



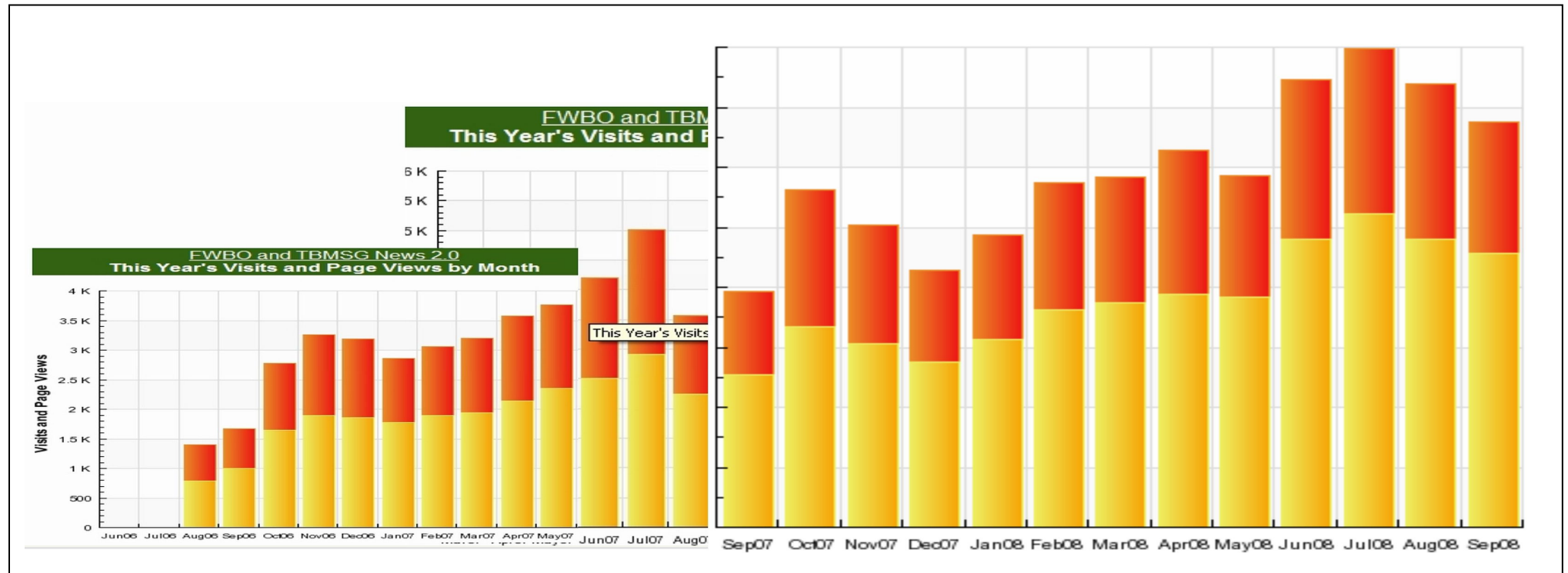
FWBO and TBMSG News:

Collected stories September - July 2008

on the web at: www.fwbo-news.org | news@fwbo-news.org

FWBO News' readership grows – and grows

Since the new FWBO News site was launched by Jayarava in June 2006, readership has climbed steadily. The graph shows just how, and the present level which is running at approx 7,000/month. In addition every story is emailed to approx 370 subscribers using the 'Feedblitz' service.



Monday, September 29

New Students arrive at Nagaloka in India



Nagaloka is TBMSG's training centre on the outskirts of Nagpur, in Central India. Every year it takes a batch of young Buddhist men and women from all over India and gives them a year-long intensive training in both the Dhamma and basic social work – plus marketable skills such as NVC (Non-Violent Communication). After completing the course, some stay for further training while the majority return home and begin to do what they can for the Dhamma in their local areas. In this way a network of over 200 has built up, an India-wide network that is gathering strength every year.

Vivekaratna, Nagaloka's Director, has written to FWBO News to say – "The Inauguration Ceremony of the VIIth batch was held at Nagaloka on 6th July 2008. It is a special year for us because so many are female – in total we have 23 Female & 44 Male. They come from 14 states of India – this too is great news. In addition 6 Trainees from 6th Batch have stayed on and joined the community in Nagaloka.

You can see photographs of Nagaloka on the FWBO Photos site – specifically at www.flickr.com/photos/fwbo/sets/72157594310787939, including a detailed map, produced in 2007, of all TBMSG groups across India.

Sunday, September 28

Rijumati's travels - Part VI - Hiroshima, Kyoto, and more, in Japan

Rijumati, an Order Member from Cambridge UK, has been travelling the world since the end of last year, making every effort to avoid flying. His travels have taken him from the UK by cargo ship to Sri Lanka, across India, to Russia and Japan.



He has now published part 6 of his travel journal, which includes visits to Hiroshima, Kyoto, Honshu, and elsewhere. His travels are often in the spirit and even the footsteps of the great Buddhist Japanese poet Basho. As Rijumati himself writes -

*Ah, so wonderful
To meet a friend along the Way
The boats and trains
Grow weary of my solitude.*

Part 6 can be accessed at
www.fwbo-news.org/features/Rijumati_travels_VI_japan.pdf

Friday, September 26

Respiravida: 'Breathworks' launches in Spain

Breathworks (<http://breathworks-mindfulness.org.uk>) is the FWBO's newest (and very successful) Right Livelihood business. Started by Vidyamala in Manchester, UK, they have grown to a world-wide community of trainers offering "mindfulness-based pain management and strategies for living well to anyone wishing to live a richer life and feel a greater sense of initiative and confidence".

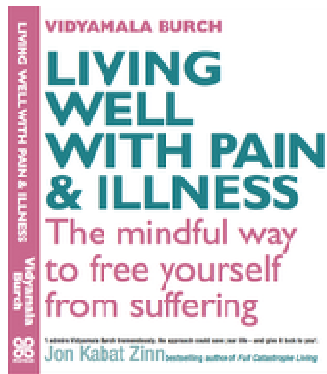


Now the Breathworks approach has spread to Spain and the Spanish-speaking world, with the launch of RespiraVida (literally, "breathe life") and their website www.respiravida.net.

This wasn't easy, there being substantial barriers of distance and language to overcome. Initially Dharmakirti and Satyabhasana, two Order Members based around the FWBO's **Valencia center**, travelled to England to do the two week-long residential training courses. After this, in order to qualify as Breathworks trainers, they had to run a practice course with distance monitoring – not so simple. As Satyabhasana explained to FWBO News, “this, of course, meant that we had to translate both the course manual and the CDs into Spanish, which was a fairly long but also interesting undertaking”.

She goes on to say “Since then we have run a further course at the Valencia Buddhist Centre and are about to branch out into a new venue, a local association which supports people with cancer and other serious illnesses. We are also planning to launch a distance learning course, as the demand seems to be there.

“If you'd like more information (in Spanish) visit www.respiravida.net or e-mail us (in Spanish or English) at respiravida@gmail.com”.



Back in the UK, Breathworks are eagerly awaiting the November publication of Vidyamala's book 'Living Well with Pain and Illness: The mindful way to free yourself from suffering'. Excellent reviews are already available on the **Resources** page of the Breathworks website and copies may be pre-ordered there with a 5% discount and free UK postage and packing.

FWBO Dharma Training Course for Mitras

Candradasa from FreeBuddhistAudio writes –



“This is just a wee note to let you know about the launch of the first **all new** sections of the new FWBO Dharma Training Course for Mitras. Modules on 'The Sangha', 'The Buddha's Eightfold Path', and 'The Bodhisattva Ideal' are now live, you can find

them at www.freebuddhistaudio.com/study/yeartwo, with full references embedded in the study files themselves. We've formatted these files to print out for use in a study group, and also to make them easy to read, navigate and search on-screen.

The new course is designed primarily for **Mitras** ('friends') involved with the FWBO Buddhist community. It aims to give people in the FWBO a thorough grounding in Dharma study and practice. It also makes an excellent general course for anyone interested in putting Buddhist teaching into practice in their life.

The rest of the course is currently being developed by a number of members of the Western Buddhist Order. New modules will be made available as they become ready through 2008 and the beginning of 2009. Check out each year's page for an advance preview of what's in store, and to sign up for regular updates on new sections as they become available.

At present, the course is being hosted on **Free Buddhist Audio** (www.freebuddhistaudio.com), and you can access it easily from there too via the 'Study' section.

Happy faring...

ps. The new site has been developed to enable a free service to be kept in place for all users. To help us keep the service free, please think about making a donation. Many thanks!

Thursday, September 25

Maitreyabandhu wins poetry prize



Last year FWBO News reported Maitreyabandhu, from the London Buddhist Centre, had won first prize in the Manchester Cathedral Poetry Competition with his poem 'Visitation'.

This year, he's come second, and we're pleased to reproduce his new poem, 'The Bond' here.

Maitreyabandhu writes –

“Dear Friend,

“I hope you don't mind me sending you this poem. I only send them out if they have won a prize or something (I dislike having poetry inflicted on me!...As I am sure you do) This poem won second prize in the Manchester Cathedral Poetry Competition (the competition I won first prize in last year). So I thought I would send it to you. It arose out of my meditation practice — in fact I wrote it straight after a meditation on a recent solitary retreat. I hope you like it. I also include the judges' comments on it.

Linda Chase (judge): “This is an unrhymed sonnet in the contemporary style – not too strict on meter. It has a wonderful clarity from which arises a huge idea. Whether we think the speaker is waiting for the second coming of Christ, or for another kind of salvation, it is clear that tolerance and love will be part of the eventual realisation. The simple details employed in this poem totally disarm me. The last line, the last phrase – they are totally stunning.”

“Love, Maitreyabandhu

The Bond

*Now that we are here again in this dark place
we must find something – a scratch of light,
an oval pebble. And we must sit here quietly
till he comes, wait patiently, not look
too often out of the window, not peep,
but know that he is coming, yes, and make
a clean place – like having clipped nails
and washed hands and a sharp pencil at the ready.
No crumbs. No digressions. We should say
gentle now and gentleness, like someone calming
a horse, or helping a child hold a kitten.
But not sweetly, not gingerly – hair pulled back,
buttons and a smock – he wouldn't want that.
Just the air blowing through us. Just the air.*

Tuesday, September 23

New edition of FWBO Puja Book now available



Windhorse Publications (www.windhorsepublications.co.uk), for many years the FWBO's principle publisher, have just released their new and updated edition of the FWBO Puja book. Among other things the translation of the Heart Sutra has been revised and the typeface made easier to read for shrine-room use. Also, for the first time, it is available in paperback.

Copies may be ordered via your local FWBO Centre or directly from Windhorse – both hardback **or** paperback . In Australia and New Zealand, contact Windhorse Books Australia (www.windhorse.com.au).

Their website also carries extracts from the book, notably the Introduction, where Dhammadinna has beautifully written -

"Imagine a world without colour, beauty, poetry, myth, celebration, or ritual. Such a world would be a very dull, drab, dead world indeed. Such experiences are essential to human life; they cultivate our emotions, refine our senses, and enrich our imaginations. Poetry, symbol, myth, and ritual carry us – as Shelley suggests in his Defence of Poetry – 'to regions of light and fire, where the winged faculty of calculation dare not ever soar'. We cannot live in the realm of rational thought alone. To feel fully and vibrantly alive, we must feel in touch with all the different aspects and levels of our being.

"Buddhism is a spiritual tradition, and as such speaks to us in our wholeness. Its various practices can help us to bring into being a harmony of body, speech, and mind. Throughout its history, therefore, many forms of ceremony and ritual have been developed. These range from the simplest recitation of a few verses to the most complex and lengthy rituals".

Highly recommended.

Monday, September 22

New chairman in Edinburgh



Vajrahridaya was last week installed as the new Chairman of the FWBO's Edinburgh Buddhist Centre (www.edinburghbuddhistcentre.org.uk). He took over from Kalyanavaca, who had served as Chair for the past 8 years and steered the Centre through two moves and a variety of hired premises to its present, permanent, location. Vajrahridaya is the first Indian Order Member to become Chairman of any FWBO centre (outside India, of course). However, he's lived in Scotland for several years, having originally moved there to be cook at Dhanakosa retreat centre.

Trained originally as a doctor in Maharashtra, India, he told FWBO News that for some time he'd been feeling the urge to put his energy into "something bigger, something more Dharmic", and that the opportunity to be chair had come at just the right time – and, having spotted it, he simply had to respond.

The occasion was marked by a two-hour ceremony for the local Sangha in which Parami, their president, and a member of the

FWBO Preceptors' College (www.preceptorscollege.org), presided. The highlight of the evening was perhaps the presentation to Vajrahridaya of a Jewel, representing the Bodhicitta – which he then planted in the centre of a Mandala, symbolising all aspects of the Edinburgh centre and even the wider world around it.

As Vajrahridaya explained, "for me, the Mandala represents a sacred circle of harmony and transformation. I see the Buddhist Centre as a series of circles, or teams, all overlapping and all in harmony, some working for the Centre itself and some reaching out to society around". He went on to say "Actually, we'll mostly

be carrying on Kalyanavaca's work –she has laid all the foundations for us to build on".

Far from going into an early retirement, Kalyanavaca has immediately joined a Karuna door-knocking fundraising appeal (www.karunaappeals.org.uk) in nearby Glasgow – after which, she says, she'll have a well-earned 'gap year'. As part of the leaving celebrations she was presented with a cheque, collected from members of the Sangha. She was delighted, and says she plans to pass it to Aloka, the WBO's most prolific artist, who is at present working on an Avalokitesvara painting for her.

The photograph shows Kalyanavaca and Vajrahridaya, both looking remarkably at home in one another's national costumes.

Saturday, September 20

Clowning and Insight in Scotland



Jayachitta has sent FWBO News this report of the FWBO's first-ever 'Clowning and Insight' retreat, held recently at Dhanakosa retreat centre (www.dhanakosa.com) in Scotland.

She writes -

"Dhanakosa in early autumn was the perfect venue for this first ever 'Clowning & Insight' retreat. The skies gave us clear and calm skies and the loch was often still like a mirror.

"'It's all about space' was what inspired both Tejananda and myself, co-leaders of this retreat. Central to 'Open Awareness' meditation is the experience of ever-present space that is always available. It is this space that allows ever-changing experience to arise and pass, being just what it is, and not the 'I' that we so often construct out of it with our habitual minds. Whilst in the quiet of our meditation we turn towards this experience with interest and care. Clowning allows us to share what goes on from moment to moment publicly - with everyone!

"Body-work, dance and partner exercises led us - on a road of much play and laughter - to discover our very own clown. We found out what he or she likes, how they dress, what moves them, and just which other clown might set them of to discover joy, longing, jealousy or vulnerability. Our clowns even learned to meditate! All of that was shared and shown, and appreciated by an empathetic audience, who only knows too well what those states are like!

