



Newsletter

Manchester Buddhist Centre, March 2010

FWBO & WESTERN BUDDHIST ORDER DISCUSS NAME CHANGE

Dayamala writes: I wanted to let you know about a proposed name change for the Order and movement. I will of course keep you informed of what is happening. The following is from the FWBO and TBMSG News website.

The FWBO and the Western Buddhist Order worldwide are discussing a change of name. If the proposed changes go ahead, later this year the Order would become the Triratna Buddhist Order and the FWBO (Friends of the Western Buddhist Order) the Triratna Buddhist Community. In India the Trailokya Bauddha Mahasangha (as the Order is known there) would become the Triratna Bauddha Mahasangha.

Triratna simply means 'Three Jewels', specifically the Three Jewels of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, to which all Buddhists commit themselves in the simple but definitive act of 'Going for Refuge'. The Three Jewels have long been used as emblems in many F/WBO situations, for instance the logo of FWBO News and on the Kesas worn by Order Members.



If the proposed change is accepted, it's likely that a Movement-wide ceremony will be held on or around Wesak this year, a date which happens to coincide with the FWBO International Retreat at Taraloka: see <http://internationalretreat.fwbo.org> for more details.

The suggestion to change the name was made on 6 January in a letter from Sangharakshita to all members of the Western Buddhist Order. His letter was itself a response to one from a group of Indian Order Members gathered in Pune, in which they requested him to change the Indian name of the Order from the present 'Trailokya Bauddha Mahasangha' and also to give a new and unified name to the whole Order world-wide.

Both 'Western' and 'Trailokya' had become increasingly problematic for some over the past decade – 'Western' because the Order is increasingly international, with members active in India, Russia, Turkey

and China, as well as other non-Western countries; and 'Trailokya' because Indians outside Maharashtra find it difficult to relate as a Buddhist name – and the Order is increasingly active in many States all across India.

Discussions about changing the name had continued in the Order on and off for many years - in fact, from 1979, when TBMSG was founded in India. However, partly due to the increasing size of the Order, it proved impossible to obtain consensus and the matter was dropped until Sangharakshita's recent intervention.

Sangharakshita's letter says in part –“...

I hope that Western Order members will be as moved as I was by the request I received [from India], and that they will join with me in wanting to meet the wish of the Indian Order members for a change of their own name and for a name for the whole Order. Having one name for the whole Order will make it clear to the world not only that we all go for Refuge to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, but that

whether in the East or the West, the North or the South, we are one united Order, with a single vision and a single heart and mind.

“After much deliberation, the new name for the Order that has come to me is the Triratna Buddhist Order (in Hindi, Triratna Bauddha Mahasangha), and I suggest that all Order members adopt it straight away”.

Sangharakshita's letter ended by proposing that the FWBO became the Friends of the Triratna Buddhist Order, which was immediately shortened by many to FTBO.

However the European Chairs Assembly, which happened to be in session at Dhanakosa in Scotland at the time, saw an opportunity to take the Movement's unification a step further, by making it easier to translate the name into different languages – and by moving away from the many sets of initials presently used to identify it. In France and Spain, for instance, the FWBO is the AOBO, in Holland the VWBO – and in Turkey, the BBBDD!

After some discussion they chose to reply to Sangharakshita suggesting that the FWBO instead became the Triratna Buddhist Community, a suggestion he accepted. They wrote:

“We like 'Triratna'. Not only does it encapsulate our central values, it also provides a positive identifying marker for the Order and the movement. We have chosen 'Buddhist Community' to replace 'Friends of' as an expression of the relationship between the movement and the Order and our emphasis on spiritual community and friendship. We have considered this in some depth, bringing to bear our collective experience and care for our movement internationally, and we would be grateful if you would seriously consider our proposal. At the same time we want you to know that we will be happy with whatever decision you make.”

The European Chairs are currently in dialogue with other Centre chairs internationally, and once these are complete further announcements will be made regarding the change and the best way to mark it. Parallel discussions are going on in the Order and again we'll announce the details as soon as they are available.

This article was first published online at: <http://www.fwbo-news.org/2010/01/fwbo-and-western-buddhist-order.html>

MITRA CEREMONIES

Thursday 25 March
Lotus Hall, 7pm

On Thursday March 25 we will be having a break from our usual study evening to celebrate some of our Sangha becoming Mitras. When people become Mitras it is a marking of their serious commitment to following Buddhist teachings and to deepen their practice in the context of this centre and Sangha. It is a very significant point in our practice to ritually mark and celebrate our heart's calling.

So, who are becoming Mitras? We have John Ashton, Sarah Ball, Isobel Dixon, Martha Evans, Judy Whitehouse, Stan Kukulowicz, Jane Lawson and Joanne Massey.

Watch out for their pictures, soon to appear on the notice board! And please come along for the evening – all welcome!

THANK YOU NISHPARA

Who is Nishpara and what do I want to thank him for?

Nishpara has been the Editor of the Manchester Buddhist Centre newsletter for the last seven years. The newsletter is one of the ways in which anyone coming to the centre can quickly get a feel for what we do here, the people involved, a flavour of the life of the centre. There is something I still love about picking something up in paper form, rather than email. Sara who helps out at the centre was telling me today that picking up the newsletter, for her, was a more quiet way of finding out what is happening. You can come into the centre as a new person, maybe a bit unsure what to expect and simply pick up a newsletter and wander away, then you get home and you can ponder on what this place is about in your own time by reading the articles.



Nishpara is a quiet chap himself and has over the years been quietly getting on with all the work it takes to get a newsletter together each month. A few of us were talking about his qualities in the office today came up with the following: he's warm, kind, open, very conscientious, must be well organised to edit a newsletter! And has been so generous with his time all these

years. He just gets on with it with no fuss.

