharma amongst the women. There was a depth of communication, honesty and an understanding of putting the Dharma into practice in one's every day life that I had not experienced so tangibly there before. On many occasions I was heartened and touched by a sense of the Dharma pulsating through the lives of the women I met. □



**Indian City scene**

inauguration in 1983. Now married with a family, she has become a Mitra and requested ordination. Sushila took me out into the shanty-dwelling slums. As we wound our way through narrow alleys, once well trodden by me,

up during my last visit to India five years ago. Eight – mostly young – Mitras and two Dharmacharinis live there, including my dear friend Vimalashuri who is Mitra Convenor for women throughout India. The others all work either as wardens at the girls' hostel



# MEETING RESPONSIBILITY

*Kalyanaprabha reports:*

## TARALOKA RETREAT CENTRE

was the venue for a special event in April when twelve Dharmacharinis from five different countries convened for a seminar on the theme: *'Responding to the Cries of the World: Taking Responsibility and Spiritual Life.'*

The idea of holding such an event was conceived last Summer when a number of women Chairmen were discussing the lack of Dharmacharinis at a number of FWBO Centres. In the UK, for instance, there are at least half a dozen such Centres. In America and Australasia there are a number of places where there is only a single Dharmacharini. How could women Order members be encouraged to venture forth to new situations, and what was it that was holding them back?

Vidyavati, a New Zealander who for the past six years has been pioneering in America, organized and led the event. In her invitation she reminded participants that *"taking responsibility in the spiritual life is essentially about the Bodhisattva Ideal. Realizing the truth of dukkha and seeing suffering in the world, the compassionate response is to want to help relieve it. In doing so we take responsibility both for the well-being of others and for ourselves, since we must grow to be effective in encouraging others' spiritual growth."*

The six day event included a number of papers. Samata, Chairman of Tiratanaloka Retreat Centre, gave a paper entitled *Cultivating Vision - Thinking Big*. Using her experience of setting up an ordina-

tion retreat centre for women, she drew out various principles, including the importance of discovering and maintaining a Transcendental perspective in one's life and work. Parami, co-Chairman of FWBO Valencia in Spain, spoke on *Obstacles to Taking Responsibility*. As well as discussing the effects, both practical and psychological, of the pulls of

alternative health centre in East London, now the highly successful *Bodywise*, showing how, through trial and error, various principles of Right Livelihood had become clear to the team of women who now run the business.

Talks were followed by discussion, both formal and, more informally, over meals and cups of tea. The

week was not a wholly serious affair, however. One evening the lounge became the venue for an impromptu soiree with music making, story-telling and charades.

It was the first time such large numbers of Dharmacharinis who have taken substantial responsibility in the FWBO have come together. As the week went on we found ourselves coming into greater

harmony and understanding, not only through the talks and discussions, but also through simply living and practising together. Each day included meditation and puja in the peaceful atmosphere of Taraloka's new shrine room.

What the on-going effects of such an event might be we will have to wait and see. More immediately we hope to make some of the material available for wider circulation. Long term we hope it will stimulate in the women's wing of the WBO a greater willingness and even eagerness to move out, to pioneer, to go where women Order members are needed, out of a desire to respond to the Buddha's injunction to his disciples that they go out and teach, 'for the happiness and benefit of the manyfolk.'



motherhood, she had some interesting points to make about the relationship between private property and participation in public life, referring to the status of women in Plato's two utopias described in *The Republic* and his later *Laws*. Kulanandi, women's Mitra Convenor in Essen, Germany, and one of the founders of Taraloka Retreat Centre, spoke with considerable humour and perspicacity about *Taking Responsibility and the Single Sex Situation*. Do women sometimes hold one another back, and do they sell themselves short by preferring to support men rather than pursuing their own spiritual growth?

Evening sessions were set aside for more personal talks including one from Maitreyi. She spoke from her experience of setting up an





# NEWS FROM THE ORDINATION TEAM

**The Ordination Team is responsible for preparing women for ordination into the Western Buddhist Order. Much of their work involves running retreats at the Tiratanaloka Retreat Centre in Wales.**

*Mokshanandi, one of the resident support team, reports:*

At the beginning of February the JCB digger made its way through the deep snow to start digging the foundations for an extension to our community house.