"Clowning allows us to be so much more that we usually do. The 'smallest mask in the world' (Jacques Lecoq) - the red nose - liberates us from our ideas of what we should be (or what we are afraid we might be!), and allows us the great space to be whatever is arising - without fixing it into a personal identity. So insight and clowning go hand in hand: it is not just a concept that we are ever-changing and without a fixed self. As a clown it is an tangible fact - and it becomes obvious through the naivety of the clown and the possibility of laughing at oneself.

"The central theme of the clown is the flop, the failure to accomplish even simple tasks. Owning that and allowing ourselves to mess up again and again we free ourselves from so much fear! Especially for Buddhists - aiming for Enlightenment, no less! - it can be hard to admit how often and how regularly we make a mess of things. The clown, with great humility, can be just what they are - no better, and no worse. And that is the starting point to discover just what fascinating and multifaceted beings we all are!

"So the main flavour of the retreat was delight in each other. We delighted in what everyone showed of themselves, be it laughter or tears, being shy, bold, loving or confused. What was revealed, was each person's poetry, their own individual way of being themselves, with the struggles and successes of their own lives. - I felt very honoured to receive so much!"

Jayachitta

For more about clowning see Jayacitta's website: www.rednoses-unlimited.co.uk

Friday, September 19

7th International Dhammakranti retreat to be held at Buddhagaya



Nagaketu, Executive Director of the TBMSG's 'Dhammakranti Project' in India, has written to FWBO News to say –

"We are very happy to inform you that the TBMSG's Dhammakranti Team (www.dhammakranti.com) is organizing the 7th International Dhammakranti Retreat at Buddha Gaya (in the State of Bihar, India) from 1st to 6th March 2009. All readers of FWBO/TBMSG News are warmly invited to attend.

"This is a good opportunity to practice in the most holy place for Buddhists in the world. It is a rare opportunity to practice and learn the Dhamma with hundred of other Buddhists from India and the World.

"This will be the third and largest International Dhammakranti Retreat in Buddha

Gaya organized by the Dhammakranti Social Institute, TBMSG, India. These retreats have made a considerable impact throughout India, giving people from all castes and classes an opportunity to practice Dhamma together and form a Casteless Society in the true sense. In India this is truly a precious opportunity.

“Many people from very poor economic backgrounds, from many Indian states, are going to participate in the retreat. A donations scheme is being set up to assist many of them to attend, and this report is an appeal for donations – see the contact details below or our special fundraising website www.justgiving.com/bodhgaya. Your donation will help hundreds of India’s new Buddhists to have this unique experience in their life.

“Come and join this historic event to transform our society to a New Society – one based on Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, and fulfill the dream of Bodhisattva Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar.

“The major attractions on the retreat are Meditation under the Bodhi Tree, Dhamma Talks, Buddhist Rituals, Group Discussions & Cultural Activities. All present will be making a contribution to reviving the Dhammachakra (Dhamma Revolution) in the World. Dhammachari Subhuti will lead the Retreat. The retreat will be held at the Nyingma Monastery in Buddha Gaya.

“For more details please contact us at nagaketu@hotmail.com, tel 0091-9371181404, or check our website www.dhammakranti.com.

Thursday, September 18

Amoghavajra returns to China - and the Paralympics



Amoghavajra, chairman of the FWBO’s Ipswich centre (www.ipswichbuddhistcentre.org.uk), has another string to his bow – he’s a keen Wheelchair Basketball player – and is currently in Beijing grading the competitors in the Paralympics, currently taking place there. He writes –

“Last night we had the opening ceremony in the Birds Nest Stadium, which is a fairly impressive building. I believe around 90,000 were in the crowd. The evening light fades very quickly here so by the time we approached the stadium

it was dark and the lights illuminating it were fairly awesome lit up in different colours.

“The ceremony was also marked by a young Asian woman who we think was protesting, running onto the track during the athletes’ entry and making a run for television coverage. She was brought to the ground after about 100 metres and after they subdued her she was led away by security. A sobering reminder that many people feel so strongly about human rights issues in China they are willing to risk their lives by protesting. Many of the athletes here are disabled as a result of the many war zones on our planet - to see this protest whilst also witnessing how many people have overcome war injuries was very poignant indeed. However I suspect most people will instead remember the rather sweet operatic music of the evening – not entirely to my taste!

“The other day I managed to have most of the day off from classifying duties and met Yin Hua, a Chinese mitra at Beijing’s famous **Lama Temple**. Like many of the tourist sites it was free to enter with Paralympic accreditation. It was a real transformation from the sporting, competitive atmosphere of the Paralympics to the atmosphere of the temple. There were many stalls selling all kinds of incense to offer - packets, boxes, bundles, gold-covered, short, medium and huge two-

foot-long sticks! I was amused to be downwind of one old woman who was offering her cellophane wrapped incense without removing the wrapping!

“As I wandered round the different halls I was very moved, and felt as if I was very much at home in this environment –the images and symbols had a real, felt meaning for me. Most of the images were of Amitabha, or Amitayus in the large halls. They were larger than life-size and conveyed a lovely quality.

In a side hall, among images I found a large lotus-family dakini. I naked female figure and attractive garland of male skulls prostrate male figure! figure of Tsongkhapa tiers. Very gracefully I sat for a while in atmosphere - it felt could see many assume that there was on there. I felt a little having been in the that lacks levels of awareness.

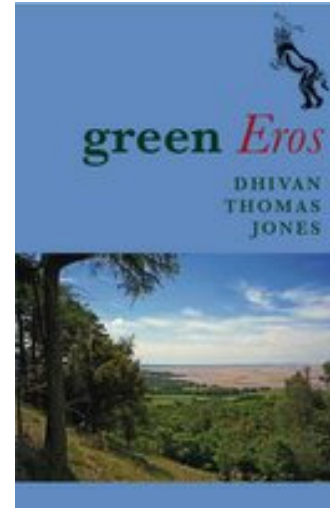


other more esoteric thanka of Kurukulle - the was fascinated by this who has a lovely smile appearance – as well as a and trampling on another Another hall had a huge that rose up to the upper and quietly authoritative. each hall just to feel the alive and charged. I monks around and still some practice going jaded within myself by sporting environment

“Yinhua was very good company and knew of a vegetarian restaurant nearby. It was so good to be able to eat in a quiet environment. And to eat vegetarian food. Time passed quickly with him and in no time we were off to get me a taxi back to the village. The area seemed very Chinese and every few hundred yards there were elderly gents and ladies, part of the community security force. All very keen to help us find a taxi. Through narrow entrances we glimpsed the famous ‘hutong’ home areas - warrens of tiny dwellings, similar in some ways to the rougher old Glasgow tenement areas, but smaller and more cramped. We found a taxi and I was on my way back to modernity and the Paralympics...”

Wednesday, September 17

Green Eros: a new novel by Dhivan



Order member Dhivan, from Cambridge, UK, has just self-published his first novel - 'Green Eros'. He writes -

"GREEN EROS is a novel about love, philosophy and men. Juniper Johnson is living the good life with his girlfriend in a cottage in northern Lancashire. But when he begins studying philosophy at Greyston University, everything starts to change. Splitting up, leaving his home, falling in love and making strong bonds of friendship with fellow philosophers, Juniper finds a new vision of life and love while in exile. Moving among professors, shamans and Buddhist monks, he learns the wisdom he needs to go home."

Dhivan, ordained in 2004, completed a PhD in the philosophy of love at Lancaster University back in 1995, and says he wrote this novel as a way to explore some of the themes he had been thinking about during his philosophical research. Is this the first novel to be published by a member of the Western Buddhist Order?

Green Eros is available via Amazon, or through Dhivan's own website at www.apuspress.co.uk, where it is for sale at £9.95 including postage.

Saturday, September 13

Audio books by Sangharakshita now available

Six of Sangharakshita's books, and one by Vessantara, are now available as audio books, for free download.

Subhadra, their creator, says "The recordings are offered as a free resource for the visually



impaired, in the hope they will find them useful and inspiring. They are available for free download and distribution, provided they are not sold in any way". You can access them at his website Buddhist Audio Books
<http://buddhistaudiobooks.com>.

Subhadra was born in 1952 in London, and ordained into the WBO in 1981. He now lives in Cambridge, England and works for Windhorse Evolution - as you can see from the photograph opposite!

Wednesday, September 10

New FWBO Centre opening in Poland



Nityabandhu has sent this report and invitation to FWBO News, we're happy to pass it on to our readers... He says -

“Czesc, tu Nityabandhu (Michal). Jak pewnie wiesz, od paru miesiecy wykanczalismy z przyjaciolmi lokal na Kazimierzu w Krakowie pod osrodek Przyjaciol Zachodniej Wspolnoty Buddyjskiej. Osrodek zacznie funkcjonowac od pazdziernika i bedzie miejscem dla medytacji, nauki medytacji, spotkan, wykladow o buddyzmie, grup dyskusyjnych, pokazow slajdow, filmow i

innych zajec; bedzie tez mial czesc kawiarniana (choc otwarcie tej czesci moze nam zajac troche dluzej)...

Happily, he's also provided an English translation, which runs thus -

“Hello everybody!

“This is Nityabandhu. As you probably know over the last few months we have been transforming a shop space in Krakow into an FWBO centre. I can't claim that we have finished on time or within budget, or even that we have finished at all. But we mostly enjoyed it and have something to show for it - there will be a

shrine room ready for meditation, as well as a cafe area.

"Over the last few months we have been transforming a former second-hand clothes shop space in Krakow into a FWBO centre. We thought that having one less second-hand clothes shop won't cause too much harm to the local people (these shops abound here), and having a Buddhist centre instead may even benefit some of them.



"I can't claim that we have finished the building work on time or within budget, or even that we have finished at all - there is still work to be done and this will continue for a few more months. The photograph shows the front entrance as it MIGHT look - we don't yet have the sign! But the shrine room is almost ready to be used. And there's a website -

<http://buddyzm.info.pl>

"On 17 September we will hold an opening ceremony to celebrate the efforts of many people who helped to make the centre happen and to establish symbolically a connection with the rest of the FWBO and the entire Buddhist tradition, and of course with Krakow. We expect quite a few people attending, from Krakow, other places in Poland and abroad. Ugyen Sangharakshita will be coming and I'm sure he will be pleased to be cutting another red-yellow-and-blue ribbon.

“The opening will be at 6pm in 4, Augustianska St. (Ul. Augustianska 4) in the Kazimierz district of Krakow.

“What to expect?

- we will meditate for about 10 minutes,
- see slides from the time before the building work and during it,
- a few words from me,
- a few words from Ugyen Sangharakshita,
- we will enshrine some Buddhist objects in the wall and recite the Dedication Ceremony.

“Then there will be time to meet and talk to people, drink tea, verify the claims that the world's best cakes are made in Poland, as well as have a look around the

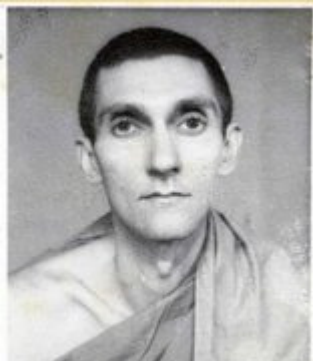
place. Please let me know briefly if you are thinking of coming. Any other questions please ask.

"From October we will start doing what one usually does in a Buddhist centre, at least in the FWBO i.e. teach meditation, meditate, do Dharma courses etc. We will start small but try to offer more courses with time and hopefully people will find these attractive. Also, we hope to open the cafe space at the centre later in the autumn".

FWBO News says, Sadhu and best wishes!

Tuesday, September 09

ClearVision launch new photographic archive



ClearVision, the FWBO's film and video arm, based in Manchester UK, have been working hard over the past months digitising Sangharakshita's photograph library – a vast collection stretching back many decades.

It's full of many glimpses of Buddhist history – including several glimpses of a very youthful Dalai Lama, among many others. Substantial sections of it have now been uploaded and are available for public viewing.

It's at www.clear-vision.org/Pictures. There's sections for Sangharakshita pre-FWBO, of the early days of the FWBO, and post-1980.

There's also sections for Sangharakshita's teachers and the start of a new section showcasing FWBO artists.

Many thanks to Padmakara especially for all his work in digitising and cataloguing the photographs. There's more to come we believe but thanks to his



work there's a great deal already available!

The three photographs shown are respectively, an early passport photograph of Sangharakshita, the first ordinations into the WBO in 1967, and a recent one of Chetrul Sangye Dorje, the only one of Sangharakshita's teachers still living.

Meanwhile their **pages for schoolchildren** (of all ages) have had a makeover – see www.clear-vision.org/Students/Default.aspx; and **Videosangha** (<http://videosangha.net>) continues to grow – it now hosts nearly 200 video clips on a wide variety of

Buddhist- and FWBO- related subjects – meditation, arts, activism, Sangharakshita, pilgrimage...

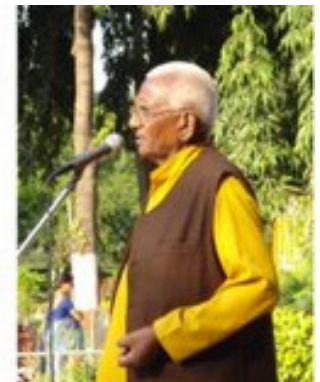
The award for Videosangha's most-watched clip may still be held by the classic 'Heart Sutra', sung by Karuna Carpenter (aka Kavyasiddhi) – over 2,000 and counting...

Monday, September 08

An invitation from Amaravati in India...

Any readers of FWBO News who may be in India during October are invited to respond to this invitation.

Heartful Invitation
Trailokya Bouddha
Mahasangha
Sahayak Gan Amaravati
invites you...



Amaravati is a town in the very centre of India, near Nagpur, and has for some years had a very active sangha, involved in a great range of social and Dhamma

projects. Now the Amaravati Sangha, led by Amitayus, are gearing up for their largest-ever programme, a month long intensive programme of talks and retreats all over their region – which is largely rural and dominated by drought, high bank loans, and low commodity prices... these factors have combined to produce a massive and ongoing tragedy of farmers' suicides - one estimate putting them at 1,500 in the past six months alone...

We hope to bring you more news of their program as it unfolds – in the meantime please also visit their fundraising page on JustGiving: www.justgiving.com/ashvajit where they have raised a remarkable UK 4,800 pounds!

Order Member Amitayus from Amaravati writes -

“Jaibhim Namō Buddhaya. **TBMSG AMARAVATI** sangha has organized a **LECTURE SERIES** from 12 October to 22 October and a **JUMBO DHAMMA MEDITATION RETREAT** from 24 October to 31 October 2008. These are part of our ongoing Dhamma and social awareness campaign and the Dhamma Revolution. Chief speaker will be **DHAMMACHARI ASHVAJIT**, a senior order member from the UK having long experience of practicing and teaching dhamma and meditation.

