

FWBO & TBMSG News

News and views from around the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order (FWBO) and Trailokya Bauddha Mahasangha Sahayaka Gana (TBMSG).

[News](#)[Jobs](#)[Features](#)[Reviews](#)[Resources](#)[FWBO](#)[Links](#)

FWBO and TBMSG News:

Collected stories

October-December 2007

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

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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.

Previous posts by topic:

Africa, Ambedkar, Arts, Aryaloka, Australia, BBC, Berlin, Birmingham, Bodh Gaya, Breathworks, Brighton, Bristol, Buddhafield, Cambridge, Canada, Cardiff, Carers retreats, Children, China, Clear Vision, Croydon, Death, Delhi, Dhammakranti, Dharmaduta, Dublin, Education, Engaged Buddhism, France, Fundraising, Germany, Health, Holland, Hungary, India, INEB, Interbuddhist, Interfaith, Ireland, Jobs, Johannesburg, Karuna, Kerala, LBC, Malaysia, Manchester, Meditation, Mumbai, Nagpur, Nepal, New Zealand, Newcastle, North London, Nottingham, NVC, Obituaries, Ordinations, Parents, Paris, Pilgrimage, Poland, Preceptors, Prisons, Radio, Right Livelihood, San Francisco, Sangharakshita, Schools, Scotland, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudarshanaloka, Sweden, Taraloka, TBMSG, Tiratanaloka, USA, Veganism, Vegetarianism, Video, Wildmind, Windhorse, Women, Yatras, Youth...

Also including:

FWBO Jobs, Feature articles, FWBO Resources, email subscriptions, search facilities, and extensive links.

FWBO & TBMSG News

News and views from around the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order (FWBO) and Trailokya Bauddha Mahasangha Sahayaka Gana (TBMSG).

Thursday, December 06, 2007

An Urban Retreat in Malaysia



Dhammaloka, a German Order Member, has for many years been visiting both China and Malaysia, in both places slowly creating groups interested in the FWBO. He has recently left on another tour, and sends us this report from Malaysia –

“Two days ago some 15 or 18 friends from Malacca, ranging in age from the late 20s to the 60s, embarked on an "Urban Retreat", probably the first ever to be held in Malaysia. Most of these friends have been practising in various contexts, and often for a good number of years. There are some experienced meditators amongst them, while others have done little sitting practice. We did a weekend retreat to introduce the practice, and then began the urban retreat proper. I'll be curious to see how they respond...

Since most of them do their reports to one another in Chinese, it's a little difficult for me to see how well they are getting on. They certainly seem to enjoy it so far...!

My impressions so far are that most of them found the idea of daily check-ins with a "Dharma buddy" a little threatening, all the more so when I suggested they did it with another member of the group rather than their spouses! Over the next few days, in the evenings, we will be meeting up for Dharma discussion and study, exploring aspects of the 'unity of Buddhism'..!"

Click here for background information about [Urban Retreats](#), as compiled by the Sheffield Buddhist Centre.

Dhammaloka will soon be visiting China, and we hope to bring you news from there as well.

Wednesday, December 05, 2007

News from the frontline – in India...



The Nagajuna Training Institute in India is the FWBO/TBMSG's largest centre there. It runs ongoing year-long residential courses in Buddhism and social work, training up to sixty young men and women per year, from all over India. At

the end of the years training they graduates may either stay on for a second year or return home. Many have done so, and in this way a widespread network of [local groups across India](#) affiliated to the TBMSG have sprung up all over India. Once home, the Nagarjuna graduates do what they can to spread the Dhamma given their need to earn money, help their family, and meet the many other demands of Indian life.

In April this year the FWBO Growth Fund gave money to support for a year twelve Nagarjuna graduates in five widely-separated Indian States – Orissa, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Rajasthan. The application was for funds to support twice as many, but as the FWBO Growth Fund is small and already over-subscribed six times over it was unable to assist!

Vivekaratna, Director of Nagarjuna, has recently sent us this report. Many other Dhamma projects are also going on across India, not least the recently-concluded and very successful Dhammakranti retreat at Bodhi Gaya, which had 1,500 people attending - we hope to bring reports of these soon.

Orissa

Jadumani conducted two seminars in Sumbalpur for college students on the Psychological Effects of Caste and Jaldhar & Panchanand supported him. Around 60 senior college students participated in both seminars. There is good team work among these three ex-trainees. They inspired people to participate in the recent Dhammakranti retreat at Bodhi Gaya – where five persons became Dhammamitras through their work.

Kerala

Subhash, who was training till August 07, has now joined Binojbabu who had already started Dhamma work in Kollam district in Kerala. They have established a Dhamma centre in Mynagapally in Kollam distt – financed entirely by donations from local people. They are meeting individually and collectively with Ambedkarite activists

from Kollam, Kottayam & Alapuzha (Alleppy) districts and conducting day retreats at the center and elsewhere. They organized a programme for Nagashuri & Saddhajyoti who visited last month – see report on FWBO News (forthcoming).

Tamilnadu

Subhash, Manimaran, and Ganesh organised a three days residential retreat at Villupuram in Central Tamilnadu. Vivekaratna led the retreat, which was on the Three Jewels, and 25 persons participated. They were very pleased because they managed to raise money locally to meet all the food expenditure of the retreat – and obtained the accommodation free of cost from a local charity. This is TBMSG's first residential retreat in Tamilnadu. There is good teamwork between Subhash, Manimaran & Ganesh.

Karnataka

In September Satyam single-handedly organised a retreat in Gulbarga. 23 persons participated in the retreat, and Padmavir & Dhammadarshi led it. Once again, Satyam raised donations locally to meet the retreat expenditures. He is conducting regular dhamma activities, mostly working in Bijapur, Bidar and Gulbarga districts, as well as keeping regular contact with ex-trainees from Karnataka and encouraging them to help in spreading the Dhamma.

Rajasthan

Rambabu is working among the Meena community which is a tribal community. He is especially active in Bharatpur, Dhaulpur, Sawai Madhopur, and Alwar Districts. In addition he has regular interaction with Ambedkarite activists and gives lectures, leads Puja, and clarifies the doubts of the persons he meets. He is specifically emphasizing social transformation through Dr. Ambedkar's thought – using Ambedkar's emphasis on Liberty, Equality and Fraternity as Buddhist values for the transformation of society.

This is only a tiny glimpse of the many Dhamma and social projects the FWBO/TBMSG runs in India.

Tuesday, December 04, 2007

Celebrating Wildmind



We'd like to celebrate [Wildmind](#). It describes itself as “online guide to meditation”. That sounds very simple – but actually, it’s much more than that...

If you dig a bit deeper into their extensive website you’ll find they go on to say “Our mission is to benefit the world by promoting awareness and compassion through the practice of Buddhist meditation”. Wildmind is a huge resource for anyone with an interest in contemporary Buddhist meditation, specifically as practiced and taught by the FWBO. Created by Bodhipaksa, a member of the Western Buddhist Order, in the year 2000, it is run by him and a small team out of their offices in Newmarket, New Hampshire.

There’s jewels scattered throughout their site, and FWBO News would like to highlight just three of these – as well as let you know one way you can support them.

First is their wonderful series of ‘[Quotes of the Month](#)’ – this month’s being Esther Lederer’s “Hanging onto resentment is letting someone you despise live rent-free in your head.”

Second is the [Wildmind Newsletter](#), just reaching its fifth anniversary - a treasure trove of insight, teaching, and tit-bits...! You can subscribe and have it delivered monthly to your inbox, or browse their extensive archives.

Third is their archive of over 2000 [meditation-related news stories](#) from around the world – fully searchable of course. A one-stop-shop

which, in effect, catalogues how meditation is influencing more and more people’s lives across the Western world.

If you’d like to get involved, besides the obvious possibility of taking one of their courses, they have an active translation program, and already have most of the site available in five languages besides English – [Chinese](#), [Spanish](#), [French](#), [Russian](#), and [Polish](#).

Next comes [Portuguese](#), already part-completed - but they would welcome [your donations](#) to assist them in this, and also extending the Chinese section of the site.

Enjoy!

Sunday, December 02, 2007

FWBO news around the world

FWBO News does its best to present a selection of news from across the Movement. Given that the FWBO and TBMSG have some 80 Buddhist centres around the world plus many other Dharma and social projects, this is not an easy job and it’s impossible here to let you know everything happening across the Movement. We would therefore like to take this opportunity to present some of the other, more local, web-based newsletters produced by different centres and FWBO projects.