Planned for completion in May, this will comprise three bedrooms, two offices, a bathroom, shrine room, sitting room and utility area. While on site the builders also erected a small Summer house which is situated in the lower garden under beech trees. This will be the shrine room in which private ordination ceremonies will take place.

With the extra space we can now enlarge the resident community: the ordination team is to be joined by two new members. First to arrive will be Ratnadharini, who worked for many years in women's team-based Right Livelihoods in London. She recently returned from six months in Australia working



**Sangharakshita (right) with members of the Tiratanaloka community**

at the Melbourne Buddhist Centre. In August 1997, Maitreyi will join the team. Maitreyi helped establish the Bodywise Alternative Health Centre in East London. She currently works at the London Buddhist Centre with women who have asked for ordination. Silaprabha, who has been part of the support team responsible for maintenance and organization

of retreats, will be leaving this Summer to be replaced by New Zealander Aryashuri, who will be moving here from London.

Sangharakshita, and his secretary Kovida, a member of the Preceptor's College, visited us for a second time in March. During his visit we took Bhante to some local waterfalls which were still hung with icicles from the cold and wintry weather. Whilst he was here, he suggested we raise funds to build a stupa in the grounds of Tiratanaloka to hold some of the ashes of his

teacher Dhardo Rimpoche. On the last night of the visit, we each took the opportunity to rejoice in Sangharakshita's merits and to thank him for his involvement in the ordination process for women over the last 28 years. □

## Forthcoming Ordinations

This year's ordination retreat for women runs for four weeks in June and into July. Twelve women have been invited on the retreat from four countries including Finland, Germany, the USA and Britain. By the time this issue of *Lotus Realm* reaches bookshops, all being well, the twelve women will have had their Going for Refuge witnessed in private ordination ceremonies during which they will undertake the practice of the Ten Ethical Precepts and receive a new name; and their public ordinations will have taken place in a ceremony that will mark their joining the Western Buddhist Order.

Srimala will conduct the public ordinations this

year. (She, along with Sanghadevi and Ratnashuri are public preceptors.) Private ordinations will be conducted by a growing number of 'private preceptors': as well as the public preceptors they include Anjali, Dhammadinna and Ratnavandana.

At around the same time, men's ordinations will take place at the Guhyaloka retreat centre in Spain. The ordination ceremony for men and women entering the Western Buddhist Order is the same. No distinction is made as to which practices a man or women may take up and they have the same duties and responsibilities.

The next issue of *Lotus Realm* will include a full report of the ordination retreat. □



# Remembering a Spiritual Friend



*Mamaki was a member of the Western Buddhist Order for twenty-three years. She died earlier this year. Mettaviharin writes:*

**MAMAKI AND I** loved walking, sharing the delights of the countryside as well as our companionship. We would admire the blue

sky with its wispy white clouds; rejoice in the beauty of the trees; and enjoy good conversation on a variety of subjects.

I first met Mamaki in January 1989. She was a friendly, open person, a good listener. The photo captures her smiling welcome and openness, her warm hospitality whenever we met at her home. Her window ledge shows her love of nature: she had a great interest in gardening; loved visiting garden centres, the Chelsea flower show and the beautiful gardens at Wisley.

Mamaki was in her 40's when she first met Sangharakshita. He had come to give a talk at one of her Quaker meetings. She was impressed both by the talk and the answers he gave to questions. She was ordained by him on Sangha Day 1972. The name he chose was very apt, 'Mamaki' being an aspect of Buddha nature

that regards all things as dear, as beloved. Through her life she touched many people as an Order member and through her work as a Jungian analyst. From early on in her Order life Mamaki taught meditation. She is also remembered for her 'dream groups' of the early days of the FWBO when people would meet together to talk about their dreams. She was a calming influence in groups, bringing a word of wisdom.

She died after several months illness on January 24th. Many Order members attended the funeral to take their farewell, to rejoice in Mamaki's merits and to wish her well. □

## EVOLVING IN DUBLIN

PAULINE MAGUIRE REPORTS

IN NOVEMBER 1995 the first ever team-based Right Livelihood for women in Ireland opened its doors, trading as Evolution, Dublin. Initially planned as a Christmas shop, but still in business this Summer, the shop is run by a team of four women: a yoga teacher, an ex-graphic designer, a psychology graduate and an ex-art student. With no Dharmacharini in Dublin as yet, our Right Livelihood provides a focus for other women who can see the spiritual life being lived out in a practical way. The team has found the project very worthwhile. It has deepened our communication with one another, helping to illuminate limiting view and ideas, enabling us to challenge and go beyond them. The work is also good fun; whilst the Evolution shop itself brings some beauty to an otherwise unattractive part of Dublin.