“Inspired and motivated by the work of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar we will deliver talks at 15 different towns and places around Amaravati, followed by the Jumbo Retreat itself.

“**We are looking you to participate and share your life with the other fellow participants.** They will be coming from variety of backgrounds especially from the farming region which is full of suffering and dominated by the farmer suicide – for the last four years it has been declared as a drought affected district just 150 km from Nagpur and 600 km from Mumbai. You can read about the suicides in Indian media [here](#) and [here](#) as well as many other places.

“The participants which will nearly be thousands in numbers including Buddhist, non-Buddhist, youths, farmers, women, and the socially and economically backward and from various geographical backgrounds.

“Your participation in both the rally and retreat will give you the opportunity -

- * To visit and see the countryside of India
- * To see the social change cause by Dr Ambedkar's Conversion.
- * To listen, share, and interact with the local people.
- * To respond their needs by sharing your experience of dhamma life.

“This can be a life enriching experience for you and would definitely be inspiring to go forth. It will be my pleasure to send you the detail schedule programme, transportation assistance, your stay and the financial contribution you will have to bear, please contact me if you are interested.

Do come

Yours with metta

Amitayus

office:+91 (0)721 266 66 67 cell: +91 (0)9960935276 www.bahujanhitaya.org

Saturday, September 06

Ambedkar Day in north London

The second annual Ambedkar Day at the FWBO's North London Buddhist Centre (www.northlondonbuddhistcentre.com) is coming up on Saturday 13th September 2008,.



It's been created to celebrate the life, work, and legacy of Dr. Ambedkar, who died in 1956 but is still the inspiration to millions upon millions of India's new Buddhists. More than almost anyone else, he demonstrated the need for Dhamma practice to address both the individual and the world – inspiring Sangharakshita, and through him, the whole FWBO/TBMSG with this vision.

It's looking to be a rich and full day, running from 10 am – 10 pm, offering a feast of events and information put on by a wide variety of groups, both FWBO and other. There'll be talks by

Vishvapani on 'Indian Buddhism now' and Tejjadarshan on Ambedkar's Dhamma Revolution; a display by the Dalit Solidarity Network on their campaign against manual scavenging (still endemic in India) two showings of 'Recurring Dreams' (Suryaprabha's new film on TBMSG and Indian Dhamma. There'll be a selection of workshops and presentations, including Saul Deason will be reporting on his recent visits to India and to followers of Dr. Ambedkar in Hungary. There'll be Bollywood Dance by Ramesh; Hindi chanting, and DVDs and books on Caste on sale in the foyer – and even, for those needing a bit of peace and quiet, meditation workshops!

Saul Deason, the organiser, describes his mission being “to encourage active support for Ambedkarite projects and to broaden the support for them among Buddhists and others”.



Thursday, September 04

New reading lists available from Windhorse Publications

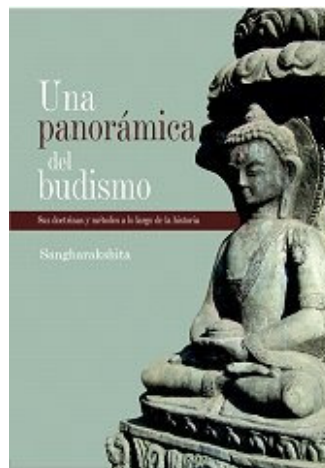
Windhorse Publications have for many years been the main publisher of FWBO books, at least in English, with some 140 books currently on offer. With so many to choose from, where to start...?

Happily, they have just released four new reading lists - one each for those seeking an introduction to

Buddhism (www.fwbo-news.org/resources/Introductory_reading_list.pdf), those wanting to go deeper (www.fwbo-news.org/resources/Going_deeper_reading_list.pdf), those interested in meditation (www.fwbo-news.org/resources/Meditation_reading_list.pdf), and those thinking of taking up the FWBO Mitra Study course (www.fwbo-news.org/resources/Mitra_Study_reading_list.pdf)

Thursday, September 04

Una Panorámica del Budismo - the 'Survey of Buddhism' printed in Spanish



One of Sangharakshita's best-known – and longest - books has just been published in Spanish. The 'Survey of Buddhism' ('Una Panorámica del Budismo' as it is known in Spanish) was first published in 1957, and written when Sangharakshita was only 26 years old, at a time when Buddhism was only just beginning to become known in the West. At well over 500 pages it is a tour-de-force - and a remarkable feat of translation! The work has stood the test of time, with over 9 editions and numerous reprints in English.

The occasion was celebrated at the FWBO's Valencia centre (www.budismo-valencia.com) with a special visit by Sangharakshita, fresh from celebrating his 83rd birthday in Birmingham, UK. His visit coincided with their Padmasambhava Day celebrations, including a Padmasambhava Puja.

Spanish-speaking readers may like to know that the FWBO's **Libros Budistas**, also based in Valencia, offer some 48 Dharma books in Spanish for free download – www.librosbudistas.com/descargar.asp



Wednesday, September 03

Ordination in Belgium

On Sunday August 24th Bart Van den Berghe from the FWBO's centre in Ghent (www.gent.vwbo.net), Belgium had his Public Ordination, becoming UPEKSHADAKA, meaning 'daka possessed with equanimity'.. This was the first Western Buddhist Order ordination in Belgium and an occasion for great rejoicing. He joins Dhammaketu, Arthakusalin, and Tarini in the "Vrienden van de Westerse Boeddhistische Orde", or VWBO (as the FWBO are known in Belgium).

Tuesday, September 02

Sand Mandalas at Aryaloka



New Hampshire's 'Seacoast online' magazine recently detailed the recent visit of Tibetan monks to Aryaloka, the FWBO retreat centre in New Hampshire, USA.

"This week, four monks from the Gaden Jangste Monastery in India will spend days hunched over a board creating

the intricate and colorful drawing at the FWBO's Aryaloka Buddhist Center (www.aryaloka.org) in New Hampshire, USA. At the end of the week, after long hours of work, the monks will teach the lesson of the transitory nature of all things by systematically destroying what it took them so long to create.

"This mandala is being dedicated to the deity of compassion (Chenrezig in Tibetan, Avalokiteshva in Sanskrit)," said Nima Neduro, the group's coordinator and translator. "It shows his celestial mansion, and it will take all week to finish. The process of creating the mandala is intricate and time-consuming. Long metal funnels with tiny holes in the ends are filled with colored sand. The funnels are ribbed, and the monks use metal sticks to rub the funnels, releasing the sand grain by grain. We have been criss-crossing the country for the past nine months to show our culture and, at the same time, raise money for our monastery in India," Neduro said.

The Gaden Jangste Monastery, was originally built to house 300 monks who had fled Tibet when the Chinese invaded in 1959. The continuing limits placed on the ability of Tibetans to practice their culture and religion freely has prompted a major migration of Tibetan Buddhists to India, and now the monastery is home to more than 2,600 refugees looking for religious and educational freedom, the coordinator said.

"Tibetans in India right now are free to practice their culture and religion," Neduro said. "The problem is with those still in Tibet. While the Chinese have allowed the communities to rebuild the thousands of temples destroyed when the

Chinese invaded, Tibetan practices are limited by the government," he said. "Many are still trying to flee."

"Our purpose in inviting the monks here is a gesture of good will and support," said Amala, Aryaloka's director. "We heard that they were looking for venues in which to show their traditions, and we are extending the hand of friendship to other Buddhists", she said.



Monday, September 01

Happy Birthday Bhante!

Tuesday 26 August was the 83rd birthday of Sangharakshita, founder of the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order.

This year's celebration also marked the successful conclusion of a fundraising campaign among the Order that aimed to transfer the financial support of Bhante (Sangharakshita) from the FWBO to the Order.

Siddhisambhava, Fundraiser in the FWBO Development Team who spearheaded the appeal, describes the genteel action -

"A small party was held in the conservatory at Madhyamaloka in Birmingham, where Bhante lives in a two-bedroom flat. Platters of cucumber sandwiches and pots of tea embraced an iced Victorian sponge birthday cake – the traditional fare of an English afternoon tea party and especially appropriate, perhaps, for an 83rd birthday. But the clusters of red, yellow and blue balloons reminded us this has been no ordinary life.

"I launched this appeal five months ago at a European Order week-end marking the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the Order. The



target was to secure Bhante a stable annual income of £30,000 from the Order by inviting standing orders of £5 UK a month from 500 people coming together in an act of samaya-dana, a collective bond (samaya) of generosity (dana). Bhante's birthday present from the Order this year turned out to be nearly £39,000 pa, plus nearly £6,000 in one-off donations from over 420 Order members.

"I presented Bhante with a framed copy of the **Order Mosaic** (www.fwbo-news.org/resources/mosaic/thumbnail), a photograph of all Order members surrounding a thousand-armed Avalokiteshvara, the symbol of the Order. Sadly, his eyesight these days is not up to seeing it in the literal sense but that wasn't the point of the gift.

"Visuddhimati, a member of the European Chairs Assembly Executive, presented Mahamati, a Trustee of FWBO Uddiyana (the charity that maintains Bhante and his activities) with a golden tantric cheque – see photo. The cheque was from the Jambhala Dana Bank, based, apparently, at Mount Nakula, Shrimat Loka. (Jambhala is the god of wealth who holds a mongoose (nakula) that spits out jewels; Shrimat Loka means the Glorious Realm.) And I noticed it was signed Om Mani Padme Hum££ from the Western Buddhist Order.

"FWBO Uddiyana is Bhante's 'nerve centre' and its' funds also support Dharmamati (his secretary) and Saraha (his carer). - all shown in the photo. The bulk of FWBO Uddiyana's financial support has, for many years, come from just two FWBO institutions, the European centres' Central Dana Fund, and the Windhorse Trust. Though robust and blooming in many ways, both are struggling financially at the moment. The appeal was therefore launched to help the Order take on supporting Bhante in his remaining years and to free up FWBO money to fund FWBO projects, such as a new website. Many thanks to everyone who has contributed to the success of this appeal.

"It's been a win-win-win outcome: Bhante benefits from a stable income; the FWBO benefits by more of its money being freed up to spend on the Movement; and the Order benefits by strengthening its connection with Bhante and each other through samaya-dana. Happy Birthday and long life Bhante!

"If you'd like to see such genteel action live, including balloon-blowing-up, birthday-candle-blowing-out, close ups of cucumber sandwiches and tantric cheques, check out the movie, coming soon on www.videosangha.net".

Sunday, August 31

Dharma and creativity: fresh explorations



Vajradaka lived for 21 years at Vajraloka, the FWBO's meditation retreat centre in Wales, and for many years its chairman.

Now he's left and moved to the big city, London - and started a new project supporting "creativity". More specifically, he's facilitating forums and workshops on the underlying principles and spirit of Creativity, and he's created a website illustrating what he's trying to do www.creativengagement.wordpress.com/creative-events.

He describes it as "CREATIVE ENGAGEMENT:

Exploring the Dharma in the context of creativity".

Outside of cyberspace you'll find him at **491 Gallery**, a vibrant community arts and creativity centre in Leytonstone, London. They describe what they're up to as *"an evolving Arts Piece, a meta-conceptual living room, a pirate utopia reclaiming neglected land and property and giving something back to the community with a healthy balance of art, regeneration, education, performance, gardening, and diversity of life..."*

Vajradaka hopes his forums/workshops will support creative expression in all its different forms; the next events at 491 are on the 3rd and 17th of September. He tells FWBO News he's also giving one-to-one guidance on creativity – check his website for details

Of course there's plenty else in the way of creativity going on across the FWBO/TBMSG - in London for instance we have for years run the London Buddhist Arts Centre (www.londonbuddhistartscentre.co.uk). They describe their mission as "to support Buddhist artists to explore the relationship between their art, Dharma practice, and the urban habitat".

Another new development is that on the FWBO Photos website (now hosting over 3,000 FWBO photos!) there's a page dedicated to showcasing the work of some FWBO Artists, including links to many individual artists' pages - www.flickr.com/photos/fwbo/sets/72157602143090639. Contributions welcome.

Saturday, August 30

On pilgrimage in Japan - Rijumati's travels



Part V of Order Member Rijumati's travel diaries has just been published, an account of his experiences as he heads around the world after many year's work in Right Livelihood in Cambridge, UK. They're on the Features section of FWBO News – see www.fwbo-news.org/features/Rijumati_travels_V_japanese_pilgrimage.pdf

Part V is an account of his pilgrimage in Japan to the four Japanese Teachers on the Western Buddhist Order's Refuge Tree (shown opposite) – Hakuin, Kukai, Dogen, and Shinran.

He writes about his visit to Shinran's place of exile, on the coast of northwest

Honshu; Eihei-ji, Dogen's monastery (which Rijumati unflatteringly describes as a "Buddhist airport departure gate"); Kukai's remote mountain forest plateau at Koyasan - whence come the famous lines

*"You ask me why I entered the mountain deep and cold,
Awesome, surrounded by steep peaks and grotesque rocks,
A place that is painful to climb and difficult to descend,
Wherein reside the gods of the mountain and the spirits of trees.*

And last but by no means least, his visit to the shrine of Hakuin and the old and beautiful tree named the Suribachi pine.

The Refuge Tree as a whole contains some 42 figures from across the whole Buddhist tradition, being those the Order draws on most strongly for teaching and inspiration. It's a symbol of the highest ideals of Buddhism, a traditional image that takes different forms in different schools.

Modern Buddhists might be regarded as heirs to the whole of the Buddhist tradition and the Refuge Tree of the Western Buddhist Order includes figures from India, Tibet, China and Japan as well as archetypal Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and the teachers whose guidance helped to shape Sangharakshita's understanding of Buddhism.

An excellent introduction can be found in '**Teachers of Enlightenment**', by Kulananda, available from Windhorse Publications .

Friday, August 29

Floods at Buddhafield's largest-ever retreat - but the magic goes on!



The FWBO's Buddhafield project (www.buddhafield.com) has been running retreats and festivals for over 15 years now, with around a dozen retreats of all shapes and sizes offered every year – but all in fields, and mostly in the West Country of England.

Their largest has always been the annual 'Child-Friendly' retreat, which aims to be exactly what it says – friendly to children (and parents and all, of course!) This year's was the largest-ever, with some 250 people attending – including, of course, lots and lots of children! It was the second time they'd held the retreat on their new land at **Frog Mill**, 18 beautiful acres in the Dartmoor National Park.



It being Devon, and the British summer, they knew the weather was always going to be uncertain – but they'd never had such a downpour as they did on the first days of the retreat! Devapriya, its leader, had his caravan on site and reported the land around him became a lake, a lake so deep that it flooded over the tops of people's Wellington boots!