Aryaloka, our retreat centre in New Hampshire, USA, produces an online newsletter [Vajra Bell](#), while on the other side of the country the San Francisco FWBO centre publishes their [on-line bulletin](#).

Further afield, 'down under' (as we Brits say!), in Australia, the Sydney Buddhist Centre has long published a [newsletter](#) as have their associated Right Livelihood [Windhorse Books](#).



Back in UK, there are also newsletters from the [Bristol](#), [Cambridge](#), and [Manchester](#) Buddhist Centres in the UK, plus a weblog from the [London Buddhist Centre](#).

Taraloka is a much-loved women's retreat centre in Shropshire - where, among their own [news](#), you'll find links to two BBC videos of Taraloka - '[Inside a Buddhist retreat centre](#)' and '[Take a Tour of a Buddhist Retreat](#)'.

The FWBO's Karuna Trust, our largest fundraising project, based in London, has many of its past [annual reports](#) and [newsletters](#) available on their website. Karuna fundraises and sends over UK £1,000,000 per year to India funding both Dhamma and Social projects by the TBMSG (as the FWBO is known in India) and other project partners.



Up in Scotland, the Glasgow Buddhist Centre has long produced [Gist](#), their much-loved and very rich centre newsletter.

Free Buddhist Audio is a truly global FWBO website, hosting many hundreds of Dharma talks in several languages. Their collection is constantly growing, and as well as podcasts they offer a blog where you can read their [latest news](#).

All these are newsletters and bulletins from our centres or projects; many of the individuals who make up our Sangha have their own websites, blogs, or photo collections. The best place to find these is probably [FWBO People](#) or to look at the links offered in the right-hand column below.

Finally, less well-known is probably the WBO's College of Public Preceptors, the body of senior Order Members who are responsible for all ordinations into the Western Buddhist Order. Click here to read their [occasional blog](#).

If all this were not enough, there are budding FWBO presences on MySpace and Facebook – but we'll leave you to find them!

Happy reading!

Bristol's Vitarka Project



For the past nine months the [Bristol Buddhist centre](#) have been running the '[Vitarka Project](#)'. Kamalamani reports

In April this year we were successful in being awarded £4,400 from the UK government's Faith Communities Capacity Building fund. This was to enable us to contribute to the development of a culture of tolerance and mutual respect through outreach work to schools and the wider community

I was appointed as Schools Outreach Development Worker for the Buddhist Centre later in the month and have since been thoroughly enjoying co-ordinating schools work. My main priority has been to make contact with schools, so that they know what's available to them in terms of visiting the Centre and having visitors to their schools. To give you an idea of what the schools work covers, please read on!

One of my first assignments was hosting a visit from Chew Valley School. This was particularly significant for me, as Chew Valley is the secondary school I attended! We've developed a 'School Visiting Kula', my hope is that this will build sangha friendships, as well as provide a great capacity for schools – it's a multi faceted and talented team.

I've spent time reviewing existing resources and adding some new resources from [Clear Vision](#) (for example, their DVDs entitled '[Pilgrimage: An Indian Spiritual Journey](#)' and '[Buddhist Centre in the City: A Tour of the Manchester Buddhist Centre](#)' - both great, interesting film making). I hope to continue this process to build the resources of the kula and to be able to signpost teachers to relevant and interesting resources.

In terms of local networking, I've found it very interesting to meet with Bristol City Council's Social Inclusion Officer, the Interfaith Consultant, local SACRE representatives and members of the Bristol Diocese, to find out what's already going on in and around Bristol. Bristol schools face significant challenges, with one of the highest rates of exclusion of pupils from schools in the country, and ongoing

tensions between some ethnic groups. It seems that the need for interfaith and social inclusion work is greater than ever, to support schools and the wider community.

Earlier in the summer I was a facilitator at the Childrens' Interfaith conference, run by Bristol City Council. This was a really interesting day and I was particularly struck by hearing children talk so openly about the similarities and differences between their faiths. It was very moving and heartening. I hope this event will become a regular fixture in Bristol's calendar.

The Future

There is a huge amount of scope for the Buddhist Centre to continue to develop its schools and educational work, and I imagine that this area will blossom and grow over the next few years. It would be great to have ongoing partnerships with a high percentage of schools across the city. Potentially, this work also goes beyond schools work, into broader interfaith work, community cohesion and meditation in schools, to mention but a few.

So I thought I would finish with a few of the questions and comments from some of the children I've met and enjoyed working with so far, given that they are by far and away the most important focus of this project...

"When you've been enlightened, can you become unenlightened?"

"Are the three jewels to do with each of the elements?"

"Will the Buddhist lady be black?" (question to a teacher before my visit, from a Muslim girl)

"Do you still cry when you're a Buddhist?"

"Does Buddhism stop crime?"

"Will you be reborn as a Buddhist if you've been a Buddhist this lifetime?"

"We're like flowers miss aren't we? Cos we die too..."

Click here for our [Autumn schools programme](#).

Friday, November 30, 2007

Bhante in Germany - part II

FWBO News is happy to present some more details of Sangharakshita's recent visit to the FWBO's centres in Germany. Thanks to Lalitaratna for sending them.

On the first Saturday morning of this November, Bhante, accompanied by Nityabandhu, flew from Birmingham to Düsseldorf airport in Germany.



Bhante's first stop was [Vimaladhātu retreat centre](#) where the public Ordination of Anissita was just taking place. Bhante did not join the throng - later in his trip he would be delivering a public talk and so would meet the Essen Sangha - but kept in the background where he later joined the new ordinand and his two preceptors: Bodhimitra and Surata, for a cup of tea.

Bhante had made it clear that, with a pretty full travel itinerary, it would be best if those who wanted to see him shared his mealtimes with him. The first of these meals took place that Saturday evening at Vimaladhātu when twenty-one men, made up of Order members and GFR mitras, sat down to an excellent meal which was eaten in silence followed by a delightful period of wit and conversation with Bhante.

The next morning Bhante was driven back to Essen - a 110 km trip -

to the men's community where he had a short break before meeting Prasadavati and thirteen other women who made up the group of German 'outlying GFR mitras'.



Apart from breakfast time, Bhante shared his mealtimes with gatherings from the Sangha. He dined with the women's community with invited friends; the Karuna group; a men's study group, and finally members of the Essen FWBO council. Bhante offered a question and answer session to the Order members on the Sunday evening and delivered a public talk at the [Essen Buddhist Centre](#) to 130 visitors on the Tuesday evening. The theme of the talk was his precious teachers, and Bhante later signed copies of his book with the same title.

The day after Bhante's visit, one of the yoga teachers came into the centre and commented on how everybody looked very bright. Bhante Urgyen Sangharakshita's visit was a true gift to the Essen Sangha and it has been, and remains, deeply appreciated.

Wednesday, November 28, 2007

Ordinations at the Manchester Buddhist Centre



The following men had their Public Ordination on Saturday, 24th November:

Mike Slattery becomes NISHPARA = 'He who is unbounded/boundless'. For pronunciation, the weight falls on the first 'a' (the long 'a').

Steve Johnson becomes NARAPA = 'He who is a protector of men'. For pronunciation, the weight falls on the first 'a'.

In both cases the Private Preceptor was Mokshapriya and the Public Preceptor Sona.

Sadhu!

Tuesday, November 27, 2007

More Buddhists on the radio...



Kavyasiddhi is presenting five night-time Pause for Thoughts which will go out on BBC Radio 2 this week Monday – Friday, beginning November 26th.

She says "If anyone wants to hear my latest two minute dharma talks for non-Buddhist shift workers & insomniacs, I invite you to tune to the Janice Long Show at 1.30 and 3.30am - yes, that is the middle of the night, ie very, very early a.m!"

If you don't get up in time you can listen to her again by clicking [here](#) and then selecting the day of the week.

Vishvapani is doing BBC Radio 4's 'Thought for the Day' on the Tuesday 27th November, and the following two Tuesdays ie Dec 4 & 11, all at 7.50 am. Listen to him again [here](#).