So on behalf of all of us, thank you so much for all your work in editing the newsletter for the last seven years. If you haven't met Nishpara, look out for him around the centre, he'll be teaching on some of the meditation courses and sometimes runs meditation days too. His name means "boundless", literally "without a further shore". **Suryaka**

SANGHA NIGHTS FROM SPRING 2010

Ratnaguna is moving on from Sangha Night!

Some of you who attend Monday's Sangha Night might not yet know that this spring will see a very important change – the departure of Ratnaguna, after around two and a half years of very dedicated leadership. Ratnaguna has put a huge amount of time, energy and enthusiasm into Sangha Night over this period, providing the full spectrum of the Sangha, from new friends to Order members, with teaching, inspiration and his own distinctively friendly and welcoming approach. I've been personally impressed by how he has taken great care to welcome newcomers and make them feel at home – something that I think is really important, and that didn't happen when I was a newcomer (long ago, and not at this centre!).

In order to do proper justice to Ratnaguna's departure, the last Monday before Easter (29 March) will be dedicated to him! It would be great if we could give him a fitting send-off by recalling our favourite Sangha Nights and rejoicing in some of his many merits. One of these (if I may say so) is that he recognises the importance of gratitude, so let's show him some of ours for the brilliant work he's done in supporting Sangha Night for so long. If you'd like to make a contribution, please get in touch with me, and I'll give you a suitable slot in the evening's

programme, depending on what you'd like to say (or recite, sing, or whatever!).

Looking a little further into the future, from Monday 12 April I'll be looking after Sangha Night in Ratnaguna's wake, although aided and abetted by Nishpara and Saccacitta, who are my fellows in our Order chapter. What can you look forward to 'under new management'? I'd really like to think that you, the Sangha, will help me to decide that in the long run – for example, you might be interested in lots of meditation, pujas of various types, guest speakers, discussion of Pali suttas or Mahayana sutras, or some quite different ideas... However, in the immediate few weeks of April and May we have an opportunity to take the 'long view' and look at a historic perspective on our own movement, as the FWBO approaches the likely first change of name in its 43-year existence to become the Triratna Buddhist Community. To mark this probable and important change we're planning a season featuring selected highlights from the first 4 decades, through both watching vintage video footage and hearing from some similarly vintage members of the movement. The plan is for the first of these to be 12 April looking at the earliest phase of the movement, way back in the halcyon days of peace and love(!). Watch this space in April's newsletter! **Chandana**

Thanks to Ratnaguna from the Monday night Sangha

This is a huge, heartfelt 'thank you' to Ratnaguna for all the effort you put in to making Monday night Sangha evenings so very special. Your enthusiasm, dedication and commitment are very much appreciated. You bring great clarity and accessibility to the Dharma. One of the Monday night sangha sums up our feelings:

'Ratnaguna is inspiring: he has endless generosity, time and patience. A kind,



selfless nature and a wonderful sense of humour!'

Sangharakshita said 'It is not possible to teach the Dharma, one can only inspire people to lead the spiritual life'. He goes on to say '...the teacher is inspiring because he himself is inspired by the Dharma'. Ratnaguna's passion for the Dharma and the spiritual life is there for us all to see and benefit from.

Thank you Ratnaguna!

SALUTATION TO THE THREE JEWELS

A day for Women who have asked for Ordination with Samantabhadri

Saturday 17 April 10–4.30

cost £25/£18/£15 (waged/low waged/unwaged)
Please book in advance at reception or through the website

Samantabhadri writes:

"You will probably have associations of chanting the Tiratana Vandana: that flow of Pali as a detailed, precise honouring of the Three Jewels. The verses take us back to the time of the Buddha and the sheer impact of presence. They were the words that had to be said again and again and an early, living expression of the principle of enlightenment. In the 1980s, Bhante led a seminar on the three verses and this is transcribed in over 80 pages! For many of us, the verses have become a beautiful, collective expression of our Going for Refuge, while for others they may still be a newer or even puzzling experience.

I am really looking forward to studying these verses and their glimpses of the transcendental nature of the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha. We will explore together our responses and the sense of our Going for Refuge. This will be supported by some meditation and devotional practice. I am also excited about visiting Manchester Buddhist Centre!"

Samantabhadri was ordained in 1995. She was a founder member of the Colchester Sangha. She was mitra convenor there for twelve years, led mitra study and supported many women in their ordination process.

Until 2002, she held a senior position at the Sixth Form College whilst continuing to teach English Literature. After this, she was for a while a carer to her mother in her final years of dementia and felt enriched by this experience. For a while, she acted as a funeral celebrant and has been keen to share this skill within the Order.

She has a love of the arts and of the countryside. In late 1998, she moved to Taraloka where her main responsibility is leading retreats. These range from meditation retreats for women who have asked for ordination to introductory weekends, from Sesshins to autobiographical writing.

EVENING WITH DAYAMALA

for Women Mitras and Dharmacharinis

Tuesday 2 March 7–9.30 – Lotus Hall

An opportunity to come together for practice, discussion, questions, answers...
Just come along no need to book.

BUDDHAFIELD NORTH RETREATS 2010

Buddhfield North is enjoying its eighth year of running camping retreats in the north of England. They are now held on a beautiful farm at Addingham Moorside, near Ilkey. We provide a structured retreat environment for you to deepen your practice of meditation and ritual. Many people come back year after year. Vegetarian food is provided but do bring all your own camping and shrine room equipment.

Advanced booking is essential for all the retreats and the closing date for booking is seven days before the start of each retreat. Full joining instructions will be sent on receipt of the booking form and deposit.