He went on to say the children hardly seemed to notice anything was wrong – “yippee, it's a flood”, they said, and off they went paddling but that it was more challenging for the team and many of the less experienced campers - but they rapidly regrouped and got on with it. The ‘tea tent’ and kids areas were also totally flooded, as were many individual people's tents. Padmapani, one of the meditation teachers, returned to find his airbed FLOATING inside his tent – by great good fortune his cameras and a selection of hand-painted Tibetan thankhas has been left on TOP of the bed and survived! Happily the shrine room itself was not flooded and Devapriya also reported they'd never had such high attendance at the meditations!

With a month of the Buddhafield retreat season still to go they are hoping for better weather in September. If you fancy a retreat who not consider coming – and, if you don't want to chance the weather, check the FWBO website www.goingonretreat.com which carries details of all FWBO retreats in the UK.

Tuesday, August 26

News from the American Order Convention



The FWBO's San Francisco Buddhist Center (www.sfbuddhistcenter.org) hosted the North American Order Convention this year in July, at Jikoji, a retreat center in the Santa Cruz Mountains, a short distance south of San Francisco. Suvarnaprabha, the SFBC's Director, has sent FWBO News this report -

"We began with a ceremony marking the entry of three new Order Members, Saricitta ("Heart/Mind Like a Waterfall"), Vihanasari ("Thrush at Dawn"), and Danakamala ("Lotus of Generosity") into the Western Buddhist Order. The ceremony was beautifully and jointly led by public preceptors Dhammarati and Dayanandi.

"The Convention was attended by about 25 or so Order Members, who traveled from the far flung corners of the continent: from Washington State, Vancouver (Canada), Montana, Maine, New Hampshire, Boston, and New York City, plus two from the UK, and the delightful Saddhajoti from Mexico. For 5 days we met, caught up with each other, and focused on meditation, especially practices specific to the Order, such as the Mula Yogas (including the Bodhicitta practice). Khajit also got some of us to give our kesas a much needed wash!

"And at the cultural evening on the last night, we outdid ourselves! We witnessed Karunadakini transform into a diner waitress falling in love with a logger, and with our own eyes we saw Vajramati and Naganatika's heads on a plates in a fit of hilarious Beckett-esque high drama in the dining room. Not to mention poems and stories, an acapella song, Argentinian guitar, an original blues song, and a cello solo.

"It was beautiful and I felt such a strong connection to the Order, such a strong sense of sangha. Many thanks to Sangharakshita for making that connection possible. May he and his Order thrive for many years to come".

Monday, August 25

Transforming Self, Transforming World in Birmingham

The FWBO's Birmingham Buddhist Centre

(www.birminghambuddhistcentre.org.uk) recently teamed up with local environmental-awareness groups to put on an event entitled 'Transforming Self, Transforming World'.



The day included meditation, a workshop by Friends of the Earth on bio-fuels, composting for kids, lunch courtesy of the Birmingham chapter of '**Food not Bombs**', recycled arts and crafts, Rob's smoothie-bike, a showing of '**The Power of Community**', a film & discussion based upon Cuba's creative response to having its oil imports cut. Padmakumara also led a workshop exploring Joanna Macy's '**Work that Re-connects**'.

As well as being a great opportunity for people who perhaps wouldn't normally attend a Buddhist Centre to come along and get a feel for the place, it also helped to emphasise how Buddhist practice can give rise to a natural and spontaneous aspiration to contribute to the welfare of the world, an aspiration not characterised by fear and apathy but rooted in loving-kindness.

"It's always so inspiring to meet people who work for our shared planet! A positive way to learn from one another and cooperate for a more peaceful and sustainable world!" Rianne Veen.

Sunday, August 24

A report from the FWBO European Chairs Meeting, July 2008



Satyadarshin, Siddhisambhava, and others!

This brief report, by Lokabandhu, gives a few of the highlights of the meeting,

July 18-27 saw some 30 FWBO Chairs from around Europe – men and women - gathering for the usual summer 'assembly' at Vajrasana, the London Buddhist Centre's very handsome retreat centre in Suffolk. The European Chairs work together through their shared charity the Indrajala Trust, which employs the FWBO Development Team – better known to most people as the friendly faces of Lokabandhu, Vajragupta,

for any FWBO readers interested in some of the 'background' workings of the FWBO, at least the FWBO as it is in Europe.

- * Celebrating Dharma Day with meditation and a talk by Mahamati, who was visiting the meeting as a welcome guest. The theme was continued through the week with pujas to the figures in the Five Buddha Mandala most evenings.
- * Welcoming Siddhisambhava as the new FWBO Fundraiser and agreeing with her a fundraising strategy for the next couple of years –probably with fundraising for Free Buddhist Audio her next major focus; also beginning to develop materials for an FWBO Legacies campaign. And celebrating with her the successful completion of her first campaign, raising over £37,000/year (and counting!) from the Order with which to support Sangharakshita and his staff.
- * Agreeing £15,000 for Candradasa and his team to create a new and much more dynamic/interactive website for the FWBO, to be hosted under the new domain fwbo.com.
- * Agreeing to hold another **FWBO International Retreat** (<http://internationalretreat.fwbo.org>) in 2010, and probably every two years after that – and congratulating Vajragupta on his very successful organisation of the first one.
- * Agreeing to hold an international FWBO Urban Retreat in 2009 – and possibly every second year after that. This is building on the successful pilots that have been held in Sheffield and elsewhere. (See the FWBO Centre Support website for info). We'll fix the exact date in October, after consultations with centres worldwide
- * Participating in a day-long training on NVC (non-violent communication) with Vajrasara. The day was noteworthy, and all the more enjoyable, at least for some, due to the complete absence of jackals and giraffes! Those familiar with NVC will understand the reference...
- * Agreeing to take up the subject of 'Growth' at the next meeting, in January 2009, and tasking Lokabandhu and Vajragupta to prepare a paper on this for presentation then.
- * After noting that we now seem to be top in Google searches for "buddhism/yourtown" and "meditation/yourtown" almost everywhere we have centres, agreeing to bring to a close the successful work of Satyadarshin, for



several years the FWBO webmaster.

* Previewing '**Recurring Dream**', Suryaprabha's new movie – a portrait of TBMSG, and part III of his five-part series in search of a spiritually meaningful way of life. (See FWBO News for a review).

* Reviewing the **six 'Strategic Priorities'** of the European Chairs' meeting, taking several of them forwards in 'Dream and Design' sessions; and agreeing to revisit them and possibly revise them at the next meeting – which will be two years after they were created.

* Receiving reports from a meeting of FWBO Presidents – the first for some years – and also news of **Windhorse:Evolution**'s ambitious plans for growth over the next few years.

* Reviewing the work of the Development Team after their first two years, and as part of that, appointing Vajragupta to be its Director.

* Last but by no means least, enjoying the excellent hospitality of the LBC team who looked after us, and the many delightful walks around Vajrasana.

It was a remarkably harmonious and productive meeting and I think enjoyed by all. There was business to be done, of course, but also time for much else besides – not least the evening volleyball and frisbee! It marked, perhaps, the first really substantial fruits of the work of the FWBO Development Team, now some two years old – and laid the ground for the next phase of their work.

Friday, August 22

First FWBO Mitra ceremony in Korea



Further to Wednesday's news of Lokamitra's award of the Manhae Grand Prize for Peace in South Korea, Mangesh Dahiwalé reports that on 15th August 2008, later in Lokamitra's visit, he was able to conduct the first FWBO Mitra Ceremony in Korea.

Song Jin (shown opposite), who has long-standing connections with FWBO/TBMSG centres and individuals in Australia and India, made the three traditional offerings of a flower, candle, and incense to become a Dhammamitra or Friend of the Dhamma. The ceremony

concluded with a small Pali Puja and Blessing Gatha.

The ceremony was held in the Buddha Hall of Buddhist Solidarity for Reforms (BSR) in Seoul, and was preceded by a Dhamma talk from Lokamitra explaining the importance of "Going For Refuge" in life and commitment to the Three Jewels of Buddhism. He also explained the practice of Metta Bhavana followed by actual meditation.

Wednesday, August 20

Lokamitra awarded the Manhae Grand Prize for Peace in Korea

FWBO News is delighted to report that Lokamitra, one of the seniormost members of the Western Buddhist Order, and long resident in India, has been awarded the Manhae Grand Prize for Peace 2008 in a ceremony held by **Manhae Foundation** in South Korea.



The Manhae Grand Prize, one of the most prestigious prizes in Korea, is given annually to commemorate Han Yong-woon (1879-1944), known by the pen name 'Manhae'. Han was a Buddhist monk, poet and thinker, as well as a great hero of the anti-imperialist movement. Previous recipients include the Dalai Lama (2005), Nelson Mandela (2004), and, last year, President Bongo of Gabon.

This report is from Mangesh Dahiwalé, who has been in Korea with Lokamitra -

"In the ceremony, held on 12th August 2008, the President of Jogye Order awarded Lokamitra the Grand Prize for his 30 years of contribution to the understanding and practice of Buddhism in India amongst the followers of Dr. Ambedkar (most of whom were previously known and treated as untouchables). After moving to India, on Sangharakshita's encouragement, in 1978, he helped initiate the Trailokya Bauddha Mahasangha Sahayaka Gana (TBMSG) which now has many Dhamma teaching centres throughout India, a publications wing,

and three retreat centres. Soon afterwards Bahujan Hitay was started which runs many social works for the deprived and discriminated, including 80 community centres and more than 20 educational hostels.



“Lokamitra's work is a continuation of Sangharakshita's work and vision, emphasising the possibilities of social transformation through Buddhist practice. Although Sangharakshita returned to England in 1960s in order to develop the FWBO, he never lost his connection with his Buddhist friends in India, and Lokamitra was able to follow up his

very strong and deep contacts amongst the Buddhists in Maharashtra, especially in Pune and Nagpur, developed through Sangharakshita's extensive teaching tours in the slums and villages of India during the 1950s.

“Now the work we are doing in India has begun to appeal to the Buddhists all over the world and is being recognised as a very special example of socially engaged Buddhism in the modern world. Through his friendships in the Buddhist East, and involvement with organisations like the World Fellowship of Buddhists and the International Network of Engaged Buddhists, Lokamitra has helped to bring the attention and appreciation of many in the Buddhist East to the newly converted Buddhists of India. As a result many of them have now visited Nagpur and seen our work at first hand.

“Recently he has been concentrating his efforts on the establishment of the **Nagarjuna Training Institute** (www.jambudvipa.org/sec3a.htm) at Nagpur, where in 1956 Dr. Ambedkar converted to Buddhism along with half a million followers. There are perhaps 30 million Buddhists in India today all from the Scheduled Caste communities (Scheduled Caste being the official term for people designated as untouchables in the Hindu caste system), and over 200

million Indians who are open to Buddhism because of the influence of Dr. Ambedkar. While TBMSG does not have the manpower to start centres in every one of the thousands of towns in India (which is what is really required!), it helps to train new Buddhists from all over India at the Nagarjuna Training Institute, where it runs a one year introductory, residential training course in Buddhist teaching and practices, as well as basic social work skills. In fact the Nagarjuna Training Institute has been instrumental in training 495 men and women from 19 states in India since its inception in 2002.

“The people from the Scheduled Castes still face immense difficulties in realising their constitutional rights. Many are working to end suffering due to the caste system, but, at times, lack confidence, a sense of solidarity, and basic training in running organizations. The **Jambudvipa Trust**, founded by Lokamitra in 1998, encourages individuals and organisations from the disadvantaged sections of society to take initiative and responsibility for their situation. It has been able to assist in natural calamities (eg the Gujarat earthquake, the Tsunami and the Bombay floods) when the Scheduled Castes suffered terrible discrimination in relief and rehabilitation work. Furthermore, under the **Manuski Project** (<http://manuski.net>; Manuski being a beautiful word meaning respect, humanity, compassion) Lokamitra and his team have created a network of over 150 organisations across India for whom it has conducted hundreds of training sessions. The Manuski project is also doing human rights' advocacy work especially related to atrocities (of which there are many) and cases of discrimination.

“In his acceptance speech, Lokamitra appreciated the life and work of Venerable Manhae and expressed the hope that this award will bring much needed attention to the plights of the almost 200 million Scheduled Caste and the glorious non-violent struggle for liberation and social transformation of about 30 million of them through Buddhism”.

Sadhu Lokamitra!

There's a short video of Lokamitra speaking after the award on **Tagstory**.

Monday, August 18

New FWBO Dharma Training Course for Mitras



Today, we're delighted to let you know about the launch of the online site for the new FWBO Dharma Training Course for Mitras.

The permanent web address to bookmark for the new course is: www.fwbomitracourse.com

The new Dharma Training Course is designed primarily for Mitras

('friends') involved with the FWBO Buddhist community. The course aims to give people in the FWBO a thorough grounding in Dharma study and practice. It also makes an excellent general course for anyone interested in putting Buddhist teaching into practice in their life.

The first year is now available online, with a full reference section for further context and engagement. We've formatted our .pdf files to print out for use in a study group, and also to make them easy to read, navigate and search on-screen.

The rest of the course is currently being developed by a number of members of the Western Buddhist Order. New modules will be made available as they become ready through 2008 and the beginning of 2009. Check out each year's page for an advance preview of what's in store.

At present, the course is being hosted on **Free Buddhist Audio**, and you can access it easily from there too via the 'Study' section.

We hope you'll enjoy using the online version of the Course, and that you'll make steady progress in your own Dharma studies.

with best wishes,

The Free Buddhist Audio Team

Karuna Trust 2008 report out now



The FWBO's Karuna Trust (<http://karuna.org>) raises over UK £1.5 million/year for a multitude of social and Dharma projects in India. They've just published their 2008 report ('Karuna 08') – it's a beautiful and inspiring piece of work. Look for it at a Buddhist centre near you, or check their website.

The report this year focuses on caste, "an ancient injustice", and gives glimpses of many aspects of the work of Karuna's many partners in India – ranging from publicising the many ongoing atrocities inflicted

on low-caste people, to emerging initiatives to build a truly casteless society.

Karuna's work is largely sustained by regular team-based door-knocking appeals all over UK. Through these, they have built up a network of over 7,000 committed donors and also learned how to make the act of fundraising into an intense and effective spiritual practice.

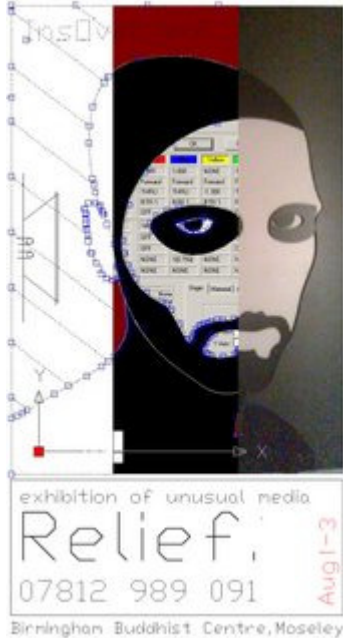
Check their Appeals website www.karunaappeals.org.uk for a treasure trove of real-life fundraisers stories – and details of upcoming appeals. To quote just a fragment from Jo's blog (Jo was on the June London appeal):

"There is something deeply irrational about volunteering for a Karuna appeal...it has no logic to it whatsoever! Why would I want to go out there on the streets risking feelings of shame, humiliation, rejection, anger? - but also, risking feelings of connection, openness, love, generosity, positivity? Sometimes I find the more positive feelings more difficult to open to. Take "Danny" that I met last night...." Read more on Jo's fundraising blog <http://karunaappeals.org.uk/blogs/jo---london-2008.html>

Sadhu Karuna!