Saturday, November 24, 2007

Six ordinations at Padmaloka



The following men had their Public Ordinations at [Padmaloka](#) Retreat Centre on Thursday, 22nd November:

Stephen White becomes MAITRIYOGIN = "The spiritual practitioner who is full of loving - kindness" (Private Preceptor Satyaraja)

Stephen Roe becomes DHARMAPALITA = "He who is protected, guarded, cherished, nourished by the Dharma" (Private Preceptor Satyaraja)

Michael Evans becomes DAYABANDHU = "Kind, compassionate brother, kinsman or friend", or just "kind friend" (Private Preceptor Satyaraja)

Stu Orvis becomes CHANDANA = Lit. "Sandalwood". The name reflects Chandana's ability to positively affect those around him through the qualities of his practice. Also the name of a Buddha. (Private Preceptor Mokshapriya)

Tim Davis becomes SAHAJASIDDHI = "He whose attainment is innate" (Private Preceptor Tejananda)

Howard Dyer becomes HRIDAYAMATI = "He whose heart and mind are unified" (Private Preceptor Ashvajit)

The Public Preceptor for all was Saddhaloka.

Friday, November 23, 2007

Sangharakshita visits FWBO Düsseldorf



Paul McLoughlin from [FWBO Düsseldorf](#) has sent us a short report on Sangharakshita (Bhante)'s recent visit to their sangha there. Sangharakshita only appears rarely on FWBO News these days and we're very happy to reproduce his report here.

"As a relatively new (3 years) member of the FWBO and background team member in our new center in Düsseldorf, I was honoured at the chance of meeting Bhante in a small circle of people. As the weeks and days flew by, my anticipation grew. On the big day I had to laugh as we were still so involved "making everything perfect" that we almost missed greeting our distinguished guest at the door!

"Suddenly Bhante was among us and so normal and human. He was accompanied by his friend and companion Nityabandhu. Very soon it was clear that his frailness was only bodily and that below the surface was a very sharp, wise, loving spirit. Nine of us sat together two hours, laughed and discussed subjects as varied as psychotherapy, the Brahma Viharas, the importance of harmony between team members, Ayya Khema, marriage and Angela Merkel (the last two being separate subjects, smile). Bhante encouraged us, especially through his interest for new, small sangha groups to just keep going. All too soon the visit neared an end, but not before Bhante agreed with pleasure to chant a blessing in our shrine room.

Those moments so intense will fire us on for a long long time, to continue to work as a "small team closely knit together by Metta" in Düsseldorf.

"As we stood together in front of our center saying goodbye it really felt as if we were saying goodbye to an old dear friend. THANK YOU BHANTE!!!"

Wednesday, November 21, 2007

Karuna windfall gratefully received



The FWBO's [Karuna Trust](#) have received an anonymous donation of US \$97,000 for the SAATHI Street children's project in Mumbai (Bombay). [Saathi](#) is one of Karuna's non-Buddhist partners, but one with whom they have a long-standing and positive relationship. As part of this they have for some time been funding Saathi's 'Invisible Girl' project. This is a response to the widespread phenomenon in India of '[railway children](#)'. The windfall donation coincided with a visit to Mumbai and the railway projects by London's mayor Ken Livingston, click [here](#) for some press reports.

The following is taken from a report by Adarsha, one of Karuna's fundraisers, on a visit there last year.

"In Bombay we visited Saathi. We went to Bombay Central station where the young people and girls turn up in the city. The task of the project workers is to get to them before the agents of the brothels and the domestic work networks do. Impressively they have done a lot of

outreach work with station staff, police, stall holders, platform kids and groups who live in the station, explaining the situation facing the children who turn up alone at the station, and getting them to help. Whereas before the police were completely unhelpful they have now had trainings about their responsibilities under the Juvenile Justice Act 2000, and whilst the relationship is variable the police are more supportive than they were. The other groups mentioned used to prey on the girls themselves, and the awareness work has helped to encourage them to bring the girls to Saathi.

"We also visited the day centre Saathi runs where the girls get education and vocational skills. I was very impressed by their confidence and articulacy - the dedicated efforts of the team, including a psychotherapist, who have been focusing on building the girls' confidence seems to be working. It surprised me how clear the girls were about what they wanted to be - doctor, soldier, social worker - and more so that it didn't seem to be just pipe-dreams, but they realised some of what they needed to do to get there. I subsequently found out that this is an area the Saathi team particularly focus upon.

"As my Hindi has just about reached a semi-fluent level I could talk to the girls directly - as I could with the platform kids and station police and staff in Bihar (where Karuna fund a similar project called Gaya Rescue Junction, run by [People First](#)) . This has made such a huge difference to getting a felt sense of the work and building a connection and rapport with the project staff and beneficiaries. And also means that I can tell whether the translator is doing a spin - for example in Bihar when we talked to the station staff several of them clearly didn't know anything about the project, which we might have missed if I hadn't been talking to them directly!"

Tuesday, November 20, 2007

Buddhafield expands into cyberspace...



Rupadarshin of Buddhafield has contacted FWBO News to inform us -

“[Buddhafield](#) has a new way into cyberspace - there is now a Myspace contact point for 'fans' of Buddhafield and of our particular take on spreading the Dharma. The Myspace format allows for fast updates about us to be sent out to our friends, and it also gives a flavour of Buddhafield to the Myspace network, through photos and slideshows, mantras, comments, and more. Just go to <http://www.myspace.com/buddhafieldfwbo> and have a look...

The more friends Buddhafield has on Myspace, the better - for both Buddhafield and the FWBO generally, so please get into MySpace, become our 'friend', and boost our profile. As my skills in this strange world improve I hope to add further links and features as seems appropriate. Any advice is more than welcome.

For those who prefer Facebook for online networking, Buddhafield events will be announced here too as the dates come clear. In fact there is already a Facebook 'Event' for the [Buddhafield Festival 2008](#).

Saturday, November 17, 2007

Buddhists on the Radio...



Sarvananda has for many years practiced as a playwright. On Wednesday 28 November between 2.15-3.00pm BBC Radio 4 will be broadcasting his latest play, "The Sensitive: the Hanged Man".

This is a sequel to his 'The Sensitive', also broadcast on Radio 4, where it was described as an 'offbeat thriller', in which police call in a psychic to help find a missing woman. Thomas Soutar is adept at solving crimes - but is his extraordinary gift a blessing or a curse?

Sarvananda has been developing his own website, still very much under construction but available to browse [here](#).



On Saturday December 8th between 9-12am, Sunday 9th 1-4pm, and Tuesday 11th 1-4am (all UK time), Lokabandhu will be on the internet-only [Glastonbury Radio](#) discussing the progress of the Transition Town initiative in his home

town of Glastonbury.

[Transition Towns](#) are a network of communities of all sizes, across the UK and beyond, that are looking the BIG questions of [Peak Oil and Climate Change](#) squarely in the eye with the intention of discovering and implementing ways to manage the coming changes including the necessary shift away from fossil fuels. He will be appearing with [Patrick Whitefield](#), Glastonbury resident and acclaimed permaculture teacher and author, and Linda Hull, a Glastonbury town Councillor.

Glastonbury Radio is an internet radio station but available to all with broadband.

Thursday, November 15, 2007

Ongoing actions in support of Burma...



Events across the FWBO continue to be held to draw attention to the situation in Burma and build support for peaceful change there.

In Birmingham, around 70 people from the Birmingham Buddhist Centre – and others from Birmingham’s Inter-Faith Network - walked in a silent ‘yatra’ from the Town Hall along the main shopping street on a crowded Sunday. They gave out several hundred

leaflets, explaining the situation in Burma and suggesting actions people could take in support of the Burmese people.

In Edinburgh, a group led by Kalyanavaca, the Centre’s Chairwoman, meditated in the City Centre, and gave out leaflets passing on Aung San Suu Kyi’s famous request to “use your liberty to promote ours”.

In Delhi, Maitriveer Nagarjun, an Indian Order Member, who is one of the core team for TBMSG’s Dhammakranti Project, helped organised a large public meeting at the prestigious Jawaharlal Nehru University where he is a post-graduate student. This was attended by Burmese survivors of the last military crackdown in Burma, and a signature campaign was organised calling on the Indian Government (one of Burma’s chief supporters) to cease investment until democracy and human rights have been restored to Burma.

In Poona, India, the Jambudvipa Trust, an FWBO/TBMSG ‘outreach’ project is contributing to discussions with the aim of organising a visit to Burma by senior Buddhist peacemakers.