For further information look for posters and booking forms at the Centre or go to www.buddhfieldnorth.org.uk

You can also contact Tejapushpa on 07952207997, Dayavajra on 07900590340 or Dayaka on 01924 270365

THE BIG SUMMER OPEN CAMPING RETREAT, 22 – 27 August 2010 “The Turning of the Mind”

Open to everyone. Cost: £160 (fully waged), £130 (low waged) and £100 (unwaged).

Children under 2 years: free. 2–16 years: 50% of the adult rate

Here we will be enjoying our annual experiment in communal living whilst reflecting on the dharma, meditating, doing puja, bodywork and just generally hanging out in a supportive environment.

The retreat will provide an opportunity to deepen our experience. There will also be optional training sessions in woodland crafts and we will provide periods of activities for children. This retreat is likely to book up, so an early booking is advisable.

The theme is inspired by The Four Reminders, which are:

*Life has inevitable difficulties.
No one can control it all.
This body is impermanent.
Death is certain.
The karma I create,
shapes the course of my life.
This human birth is precious,
an opportunity to awaken.*

OPENING INTO WHOLENESS a weekend led by Dhammagita, 13–14 March

This weekend offers a vibrant exploration and appreciation of the human body in movement and stillness. Dhammagita uses a powerful synthesis of somatic practices, energy work and breathing techniques drawn from her exploration of various bodywork and spiritual traditions. The result is richly flavoured with her love of music, poetry, art, fun and interest in everything.

Dhammagita will help us to enhance the wellbeing of our whole body-mind. With the elements as a framework, she will help us to

WOMEN'S CAMPING WEEKEND, 11 – 13 June 2010

“Radical Sincerity and the Path to Freedom”

Led by Padmarashini, Tejapushpa and Taravandana

Open to women with experience of meditation and puja. Cost: £80 (fully waged), £65 (low waged) and £50 (unwaged)

Join Padmarashini, Tejapushpa and Taravandana. We will be exploring what it means to practise. How do we break free from constricting habits and patterns? How do we move from the reactive cycle of the wheel to the creative possibilities of the spiral?

With ritual, meditation, chanting, personal talks, sitting by campfires and spending time with nature. And the Dakini to inspire and shake us!

MEN'S CAMPING WEEKEND 4 – 6 June 2010

“Padmasambhava and the Elements”

Led by The Men's Northern Mitra Convenors

Open to all men with experience of meditation and puja.

Cost: £80 (fully waged), £65 (low waged) and £50 (unwaged)

This weekend will be held at the beautiful site on Ilkley Moor. Some of our practice will be held outdoors, some in a converted barn and under canvas.

The retreat will involve using workshops, ritual and puja to explore our connection with the elements under the compassionate gaze of Guru Padmasambhava.

New for 2010! A TWO DAY WORKING RETREAT, 27 – 29 AUGUST

Cost: Nowt/ Free/ Dana if you must

We are looking for ten people to join the Buddhfield North team in the take down after the Big Summer Open Camping Retreat. We will be exploring maintaining awareness in body, speech and mind during this period of intense activity. Further details are available on request.

- ground ourselves and release to the support of the earth
- move body and mind with the fluidity of water
- feel the fire of energy
- enjoy the unobstructed freedom of air in our breath and being

The event is suitable for everybody and any body – no experience necessary – however in or out of touch you are with your body. You don't have to be fit, energetic or anything but human to enjoy and benefit from the weekend. Further details: ask at reception or look on the MBC website.

RETREATS ARE SUCH A TREAT! by Suryaka

I'm just back from an eight-day meditation retreat at Taraloka, the retreat centre for women in Shropshire. It's a beautiful peaceful place, in wonderful countryside with big skies. It has been running for over 20 years and offers a whole range of retreats including newcomers' weekends – there is something for women at all levels of experience.

At the end of my time away I reflected on what a huge difference it has made to me, over the last 15 years, to have the chance to go on retreat. I start to see more clearly what is going on in my mind, there is a structure to help me settle more into myself, I'm away from my usual daily responsibilities, my life is simplified, there is more time to meditate, more time to just be with myself, more time to connect with others, time to go for a walk, have an afternoon snooze, sit by the open fire, read, relax, take stock of my life. That's just for starters!

There's also the input from the team leading the retreat. The retreat leaders are experienced Buddhist practitioners, each with their own particular qualities. I really feel I learn a lot from being around people with more experience than myself. The team will guide you through a theme and encourage you to find your own connection. There is space to explore issues that arise through group sessions and/or meditation interviews. Then there's the experience of being part of a community, spending time together with new and perhaps old friends, creating something special where we can all be more ourselves. It was particularly great on this retreat to be with four other women from Manchester.

I really think I would have struggled to deepen my practice and know myself more without some time spent on retreats each year. So, if you haven't tried going on a retreat yet, why not give it a go? We're lucky that here in Manchester there are a couple of weekend retreats coming up—check out the articles in this newsletter, the calendar on the back page and look on the events page of the web site.

Taraloka and other FWBO retreat centres do both short (weekend) and longer retreats and there is plenty to choose from. So, if you fancy some time away, why not pick up one of the retreat centre programmes in the leaflet rack at reception, have a look on the noticeboard in the tea area or check out www.goingonretreat.com which has a comprehensive list of retreat centres providing retreats for people at all levels of practice and experience. Best wishes, **Suryaka**

Taraloka womens retreat centre:

www.taraloka.org.uk

Vajraloka Men's retreat centre:

www.vajraloka.org/

To all Poetry Lovers

A new poetry groups starts on Tuesday, 16 March, 6.30pm at the Friends Meeting House on Street in Manchester. Please bring a poem you love to share with other poetry lovers. The group aims to meet once a month – or two. A FAMOUS ARTIST WILL ATTEND!

Hoping to see you there.