Sunday, August 17

Relief - art exhibition in Birmingham



Following yesterday's post featuring Valerie Witonska's poetry, FWBO News has had news of a very different artistic exhibition by another member of the Sangha.

Mat, also known as Matnoo, from the Birmingham Buddhist Centre, is perhaps best described as a sculptor – his unusual artwork is made from precision engineered plastic using CNC equipment (computer numerically controlled equipment, to the uninitiated!)

His exhibition 'Relief', held in the Buddhist Centre, featured 10-15 pieces on a range of subjects including cartoon-like animals, portraits, Buddhist philosophy and also some interactive pieces, including a tardis-like box you could step inside and see endless reflections of yourself: a modern-day Vairocana's tower...

You can contact him at matnoo@hotmail.com



Saturday, August 16

New poems...

FWBO News normally publishes exactly that – news, but it's hard for mere pieces of news to capture the breadth and depth of people's practice within the FWBO Sangha. We're therefore pleased to offer you a poem, selected from 'Is It OK Now?', a new book of poems by Valerie Witonska (Val Blomfield), an LBC mitra and an experienced poet and playwright.

The poems track her progress through life and her exploration of Dharma practice. Manjusvara writes of

them in his Foreword:

'Here are poems of love and poems of laughter. Poems of longing and poems of letting go. Gently funny and carefully wise, I hope they bring you as much pleasure as they have brought me. Let them break your heart and then rebuild it again'.

THE COOL CAVE

You can't stroke me like a horse's back.
I am nothing to do with ghosts.
There are no nativity scenes;
no curves and curlicues of theatre ceilings.

Don't listen for reverberating chords.
Making sense of me won't work.
When you try to look
your eyes swim.

I'm not interested in your stories
about me;
about yourselves.
You may chant into my silence:
I am the space in between the rocks.

'Is It OK Now?' was edited by Val's son Vishvapani and published using [lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com), a print-on-demand service. It's available at <http://www.lulu.com/content/2896553>.

Friday, August 15

Spiritual practice, efficiency, and productivity in the work-place



FWBO News is pleased to reproduce a talk recently given by Ratnaghosa to the warehouse workers at Windhorse:Evolution, the FWBO's largest and most successful business.

Entitled "**Spiritual practice, efficiency, and productivity in the work place**", it's reproduced here to give readers of FWBO News some insight into Windhorse's ongoing exploration of the principles of Right Livelihood and the ways they seek to combine business success with spiritual development.

To take a quote almost at random from

the middle of the talk –

"Efficiency, on the other hand, is conducive to good mental states and positive mental states are conducive to efficiency. This is a virtuous circle. Higher mental states are more creative and are likely to lead to elegant solutions and this is what we really want to achieve at Windhorse. We want to encourage the development of higher states of consciousness and see those higher states of consciousness manifesting in creativity, co-operation and satisfying relationships and results. And if we can achieve elegant creativity in our systems and teams that will encourage higher states of consciousness. It is like a Zen garden. The garden is created out of a tranquil state of consciousness and the garden in turn produces tranquillity in those who use it..."

You can read the talk via FWBO Features at www.fwbo-news.org/features/Ratnaghosa_spiritual_practice_workplace.pdf

Wednesday, August 13

Report from "The Buddhist Contribution to building a Just, Democratic and Civil Society"



Gunaketu, chairman of the FWBO's small centre in Oslo, Norway (www.oslobuddhistsenter.no), has for long been active in the field of environmentally and socially engaged Buddhism. He is recently returned from Hanoi in Vietnam, where he participated in a United Nations' sponsored conference called "The Buddhist Contribution to building a Just, Democratic and Civil Society: War, Conflict and Healing-A Buddhist perspective". Details are at <http://vesakday2008.com/tintuc/index.php?menu=detail&mid=2&nid=173>

He reports -

"I was lucky to be invited to Vietnam to partake in a State sponsored Buddhist Conference. Some years ago UN recognised Vesak as an international holiday. Thailand promptly arranged a large conference to celebrate, and have done so the past few years.

"Last year Vietnam decided to host the conference in 2008. This was quite an historic event because the authorities in Vietnam have been restrictive with the practice of dharma. At the opening ceremony, the Chairman of the International Organizing Committee welcomed the previous Prime Minister and Foreign Minister who were instrumental in keeping him in house arrest for many years. Things change. Now, the Government are rebuilding Monasteries on a large scale. And at the same time, the Government took over the control with the organizing of the conference, last minute.

"An example of this was related to David Blundell who was not allowed to show a 28-minute preview of a documentary about Dr. Ambedkar that he was invited for, because some party official had to see it first to approve it.

"On the other hand Thich Nhat Hanh was welcomed back to Vietnam a few years ago, and he was invited as one of the keynote speakers. He had led a five-day

retreat in Hanoi just before the conference, and when it was his turn to give his speech, his followers walked onto the stage, single file, slowly. First there were the brown clad nuns and monks. Then came the light blue lay people. The procession went on for many minutes and nearly 400 people filled the stage. Thich Nhath Hanh had come back en force. They chanted and Thich Nhath Hanh delivered an inspiring talk about listening and personal practice. It wasn't challenging to the Government. The other keynote speakers were Matthew Ricard, the author of the book "The philosopher and the monk", and Phra Dharmakosajarn, the Principal at the Main Buddhist University in Bangkok, Thailand.

"As I stood with our small Norwegian contingent of four, in the main hall, with thousands of people milling around, I suddenly saw another recognisable kesa. There was Amoghamati from our Sangha in Germany! I was very surprised and delighted. Someone had told her that I might be there. This was in fact one of the highlights of the conference: To be among Buddhists from so many traditions, to meet someone from my own Order (we had not met before), to feel a strong connection and shared point of view, and from there to explore the conference together. Salutation to the good companion!

The main theme of the conference was: Buddhist Contribution to building a Just, Democratic and Civil Society. The sub themes were:

1. War, Conflict and Healing: A Buddhist Perspective
2. Buddhist Contribution to Social Justice
3. Engaged Buddhism and Development
4. Care for Our Environment: Buddhist Response to Climate Change
5. Family Problems and the Buddhist Response
6. Symposium on Buddhist Education: Continuity and Progress
7. Symposium on Buddhism in the Digital Age

"Amoghamati delivered a clear and inspiring presentation of Karuna in Germany under 3) Engaged Buddhism and Development. It was good to see the work they are doing in this context. I was invited to speak under 1) War, Conflict and Healing, with the title: Healing Conflict with Awareness.

"Due to the size of the conference with over 4000 participants, it was quite chaotic. There were for instance twice as many people invited to speak in sub

theme 1) than there was time for. Many of us were therefore given just a few minutes at the end. Rather than contend with this, I offered to give my presentation in a slightly altered form under 3), as Amoghamati had told me that they did not have that many speakers, which I did. Unfortunately, this meant that I couldn't carry out a participatory exercise I had prepared, but c'est la vie.

"In the plenary session the following day, the moderators from the various groups summed up their activities. The moderator from group 4) presented six points to care for the Environment. I asked if he would consider a seventh recommendation for a vegetarian diet, which he partly acknowledged and yet did not fully agree with. Ajahn Brahmavamso gave the concluding speech where he too emphasized listening and finished by saying that he was careful with the earth's resources by not having children (including a wry smile).

"Then the conference was brought to a close with various congratulatory speeches and a modern classical concert composed for the occasion, which included in the middle of it some 50 monks coming on stage to chant. The other days of the conference were also concluded with cultural performances of modern dance and a traditional Vietnamese "Reform Play" about the life of the Buddha.

"Yours in the Dharma, Gunaketu

Tuesday, August 12

Vijayamala and Vessantara begin three-year retreat

Last month FWBO News posted a piece by Vessantara outlining his plans and preparations for the three-year retreat he is beginning with his partner Vijayamala. They have now arrived, and we're pleased to reproduce this update from Vijayamala herself.

She says -

"So here we are deposited with various retreat supplies in



the foothills of France's Massif Central mountains, on the brink of a 3-years-or-so retreat. It's actually a stunning location. I already knew we were on a beautiful hillside, quite far up (!), but doing a little bit of exploring soon revealed just what it meant to be where we are. We're in undulating country, part of a massive plateau and if you go a couple of kilometres south or east this quickly falls away into deep deep gorges with a wide river looping through vast stretches of forested wilderness only accessible to the buzzards and kites. It's so quiet! It was good to look around a little. I won't see all this during the retreat of course, but it makes a difference to know what I am meditating on! We also climbed the Puy de Dome, not far from here, which is a stand-alone mountain from which you get 360 degree panoramic views. Again a very good place to get a sense of the mandala of beings stretching so far out all around.

"Everything here is very deeply green and lush, quite a tonic after all the last-minute preparations for leaving, which seemed to go on for months and quite different from the harsh weather conditions of the winter here (and to some extent spring and autumn too). There are preparations to do here too: weather proofing and painting the circus wagons in which we'll be living, getting in supplies, finishing off bits of work, but it's all much simpler somehow and it feels wonderful to know I don't have to go anywhere for a very long time.

"My retreat program is shaping up. It's a real luxury to have so long, although when I look at what I want to engage with it doesn't seem very long at all!

"I will spend the first while focusing on the human condition; using the Four Reminders (the preciousness of human life, impermanence, conditioned co-production, and the sufferings of samsara) and also Bodhicitta. It's easy to reel off lists, but I want to spend real substantial time exploring these things in my actual experience, turning every stone to see what blocks my acceptance of these rather obvious truths. I started this process on the pre-retreat earlier this year and could take all of the next three years to scratch the surface, but I suspect there will come a time when it feels right to move on.

"I would also like have a good chunk of time, at least six months, focusing on metta and Bodhicitta. I'll probably keep it quite simple, using breathing alongside metta as a connection to life and also doing tonglen 'exchange' practice. Let's see if that can make any dent at all in my deep self-centredness - I hope so. At least I know that that way lies freedom!

"Then, if the time feels right, I will then enter a phase of focusing more fully on sadhana practice. What a chance to live so completely in a world flavoured by an enlightened perspective - again let's see what rubs off...

"It's all so much of an exploration. 3 years seems like a drop in the ocean, given that I have been attempting to practice now for nearly 30. Who knows what I will learn, maybe just a lot more things not to do, but I am ready for the adventure...

"We close the doors on August 5th and start retreat on the 11th (a Padmasambhava day), Probably by the time you read this. So it only remains to wish you all joy, health and wisdom over the next few years and in due course I look forward to finding out what trajectories some of your lives have taken over that time.

"Vijayamala

Monday, August 11



Bhante in Berlin

Amogharatna, chairman of the FWBO's Centre in Berlin, (known locally as the **Buddhistisches Tor Berlin**, or the 'Buddhist Gate' of Berlin) has sent us this report on their recent visit by Sangharakshita.

"On 14th July, Bhante arrived in Berlin for a short visit. He was

accompanied by his friend Saraha, and they stayed in the men's community. Over the next three days members of the Berlin Sangha enjoyed several opportunities to see Bhante. His programme included going for a short walk each day and meeting individuals as well as a few special events.



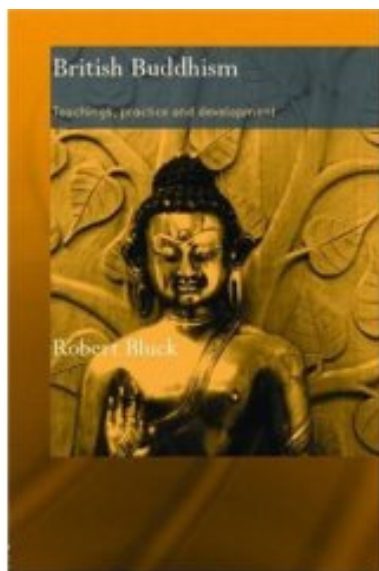
"At the Sangha evening in Buddhistisches Tor Berlin on Tuesday he gave a substantial talk on "The Six Distinctive Emphases of the FWBO", which was translated into German by Dharmapriya. This was a particularly appropriate topic for a Sangha whose members are geographically quite remote from other FWBOs, and the shrine room was filled to capacity with over sixty people. On the same evening he officiated at Peter Hirth's Mitra ceremony. A version of the talk is available on FreeBuddhistAudio.

"On Wednesday afternoon Bhante performed a 'naming ceremony' for Samuel Phillip, Utpalavajri and Akasaraja's recently born son, and in the evening he had dinner with Berlin's men Mitras. On Thursday he had a meeting with Order Members from Berlin in the morning and in the evening had dinner with the women Mitras.

"So it was a busy time for Bhante, much appreciated by the many people who were able to see him, and for which they are all very grateful".

Sunday, August 10

British Buddhism - now available in paperback!



'British Buddhism: Teachings, Practice and Development' is a key source for anyone interested in understanding more deeply the landscape of British Buddhism. It's been in print for some years now, but only in hardback and at the somewhat unaffordable price of UK £65. However the paperback edition has just been released, and given that it refers extensively to the FWBO, it may be of interest to readers of FWBO News. A **review** was posted some time ago on the Reviews section of the FWBO News website.

The author, Robert Bluck, has written to FWBO News to say "the book describes and analyses a representative sample of the full

range of traditions for the first time. It allows similarities and differences to be traced by tradition or by theme, and examines how Buddhism changes when moving to a new country. Written with the British Buddhist community specifically in mind, I hope it will encourage Buddhists in Britain to discover more about their spiritual friends in other traditions, and so promote the generosity, compassion and wisdom of the Buddha and his followers. I hope you find British Buddhism interesting, and I would welcome any feedback from readers.

"With all best wishes in the Dharma,

"Robert Bluck

"Associate Lecturer in World Religions, Open University"

For further information please see your local bookshop or visit www.routledge.com

Monday, August 04

New video released: TBMSG sangha in India



'*Recurring Dream*' is the third in a five-part series of films by Suryaprabha, a Order Member who's also a veteran film-maker and chronicler of the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order (FWBO) and its Indian counterpart the Trailokya Bauddha Mahasangha (TBMSG). He's best-known for the much-loved four-part series on the **FWBO's history** (http://web.mac.com/surya4/LightsInTheSky/Series_I.html): this just-released film is part III of his latest and current project 'Earth Rising, Heaven Descending'.