## Publications Team on the move

IN APRIL Windhorse Publications' editorial team – Jan Parker, Helen Argent, Lottie Berthoud and Vidyadevi – moved from Norwich to Birmingham, to form a new community, 'Susamaya', and set up a new office in 'the Custard Factory', where the men's team responsible for sales, marketing, accounts and distribution have already been based for two years.

In its twenty year history, Windhorse Publications has moved around a lot. At a crucial time in the business's development it was run by a women's team in Glasgow. The recent move represents an important step forward at a time when more titles than ever are being published.

Another development is the recent publication of Windhorse's

first book by a woman writer, Srimala's autobiography, *Breaking Free*. There are more books by women Order members in the pipeline.

The editorial team is involved in all aspects of a book's life, from commissioning and receiving authors' manuscripts to the point at which the book goes to press. They are currently looking for extra voluntary help, especially in the areas of editing, sub-editing and proof-reading. If you have experience or interest in any of these areas and would like to help, please contact Helen at Windhorse Publications Editorial Office, Unit 1-314, The Custard Factory, Gibb Street, Digbeth, Birmingham B9 4AA; phone 0121-604 9977; e-mail Compuserve 100545,2201. □



# Secret Desire

## Traveller in Space: In Search of Female Identity in Tibetan Buddhism

June Campbell

Athlone Press 1996, pp225, £17.95 h/b

### BOOK REVIEW BY DHARMACHANDRA

THE IDEA THAT SEX can be a Buddhist spiritual practice is unique to the Tibetan Tantra, where it is seen as a practice belonging to the highest reaches of the spiritual path. Take this idea and add to it the emphasis which the Tibetan tradition places on unquestioning devotion to one's guru, then transport it to the fluid sexual mores of the West – and inevitably problems arise.

June Campbell, author of this latest critique of Eastern Buddhism come West, was for several years the 'secret consort' of a respected Kagyu lama, ostensibly a monk. But her book is not just an exotic 'kiss and tell' story. She asks searching questions about Tibetan Buddhism and its encounter with the West.

Her primary aim is to examine Tibetan Buddhism's conception of gender and its implications for women practitioners of the Dharma. She takes a feminist-psychoanalytic theoretical perspective, arguing that analysis of gender relationships – including those within religious institutions – needs to take into account the individual psychological development of men and women.

She explores pre-Buddhist influences in Tibet, and shows how many ancient goddesses changed gender as cultural values changed. She argues that, although there have been great women practitioners in Tibet, over time there developed an androcentric perspective on spiritual matters – the female became of secondary importance, and was categorized in relation and opposition to the male. She believes that this process led to ambiguities – for example, despite the existence of many female deities, women were virtually absent from positions of religious authority.

The author goes on to analyse the tulku system as providing a means of succession in which the female becomes almost dispensable – the mother's only role is to bear the child and surrender him to the system. She explores the psychological effects of leaving one's family and entering a monastery at such a young age. From the point of view of Tibetan Buddhism, the tulku is not bound by the ordinary person's emotional responses. But from the psychoanalyst's perspective, she sees "the trauma which surrounded the early lives of these boys...as of great importance for the

*development of their sense of self' and suggests that it might lead to a desire for 'secret relationships which carried no responsibilities.'*

Her own experience is reflected in her discussion of the secret consort or songyum (literally 'secret mother'). Although this is often described metaphorically, as a visualized deity, she argues that in practice many lamas and monks – in traditional Tibet and now in the West – have actual sexual partners, in great secrecy so as not to undermine the structures of the system or the devotion of the laity. Women's acquiescence is explained in terms of the prestige of being a songyum and the culture of faith in the guru – it is not a meeting of 'two autonomous individuals'.

One chapter is devoted to the significance of the dakini. Campbell contends that "the mere existence of such symbols is no guarantee of either a living female tradition, or positive and beneficial symbolism for female practitioners." She argues that the imagery is described from the perspective of the male practitioner, so that the dakini is a complement or helper rather than 'mistress of her own domain.' She suggests that this echoes Lacan's view of the feminine as merely an absence, a problematic notion for women's sense of subjective identity.