Aryamati



DAYAMALA'S RAMBLE

Some of my reflections do seem to have rambled this month!

There are a lot of roadworks on my route into Manchester. Some are due to the new Metrolink which is being built out my way, and some related to sewer renewals. Travelling into the centre last week, I looked up from my book and out of the bus window to see one of the workmen carrying a huge coil of piping. I, rather surprisingly, felt my heart open and a sudden rush of gratitude to him - for his strength, fitness, the physically demanding work he's doing - and then it felt like an "explosion" of gratitude towards other manual workers who build our world, and indeed all others who contribute to the infrastructure of society, indeed are society!

I felt grateful to be Chair of the centre, grateful to be working closely with people, grateful for the friendships that are deepening and the relationships that are developing, grateful for the help and advice I get, grateful to be alive. Gratitude, like kindness, is by its very nature other regarding.

My gratitude to be alive brought me to more reflections on death - not surprisingly

given Parinirvana Day last week - and the gratitude I felt for the very positive experience I had on witnessing my first death - my grandfather - when I was 14. I had called round on my way to the dentist. He had been dying of cancer for a long time and a bed had been brought into the living room months earlier. It was watching him deteriorate that I learnt the difference between skin and flesh. He was very weak and had hardly been able to move unaided for quite a while. As I sat on the settee just a few feet away from him, he suddenly sat up, started waving his hands about, began muttering about a white light and a beautiful countenance came across his face. I was mesmerised, fascinated, thought he was seeing God. He then lay down and died. Half an hour later I was in the dentist's chair thinking "I've just watched my grandfather die"! It was a very positive experience.

And I felt grateful to have moved back to Manchester to look after my Mum in her final years with her failing health. Her death, though sad, was not tragic. What upset me a lot looking after her, was watching her utter frustration as she lost more and more her independence and no longer being in control. The most graphic example of this was her last admission to hospital. Most visiting times, she would plead with my sister and I to take her home, which, at that time, we were unable to do. I had to leave on several occasions with her sobbing behind me. This set me off thinking "What DO we do when we cannot get what we want?" "What do I do - even in less extreme circumstances?" and how we so often live our lives wanting what we want, when we want it.

This brought me to something I said on Parinirvana Day...rather than asking ourselves questions like "What happens after death?", or "Is there an afterlife?"; we should rather ask "What is my relationship with the unknown?" If we try to make death a known and safe subject through our views, are we missing the teaching? Can we live without projecting anything onto the unknown?

We can use every opportunity in our lives to get to know ourselves more, ask ourselves questions, maybe come a bit nearer to reality. We can question every assumption we have about life. With every thought...Is it true? Is it really true? Who am I without that thought? Who am I? As Rilke says, "...try to love the questions themselves...do not seek the answers, which cannot be given...Live the questions now."

I'll finish with a poem by Tsong Khapa:

The Human Body at Peace with Itself

The human body at peace with itself,
Is more precious than the rarest gem.
Cherish your body, it is yours this one time only.
The human form is won with difficulty,
It is easy to lose.
All worldly things are brief,
Like lightening in the sky;
This life you must know
As the tiny splash of a raindrop;
A thing of beauty that disappears
Even as it comes into being.
Therefore set your goal
Make use of every day and night
To achieve it.

Until next month, wishing you all well,
Dayamala

FWBO INTERNATIONAL RETREAT TURNING ARROWS INTO FLOWERS

28 May - 1 June at Taraloka Retreat Centre, Shropshire

The FWBO's major international gathering of practice and celebration later in the year is at Taraloka Retreat Centre in Shropshire. We'll gather on the full-moon evening of May, when 2500 years ago, the Buddha gained Enlightenment. According to legend, he meditated through the night, overcoming Mara's army and turning their arrows into flowers. During the weekend, we'll unpack the meaning of this story, and explore the spiritual transformation of our own lives and the world we live in.

This retreat is a fantastic opportunity to participate in a full programme of talks, meditations, storytelling, and rituals, plus free time for meeting up with friends or going for a walk.

Here's some of what has been arranged so far:

Storytelling, chanting and ritual: to create an atmosphere of magic and beauty, re-enacting the story of the Buddha's Enlightenment.

Meditation: teaching and time to

practice. How can we see through negativity and free our own hearts and minds?

Talks and discussion: looking at the society we live in and what helps and what hinders our attempts to move towards Enlightenment. How can we help turn "arrows into flowers"?

Sangha: an experience of the breadth and depth of the FWBO with hundreds of us from all over Europe living, practising, and creating sangha together over a long weekend.

Family Friendly: facilities and activities for children and teenagers. There will be two sessions each day when those with children can bring their kids along to be looked after, allowing them to go to the talks, meditations and so on. Also, in the evening we'll have storytelling that kids can come to, sometimes join in, and sometimes stay for part of the ritual/puja that follows on from it.

Some of the FWBO's most experienced teachers will be there including Jnanavaca,

Maitreyabandhu, Padmavajra, Saddhanandi, Sona, Tejananda, Vajradarshini, Vidyamala, with more to be confirmed...

It promises to be a huge opportunity for a very imaginative collective celebration of Buddha Day (Vesak) - the festival of the Buddha's Enlightenment. It's also a great way to experience the depth and breadth of the FWBO, and to get a taste of just how satisfying it can be not just to practise but to live for a short time immersed in a Buddhist context.

There are three prices for the event: £135 (for those on a wage), £110 (for those on FWBO support or a low wage), and £80 (for those on no wage). The prices include all facilities, meals, teaching etc.

Children aged 3 or under can come for free, and 4 to 16 year olds half price.

Places are limited so book soon!