The five-part series of films is subtitled "on a search for a spiritually meaningful way of life" and in each film Suryaprabha captures the conversations, images, dreams, reflections, laughter, contradictions and craziness in the people that make up the FWBO/TBMSG Sangha in one or another part of the world. Part I set the scene, part II looked at America.

Part III, *Recurring Dream* takes him to India, and it's great! If you've never been to India, it'll take you there; if you have, it'll take you right back there...

India is full of unlikely spectacles, and *Recurring Dreams* is full of them. Where else would a brass band accompany someone as they walked down the road to deliver a talk? Where else would you find a stadium full of people ritually dissolving the five elements in their bodies to leave only space? And where else could you see the grainy 50-year-old footage of Dr. Ambedkar as he led 300,000 of his followers away from Hinduism and to a new life as Buddhists?

In its 65 minutes Suryaprabha manages to pack in a great deal of serious and often very intimate content– we witness the hopes and aspirations of young orphans growing up in TBMSG hostels; the frank admissions of women living in a Buddhist community as they discuss between themselves their plans up until marriage (and beyond!); the rousing exhortations of Subhuti as he urges his listeners to initiate a "peaceful revolution". We glimpse the appalling caste violence that mar the lives of many Dalits in India today, and end with the spectacular extravagance of an inter-caste wedding.

'*Recurring Dream*' is available from Suryaprabha's company 'Lights in the Sky', the price being £15 for personal viewing and £44 for public showing. Highly recommended.

Available from the **Lights in the Sky** website

<http://web.mac.com/surya4/LightsInTheSky/Home.html> or tel (020) 7607 9480

Review written by Lokabandhu.

Sunday, August 03

Dharma developments in Amsterdam

The FWBO's Amsterdam centre (www.vwbo.nl) is over 20 years old and has



quietly established itself as a significant element in the Buddhist life of the city, with some 8 Order Members living there.

Gunabhadri became chairwoman last year, and has focused on developing and systematizing the Centre's teaching, including developing teaching materials in Dutch.

She writes – “The main news as far as I am concerned from the Amsterdam Buddhist Centre is that we have just finished year 1 of our 2-year Buddhism course which we started in September last year. The course consists of various modules that people can either follow one-by-one in a linear way from 1 to 2 through to the last, or pick and choose and just follow some of the modules.. The second year modules will follow on from particular modules from year one - for example, in year 1 we have a module on the Buddha, in year 2 one on the Mandala of the Five Buddhas which will take people deeper into the theme of the Buddha. Other themes are: the Wheel of Life (year 1) followed by the Spiral Path (year 2); the Noble Eightfold Path (year 1) followed by the Wisdom Sutras (year 2); and the Threefold Path, the Sangha and the Bodhisattva Ideal. During the last year meditation modules were also part of the course.

“With the course comes a compendium of various materials in Dutch, which we are writing as we go along (including lots of material and quotes from Bhante’s lectures and other teachers in the FWBO). The plan is to use ‘new media’ more - to be able to do this we’ve invested in a new computer system, including a beamer, simple recording equipment, etc.

“In terms of Order members, there’s also been some changes - Amsterdam has ‘lost’ Sobhanandi who has moved to our centre in Arnhem (www.vwbo.net/arnhem) and Sarojini is about to move to our centre in Gent (www.gent.vwbo.net) in Belgium. On the plus side, Mokshagandhi, who is based in Amsterdam, has just been ‘born’ into the Order, and so has Amritapurna, though she is planning to go and live in Groningen (in the North of Holland) – while over in Belgium Bart van den Berghe is about to be ordained (public ordination date 24 August).

“So, we are happy with the way it is going and it feels like a new generation of people is getting involved with the Centre – of course it’s early days really.

"Please do come and visit if you are ever in Amsterdam”.



Friday, August 01

Brighton Buddhist Centre's 'Tibet week'

The FWBO’s Brighton Buddhist Centre is playing a major role in Brighton’s forthcoming Tibet 2008 Initiative, which will run throughout August starting next Saturday 2nd.

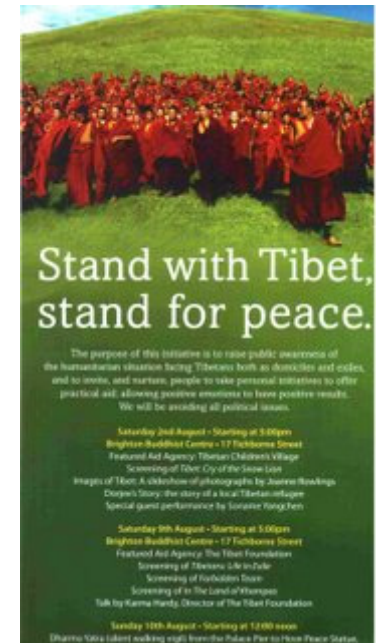
Pete Fountain, the inspiration behind the Tibet 2008 Initiative said, “I hope that these events will encourage people to offer whatever help they can to other human beings. They can do this in the full knowledge that they are directly making a beneficial difference to another person's life; potentially to the extent of actually saving it.”

The programme aims to promote an understanding of the issues facing Tibetans, both in exile and in their homeland. It will also offer practical ways in which people can provide support for the Tibetan nationals.

First comes an evening where Tibetan refugees will share their experiences of life in Tibet through song and the spoken word – among those present will be Dorjee, a Tibetan refugee living in Brighton, who will be talking about his reasons for leaving his homeland, his 34-day journey walking over the snow covered Himalayas to India, and his life as a refugee living in Brighton. The Gangjong Doeghar performance group, many of whose performers come from the Karuna-funded Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Cultural Institute ITBCI, will also be performing.

Later in August there will be three Walking Vigils along the Brighton Seafront in Support of the Tibetan People – an opportunity to show solidarity with the Tibetan people's desire for greater freedom, to assemble together on behalf of those who cannot.”

Of special interest to those in the FWBO might be the last event, an evening



showcasing “One Lama’s Mission to Preserve Tibetan Culture” – the lama in question of course being Sangharakshita’s friend and teacher Dhardo Rimpoche.

Many other events are also planned – more details on the web at <http://www.brightonbuddhistcentre.co.uk/tibet.html>

Thursday, July 31

Rupavati emerges from nine-month solitary at Naga-Naga, Australia



Naga-Naga is a little-known FWBO women’s vihara in Eastern Australia, some way south of Brisbane. It was created upon land traditionally owned by the Dhungutti nation and developed as a place dedicated to women’s spiritual practise by its previous owner, Minmia, a senior Wiradjiri woman. When the FWBO took it over, they included in their vision their intention to provide support to women who are serious Buddhist practitioners, particularly those who are ordained or seeking ordination in the Western Buddhist Order; also to live in

harmony with and to promote the well being of the land its inhabitants, both seen and unseen.

Among other projects they offer facilities for women to engage in long solitary retreats; FWBO News has recently received this report from Rupavati, newly emerged from a nine-month retreat there. She says -

“In June last year I was newly arrived at Naganaga Vihara. I was planning a nine-month solitary retreat – it was yet to begin and I was looking forward to a road trip first.

“All that is far behind me now.



My retreat finished towards the end of April this year, and as I slowly emerged from that I gradually merged into the community and their annual May ‘Rains Retreat’. During my time alone everyone in the community - Megha, Padmalaya, Satyagandhi and Viryadana – had been a wonderful support, bringing me my weekly food shopping, replenishing gas cylinders and other requests as need arose. I am extremely grateful to them all, especially Satyagandhi, for creating such a safe and beautiful situation.

“The retreat itself was a huge internal adventure. Being continuously face to face with my mind for that length of time was a sobering experience. From where does it all come? As my awareness developed and intensified, as I engaged more and more deeply and fully with my sadhana practices and formless meditation, I felt sometimes as if I were inhabiting an alternative world or life, an all-enveloping hallucination. Then my awareness would return and I would remember the illusory nature of this existence too. I reflected often on Emptiness, something I had not done in years. Going deep into my body and looking at atoms that are more space than matter (remember the Tao of Physics?) and seeing form and emptiness. This was reflection not experiential but gave me a feel for the illusory nature of my body.

“Towards the end of the retreat I became aware that I was engaging with a much more subtle level of my body. What I have learned is ongoing, pathways yet to be explored, new doors opening in my practice.

“The caravan I inhabited was in a beautiful setting. From my sofa outside I could see the Macleay River and across to the mountainous hills opposite. Everything



was lush and green as we had a very wet summer. I walked daily in the valley by the river, sometimes just sitting beside it watching it flow, and enjoying the multitude of wildlife. I walked late in the afternoon when the sun began to lose the intensity of heat, the sun slanting through the leaves of the trees and gleaming on the rich chestnut-coloured cows

and their beautiful little calves. It has been quite a wrench to leave all that and engage with the world again.

“Now I am back in New Zealand, slowly relaxing into a very different beauty and serenity. I'm here until mid-October when I return to the UK and my life in London. Lastly I'll just mention how very much I enjoyed a sense of being in touch with the wider Order during my solitary – although I was alone I read the Order's monthly journal 'Shabda' treating myself to a few letters or an article in bed each night. Much love to all in our Sangha”.

Wednesday, July 30

Public Ordinations in California

On 27th JULY three Ordinations took place at the start of the North American Order Convention at Jikoji Retreat Center with 28 Order Members present.

Rita Holmes of Aryaloka Buddhist Center becomes: Saricitta (pronounced Sarichittaa; stress falls on the "i" in citta), meaning: she who has a heart/ mind like a waterfall (She who has a loving/kind heart/mind overflowing with metta and compassion that is cascading like a waterfall to all beings.

Sandy Bonin of Aryaloka Buddhist Center becomes: Vihanasari (pronounced Vihaanasaari; stress falls on the "a" in sari, meaning: Thrush at the dawn (Thrush with a beautiful song singing with joy at dawn as the light of the Dharma enters the world. In both cases the Public Preceptor was Dayanandi and the Private Preceptor Dayalocana.

Dino Papavasiliou of Aryaloka Buddhist Center becomes: Danakamala (pronounced Daanakamala. Stress on Daa and ka, meaning: Lotus of Generosity. The Public Preceptor was Dhammarati and the Private Preceptor Vajramati.



Tuesday, July 29

New TBMSG centre opens in Delhi



News of India comes today via an FWBO blogger with her ear to the ground in San Francisco - in her journal Jai Bhim International (<http://jaibhim.livejournal.com/friends>) she writes:

"we are rejoicing in the opening of a new FWBO/TBMSG dhamma center in delhi, the dhammachakra buddhist centre. the center officially opened last sunday, with an inauguration led by its director, dhammachari maitriveer nagarjuna (shown leading the puja, left). over 50 people came to celebrate the new space on the prestigious jnu university campus: university students, buddhists representing other sanghas, as well as families from the local community. may this sangha continue to thrive!"

The new centre will serve as a base for the ambitious plans of TBMSG's Dhammakranti Project for new Dhamma classes in the four neighbouring States of Rajasthan, Hariyana Uttar Pradesh and Punjab, besides serving as a community base and training centre.

During the opening ceremonies Lama Sumati from Bodhagaya, a long-time friend of Maitriveer Nagarjun, spoke, reminding people about Dr.Ambedkar's teaching that:

1. Buddhism is difficult to practice, so one must be brave to practice the Dhamma.
2. Dr. Ambedkar wanted his followers to be brave to revive the Buddhism.
3. There is no short cut to practice, so we need to work hard for the Buddha's teachings.

The new centre's first major event is already in preparation, a North India Youth Convention to be held under the auspices of the new National Network of Buddhist Youth (www.nnby.org) - the dates are 11-14 September 2008, in Delhi.

Sunday, July 27

New premises appeal for Ipswich Buddhist Centre

The FWBO's Ipswich Buddhist Centre (www.ipswichbuddhistcentre.org.uk) has been seeking new premises - and it looks like they are well on the way to finding somewhere. We're happy to pass on this message from their Facebook site -

"Hello there all, in case you don't know we have found a new freehold building in a very prominent place in the town centre.

"We are the process of seeing who is interesting in helping us in a appeal to raise money to move and furnish to new centre to continue our work of creating a positive sphere of influence and help people to transform grow and develop.

If you have fundraising ideas, skills and would like to be involved please let us know. It is a very exciting development :-> Check them out on **Facebook**.



Friday, July 25

Environmental Audit and action plans at the London Buddhist Centre



In 2007 the FWBO's London Buddhist Centre (www.lbc.org.uk) celebrated the year of Amoghasiddhi, the Green Buddha of Action and Fearlessness.

As part of this they focussed attention on taking practical action to address environmental issues, exploring how Buddhism teaches us to lead a more simple and less wasteful life, more in harmony with the environment.

And as part of that, over the last few months a series of 'environmental audits' have been carried out in and around the LBC's

'Buddhist Village', covering many of the businesses and communities that are linked to the LBC as well as the centre itself. They have now produced a report summarising the main findings of those environmental audits – all of which include commitments to action, whether reducing direct environmental impacts, working in partnership with others on environmental issues, or by raising awareness of why and how we can all take action on the environment.

The report can be read in full here - www.fwbo-news.org/features/LBC_Environment_Review_Summary.pdf. Thanks to the LBC for permission to reproduce

Wednesday, July 23

New Paintings for Padmaloka's Shrine Room



In 2007 the FWBO's **Padmaloka Retreat Centre** (www.padmalo.org.uk) began a new project to fill their main shrine room with large paintings of buddhas and bodhisattvas painted by the Buddhist artist Aloka. The main shrine room at Padmaloka is the heart of the retreat centre and is a source of inspiration to all who spend time there. And this project will make it even more inspiring!! It will become a place that progressively expresses the mythic depths of Padmaloka.

Aloka has been painting for much of his life and is concerned very much with creating images that speak to Buddhists living and practising in the modern world. So not only will this project create a wonderful environment at Padmaloka to practice in, it will also be creating a legacy for the future by providing the FWBO with inspiring images for the modern Buddhist practitioner.

In autumn 2007 Aloka began the first two paintings. Recently these were completed and are now hanging in the shrine room. They are of White Tara and Green Tara, both feminine figures of compassion, and are situated to either side

of the shrine room entrance. There is no definite plan for what paintings come next – these will emerge as time goes on.

In order to continue this project Padmaloka is initiating a number of fundraising projects over the coming years. This year in August there is a special fundraising weekend event called “The Twenty Four Hour Garland of Mantras”.

Open to all men, this will involve among other things an intensive 24 hour period of mantra chanting, for which the participants will be sponsored. This will be a fantastic opportunity to deeply immerse yourself in the mysterious world of mantra and also to help call forth the paintings yet to come! If you would like to attend this event click the link above for more details.

Monday, July 21

Buddhafield Festival ends in beauty



The 13th Buddhafield Festival ended yesterday, with over 2,500 people heading home after a rich weekend on Buddhafield's beautiful new site in the Blackdown Hills, Somerset. It was Buddhafield's largest-ever festival and something of a risk given the new site and the

increasingly uncertain weather of the British summer.