Finally, Dayaratna, in Cambridge UK, would like to hear from anyone wanting to continue to support Burma, specifically by putting pressure on China, via the 2008 Olympics, to change its ‘hands-off’ policy towards the regime in Burma. [Contact him](#) if you would like to be part of this.

As Cait, organiser of the Birmingham Yatra, said, “We cannot know the outcome of our actions, but we hope that we have helped to keep the issue alive in the minds of those who saw us.”

Tuesday, November 13, 2007

VideoSangha and ClearVision – two brilliant resources



[Videosangha](#) is the FWBO's video website. Here you can find short movies on a very wide range of FWBO-related topics. The site has expanded dramatically in recent weeks and now boasts sections on FWBO History, Questions, Centres, Retreats, Meditation, Dharma, Social Work, Activism, and the Arts – to name but some. It's easy to contribute to - the creators say "Feel free to submit any video related to your involvement with Buddhism and the FWBO - however tenuous! Just upload your video to YouTube (for example), give it a tag of FWBO and we will import it automatically". You can also register on the Videosangha website and then review videos submitted by others - most recently, Ramesh teaching Bollywood dance at the Buddhafield Festival, Jayamati directing Sangharakshita's 'Going Forth' on the recent Order Convention, and a series of videos from our FWBO centres in Finland - rarely seen on these pages - such as the fast-moving, beautiful, and curious [Kamnitsanmatka minuutissa](#) .

ClearVision provides educational audio-visual resources for students and teachers to explore Buddhism. This site too has become a rich treasure trove of material – besides selling [DVDs for teachers](#) the '[Students](#)' section contains a mass of free material for children of all ages – all carefully graded to match children's needs and interests plus the UK RE syllabi. There are four sections, one each for

children aged [5-11](#) (with some wonderful stories from the Jataka tales), [11-14](#) (with an interactive Wheel of Life), [15-16](#) (with sections on religious authority, and citizenship, and finally [17-18 A-level students](#) (where there's sections on human rights and responsibilities, also sex and relationships).

For teachers, and adults generally, there is their new audio CD of non-religious '[stilling exercises](#)' and a fascinating collection of on-line [art by Western Buddhists](#).

Windhorse:Evolution supports new social projects



Windhorse:Evolution is the largest and most profitable of the FWBO's many Right Livelihood businesses, with a turnover of some £10 million and employing over 200 people – 100 at their main warehouse, 'Uddiyana' in Cambridge UK, and another 100 in a chain of 'Evolution' shops around the UK and elsewhere.

Besides practicing Right Livelihood, as chronicled by Padmasuri in her book '[Transforming Work](#)', they have always aimed to make a profit and to give that profit away as dana. At first they simply asked Sangharakshita for direction in this; in recent years they have donated it to the 'Windhorse Trust' which has in turn created five independent funds and distributes the available dana among them.

Initially all available dana was given to FWBO projects; but in a new departure, one of the new funds created was the Windhorse Social

Fund. This aims to invest in social projects close to Windhorse's main suppliers, and they now contribute around £20,000/year to this as part of their 'Trade for Aid' initiative.

In a new feature on FWBO News, Samata writes about two new social projects supported by Windhorse - The Wheatfield Plan in China and The Kupu-Kupu Foundation in Bali. Click [here](#) to read it.

Alongside this they have been taking active steps to ensure their goods come from ethical sources, so far as this is practicable. You can read more about this on their Evolution shops website [here](#), which includes the reply given by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile when asked if Windhorse should be trading with China at all, given its poor human-rights record.

Sunday, November 11, 2007

Ordinations at the London Buddhist Centre



On Thursday 8th November, at the London Buddhist Centre, two ordinations took place, in a ceremony attended by family and many friends.

Julie Rankin became Kamalini (Pali, with a long second i), meaning (She who is) Rich in the qualities of the Lotus Family, or Like a pool covered with lotuses. Her private preceptor was Dhammadassin.

Diana Cliff became Kamalasiddhi (Sanskrit & Pali), meaning She who is successful, like a lotus. Her private preceptor was Srivati.

The public preceptor in both cases was Parami.

Sadhu!

Friday, November 09, 2007

Celebrating Dr. Ambedkar in India and UK



October 14th is the anniversary of the conversion to Buddhism of Dr. Ambedkar, and is a major event for all our centres in India. They celebrate his conversion to Buddhism in 1956, together with 400,000 of his followers, and his few short weeks as a Buddhist before his death on December 6th of that year. It is very much a bitter-sweet time for them.

This year they were joined by the North London Buddhist Centre who hosted an 'Ambedkar Festival' which they hope may become an

annual event. Entitled 'Celebrating the New Dawn of Indian Buddhism', the day set out to educate, inspire, and celebrate - and succeeded handsomely in all three. Some 200 people attended some or all of the day, and were treated to a programme of talks, a wide selection of workshops including practical information on how to get involved (both in the UK and in India), and to both Indian and Western music which went on into the evening.

Sangharakshita had been due to give the keynote speech but sadly had to cancel at the very last minute due to his poor health. Happily, due to the foresight of Saul Deason, the organiser, Lokabandhu was primed to step in, and among other things offered his reflection that the future of the new Buddhist movement in India was very much up to us, at least up to our generation, since the great leaders of the past were no longer with us - the Buddha, Ambedkar himself, and now Sangharakshita.



By coincidence, FWBO News came to know that at the same time, far away in Bodh Gaya, in the north-eastern Indian state of Bihar, the community living on FWBO/TBMSG's land there were conducting a small programme of their own in honour of Dr. Ambedkar, attended by some 50 local residents including Theravadin monks with whom they have become friendly. The programme took place in the earth-brick huts recently constructed by Nissoka, and was felt by those present to be a small but significant step in establishing ourselves on our land at Bodh Gaya. There are now some 10 mitras in and around Bodh Gaya.

Wednesday, November 07, 2007

Berlin - Paris Sangha friendship weekend



At the very end of October, on Halloween, five men and women from the Paris sangha set off by train from the Paris 'Gare du Nord' on the night train to Berlin's Ostbahnhof station. On arrival they were put up by different members of the Berlin Sangha and a long weekend followed of rich and interesting meetings and exchanges, including activities at [Buddhistisches Tor Berlin](#) (the Berlin Buddhist Centre) and sightseeing in this most historic city.

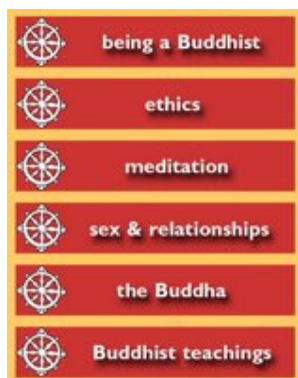
The highlight of their visit was undoubtedly the Berlin–Paris friendship day on Saturday, at Buddhistisches Tor. The day was led by Amogharatna, chairman of Buddhistisches Tor Berlin, and included meditations, meals and short talks on the theme of 'Going Forth' from Kalyanaprabha and Akasaraja from Berlin, and Danièle Adam and Pierrick Parigot from Paris. For Pierrick it was a last opportunity to visit as he has been invited to be ordained in New Zealand early in 2008. There was also a longer talk on 'Internationality as Practice' from Suvannavira from Paris. The day concluded with a French–German sevenfold puja with alternating verses - first one in French and then one in German, and so on.

"The weekend was very inspiring, international and spiritual; our German hosts were creative, friendly, fascinating and gemütlich (which means something like cosy, pleasant and comfortable in

German)" - Sandra.

The Berlin sangha are already invited to visit Paris the same time next year. Some photos of their visit have been posted on the Berlin portion of the Flickr [FWBO Photos](#) site.

Ask a Buddhist...



Clearvision launches their new '[Ask a Buddhist](#)' service for students.

Clearvision, an FWBO educational charity that provides audio-visual teaching material on Buddhism to schools, has launched its new on-line video service called '[Ask a Buddhist](#)'. Buddhist teachers from the FWBO (and, they plan, from other Sanghas too) give personal answers to all sorts of difficult questions posed by the many students who've visited Clearvision and the Manchester Buddhist Centre over the years. Several questions have multiple replies, indicating that Buddhists sometimes have different points of view and there is no one 'right answer' in the Buddhist tradition.