Further details and booking information is available at FWBO International Retreat website

<http://www.internationalretreat.fwbo.org/>

SHAKYAJATA IN INDIA

It has been quite a while since my last update; I have been struggling with health problems (tummy bug, the cough & cold) and had limited time on the Internet. My health is now improving and, although I have been based in Nagpur for the last few weeks, there is still plenty happening.

Priyadaka left last weekend, and we all miss him very much. He was very much loved in the men's community with the Animation Course students, and by all the young (and old) people he met here. He was sad to leave too but we consoled ourselves with the promise of Kerala in October, and probably lots of other places. Invitations keep coming to me, to Andhra Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Karnataka, Lucknow, places where there are active groups, or potentially active groups, of the NTL trainees. There is so much interest, in the kind of community development we are so keen to see, among very marginalised people.

I have been talking to the young students at NTL recently, had a few meetings with them about their future prospects, about which they are very anxious. This is because the situations they have come from are so dire. I spoke to three young people yesterday whose families (subsistence farmers) lost everything in floods, so they cannot expect any financial support from them, yet they (the students) are their families' only hope for the future, to get out of this poverty trap. So the necessity looms ever

larger to get them into training for decent jobs, and to raise funds to kick-start that training. This is what I shall be focussing on when I return, as well as supporting new activities in their remote areas of India.

These activities are starting to happen, especially in Orissa where there is a small (and growing) mens' community of excellent, dedicated, effective people who are forming a trust for social activities among new Buddhists and Ambedkarites (and others who have need; but these are the ones most likely to respond). Tejadhamma, who was one of our team there, is organising a retreat in Orissa with Amoghasiddhi and Ratnodaya in May, to give focus, encouragement and support to the Kalingamitra Trust activists. (The Trust is named after a famous incident which happened in Orissa, where the emperor Ashoka embraced the Buddhist path of peace after witnessing the terrible slaughter of the Kalinga people by his own troops. We have seen the Peace Pagoda at the site, where the river is said to have run red with blood at that time.)

Also in Trivandrum in Kerala, where we had an excellent meeting in December, the formidable Rejimon is initiating meetings and activities to help people there. I am giving him as much support as I can, though he seems to be doing very well by himself! A lovely new development is that there is a big group of Kerala trainees at Nagaloka (NTI) who are all keen to help in

future. Also the dynamic Ratnasiddhi will run a retreat/programme there, with Satyadhamma and Dhyana Ratna, in August – then Sinhendra may be interested in visiting in September (are you there Sinhendra? does this come as a surprise!?) and maybe Priyadaka and I in October, so there should be some continuity. We are planning to start a small computer institute there, maybe next year.

Which brings up the next headache – about forty young people, very few of them with any financial backing at all, want to learn Animation Studies at Aryaloka from July! For some it is not suitable, but many are keen and highly eligible, and there will probably be a max. of 15 places... so selecting them will be a nightmare... Anyway, the Kavyakula Animation trainees are going from strength to strength, now learning an enormously complex 3-D programme called Maya, and loving it. We hope they will have a bit of a grasp of it before the representatives from the Framestore Company come on the 22nd – and the new comic will be launched that week... then I'm back in the UK from end of February to carry on remote networking.

Enough, already! So much to say, so much to do... please don't forget www.justgiving.com/youngindianfutures as the need gets greater and greater... and big thanks to you who have given so generously already.

best of wishes, **Shakyajata**

SANGHA NIGHT DOUBLE BILL Monday 22 March Farewell to Phyll, Celebrating Clear Vision

FAREWELL TO PHYLL

On this night we have a double celebration. Half the evening will be spent celebrating Phyl Blakey, because, after many years' faithful Dharmafaring, she is off to her three-month ordination retreat in Spain. These ordination farewells are always heartwarming and inspiring, reminding us all of the ordinand's many fine qualities and exploring the significance of ordination itself.



Whether or not you know her, come along and give her a fine send-off!

In the other half of the evening Munisha will explain the work of Clear Vision in the field of Religious Education and guide us around the online riches of the Clear Vision video archives.

CELEBRATING CLEAR VISION

Upstairs on the third floor of the Buddhist Centre you'll find the centre of a Dharmarevolution: three dedicated Buddhists (Aparajita, Munisha and Upekshapriya) producing DVD and online video teaching materials, both for Buddhists and for Religious Education (RE) in schools. Primarily founded to record news and talks by Sangharakshita and other members of the FWBO, Clear Vision is actually most famous among non-Buddhists, in UK schools, since releasing its first school video pack, Buddhism for KS2, in 1994. This double VHS cassette and A4 handbook was a runaway bestseller, and was followed by another five publications for primary and secondary RE. It's been said by one RE specialist that Clear Vision's Buddhist materials are the best RE materials produced by any faith. Of course, these days they're all on DVD. You can see them in the MBC shop, and there are free video clips on the Clear Vision website at www.clear-vision.org.

Clear Vision's educational expertise makes them the most natural people to run the MBC's education service, which is hugely popular. Most of you never see them because they all come on weekdays, but in 2009 we welcomed 2,200 pupils and students on group visits to the Buddhist Centre, a 20% rise on 2008. To give you an idea of what this means, the nearby Cathedral receives 4,000 pupil visits a year, but then study of Christianity is compulsory in RE, whereas Buddhism is optional.

Our young visitors come from primary and secondary schools, and from teacher training colleges, across north Wales and the northwest of England. They often combine their visit to us with a visit to the Cathedral, or to the mosque opposite the Buddhist Centre. Munisha books the centre visits and teaches some of them, aided by a team of freelancers: Richard Weeden, Ratnaguna and Amitasuri. Teacher evaluation sheets consistently show a 95% satisfaction rate with all aspects of their visit. You can see all details of the service here: www.clear-vision.org; and this is also where you'll find one of our most popular free online services, Ask A Buddhist! - free video answers to school pupils' questions about Buddhism.