The Festival was dedicated the theme of the Six Elements – Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Space, and Consciousness, with rituals each day dedicated to one of the Elements. For Water, for instance, those participating gathered by the side of the lake for the recitation of verses of meditation. On the last night, for the closing

ceremony and to celebrate the element of Space, many papier-mache hot air balloons were lit which flew up into the air and away – a beautiful sight.

Some photos can be seen in the attached slideshow or on **FWBO Photos**, www.flickr.com/photos/fwbo/sets/72157606287749510/show. The slideshow takes you on a journey through the Festival, from arrival, to meeting the stewards, to the opening ceremony, the many shrines, a whistle-stop tour of a small selection of the hundreds of gems scattered through the site - and last but by no means least, a study of the remarkable paper stupa in the centre of the site.

Thursday, July 17

Windhorse: Evolution part IV: Dana in 2008 - and beyond...



This is part four of a series of four articles on **Windhorse: Evolution** (www.evolutiongifts.co.uk), the FWBO's largest and most successful Right Livelihood business, based in Cambridge, UK.

In 2007-8 Windhorse's dana totalled a remarkable £265,229, all given away out of the profits of the business to a multiplicity of projects across the FWBO, TBMSG, and beyond. Part IV of this series looks at how Windhorse makes its decisions, and exactly what they chose to fund last year. There's the Dana Fund, the Growth Fund, the Legacy Fund, and the Social Fund.

Just one, the Growth Fund, was able to give money to a new FWBO group in Freiburg, Southern Germany, for continuing the development of close-to-nature

camping retreats in Holland and Belgium, for publicity and basic expenses for new centre in Düsseldorf, Germany, for cushions, mats, etc for the new Buddhist Centre in Krakow, Poland and equipment and publicity for new FWBO centre in Leicester, UK.

In India it gave publicity and equipment for new city centre premises in Bhusawal, Maharastra, and a major new Indian Buddhist Youth project building on previous two years of the 'National Buddhist Youth' gatherings, funding for a second year to continue working with Tribal people in remote areas, also to sponsor gatherings of leaders from different caste communities in India, , for a major extension of TBMSG activities in North India - and last but by no means least, for underwriting the cost of two Order Membes visiting a woman mitra running FWBO-style activities near Ulan Bator, Mongolia.

The full report is available at www.fwbo-news.org/features/2005/07/windhorseevolution-part-iv-dana-in-2008.html - which also looks at Windhorse's plans for the future - which include a clear "Donations Warning!" for 2009 and beyond.

Tuesday, July 15



Youth Dharma: upcoming event

In common with other Buddhist sanghas in the West, the FWBO attracted a lot of young people in the 60's and 70's, fewer in the 80's and 90's, and even fewer today. Why? Who knows – but we'd like to find out!

Sometimes the spiritual path is spoken of as starting with the

experience of Dukkha, or unsatisfactoriness: everyone experiences this and finds this painful, the young often more than the old. And sometimes the Goal is spoken of as 'the Taste of Freedom', again all desire this, the young no less than their elders.



As a first step, in November this year, there's going to be a weekend gathering of all those with an interest in this area. The weekend is open to everyone – of all levels of involvement and all ages. We'd especially like to get young people from centres along and hear what they have to say and encourage them to get involved. Please tell people at your centre about this event, and also come along yourself, even if you are no longer young! But just for the sake of clarity, the focus will be on folk in their teens through to the end of their twenties.

The aim is to create energy, confidence, inspiration, and ideas. Among other things we'll be using '**Open Space Technology**' to maximise everyone's opportunities for contributions and learning. We hope to encourage centres, retreat centres, teachers, and preceptors to have this as part of their perspective on their work.

There are big questions to be addressed: how can we create a vibrant FWBO culture that inspires young people with the Dharma? What are young people looking for? How can the Dharma touch them? And how can we create a sense of community in which teenage offspring of Buddhist parents will want to get involved?

The weekend is from Friday 7th to Sunday 9th November; the venue is 'Bilberry Hill', a little way outside Birmingham, UK. And the cost is £50, including food and accommodation. (If you can't afford to pay that, please pay less.) Full details will be sent upon booking.

To book, please send a cheque for £50, payable to "FWBO" to: Lokabandhu, 25 St. Edmunds Road, Glastonbury, Somerset, BA6 9HX, UK; or contact him on lokabandhu@fwbo.org for more details.

Monday, July 14

Windhorse:Evolution - the people...

Part three of a series of four articles on **Windhorse:Evolution**, the FWBO's largest and most



successful Right Livelihood business, is available at www.fwbo-news.org/features/2005/07/windhorseevolution-people.html. Part III explores the experiences of some individuals working in it, while part IV (to be published on July 16th) will reveal the many projects funded by their current *dana* or generosity.

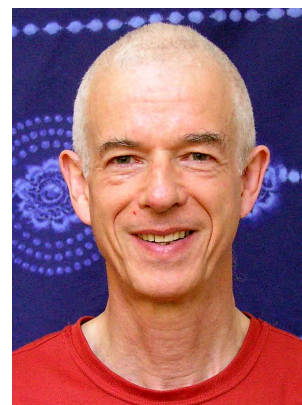
1.Gaining Confidence

Santosh Kamble (who has just been ordained, and is now known as Sanghanatha, 'Protector of the Sangha') works in the Windhorse:Evolution warehouse in Cambridge, known as 'Uddiyana'. He's from a small village in Maharastra, India, and this is his story...

"I came into contact with the Western Buddhist Order (known in India as TBMSG) in my childhood through the Asvaghosa project. They go from village to village, teaching drama, singing songs and telling stories to the most underprivileged children, to build their confidence. I went to those classes in my village when I was a child, and I loved the singing, drama and playing games, and I was inspired by their activities. They pick up some incidents from the Buddha's life and tell a story or do a performance. Most of the songs are about the spiritual life. I made a connection with the teachers and Asvaghosa leaders, who are practising Buddhists involved in TBMSG".

Ten years later, and he's in Windhorse...

Sunday, July 13



Clear Thinking in Birmingham: 'Asking the Right Questions'

The FWBO's Dharmapala College (www.dharmapalacollege.org) in Birmingham now has a new sort of retreat. Specifically it's a "Level Two Clear Thinking Workshop" entitled 'Asking The Right Questions'.

The course leader, Jnanaketu, says – "This short course briefly reviews the main areas of clear

thinking skills, using material directly related to the Dharma – identifying and developing arguments, identifying ambiguity, hidden assumptions and fallacies, and formulating questions. Using clear thinking in study groups is an area that I have been thinking and writing about over recent months. Two articles can be downloaded from the Dharmapala College website.

"Most of the time will be spent practising applications of clear thinking, which will probably include: examining ways of identifying and reflecting on views, practising the Elenkhos (investigating a topic by means of collaborative questioning), and using clear thinking skills to participate in and lead Dharma study groups effectively.

"Completely new for 2008 is 'Insight Dialogue', a very effective way of reflecting in pairs on short Dharma texts and views. I am also keen that we should cultivate metta (loving-kindness) in the course of practising these applications". The Dharmapala College is something of a new venture for FWBO retreats – they see their principle task as that of building a 'Community of Enquiry', describing it thus –

"Dharmapala College plays an active part in the emerging Buddhist culture in the West. Initiated by members of the Western Buddhist Order, it invites the participation of everyone inspired by the ideals of collaborative enquiry into reality and open-handed sharing of understanding and experience. With the ending of the two-year Dharmaduta Training Course, we have been shifting our main emphasis to developing a 'Community of Enquiry' as the core practice inspiring our teaching activities.

"By 'enquiry' we mean dharma-vicaya, understood as practice (bhavana) comprising both critical investigation and contemplative reflection, and culminating in an ever deeper experience of insight. Our notion of enquiry thus rests on a mutually reinforcing combination of study, meditation, and devotional practice. Most simply put, the "enquiry" aspect of our vision seeks to cultivate the four idhipadas or bases of spiritual success: concentration of intention, of energy, of mind, and of investigation".

You can read more about this on their website, and find details of their retreats

(and many others) on our **GoingOnRetreat website** (www.goingonretreat.com). Highly recommended!

Saturday, July 12

Sangharakshita's Diary April - June 2008



Sangharakshita's secretary Dharmamati has sent FWBO News this account of Sangharakshita's engagements and activities over the past couple of months. We're pleased to reproduce it here.

"Bhante's health: Since the problems with Bhante's heart in February he continues to improve. His energy levels are good as long as he does not overdo things. The treatment for the macular degeneration appears to have been successful and there has been no further deterioration in his eyesight.

"April: (continued from last report) The last report concluded with Bhante's trip to Manchester.

Shortly after, Lama Lhundrup, the German Kagyu Lama who is overseeing Vessantara's long solitart retreat, visited

Bhante with his South African colleague. This was during a seminar Lhundrup was leading at Madhyamaloka on the Mahamudra. Bhante was pleased to find that the Lama believed that there was only one model for the spiritual life, namely the developmental model, that the doctrine of Tathagatagarbha represented a potential and not an actuality, and that it was his personal belief that there was a connection between Mahamudra and Satipatthana.

Towards the end of April Bhante visited the FWBO's **Amsterdam centre**. He had three full days there during which he gave a Q&A session for Order members at the Amsterdam Buddhist centre and met with local sangha members both in small groups for meals and individually. Unfortunately on the second day Bhante, Ksantivadin and I came down with a particularly virulent stomach bug.

Thanks to Dayapadma we were all well looked after and nursed back to health. This meant, unfortunately, that a trip planned to the Arnhem centre had to be cancelled. Despite this set back Bhante managed continue as usual, making the trip to Holland a success that was much appreciated by the local sangha.

May: The first event that Bhante attended in this month was the Women Mitra convenor's meeting, during which, over a period of two days, he led study at Tiratanaloka, on the chapter Guarding of Awareness from the Bodhicaryavatara.

This was closely followed by a visit from another Lama. This time, Lama Rangdrol, the only African-American Lama recognized by the first conference of Tibetan Buddhist Centres of North and South America. He had recently attended the seminar on Beyond Race and Caste, hosted by the San Francisco Buddhist centre. He came with his companion Rebecca Walker, who incidentally is the daughter of Alice Walker who wrote The Colour Purple and is an author in her own right. After the meeting the Lama told me that he had just experienced the most spiritually enriching half hour in his life!

Around the middle of the month Bhante was visited by a group of Going for Refuge Mitras from Dublin.

The next significant event was a visit to Lambeth palace for a meeting of religious leaders organised by the Archbishop of Canterbury. This was primarily a reception for the Dalai Lama. Gordon Brown, the Prime minister, was there to have a private meeting the Dalai Lama and the Archbishop prior to the meeting. After this he greeted the religious leaders, during which time Bhante got to meet him. The Prime minister departed and the meeting got under way. There were 21 delegates representing most religions in Britain (A fuller report of the meeting appeared in FWBO news on 7th July).

Before the meeting Bhante chatted with the Dalai Lama. It was the first time they had met for many years and the Dalai Lama remembered Bhante very well and also mentioned that he was well aware of the work of the FWBO with the Dalits in India. The highlight, for me, was seeing the Dalai Lama helping Bhante up the stairs, they almost danced hand in hand in a very playful way. Bhante also got an opportunity to chat to some of the other delegates including Ajahn Sumedho from Amaravati, Ven Tawalama Bandula from the London Buddhist Vihara and Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor R.C. Archbishop of Westminster.

Two days later Bhante gave a talk on the FWBO International retreat. The talk was on 'Growing the Spiritual Community' and looked at the factors that help grow and healthily maintain the Spiritual community. The retreat certainly met one of the factors, that of meeting in large numbers.

June: At the time of writing Bhante has just returned from Padmaloka where he led study for the 2005 Guhyaloka reunion retreat. He led 10 sessions of study over a period of 5days again from the Bodhicaryavatara this from the chapter on Kshanti or forbearance. He also attended the British Buddhist Landscape conference at Taplow Course - a report on this has already appeared in FWBO News.

Apart from the highlights above Bhante continues to meet individuals daily and working on the Spoken Word book, Nagarjuna's 'Precious Garland' with Samacitta.

Next month trips are planned to Sheffield, Berlin and the Men's Mitra convenors meeting at Padmaloka.

So as you can see despite the set-back at the beginning of the year Bhante continues to be quite active.

Dharmamati 16th June 2008

Friday, July 11

Windhorse:Evolution - a Buddhist business...

Part II of a series of four articles on **Windhorse:Evolution**, the FWBO's largest and most successful Right Livelihood business, explores the ethos of the business. It has been published at www.fwbo-news.org/features/2005/07/windhorseevolution-as-buddhist-business.html Parts III and IV will examine the experiences of some individuals working in it, and some of the many projects funded by their current dana. Most of the articles are taken from the W:E magazine, and are reprinted by permission.

Keturaja, Windhorse:Evolution's HR Director, talks to Tejasvini about some of the Buddhist flavours to be found at windhorse:evolution. He says "Many of us have come to work at windhorse:evolution because we value working with other people who are inspired to practise the Buddhist path. Our ethos, and the five principles of the business are inspired by Buddhist practice..."



He goes on to talk of the renaissance in community living they are currently experiencing, and of the variety to be found between the dozen or more communities that are associated with Windhorse in Cambridge. Also of their flexibility in paying people - and of the simple virtues - and challenges of living on their 'support package' as opposed to drawing a wage. This is, perhaps, one of the most distinctive features of Windhorse and indeed the FWBO's 'team-based Right Livelihood' businesses generally. As Keturaja says -

"...there's a collective element in the practice of being on support. Most of support consists of allowances, which are just taken, but there are some elements that involve discussing one's own needs, and I think that's a useful reflection and clarification on needs and wants. We all have a relationship with money and how we use it, and quite a lot of our conditioning is tied up with our feelings about money. Somehow the support system draws out and reflects back one's own conditioning in regard to it. Sometimes that can be quite challenging, but personally I have found that it helps make me aware of my own conditioning and deciding whether I'm happy with that conditioning or want to change it. For example some people find it difficult to ask about their own needs, and so the people involved in administering the support system practise being open and encouraging, helping people clarify what their needs really are".

Wednesday, July 09

Windhorse:Evolution's "Year of the Rat"

A series of four articles on **Windhorse:Evolution** (www.evolutiongifts.co.uk), the FWBO's largest and most successful Right Livelihood business, is available on FWBO Features. The articles will look at the ethos of the business, recent changes and challenges it has faced, the experiences of some individuals working in it, and some of the many projects funded by their current dana. Most of the

articles are taken from the W:E magazine, and are reprinted by permission.