Campbell's generally lucid argument does sometimes slide into tenuous speculation. Padmasambhava is described as if he brought patriarchy to Tibet rather than Buddhism; and elsewhere she implies that the Buddha is central in iconography because he is male, rather than because he is Enlightened! She argues that, "if scholars were able to abstract the Buddha from his male gender...there might be more possibility of reaching an understanding of the emptiness of all gender categories' – but surely practitioners can do this, even if scholars cannot?"

In this book, Campbell raises some important issues that merit serious consideration. One of her main themes is that notions of the female and of women's place in spiritual life have generally been defined from a male point of view – men as subject, women as object, as 'other'. She accepts that the teachings of Buddhism – in terms of basic doctrines and ethics – are complete for practitioners of either gender, but argues that we need a



deeper understanding of what *"the unique facets about being female' mean for spiritual practice. Women need to be actively involved in this, for they cannot 'claim to be victims of the system which has dictated their position whilst they themselves remained silent and collusive."*

She argues that the Tibetan Buddhist lineage has no structures which address the different needs of women and gives only one example of these issues being reflected elsewhere: Tsultrim Allione's 'Dakini Retreats.' She calls for 'unequivocal acceptance of female practitioners.' She would certainly find this in the FWBO where single-sex situations provide conditions for clarifying the respective spiritual experiences and needs of women and men, with the ultimate aim of transcending limitations.

Campbell's provocative book challenges some cherished assumptions and will be of particular interest to women (and men) practising within a traditional Tibetan system. She highlights problematic aspects of the transposition of Tibetan Buddhism to the West which can be masked by our tendency to idealize Tibet.

At times she seems to rather lose sight of the Dharma in the attempt to free it from Tibetan accretions. She is right, however, that in the history of Buddhism *"changes and upheavals...have taken place through debate and reformation of thought and institution."* But we need to exercise caution in applying Western ideas – whether feminist, psychoanalytic or any other – to Eastern Buddhist traditions. Unless we pay heed to the *Vimalakirti Nirdeśa's* advice to 'determine the Dharma according to the Dharma', we might simply replace Tibetan cultural distortions with our own. □

## RETREAT FOR OLDER WOMEN December 9 – 13th 1996

*an Opportunity  
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for  
Study*

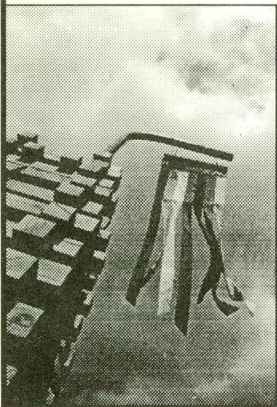
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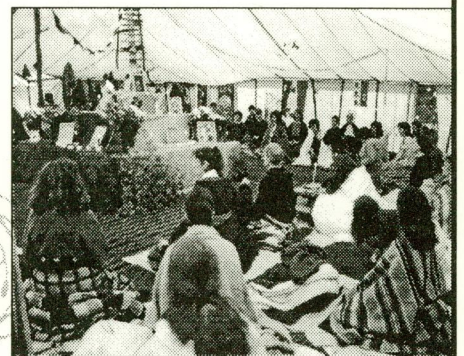
**TARA FESTIVAL**  
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All women welcome

**CREATING TARA'S REALM**  
A Landscaping Project  
16 – 25th July

*Become part of the Community at Taraloka as  
we all work together to create Tara's realm*



led by  
Vajramala,  
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For more details about these events and others held at Taraloka, please contact:  
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## **LOTUS REALM REPRESENTATIVES AT FWBO CENTRES**