Clear Vision is also the FWBO's video and image archive. The new website boasts more than 500 new free video clips from *Questions and Answers with Sangharakshita*, grouped by theme, as well as downloadable images and much more. It's all free, so why not spend some time finding out what's there? See it at www.clear-vision.org

On Sangha Night Monday 22 March, Munisha will be giving a talk and audio-visual presentation, explaining the potentially worldwide significance of Clear Vision's work for children and young people, and showing us around the riches of the Clear Vision website. In particular she'll be explaining their latest project: free online interactive Dharma materials for 8-16 year-olds – probably a world-first in the history of the teaching of the Dharma.

SANGHA WEEKEND — DARING TO LIVE FREE

how to free yourself from the group and become a true individual led by Sona and Vidyamala
6pm Friday 9 April to 4pm Sunday 11 April

Following last year's two successful weekend retreats with the Manchester sangha, Sona and Vidyamala will lead another two weekend retreats this year.

These retreats will continue to explore the theme of 'vision and transformation'. In 2009 they explored 'vision' — looking at big topics such as impermanence and emptiness. This year they will begin to explore 'vision' in terms of what we can aim at here and now, and look at how we can actively tread the path of 'transformation' whilst living with all the complexities of the modern world.

One of Sangharakshita's key teachings is the importance of becoming a 'true individual' — someone who is neither over-conforming to a group, nor rebelling against it. An individual is someone who knows themselves well and is able to 'stand tall' — comfortable in their own lives and convictions and yet receptive and open to others. On the weekend we will have talks and discussions on this theme. The programme will also include meditation and devotional practices.

Book at reception, by phone or via the website.
Cost: £85/£75/£65 (waged/low-waged/concessions)

The second weekend retreat led by Sona and Vidyamala is in October, see the website for details.

GIVE SOMETHING BACK TO THE CENTRE...

Sunday 11 April, 10–5pm

Maintaining the centre is a BIG undertaking! The centre depends on the sangha to take care of it — many of you don't know that a number of volunteers contribute to the upkeep of the centre all year round, helping with cleaning, decorating, DIY etc. Many thanks to all those volunteers who already contribute in this way.

I'm now organising days where you can show your appreciation of the centre and give something back. Having a day together gives us the space to tackle some bigger jobs that can't be easily done when the centre is open to the public. Why not come along? There are lots of benefits to taking part,

you can meet and connect more with the sangha, have fun and see what a difference we can make.

We'll start the day together with some meditation and finish with relaxation and ritual. During the day we'll work together on the ground floor, doing some cleaning and decorating. Please bring veggie lunch to share and work clothes.

So put this date in your diary NOW, if you want to come!

I do hope to see you there. You can just turn up, but it will help me plan the day if you can let me know if you're coming

Suryaka, Facilities Manager
suryaka@manchesterbuddhistcentre.org.uk

WEEKEND RETREAT FOR MEN

Song of the Yogi's Joy
26 – 28 March at Vajraloka

This weekend retreat for men of the MBC will be held at Vajraloka retreat centre in North Wales, the perfect place to go more deeply into the Dharma through discussion, meditation, ritual and friendship.

We have chosen for the weekend's theme part of a text from the hundred thousand songs of Milarepa entitled 'Song of the Yogi's Joy'. We will also be looking at Sangharakshita's commentary on this song (chapter 3 in Sangharakshita's book *The Yogi's Joy*).

*Oh, happy are the myriad manifestations!
The more ups and downs, the more joy I feel.
Happy is the body free from harmful karma,
Happy indeed are the countless confusions!
The greater the fear, the greater the happiness I feel.
Oh, happy is death of sensations and passions!*

*The greater the distress and passions,
The more can one be blithe and gay!
What happiness to feel no ailment or illness;
What happiness to feel that joy and suffering are one;
What happiness to play in bodily movement
With the power aroused by Yoga.
To jump and run, to dance and leap, is more joyful still.*

The weekend will be run by Arthaketu and Chandana and is suitable for men who have completed a 'Going Further with Buddhism' (Buddhism level 2) course.

The cost is £85/£75/£65 and you will need to book at reception.

See you there, **Arthaketu**

WOMEN'S WRITES



On Wednesday 10 March, 6 to 6.45 pm, **Aryamati** is giving a talk at **Manchester Central Library** for the paperback publication of her book *800 Years of Women's Letters*.

This informative and entertaining book on the history of women's letter-writing reveals women's lives through the centuries and provide an invaluable historical resource.

Aryamati is particularly interested in women's spirituality, which is why she begins 800 years ago with Hildegard of Bingen, a mystic, herbalist and famous preacher who sent strong advice to men in power. Do come along to hear friends read remarkable extracts from letters written by Queens to weavers, suffragettes to fighters. If you are able stay at the library until 7.30 you will hear three gifted friends, a poet, a diarist and a novelist reading from recent work. Free refreshments provided.

WOMEN'S FILM NIGHT Saturday 13 March, 7pm



It's time for the next fundraising film night!

And we've found yet another great film. "Ten years in the making, this award-winning feature-length documentary was filmed during nine journeys throughout Tibet, India and Nepal. *Tibet: Cry Of The Snow Lion* brings audiences to the long-forbidden "rooftop of the world" with an unprecedented richness of imagery... from rarely-seen rituals in remote monasteries, to horse races with Khamba warriors; from brothels and slums in the holy city of Lhasa, to magnificent Himalayan peaks still traveled by nomadic yak caravans.

The dark secrets of Tibet's recent past are powerfully chronicled through personal stories and interviews, and a collection of

undercover and archival images never before assembled in one film. *Cry Of The Snow Lion* is an epic story of courage and compassion."