So far they've uploaded some 24 video clips in seven categories, covering such questions as -

["What's the hardest thing about being a Buddhist?"](#);

["Is it OK for Buddhists to have same-sex relationships?"](#);

["What's your view on abortion?"](#)

and even

["Why does the Buddha have long ears?"](#)!

They are inviting students to pose more questions and teachers from other Buddhist groups to submit answers. Click [here](#) to contact them.

This looks like a great resource and an excellent use of the internet. Thank you Clearvision.

Tuesday, November 06, 2007

Ordination in Germany



On Saturday November 3rd, Leo J. Zeef was publicly ordained in the context of a Going for Refuge Retreat in Vimaladhatu, the FWBO's retreat centre near [Essen](#) in Germany. He became ANISSITA, a Pali name meaning 'He who is independent, unattached, and free'. The Private Preceptor was Bodhimitra, and the Public Preceptor Surata.

Sadhu!

Thursday, November 01, 2007

Breathing Space - the LBC's Compassion in Action project - wins major grant



The London Buddhist Centre (LBC) has been awarded a £50,000 grant by the City Bridge Trust, which gives money from the City of London to charitable projects benefiting the inhabitants of Greater London.

This grant is for accessibility works in the basement, where the LBC will run its Breathing Space health and wellbeing programme. Specifically, this will include a lift going from the ground floor and a disabled toilet in the basement. This is – as far as the LBC is aware – the biggest single grant it has ever received. The work will create a beautiful new venue for courses that help people who've struggled with depression, addiction, stress and chronic pain to look after their own mental health. This will also give them the opportunity of making the LBC much more flexible – so they can attract a more diverse range of people.

Maitreyabandhu, Breathing Space Project Director, said: “It’s a fantastic endorsement from a very well respected grant-making body for what we are trying to achieve with our Breathing Space programme – helping prevent people from relapsing into depression

and addiction, and reaching out to more people in East London.”

The creation of the new Breathing Space in the basement of the LBC is just one part of the programme of building works taking place next year, ahead of the LBC’s 30th anniversary.

The LBC team is currently having intensive fortnightly progress meetings with its architect and team of building experts. It is also carrying out extensive health and safety planning. The target for the building work to start is Spring 2008, with completion by the end of that year.

The LBC will be holding a Mandala Evening on Thursday 6 December at 7.15pm, which will be a chance for people to see all the finalised plans – including drawings and computer generated photos – for the building programme.

Wednesday, October 31, 2007

Nagpur celebrates the 51st anniversary of the conversions; Dhammakranti joins in



The Dhammakranti team recently took time out from working on preparations for their big retreat in Bodh Gaya to attend the annual celebrations in Nagpur of Dr. Ambedkar’s conversion to Buddhism in October 1956. This year was

the 51st anniversary of the great conversion ceremony, and they organized the biggest stall ever to be seen at the Dikshabhumi (the 'ground of conversion') in Nagpur.

All the major TBMSG projects in Nagpur participated in the event – Dhammakranti itself, the Samata Mahila Society (a women's project running a hostel for 80 girls as well as thirteen community centres in the Nagpur slums), Triratna Pustakalya (a TBMSG-run bookshop in central Nagpur), TBMSG Nagpur itself (general social and Dhamma work across Nagpur) and the Nagarjuna Training Institute (a major TBMSG teaching centre which runs year-long training courses for new Dhamma teachers from all over India on a beautiful campus on the outskirts of Nagpur).

Dhammakranti's manager, Nagaketu, told FWBO News "Thousands of people visited the stall and purchased books on Buddhism and social change. We were also able to give information to thousands more on the coming [International Dhammakranti retreat](#) in Buddha Gaya and on the next training course on Buddhism and social work, which we are running at Nagaloka. This was the biggest stall organized by anybody ever in the history of the Dikshabhumi!"

Click here for further information on the [Nagarjuna Training Institute](#).

Readers interested in the thought of Dr. Ambedkar are invited to read a selection of his [quotations](#) or his classic work, [Annihilation of Caste](#). His Buddhist classic '[The Buddha and his Dhamma](#)', published posthumously, is also available on-line.

Tuesday, October 30, 2007

Ordination in the Netherlands

On Saturday 27th October in the context of a retreat in Schoorl, in the Netherlands, Eric de Ruijter became UJUKARIN, 'He who makes

(the mind) straight'.

His Private Preceptor was Dhammaketu, his Public Preceptor Surata.

Sadhu!

Monday, October 29, 2007

Dhammakranti retreat at Bodh Gaya - 1,500 booked and counting...



November 11th sees the start of the annual TBMSG 'Dhammakranti' retreat at Bodh Gaya. Nagaketu, the organiser, told FWBO News "So far 1500 people have booked for the retreat and in addition we are expecting at least another 1000 people". All are welcome, from East and West, and people will be coming from many different castes and communities all over India - one aim of the retreat is to exemplify a 'casteless society' which is so necessary if Buddhism is to become truly established across India. The retreat will be held at the Nyingma Monlam monastery 1 mile from the Mahabodhi Temple and the program will include daily walking meditations to the Temple and within the temple grounds.

They are still appealing for funds to subsidise the attendance of very poor people who simply cannot afford the Rs.650 (UK £8) the retreat is costing. Donations are invited for the sponsoring of places, please

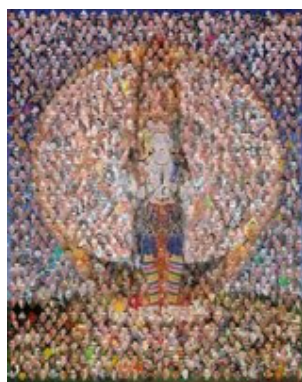
contact FWBO News if you would like to give in this way. Payment is possible internationally via Paypal, and further details of the retreat are available from the [Dhammakranti](#) website.

Friday, October 26, 2007

FWBO News' news

FWBO News would like to apologise for the lack of news items this week. This has not been due to a lack of news to report, but a series of small hiccups and difficulties in creating news items from the news itself. We hope normal service will be resumed next week - there is no shortage of things to report! Contributions remain very welcome.

New search facility for FWBO People



[FWBO People](#) is a sister-site to FWBO News, carrying links to over 180 websites run by people associated with the FWBO and the Western Buddhist Order.

We have now added a specialised search facility to this which searches all the content of all the sites listed. Click [here](#) to use it. It is hoped that in time this will broaden out to become a searchable on-line directory of our Sangha's skills, interests, and Dharma practice.

Saturday, October 20, 2007

FWBO Jobs - world-wide opportunities across the FWBO

[FWBO Jobs](#) is a sister web-site to FWBO News. It has recently expanded and now carries news of a variety of opportunities to join FWBO projects around the world, on a full-time or voluntary basis. Please check it regularly for updates.

Current opportunities include –



teaching English to the new Buddhists in India or Hungary;



the new FWBO Fundraiser's post;



a commissioning editor for Windhorse Publications,



and an opportunity to join the team at the Vajraloka Meditation Retreat Centre in north Wales.

If you run an FWBO or TBMSG project and are seeking people to join you, either full or part time, for pay or as volunteers, please contact [FWBO News](#). You can access FWBO Jobs any time either by clicking the 'Jobs' tab on FWBO News' website, or by visiting www.fwbo-news.org/jobs/jobs.html. Among other things the site contains a fairly comprehensive list of the many FWBO/TBMSG businesses around the world, from [Tipu's Tiger](#) vegetarian restaurant in Missoula Montana to [english teaching in Berlin](#) to [Windhorse:Evolution](#) in Cambridge UK.

Friday, October 19, 2007

Dhamma activities in South and North India



A second FWBO/TBMSG centre has just opened in Kerala, south India. For some years Tejabhadra has been running a Buddhist centre in the capital city, Trivandrum (click [here](#) for details), he has now been joined by Binoj Babu and Dhammamitra Subhash. They are graduates of TBMSG's Nagarjuna Training Institute and have founded the Abhayaloka Trust which is running activities in the seaside town of Kollam, further up the Keralan coast.

Visitors are welcome, and are asked to contact Subhash by [email](#) or phone (tel 0091 99478 00803) before arrival - or simply to go to Mynagappally village and ask for the Divya Building.