To give perspective, there are approximately 112 people working for Windhorse in Cambridge, and a further 107 in over a dozen Evolution shops. Of the ones in Cambridge, 98 are Buddhist and 14 not Buddhist; a total of 72 people in Cambridge live in Buddhist communities. And since 1990 Windhorse has raised and given away almost UK £7 million!



We start with some reflections by Vajraketu, Windhorse:Evolution's Managing Director and chief buyer, on the state of the business in this, the 'Year of the Rat'.

"A rat year is a time of hard work, activity and renewal. This is a good year to begin a new job, launch a new product or make a fresh start. Ventures begun now may not yield fast returns, but opportunities will come for people who are well prepared and resourceful. The best way for you to succeed is to be patient, let things develop slowly and make the most of every opening you can find."

"This is the Year of the Rat in the Chinese system, the first in the twelve-year cycle. It happens to be an appropriate image for us, because we are entering a new phase. The characteristic of this new phase, I hope, is that we're going to grow again. After growing between 1986 and 2002, we've had five or six years of plateau or consolidation.

"During that period of consolidation we made a lot of very necessary changes, particularly during the last couple of years. Firstly in 2002 we had to move into these new premises, which was an enormous undertaking. Then within a period of about twelve months three of the six people who comprised the previous management team moved on and we had to get used to running the business without them. Ratnaghosha devised a new management structure, and Keturaja systematized things and helped bring us to the position we're in now, with every department in the business in good shape and as well or better managed than it's ever been.

"There is a certain irony here. We're probably in the best shape ever and yet last

year was our least profitable year for at least a decade. Our current estimate is that we're going to have made about £200-250,000, compared to the previous year, which was something, over £400,000. The reason for that is that sales have plateaued, but our costs have gone up inexorably. Our personnel bill has more than doubled over the last five or six years. That's the only cloud in the blue sky of the Year of the Rat...

The first article is available at www.fwbo-news.org/features/2005/07/2008-windhorseevolutions-year-of-rat.html

Part II will look at the special features of Windhorse as a Buddhist business.

Sangharakshita in London with the Dalai Lama



Dharmamati, who works in Birmingham as secretary to Sangharakshita, sends us this report of his recent meeting with the Dalai Lama at gathering of religious leaders in London.

“Recently Sangharakshita was invited to Lambeth Palace, official London residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury for a

meeting of religious leaders organised by the Archbishop of Canterbury. This was primarily a reception for the Dalai Lama. Gordon Brown, the UK Prime Minister, was there to have a private meeting with the Dalai Lama and the Archbishop prior to the main meeting. After this Gordon Brown greeted the religious leaders, during which time Sangharakshita got to meet him.

“Before the meeting Sangharakshita chatted with the Dalai Lama. It was the first time they had met since the early 1960's. The Dalai Lama remembered him very clearly, also mentioning that he was well aware of the work of the Western Buddhist Order (Trailokya Bauddha Mahasangha) with the Dalits(ex-untouchables) in India. Sangharakshita also got an opportunity to chat to some of the other delegates including Ajahn Sumedho from Amaravati, Ven Tawalama Bandula from the London Buddhist Vihara and Cardinal Cormac Murphy-

O'Connor R.C. Archbishop of Westminster. After the Prime Minister departed the meeting proper got under way.



“This was a private occasion and the opportunity, according to the Archbishop of Canterbury, for some religious leaders to come together away from the media to reflect quietly on those things that are important for the wellbeing of the people of this country. There were 21 delegates and apart from the Christian and Buddhist contingent, representatives came

from the Hindu, Muslim, Jewish, Bahai, and Jain communities.



“The Dalai Lama was invited to address the meeting. He stressed the importance of relating on the basis of our common humanness rather than difference in beliefs. He used the example that Buddhism and Jainism are both non-theistic and yet have a different view on atman and anatman. He then mentioned the enormous differences in the understanding of God between all the theistic faiths, concluding that because there is no end to difference, we have to find

what is common to us all - which is, that we are all human beings. And, that any human being can develop wisdom and compassion regardless of what they believe. And finally, that this would be a definite step in the right direction! There was a delightful moment after the meeting when the Dalai Lama helped Bhante up the stairs, the two of them almost dancing hand-in-hand in a very playful way.

“Although this gathering of some of the most influential religious leaders in the country was very brief, let us hope that it goes some way in helping them realise their common humanity and find a path to peace and reconciliation”.

Sangharakshita's personal website (www.sangharakshita.org/index.html) has recently been totally overhauled and been given a new look by Dharmamati.

Here you will find some 15 of his **books** available for free download; many of his poems both **old** and **new**; a complete **bibliography**, many **book reviews** and **editorials** from the 1950s and 60s, and some little-known **articles**, such as the fascinating glimpse into Sangharakshita's early days back in the West to be found in his '1970 – A Retrospective'. There's more, of course – but we leave you to browse!

Friday, July 04

Rave reviews for Buddhafield Festival

FWBO News has come across a review of last year's Buddhafield Festival, just published in the annual UK magazine **Festival Eye**.

Festival Eye is the UK's festival bible, coming out once a year, carrying reviews of last years' festivals and the dates for the current years'. Last year's review of Buddhafield is wonderful - we print excerpts below...

"Buddhafield's is as close... so far... as you are likely to come to a perfect community of beings living and celebrating the way we all know we should be. We all know how and at Buddhafields we are reminded of that. No drugs and drink leave the air and the smiles as clear as crystal. Add countless children, the Chai Chapel, a lost horizon with a sauna in it, a tribal Tent called Triban, some mud, but also a lot of green grass (very rare in 2007 as I'm sure you are all aware), a community notice board, some pirates, some fairies, some horses, many meditations, many dances and dancers and many naked people including myself and I think you understand. I love it, totally."

And from another reviewer - *"Buddhafields is such an invitation to play, dress up, dance until you sweat so much you want to take off your clothes, till the earth vibrates so much under your feet that you want to cover yourself with it... dance*



till sunset, dance till dawn.. in silence.. the whole site turns silent at night... you can hear the fairies breathe.. the earth children gather in tents, or go to their nests in dream land, warm up in Sam's sauna or around the fire of Lost Horizon.. tell stories, have funny competitions, better be a nudist, a pirate or an earth woman...

"At the top of a hill, some bells, some shrines and meditation tents.. that's where non stop, someone is in meditation. It is Buddhafields.. the fields where you're invited to be as playful as a laughing buddha, playing with appearances of this world..."

The full reviews are online at www.fwbo-news.org/features/BFF_2007_reviews_from_Festival_Eye.pdf.

Sadhu Buddhafield!

Thursday, July 03

Karuna Appeal in North London – a glimpse behind the scenes



Khemajala, from the **Karuna Trust's** fundraising team (www.karuna.org), writes to FWBO News to say - "Readers of FWBO News might like to know we have a team of volunteers in North London right now. They're walking the streets and talking to the good people of North London.

Jo, Naomi, Abhilasa and Paddy are halfway through their six weeks of door-knocking appeal; please bear them in mind as they do this vital fundraising. "If all goes well they'll raise many thousands between them for our many projects in India – last year we raised a remarkable £87,968 annually. And since most donations are by standing order, the money just keeps on flowing long after the appeal is over! If you want to keep up with their story Jo Robinson is blogging away on most days on the Karuna Appeals blog –

<http://karunaappeals.org.uk/blogs/jo---london-2008.html>. It makes great reading... Here's a taste.



14th June: Cultivating passion"Hi, I'm calling from a charity". "You best come in then, but I'm telling you now I'm not signing up for a standing order". "I feel the warmth of the hallway and the house immediately, and realise that it is a little cold out there walking the streets. It is a familiar warmth to me, the warmth of being invited into someone's home, I am immediately grateful. My eyes scan the room, letters opened on the table, a work pass that says BBC on the counter. "Ah, you work for the BBC" "Yes", "what do you do there?" "I'm the World Services' Africa

correspondent". Ah, I think, how interesting, we are going to get on well. "So, what do you want from me?" "Well, I'll tell you it straight there's no point in mucking around...I want a standing order...". I grin...he grins, "or a donation" I add, realising that this man is relatively rich and might give Karuna a big fat cheque."He tells me he had a Dalit cleaner when he lived in India. Tells me that the cook of the house said that if the cleaner was ever allowed in the kitchen of the house, she would resign as his cook. He tells me he hates Hinduism because it fosters this sense of when you're born you're screwed, you just have to put up with your lot..."

Wednesday, July 02

The British Buddhist Landscape Conference - a brief report



Last weekend saw the first British Buddhist Landscape Conference, with some 70 people from across the full spectrum of British Buddhism gathering at Taplow Court, HQ of Sokkai Gakkai UK.

Lokabandhu reports –
"I've never been a 'conference junkie', and for me it was a rather new and stimulating experience to spend a

weekend at a stately home in the company of intellectuals and leading Buddhist

practitioners. One couldn't help feeling just a little aristocratic! The programme was packed, and yet living together just for those two days lent a real intimacy to the event, for me at least it meant that we got to know one another far better than over a year of committee meetings – the only context in which I'd met most of the others previously.

"It was also fascinating to be able to glimpse other sanghas – I was especially impressed with the culture of dana and service at Taplow, which is run almost entirely by volunteers who are arranged in small teams of specialists or other shared interests. On the Saturday night, for instance, we had a lavish buffet supper cooked for us by their 'chef's group'. It was also fascinating to glimpse how others are engaged in translating the Dharma for the modern world – one example was the FPMT's '[Essential Education](http://www.essential-education.org)' and '[16 Guidelines](http://www.16guidelines.org)' programs (www.essential-education.org and www.16guidelines.org)

"The FWBO was generously represented, with Sangharakshita offering 'reminiscences and reflections' on the Friday night; among many other points he encouraged the different Buddhist traditions in the West today to face squarely the issues raised for them by (a) the insights into Buddhist history afforded by the higher criticism of the West and (b) the fact that the Buddhist scriptures are full of 'supernatural' beings. Besides him Vijayatara (aka Dr. Sharon Smith) spoke on People of Colour in Western Buddhism, using as case studies the FWBO and SGI (UK); also Munisha on Buddhism and Young People. Amitajyoti had organised an impressive contribution to the art exhibition, with work by Aloka, Chintamani, and Padmayogini (whose Shakyamuni is shown opposite) among others.

"More generally, there were sessions on the early history of Buddhism in the UK, with useful statistical insights – did you know, for instance, that 150,000 people declared themselves Buddhist in the last UK census? Of whom 90,000 were of Asian descent, leaving some 60,000 new converts. Or that there are now over 1,000 registered Buddhist groups in the UK? Up, it should be added, from just 30 in 1968! The diverse ethnicity of Buddhism in the UK was drawn out in four short talks from Japanese, India, Nepalese, and Thai speakers.

"Later sessions focussed on the engagement of Buddhism in many areas of modern British life – education, interfaith dialogue, hospital chaplaincy, and 'engaged Buddhism' in general, where a useful three-way division was offered:

engaged Buddhism as 'radical activism', creating the future 'New Society' through Right Livelihood, and engagement in caring and service. The conference ended with a stimulating survey of Buddhism and Western thought by John Peacock, for many years director of studies at Sharpham College.

"Most of the sessions were recorded, in several cases by ClearVision, and it is hoped that before too long they will be made more widely available – keep your eyes on the FWBO's **Videosangha** or the Network of Buddhist Organisations' website www.nbo.org.uk.


"Many thanks to the NBO and SGI (UK) for an excellent weekend."



Monday, June 30

Free Buddhist Audio News – RSS, Podcast, Sangharakshita, Top 10...

This month, there's quite a lot to tell you about! We've been busy changing and improving the site, so here are a few of the things we've been up to...

Updates: 

Whenever you see either of these symbols in your web browser's address bar, it means you can subscribe to a special version of the page you're on (a bit like a blog) and get updates whenever we add new content for that particular section – without lifting a finger...

So, it'll work to keep track of titles from a specialised area of the site (eg. meditation - www.freebuddhistaudio.com/meditation), or for uploads from any individual centre in our new community pages (eg. Taraloka - www.freebuddhistaudio.com/community/local?c=Taraloka-Retreat-Centre). And it's really simple!

All you have to do is click the symbol itself. When the page changes, add it as a 'bookmark' or 'favourite' in your web browser (usually typing 'command-D' will work). And that's it. When we upload a new talk or series, you'll get a little notification in your bookmarks list.

Podcast

If you haven't discovered our free monthly podcast yet, then this is a great time to start! Over 10,000 people now subscribe to this service (you can get it easily via iTunes), and over 350,000 Dharma talks have been delivered by podcast since late 2005 – just go to www.freebuddhistaudio.com/podcasts. The latest episode has just appeared online, a great talk by Ratnaguna: 'The Early Teachings of the Buddha' – a splendidly engaging evocation of the fundamentals of Buddhist thought and practice from the recent FWBO International retreat. Come and give it a whirl!

Two talks by Sangharakshita

Over the last wee while, Sangharakshita has been steadily adding to his already considerable archive of recorded public talks. This week, we are delighted to bring to your attention two of his latest, which are well worth a listen...

'Growing the Spiritual Community' also given at the FWBO International retreat, is a timely exploration of what it's going to take to maintain the Western Buddhist Order and FWBO as a vibrant and spiritually prospering community.

'Forty Years On – The Six Emphases of the FWBO' is a pleasing reprise of classic Sangharakshita, with some delightful reminiscences about the early days of the FWBO. The talk was given in Manchester, and marked the 40th anniversary of the founding of our spiritual community.

And finally...

Before we go, we thought it was high time we revisited with you our top 10 chart of most popular downloads. Try them - they're all marvellous!

1. The Mindfulness of Breathing: Introduction and Guidance by Kamalashila
2. Simplicity by Kamalashila
3. Buddhism and Quantum Physics by Jnanavaca
4. The Mindfulness of Breathing: Short Lead-through by Kamalashila
5. Mindfulness for Just About Everything by Paramabandhu
6. Tibetan Book of the Dead (Talk 1): The Six Bardo by Padmavajra
7. Cutting Away the Old by Abhaya
8. Breaking the Mould by Dhammarati
9. What Meditation Really Is by Sangharakshita
10. Entering the Mandala by Garava



About us:

The Friends of the Western Buddhist Order (FWBO) www.fwbo.org was founded in 1967 by Sangharakshita.

It is now an international movement with activities in more than 20 countries, including India, where it is known as the TBMSG, the 'Trailokya Bauddha Mahasangha Sahayaka Gana'.

At its heart is the Western Buddhist Order, a community of over 1,500 ordained men and women of all ages and from all walks of life, united by their common commitment to the Three Jewels of Buddhism.

The FWBO/TBMSG is a non-sectarian Buddhist movement which seeks promote the practice of Buddhism in a form appropriate to the modern world.

FWBO News

FWBO News aims to present a selection of stories illustrating some of what is going on across our network of centres, businesses, communities, arts events, and individual projects.

Many stories are linked to other websites, to access these please visit www.fwbo-news.org and connect from there.

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