This is a night for all women in the sangha. We'd love you to come visit our community, have dinner and watch it with us. Remember you will need to book as places are limited, and it has been full in the past.

Call the community on 0161 792 0966, email Phyl on phyllis.blakey@googlemail.com, or sign the list on the centre notice board.

As usual, we'll be offering a meal — the suggested donation is £10, more, or less depending on what you can give. We look forward to seeing you here!

Amitaśūri

EMBODIED MIND

meditation weekend with Paramananda
Saturday 17 – Sunday 18 April, 10–5.00pm

This weekend will explore the art of meditation as a dynamic three stage process:

- Grounding: establishing a sense of ground and embodied awareness
- Turning towards: engaging with our moment to moment experience with loving kindness and a flexible awareness
- Seeing through: opening to the possibility of new ways of being with ourselves based on the deeper insight we have developed

Paramananda has taught meditation for twenty years and is the author of three popular books on meditation: *Change Your Mind*, *A Deeper Beauty* and *The Art of Meditation — The Body*

NEW BANNER AND SIGNS AT THE CENTRE

At the end of January the Centre had brand new signs and a banner installed at the front of the building. We're sure you'll agree that they look fantastic, and really put the MBC on the map!

The old banners had to be removed quite some time ago, for reasons of safety, and we had to delay replacing them because of financial constraints. But, at last, we've been in a position to go ahead with new signage

Vidyabhadi, who used to work in the centre team, put a lot of work into this project, as did Chris Myers, who gave his time and skills freely to help with the design work. Suryaka has worked hard at supervising the installation work. So many thanks to them all.

We hope you like it, and if anyone asks how to find the MBC you can tell them to just look out for the banner on Turner Street!

THE HEART SUTRA

The Heart Sutra is probably the most well known of Mahayana Buddhism's development of the Buddha's teachings — a text entirely on the subject of Sunyata, the inherent emptiness of all phenomena.

There are two events at the Centre in March which look at this text. **Chandana** will be discussing the sutra on Sangha night, Monday 8 March, as part of the series looking at the Seven Fold Puja. And, on Sunday 21 March there is a day led by **Buddharaksita**, of study and exploration of this text for Mitras and Order Members. More details on the website, or ask at reception.

The Heart Sutra:

The Bodhisattva of Compassion,
When he meditated deeply,
Saw the emptiness of all five skandhas
And sundered the bonds that caused him
suffering.
Here then,
Form is no other than emptiness,
Emptiness no other than form.
Form is only emptiness,
Emptiness only form.
Feeling, thought, and choice,
Consciousness itself,
Are the same as this.
All things are by nature void
They are not born or destroyed
Nor are they stained or pure
Nor do they wax or wane
So, in emptiness, no form,

No feeling, thought, or choice,
Nor is there consciousness.
No eye, ear, nose, tongue, body,
mind;
No colour, sound, smell, taste,
touch,
Or what the mind takes hold of,
Nor even act of sensing.
No ignorance or end of it,
Nor all that comes of ignorance;
No withering, no death,
No end of them.
Nor is there pain, or cause of pain,
Or cease in pain, or noble path
To lead from pain;
Not even wisdom to attain!
Attainment too is emptiness.
So know that the Bodhisattva
Holding to nothing whatever,
But dwelling in Prajna wisdom,
Is freed of delusive hindrance,
Rid of the fear bred by it,
And reaches clearest Nirvana.
All Buddhas of past and present,
Buddhas of future time,
Using this Prajna wisdom,
Come to full and perfect vision.
Hear then the great dharani,
The radiant peerless mantra,
The Prajnaparamita
Whose words allay all pain;
Hear and believe its truth!
Gate Gate Paragate Parasamgate
Bodhi Svaha

BREATHWORKS events for March

Every Tuesday: Breathworks: Living Well with Pain and Illness Graduates Drop-in sessions, 1–2:30PM

Saturday 20 March: Breathworks: Living Well with Stress Graduates Day retreat at the Centre 10:30–4:30pm

Next Newsletter

The deadline for items for next month's newsletter is 20 March

Please email any items you want to include to mbcnewsletter@gmail.com

You can also leave items at reception marked for the attention of Sara Inkster

To receive the newsletter by email please contact

info@manchesterbuddhistcentre.org.uk

EVENTS AT BODYWISE

Jutika says...

"I've always loved body work, I really respond to it myself and I'm interested in how we hold experiences and emotions in our bodies. I try to create a safe, relaxing space where clients can find what they're looking for – from a good pampering session to the confidence to look after themselves and their health. For me, getting massage helps the problems of life seem smaller and less overwhelming and people can go away from a massage at Bodywise feeling better resourced to deal with the world."

Jutika has studied anatomy and physiology but she says, "I'm particularly drawn to Chinese and Japanese ways of looking at health and I'm interested in how ideas from shiatsu, yoga and acupuncture can feed into massage." She is also committed to using the intuition and sensitivity which flows from her own practice in Focusing to inform her massage technique. (She will also be helping to teach introductory workshops in Focusing at

Bodywise from February 2010.)

Jutika also offers occasional massage classes at Bodywise, helping people to "relax, follow their intuition and find the freedom to experiment." As well as introducing skills people can use on their partners and friends, classes can help individuals "learn" how to be massaged and increase their own sensitivity and receptivity. Next workshop is on Saturday 12 June and has already a substantial number of bookings.

Jutika (Siobhan Healy) has been practising therapeutic and relaxing massage at Bodywise for fourteen years. (With thanks to Sarah Irving – <http://www.sarahirving.net> – for writing this.)

Shiatsu CPD day for Practitioners
Shuddhabha writes:

"On March 6, I am running a Shiatsu CPD day on pregnancy. It will cover the use of extraordinary vessels in pregnancy and some common complications."