The Nagarjuna Training Institute is located in Nagpur on TBMSG's Nagaloka site. The program is now in its fourth year and has begun to produce a stream of talented and

energetic graduates, of both genders, from all over India; many have returned home and are working to spread the Dhamma in their local areas.

Next month will see a major retreat in Bodh Gaya (estimated attendance 3,000 people) followed by Subhuti's annual Dhamma tour, this time in North India, organised as always by NTI graduates. This work is especially significant in that it represents the beginning of the Buddhist renaissance in India 'breaking out' of Maharastra and Dr. Ambedkar's own community and beginning to contact a far wider cross-section of Indian society all over India.



The Dhammakranti project is appealing for funds to assist the work of contacting local Dalit and tribal people who have become interested in Buddhism but who cannot afford to attend retreats, please click [here](#) if you would like to contribute.

Thursday, October 18, 2007

Wabi Sabi



FWBO News is proud to present another article in our features section. Click [here](#) to read it.

The article is by Sally Radnor, a mitra from the Cambridge Buddhist Centre, is on the theme of Wabi Sabi, or 'sad beauty', the famous Japanese aesthetic of decay.. It was inspired by a recent retreat at Tiratanaloka led by Vajradarshini. Interested readers can read Vajradarshini's blog describing her [discovery](#) of Wabi Sabi, her [preparation](#) for the retreat, and her reflections [afterwards](#) .

Tuesday, October 16, 2007

Rite of Passage for Teenagers at the Essen Buddhist Centre



This year at the [Essen Buddhist Centre](#) in Germany four teenagers celebrated their ritual of leaving childhood. About 80 people attended the ceremony, which was probably the first time ever

such a rite of passage for teenagers was held at an fwbo centre.

Jnanacandra (photo left) initiated and led the event and told FWBO News: “I believe that as a spiritual community it is important that we support each other at important junctions in life. There are several main transitions in a life-span, some of the more obvious ones being birth, coming of age and death. Traditional societies knew of their importance and usually had established means of celebrating them in order to help those transitions to happen as smoothly and skilfully as possible. Modern societies have often lost the awareness of their importance.

“In our Sangha we do have quite a number of families whose children have often attended families retreats and know each other. I felt it was important that at the age of 13/14 we offered them a way of acknowledging that something important was changing in them and in their relation to their parents. Something dramatic happens around that time in a person’s life and I felt that in making it more explicit we could support those involved, i.e. the teenagers themselves and their parents, by stressing and ritually invoking the positive forces involved in the process of change.”

“Of the seven teenagers aged 13 or 14 who were invited to take part four girls decided to have the ceremony. For three months before it they met weekly with Jnanacandra and explored issues around growing up: reflecting on their values in life, looking back at their childhood, exploring their relationship with their parents, as well as some outings like taking part in a first-aid-course and spending a morning at court.

“For the ceremony itself the girls were free to invite whoever they wanted, so we had grand-parents, wider family, peer friends and some friends from the Sangha. “We made it clear from the start that the ceremony was not strictly ‘buddhist’ i.e. they weren’t committing themselves to buddhism in any way, although the ceremony certainly reflected buddhist values.” The ritual consisted of three parts which

could be described as ‘connectedness’, ‘letting go’, and ‘evoking strength’.

The first part of the ceremony, ‘connectedness’, was dedicated to looking back. After a brief reflection on their childhood the teenagers and their parents gave expression to their sense of connectedness, mutual respect and gratitude by bowing to each other and by exchanging a symbolic present representing what they particularly valued in each other. This emphasized the deep bond between them that formed the stable basis from which the young people could go out to find their own way in life.

The second part of the ceremony, ‘letting go’, focussed on the process of letting go of the child by her parents that necessarily happens around that age. It was symbolically enacted by one of the parents cutting off a curl of their daughter’s hair. This was later to be thrown in streaming water. As they later confirmed, this had quite a strong emotional impact on some of the parents.

The third and final part of the ceremony, ‘evoking strength’ evoked the strength that the girls will need in order to venture into the turbulent years ahead of them. Holding a “power object” that they had previously chosen and ‘charged’, each of them listened to a beautiful Rejoicing in Merit by their elder sister, parent or grandparent. In this they were reminded of the many beautiful qualities that they have and that will help them through the bardo of adolescence that will take them to adulthood.

The ceremony was framed with live music by schoolmates of one of the girls and ended with the chanting of the blessings. After the formal part, there was coffee and cake and after that the families went off to continue their celebration at home. Many people voiced their appreciation of the event and expressed the hope that it may become a part of our culture across the FWBO.

Sunday, October 14, 2007

FWBO International Retreat 2008 - bookings opening soon



The publicity and booking information for the [FWBO International Retreat](http://www.internationalretreat.fwbo.org) is being launched in the next few weeks. The retreat is a new venture, organised by the European FWBO Chairs Assembly, and is taking place from 22nd to 26th May next year. The format will be a long weekend retreat, and it will be held at [Taraloka](http://www.taraloka.co.uk) in the UK, with some of the FWBO's best and most experienced teachers.

So far, the list of confirmed teachers includes Dayanandi, Dhammarati, Kamalasila, Kulaprabha, Padmavajra, Parami, Maitreyi, Ratnadharini, Ratnaguna, Tejananda, Vessantara, and Vidyamala, plus members of [Buddhafiield](http://www.buddhafiield.co.uk) leading ritual and storytelling, and members of Buddhafiield North running activities for children.

The weekend takes place just a few days after Wesak, the full moon day of May, on which Buddhists all over the world celebrate the Buddha's attainment of Enlightenment. On the retreat we'll be hearing about what it was the Buddha had discovered, how he then spent many days reflecting and meditating on its significance, before finally deciding to share his experience and "beat the drum of the Dharma".

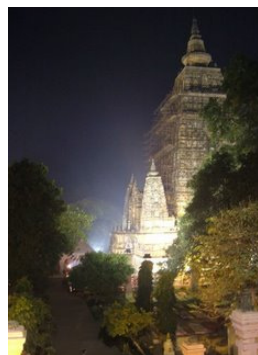
We are envisaging an unfolding theme over the weekend - looking at

the stories and incidents from the tradition, but also their meaning, relevance, and "equivalents" in our own lives. There will be a day looking at the Buddha's Enlightenment and the topic of insight and understanding, a day exploring absorption, depth, assimilation... and a day looking at going back into the world with the message of the Dharma...

On 12th October the English language version of new website www.internationalretreat.fwbo.org went live, with full information about the event. There will soon be facilities to book on-line, or download a postal booking form. Also coming are versions of the website in various other European languages. Brochures about the event (also with booking forms) will be available at UK Centres in the next couple of weeks.

Saturday, October 13, 2007

International Dhammakranti Retreat in Buddha Gaya



FWBO News is happy to pass on this announcement and request from Nagaketu at our [Dhammadharmakranti team](http://www.dhammadharmakranti.org) in India. Previous stories from this great project have included their [Delhi symposium](http://www.dhammadharmakranti.org) and their [tour of South India](http://www.dhammadharmakranti.org) late last year.

Dear friends,

We are very happy to inform you that we are organising the 6th International Dhammakranti Retreat in Buddha Gaya (in the State of Bihar, India) from 11th Nov. to 17th November 2007 at the Nyingma Monastery in Buddha Gaya. This is going to be the second and largest International Dhammakranti Retreat in Buddha Gaya organized by Dhammakranti Social Institute, TBMSG, India.

This is a good opportunity to be in the most holy place for Buddhists in the world. It is a rare opportunity to practice and learn the Dhamma with 3000 to 5000 people from India and the World.

These retreats have made a considerable impact throughout India – they give people from all castes and classes the opportunity to practice Dhamma together and form a Casteless society in the true sense. In India this is truly a precious opportunity.

This retreat is an opportunity for people to interact with others from all different caste and international backgrounds. We will meet everybody deeply enough, and in sufficient unity and harmony, that our biases towards seeing people as higher or lower than us will simply vanish.

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. Your donation will help hundreds of them to have this unique experience in their life.

Come and join this historic event to transform the Society, based on Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, and fulfill the dream of Bodhisattva Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar.

Dhammachari Subhuti will lead the Retreat, which will be on the theme of the Life of the Buddha.

The major attractions on the retreat are Meditation, Talks, Buddhist Rituals, Group Discussions & Buddhist Cultural activities.