### **BRITAIN**

**LONDON BUDDHIST CENTRE** 51 Roman Road, London E2 OHU: Subhadramati  
**BIRMINGHAM BUDDHIST CENTRE** 135 Salisbury Road, Moseley, Birmingham B13 8AL: Penny Brown  
**BRIGHTON BUDDHIST CENTRE** 15 Park Crescent Place, Brighton BN2 3HF: Annie McAuley  
**BRISTOL BUDDHIST CENTRE** 9 Cromwell Road, St Andrews, Bristol BS6 5HD: Pat Finnegan  
**CAMBRIDGE BUDDHIST CENTRE** 25 Newmarket Road, Cambridge CB5 8EG: Brenda Kent  
**FWBO COLCHESTER** c/o 13 Chrismund Way, Great Tey, Essex, CO6 1AZ  
**CROYDON BUDDHIST CENTRE** 96-98 High Street, Croydon, Surrey CRO 1ND: Franky Henly  
**EDINBURGH BUDDHIST CENTRE** 55A Grange Road, Edinburgh, EH9 1TX: Linda Goodman  
**GLASGOW BUDDHIST CENTRE** 329 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow G2 3HW: Patricia Beshal  
**LANCASHIRE BUDDHIST CENTRE** 78-80 King William Street, Blackburn, Lancs, BB1 7DT: Kay Stubbs  
**LEEDS BUDDHIST CENTRE** 9 Heddon Place, Meanwood, Leeds LS6 4EL: Patience Walker  
**LIVERPOOL MEDITATION CENTRE** 37 Hope Street, Liverpool L1 9EA: Penny Morris  
**MANCHESTER BUDDHIST CENTRE** 16/20 Turner Street, Manchester M4 1DZ: Jackie Cole  
**NOTTINGHAM BUDDHIST CENTRE** 9 St Mary's Place, St Mary's Gate, Nottingham, NG1 1PH: to be appointed  
**NEWCASTLE BUDDHIST CENTRE** 3rd Floor, Newe House, 10-12 Pilgrim Street, Newcastle, NE1 6QG: to be appointed  
**NORTH LONDON BUDDHIST CENTRE** St Mark's Studio, 12 Chillingworth Road, London N7 8SJ: Jill Warner  
**NORWICH BUDDHIST CENTRE** 41a All Saints Green, Norwich NR1 3LY: Mollie Hamling  
**FWBO SHEFFIELD** c/o 354 Crookesmoor Road, Sheffield S10 1BH: Linda Thomas  
**WEST LONDON BUDDHIST CENTRE** 94 Westbourne Park Villas, London W2 5PL: Catherine Hopper  
**TARALOKA WOMEN'S RETREAT CENTRE** Cornhill Farm, Bettisfield, nr. Whitchurch, Shropshire, SY13 2LV: Dayamala

### **EUROPE**

**FWBO IRELAND** South Frederick Street, Dublin 2, Ireland: Anne McMahon  
**CENTRO BUDISTA DE VALENCIA** Plaza Rojas, Clemente 3 Bajo, Valencia, 46008 Spain: Paramachitta  
**FWBO GERMANY** Buddhistisches Zentrum Essen, Herkulesstr. 13, 45127 Essen, Germany: Andrea Brandenburger  
**HELSINGIN BUDDHALAINEN KESKUS** PL 288, SF-00121, Helsinki 12, Finland: Marke Hankama  
**BOEDDHISTISCH CENTRUM AMSTERDAM** Palmstraat 63, 1015 HP, Amsterdam, Netherlands: Khemasiri  
**VASTERLANDSKA BUDDHISTORDENS VANNER** Soddermannagatan 58, S-116 65 Stockholm, Sweden: Lisbet Hvarfner

### **AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND**

**AUCKLAND BUDDHIST CENTRE** 381 Richmond Road, Grey Lynn, Auckland 2, New Zealand: Averil Hunt  
**WELLINGTON BUDDHIST CENTRE** PO Box 12 – 311, Wellington North, New Zealand: Varadevi  
**MELBOURNE BUDDHIST CENTRE** 34 Bishop Street, Brunswick, Victoria 3056, Australia: to be appointed  
**SYDNEY BUDDHIST CENTRE** PO Box 725 Coogee, NSW 2034, Australia: Caroline Ralston

### **USA**

**ARYALOKA RETREAT CENTER** Heartwood Circle, Newmarket, New Hampshire 03857, USA: Viriyagita  
**FWBO SEATTLE** 2410 E. Interlaken Blvd, Seattle, WA 98112, USA: Sandra Roulette  
**SAN FRANCISCO BUDDHIST CENTER** 39 Bartlett Street, San Francisco, CA 94110, USA: Lisa Cullen

### **INDIA**

**TBMSG (INDIAN CENTRES)** c/o Dhammachakra Pavartan Mahavihar, Raja Harishchandra Road, Dapodi, Poona 411012, India