This is the second part of a 2 day rolling

course, which will give you a good grounding in working with pregnant women, so you can start on either day and complete day one at a later date. The first day was well attended and got good feedback. If you were at the first day, it would be lovely to have you back. Contact Bodywise to book – the day runs from 10am-4pm and costs £60.

If you are interested in training in Shiatsu, there is an Introductory weekend in Didsbury on 24–25 April. For more details, contact Jane Lyons on 0208 671 0909.

Yoga Workshop with Christine – Saturday 20 March, 10am-1pm

The theme is "Exploring our relationship to the ground. Playing with gravity" and it is suitable for those with at least 3 months yoga experience.

Christine will also be holding a yoga workshop – "Twists" on Saturday 24 April from 10am-1pm. Please note – All events need to be booked in advance.

Events at the Centre

MARCH		
Monday 1st	7.00 – 9.30pm	Sangha Night: Sevenfold Puja – Ratnaguna on Entreaty and Supplication
Monday 1st	7.00 – 9.30pm	Breathworks: Living Well with Stress – eight-week course starts
Tuesday 2nd	7.00 – 9.30pm	Women' Practice Night for Mitras and Order Members led by Dayamala
Tuesday 2nd	1.00 – 2.30 pm	Breathworks: Living Well with Pain and Illness Graduates Drop-in sessions, these will run on all subsequent Tuesdays at the same time throughout March and April
Saturday 6th	10.00 – 4pm	Bodywise: Shiatsu CPD day for practitioners with Shuddhabha
Sunday 7th	10.30 – 4.30pm	Going Deeper with Meditation – one day course
Monday 8th	7.00 – 9.30pm	Sangha Night: Sevenfold Puja – Chandana on the Heart Sutra
Tuesday 9th	1.30 – 4.00pm	Breathworks: Living Well with Pain and Illness – eight-week course starts
Tuesday 9th	7.00 – 9.30pm	Buddhism Introductory, Going Deeper and Level – 3 six-week courses start
Wednesday 10th	7.00 – 9.30pm	Meditation Introductory and Going Deeper, six-week courses start
Wednesday 10th	6.00 – 6.45	Aryamati at Central Library with a talk and readings from her book (see page 6)
Saturday 13th – Sunday 14th	10.00 – 5.00pm	Opening into Wholeness – a weekend of bodywork, play & meditation with Dhammagita
Saturday 13th	19.00	Women's Film Night at Jyotivana Women's Community – see page 5 for more details
Sunday 14th	10.30 – 4.30pm	Introduction to Buddhism – one day course
Monday 15th	7.00 – 9.30pm	Sangha Night: Sevenfold Puja – Taravandana on Transference of Merits and Self Surrender
Saturday 20th	10.00 – 1.00pm	Bodywise: Yoga workshop – 'Playing with Gravity' with Christine
Sunday 21st	10.00 – 5.00pm	Study Day – 'The Heart Sutra: an Ode to Emptiness' led by Buddharaksita
Sunday 21st	10.30 – 4.30pm	One Day Course – Introduction to Meditation
Monday 22nd	7.00 – 9.30pm	Sangha Night: Farewell to Phyll + The Work of Clear Vision – a talk by Munisha
Friday 26th – Sunday 28th		Weekend Retreat for Men: 'Song of The Yogi's Joy' led by Artheketu at Vajraloka retreat centre, Wales
Saturday 27th	1..30 – 5.00pm	Drumming Workshop with Adam Warne
Monday 29th	7.00 – 9.30pm	Sangha Night: a night dedicated to Ratnaguna, see page 2 for more details
Tuesday 30th	5.45 – 6.45pm	Full Moon Puja to Vajrapani
APRIL		
Sunday 4th	10.00 – 5.00pm	Day for men who have asked for Ordination with Arthaketu and Mahasraddha
Friday 9th – Sunday 11th		Sangha Weekend – 'Daring to Live Free with Sona and Vidymala in Castleton, Derbyshire
Sunday 11th	10.00 – 5.00pm	Volunteer and help with maintenanc and decorating at the Centre... see front page
Monday 12th	7.00 – 9.30pm	Sangha night: the early history of the FWBO
Saturday 17th – Sunday 18th	10.00-5.00pm	Embodied Mind Meditation Weekend with Paramananda
Saturday 17th	10.00 – 5.00pm	A day for women who have asked for ordination with Samantabhadri
Monday 18th	7.00 – 9.30pm	Sangha Night: details to be confirmed, see April newsletter or the website
Saturday 20th	10.30 – 4.00pm	Breathworks Living Well with Stress Graduates Day retreat
Sunday 25th	10.00 – 4.30pm	Going further with Buddhism — one day course with Arthavadin and Chandana
Monday 26th	7.00 – 9.30pm	Sangha Night: continuing with the history of the FWBO, see April newsletter or the website for more details
Wednesday 28th	5.45 – 6.45pm	Full Moon Puja to Green Tara

Please note the views and opinions expressed in the Newsletter are those of the individual contributors and are not necessarily those held by the trustees of Manchester Buddhist Centre or by the FWBO/WBO in general.

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Manchester Buddhist Centre Links:
www.manchesterbuddhistcentre.org.uk
www.earthcafe.co.uk
www.bodywisenaturalhealth.co.uk
www.breathworks-mindfulness.org.uk
www.clear-vision.org
www.manchestermitras.blogspot.com
www.sanghasocial.com for monthly walks

Friends of the Western Buddhist Order Links:
www.goingonretreat.com
www.fwbo.org
www.fwbo-news.org
www.fwbo-buddhist-articles.org
www.freebuddhistradio.com
www.videosangha.net
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