We are expecting 200 Westerners and 100 Order Members (Dhammacharis) from India and Abroad.

Fees: for westerners 100 pounds uk/200 us dollars per person.

Book your place now and Contribute in reviving the Dhammachakra (Dhamma Revolution) in the World.

Let us participate in the Humanitarian Revolution to make an Equal Society for all.

To book, to make a donation, or for more details please contact us at:

Central office Nagpur: 0091-712-3241512 | [e-mail](#) | [web site](#)

Please pass this information on to as many people as possible.

Yours in the Dhamma,

Nagaketu, Ritayush, & Maitriveer Nagarjuna
Central Organizing Committee, FWBO/TBMSG Dhammakranti
Social Institute, Nagpur, India.

Thursday, October 11, 2007

FWBO sprouts in Toronto, Canada



FWBO News is pleased to report on the existence of a small but enthusiastic FWBO group in Toronto, Canada - and the heroic efforts of Harshaprabha to join them. He told FWBO News -

"I first visited the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) in 1998 to attend a wedding - my father having moved there in 1993 to remarry at the age of 73!

"Since 1998 I've visited Ontario on a yearly basis. In 2004 I actually moved to Guelph, Ontario with the view of emigrating to Canada, however my job only lasted 7 months and without any other means of support I was forced to return to Britain and my work as an architect. Whilst in Guelph I developed a good and loyal friendship with a number of people who attended my weekly meditation and Buddhism group.

"These friendships with people from in and around Guelph, Wasaga Beach and Toronto continue to blossom, and I'd like to spend a large part of my year in Ontario working full time to spread the Dharma. The rest of the time I'd be back in Britain or elsewhere in the world with other Buddhist friends.

"I don't know how this can be achieved but I'd very much like it to - it would give a second opportunity for people in Canada to have a regular face-to-face contact with an Order member. The other place is [Vancouver](#) some 4,000 miles away!

"If you have any ideas or wish to support me then please do [get in touch](#).

Wednesday, October 10, 2007

Is Jesus the answer?



Is Jesus the answer to Cambridge FWBO's Buddhist Footballing success?

This was the question posed by Jayaraja after the FWBO's little-known but much-loved annual football knockout competition. He told FWBO News -

"For the third year running, the Cambridge FWBO football team (led by none other than Jayaraja!) returned from London tired, hungry but satisfied with the success of retaining the FWBO's 6-a-side football trophy. That ache deep in the muscles, the knocks and grazes, the weariness, is - I am sure - much easier for the victors.

"I don't think we have the strongest team in terms of footballing

know-how. For example the LBC had two players in the running for Player of the Tournament, and depth throughout their team including a very strong goalie. In contrast our goalie Mike had only played keeper before when wearing ice hockey skates – but what he lacked in knowledge he made up for in enthusiasm, application and focus. Other members of our team were equally new to football - Peter 's background is gymnastics and volleyball, Arthasiddhi's rugby. To a trained eye it is only Pat, Mario and myself who look as if we have spent endless childhood hours scoring the winning goal in a world cup final in some distant dream.

"I think our success has been down to a willingness to learn, and plenty of practice and fun down at Jesus Green, a beautiful bit of Cambridge green space by the river where you'll regularly find our guys playing amongst themselves or with the many keen footballers in the city. We know what we can do as individuals and as a team, and we like to play with each other. And friendship, affection and trust have built up over time.

"One of the hardest games we had was against 'Live United' a team made up of players from different FWBO centres including three of our own Cambridge lads who were perhaps extra-determined to show that maybe I had made an error of judgement in leaving them out of the first team. I felt and thought a lot on the journey back. A touch of shame at losing my composure in a couple of games. Pleased I didn't lose it in others. Feeling delighted at a couple of my goals, chuffed with my guys, pleased with a couple of planned moves that came off and the turnaround after trailing to a strong Irish team at half-time – thanks to us keeping our cool and playing as a team.

"Yes, I thought - Jesus was the answer to our success. Long may the tournament continue. I would love it if someone else wins it next year, but we certainly aren't going to give it away.

"To all who took part: the spirited and resolute guys from Ireland, the strong and determined men of Bristol, the free and talented men of

Buddhafield, the energetic and passionate men of Live United, and the organised, fair and experienced men of the LBC, a big thank you.

.
Metta Jayaraja

Tuesday, October 09, 2007

Three ordinations in Berlin and America



In the course of a women's Going for Refuge retreat amidst the pine forests at [Vimaladhatu retreat centre](#), on Thursday 4th October, MARLENE ELTSCHIG from [Berlin](#) was ordained and given the name DHARMADAKINI (meaning 'Dakini of the Dharma') by her private preceptor Prasadavati. Padmasuri was the public preceptor.

The public ceremony took place on a glorious autumnal day, and, in addition to sangha friends - some of whom had travelled for many hours to attend - her father, her partner and their 4-year old son joined in the celebrations.

Just before that, on Saturday, September 29, two public ordinations took place at [Aryaloka Buddhist Center](#) in Newmarket, New Hampshire, USA.

Buddy Vaughan became ARJAVA (Aarjava), which is a Sanskrit name meaning direct, sincere, truthful, straight toward a goal, as an arrow in flight.

Dave Carr became BODHANA (no diacritics), a Sanskrit name meaning causing to awaken, arousing (as from sleep), bringing to fullness (as a flower to blossom).

Nagabodhi was Public Preceptor for both and Vidhuma the Private Preceptor.

Peace and good wishes.

Friday, October 05, 2007

First steps towards an FWBO centre in Beijing...



For several years, Dhammaloka, a German Order Member, has been visiting China. Here is his account of his relationship with the country –and his assessment of the FWBO’s prospects there.

“I love China in a way that I find difficult to understand – and don’t really need to. I love the people, the extraordinary culture, the landscape, the smells and even the noise (sometimes!). I tend to believe that the Dharma and certainly the FWBO haven’t fully arrived on our planet as long as they aren’t well established in China. In my modest way, I wish to contribute to the meeting of Western

and Chinese cultures and I wish to share my life-changing experience of Dharma with my friends in China.

Very gradually, I’ve been forming some friendships, most notably with Ruan Yinhua, whom I first met at Wutai Shan (Manjusri’s sacred mountains) in 1995. Over the years, our friendship grew in depth and, three or four years ago — at Tiantai — he became a mitra. If you want to find out a little more about him and his views on Buddhism in China, please read his [article](#) on the Free Buddhist Audio website. It’s well worth reading.

My last visit included 10 days of intensive ‘teaching’ in Malacca and a number of events in Beijing. During that time, Yinhua arranged for two non-residential weekend seminars and a talk in Beijing. One of these seminars, it must be said, was a little bit of a flop as it turned out that the people attending were mainly interested in practicing their still basic English without really being aware of what the subject was going to be! That was different with the second seminar (in which we explored principles of skilful communication with reference to NVC) and it was even more different with the talk. These last two events were held in a semi-public setting, the seminar having 12, the talk perhaps 25 people attending. Many of them ‘knew’ each other — but only under pen-names, through a web-based discussion forum on ‘spirituality’. Here they met face-to-face for the first time. I spoke on mindfulness practices and meditation, with short periods of silent sitting, interspersed with lively and well-appreciated discussion. Yinhua has maintained contact with those interested – and new people have come into the orbit since.

During that last visit, as previously, Yinhua and my conversations explored our mutual wish to establish what might develop into an FWBO centre in Beijing. For the time being, we are still playing with various options ranging from a small flat to be used for informal, ‘private’ meetings to a secular organisation promoting awareness-based life skills.

Very likely, an online 'virtual Buddhist Centre' will be the first major step in that direction. A few more people are being included in our discussions and time seems definitely ripe to move activities to a new level. Not the least, with the Olympic Games drawing close, there is a liberal wind blowing through Beijing and it would seem foolish not to align ourselves with the new dynamic of exploration and experimentation in this huge city. Continuous access to our 'own' premises in Beijing would certainly make it easier and more attractive for other order members, friends and mitras to actually visit China and contribute to our evolving Sangha.



In December 2006, Yinhua was able to visit India for the first time. For much of his time, he stayed with our friends from TBMSG in Pune and he was deeply moved by the way they looked after him. He had long wanted to get a first-hand experience of our movement in India. This visit was made possible as he was partly funded to attend an NVC seminar with Marshal Rosenberg. After his return to Beijing, he wrote:

“I started believing that I can do something greater than myself, not only to meet my needs for meaning and livelihood at the same time, but also do something meaningful for many people. Now I am considering much more seriously creating an awareness centre or a training company in Beijing, inviting people to teach Buddhism, NVC, etc. As it is a wish now coming more out of a desire to care for the welfare of the majority rather than solving personal problems, I feel much more inspired, confident, relaxed and energized to go ahead. Yes, I need some funds to start it but I trust I can get the funds by talking to some friends. I believe that what I am going to do is

very important and have a lot of merits. May Tara prepare me for that!”

If you wish to contact Yinhua, or to be involved in future activities in China or Malaysia, write to me [here](#). Please also read Yinhua's article '[My Perspective on the Revival of Buddhism and Spirituality in China](#)' on Free Buddhist Audio.

Thanks to Yinhua, Wildmind has a [Chinese section](#), and there is also a Chinese section ready and waiting on [Free Buddhist Audio](#) - though we do not yet have many Dharma talks in Chinese!

Thursday, October 04, 2007

Liberty Corner - a new FWBO Centre in Dublin, Ireland



The FWBO Dublin Centre is delighted to announce that they have purchased a new premises for the Dublin Buddhist Centre. They told FWBO News -

“Our new address is The Dublin Buddhist Centre, 5 James Joyce Street, Dublin 1 - in the very heart of Dublin!

“Number 5 is a ground floor unit in a modern award-winning building currently comprised of apartments, offices, performance & exhibition space) and Dance Ireland. There will also be a crèche housed in the building. The building is located at Liberty Corner, a sure sign that our new home is in the right place.

“Since 1990, the [Dublin Buddhist Centre](#) (DBC) has been offering yoga, meditation and Buddhism classes to the public. Over that time we have also taught meditation in the private and public sectors, plus primary and secondary schools and regular university classes. In recent years we have started to reach out to more vulnerable populations, teaching mindfulness-based stress reduction techniques to individuals through our '[Blue Sky](#)' programme, working with Multiple Sclerosis Ireland and with 'Fresh Start', a government scheme designed to facilitate re-entry into the workforce by people recovering from depression.

“Besides our work, over the last seventeen years, a thriving Buddhist community has grown up around the centre – there are now have 17 Order Members in Ireland, 16 of which are living in Dublin.

“To secure the existing work and to expand the future work of the DBC, we decided to purchase our own premises – we’ve been renting facilities ever since 1990. We will also be accessible to more people than ever before because the new premises is located very centrally on the north side of the city centre. It is an area that historically has been severely disadvantaged but which has been regenerated substantially over the last five years.



“The new premises is currently a concrete shell which needs complete refurbishment. Could you help us develop it into a peaceful and beautiful urban space to be enjoyed by everyone attending the centre?

"Please click [here](#) for more information and ways in which you can help. They have an [appeal blog](#) with details of upcoming fundraising events - or just [donate right now](#)!"

Tuesday, October 02, 2007

More FWBO yatras in support of Burma



Since last Thursday's post here, reporting the Cambridge Yatra in support of Burma, a number of other FWBO Centres and individuals have organised their own actions. In [Brighton](#) between 300 and 1,000 people joined a Dharma Yatra, walking silently between the Palace Pier and the Hove Peace Statue; Interestingly, the organisers estimated 300 and the local paper 1,000! In Glasgow the 'Shambolic Warriors' met to 'Sit in Peace' in George Square (see photo); and in [San Francisco](#) a women mitra organised her own 'very quiet gesture of non-violence' through San Francisco's financial district on Friday afternoon.

One of them, Ann, commented afterwards -

"I felt deeply peaceful and connected in an unusual way with the suit-and-tie commuters, the dates on their way to supper, the bike messengers gathering for the Critical Mass ride, the prostitutes leading their johns into the public toilet, the German tourists riding the cable cars. We walked for two hours. People noticed. It felt good. Did it make a difference? Who knows. But I had to do it. May all beings be released from their suffering".

There are plans for two more Brighton Yatras and a Birmingham

Yatra through the city centre on October 14th and there will be an FWBO presence on the London march on October 7th.

Monday, October 02, 2007

Dr Ambedkar and the Jaibhim Community in Hungary



For some two years now there have been growing links between the FWBO and the Romany gypsies in Hungary. This began when they discovered Dr. Ambedkar and became inspired by him and his followers in India. Roma gypsies in Eastern Europe live lives of extreme poverty and discrimination similar to the conditions experienced by Indian Dalits about 75 years ago, indeed, they describe themselves as the ‘untouchables’ of Europe. They realised Dr Ambedkar’s ‘Dhamma Revolution’(in which in 1956 millions of his followers renounced the Hindu social order based on caste discrimination and inequality and became Buddhist) was relevant to them too.

By the time they contacted the FWBO they had already opened the [Little Tiger Grammar School](#) in Alsoszentmarton in south Hungary. The name comes indirectly from Dr. Ambedkar, who referred to education as ‘tiger’s milk’. More than that, they realised Buddhist ethical practice helped to develop confidence and self-respect, and that Buddhist conversion opened the door to social, economic, and personal development - thus, that Buddhism could be directly

relevant to their problems. In addition to their feeling for Dr. Ambedkar, East European Roma/Gypsies are deeply conscious of their roots in India and many identify strongly with what happens there.

Since the initial contact there have been several exchange visits to Hungary, mostly by students of the Dharmapala College, Birmingham. Mostly recently Manidhamma, an Indian Order Member, visited, together with Ashwin Gunaratna, an Indian mitra from Nagpur. Reports of some of thier previous visits can be found on the [Dharmadhuta blog](#).

One of the important events during this visit was the formation of the [Jaibhim Community](#). This is an initiative by Janos Orsos and Derdak Tibor, two mitras from the gypsy community (there are now four in total). It will provide the organisational framework for Buddhist activities and the communication of Dr Ambedkar’s vision in Hungary. The Jaibhim Community is linked to the FWBO/TBMSG and has adopted a modified version of Ambedkar’s 22 Vows in its constitution. These are, in essence, a set of vows to practice Buddhism, to spread Dr Ambedkar’s message and to reconstruct society to one based on Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. Manidhamma and Janos together collected the registration document from the Charity Commissions’ office in Pecs. The website contains several videos of their activities and Dalit programs in India – even a ‘Jai Bhim’ ringtone!

Manidhamma and Ashwin were able to visit the Little Tiger School and meet students and staff. Manidhamma gave a talk on Dr Ambedkar’s emphasis on self-help and his threefold injunction to his followers to ‘Educate, Agitate, and Organise’. The school is very successful and has been taken as a model by the Hungarian government. A new similar school is being set up in northern Hungary at Tomor in association with the ‘Bhim Rao Association’.

Manidhamma also led a 3-day retreat at Uszo, a beautiful place in

North Hungary, which 30 young men and women attended from different parts of Hungary. There were talks about Dr Ambedkar, Buddhism in India, meditation and discussion about the five precepts and vegetarianism. Ashwin and Manidhamma cooked delicious Indian vegetarian food and distributed gifts - Dr Ambedkar's photos, books, CDs, Indian saris, dhotis and cloths, Buddhist images, 'Jai Bhim' head-bands (as seen in the photo), necklaces, lockets, rosaries and vegetarian food-spices and sweets. They travelled visiting Romas/Gypsies in Budapest, Pecs, Komlo, Baksa, Manfa, Hidas, Harkany, Sayokaza and Ozd. The response was warm and welcoming and our connection with them seems set to grow.

We are currently looking for English teachers able to go to Hungary and teach English to the gypsy community for four or five months at a time, if anyone is interested please contact

- [email:news@fwbo-news.org](mailto:news@fwbo-news.org)

ABOUT US

The Friends of the Western Buddhist Order (FWBO) 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'.

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

Contact FWBO and TBMSG News

- [email: news@fwbo-news.org](mailto:news@fwbo-news.org)

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[FWBO International Retreat 2008](#)
[The Western Buddhist Review](#)
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FWBO Bloggers – Groups

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[Karuna Appeal volunteers](#) - Fundraisers raising money for social and dhamma work in India
[Free Buddhist Audio](#) - FWBO audio/text archive
[Mitras from the Manchester Buddhist Centre](#)
[Dharmadhuta course students blog](#)
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