

Lecture 134: A Blueprint for a New World

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Mr. Chairman and Friends,

Some years ago - in fact it was quite a few years ago, not so very long after I returned from India as related the day before yesterday - some years ago I had a friend, quite a good friend, who was in the publishing business, and the firm to which he belonged, the firm for which he worked, had specialised in the publication of popular books; in fact whole series of popular books; on the wisdom of the East, the various oriental spiritual traditions. And, of course, one of his great preoccupations was finding and publishing books that would sell. As sometimes publishers, like other business men, admit in their more candid moments, they're not in it for the good of their health [*Laughter*], so my friend's preoccupation also was making sure his books would sell. And he told me one day that if he wanted to make quite sure, if he wasn't particularly happy about a certain book that he was going to bring out, well, there were various ways, various methods, not to say technical tricks of the trade, to make sure, to make quite sure, that the book would sell. And one of those ways, he told me in a confidential mood one evening, was to insert the word 'secret' or 'secrets' into the title, because if you did that, if it was 'The secret of this' or 'The secrets of that', people would be sure to buy that particular volume; it would sell, and sell well. Perhaps this word 'secret' or 'secrets' appeals to our natural curiosity.

I had at about the same time, perhaps a little later, another friend; another friend in the world; and this friend was in the world of advertising, and he let me into a few trade secrets too. And he said that when advertising a product he tried, as often as he possibly could, to introduce the word 'new' because this was a word, he said, which people seemed to find really fascinating. If you can say that a product is new, that's quite sufficient; you don't need to say that it's better than the previous product or some other product; people assume that if it's new it **must** be better. This friend, incidentally specialised in advertising motor vehicles, especially large trucks. [*Laughter*]

Well, we are also concerned with what is new. In the last lecture, which was, you may remember, really a talk, I spoke about 'The Nucleus of the New Society', and we saw that that nucleus is a spiritual community, is an Order, which is to say, a fellowship, a spiritual fellowship of spiritually committed people, spiritually committed individuals. And in the course of that talk I described how and why I came to start the Western Buddhist Order and the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order. I gave a description of what they are and tried to explain, tried to make clear, in what way they are the nucleus of a new society.

Tonight we are also concerned with the new: we are concerned with 'A Blueprint for a New World', which is the fourth and the last of the four things that the FWBO has to offer the modern man and the modern woman.

You may remember - those of you who've been attending all these lectures - you may remember that the first thing that the FWBO has to offer was 'A Method of Personal Development'; the second: 'A Vision of Human Existence', and the third, as I've already reminded you, 'The Nucleus of a New Society'. And all these things, these three things - the method of personal development; the vision of human existence; the nucleus of a new society - all these things have something in common, which is that they all actually exist. We have them here and now. There **is** a method of personal development; in fact, there's a whole family of such methods, and people are actually using them, having recourse to them, actually benefiting from them; people find that they do work, that one can, that one does, develop. And similarly there **is** a vision of human existence; a vision seen by the Buddha and his Enlightened disciples; a vision of which even ordinary people can have, do have from time to time, a glimpse. And as for the nucleus of the new society; that exists very concretely indeed. We may say that a part of it, at least, a **small** part of it, is here in this hall, tonight!

But what about the new world? What about the blueprint of the new world? Does that exist in the same way? Do we have it here and now? Well, we have to admit it doesn't exist in the same way. If it exists at all, it exists only in imagination, exists only as a dream; and tonight's lecture, therefore, differs very much from the three previous lectures. In those three lectures the FWBO offered something which actually exists, but in tonight's lecture it'll be offering something which does not exist, or offering something which, if it exists at all, exists only in the future. So tonight I shall be, as it were, using my imagination, not so say dreaming. But of course the imagination has its uses. Even dreaming has its uses.

What we imagine today we may execute tomorrow, and the dream of the night may become the reality of the morning. So let me imagine, let me dream, and we may find that we are closer to waking, closer to reality, than we had thought.

So; a blueprint for a new world. There is something rather fascinating in these words, especially perhaps in this word 'new'. A new world. But why should we find the idea of a new world so fascinating? Why should we find it so attractive? Presumably it's for the same reason that we find the idea of a new car fascinating; the idea of a new model: it's because we are not really satisfied with the old one. But when we say that we are dissatisfied with the old **world**, what exactly do we mean? What is it, exactly, that we're dissatisfied with? We're not dissatisfied with the world of nature, we're not dissatisfied with the sun, or with the moon or with the stars. We're not dissatisfied with the earth, with the flowers, or with the trees. I suppose that we'll never be dissatisfied with them. But with what **are** we dissatisfied? When we say that we're dissatisfied with the world we generally mean that we're dissatisfied with certain aspects of corporate human existence, dissatisfied with certain social, economic and political arrangements; dissatisfied even with the quality of human life.

But usually the dissatisfaction that we feel with the world does not go nearly deep enough. We are not nearly dissatisfied enough! Our dissatisfaction with the world only too often is rather like the motorist's dissatisfaction with his car. The motorist would like, perhaps, a slightly wider steering wheel, or a somewhat more comfortable seat, or perhaps a few more gadgets; the latest gadgets; and of course the motorist always would like to be able to go even faster. But he's not dissatisfied with that particular mode of transport as such. He's not dissatisfied with having to use up irreplaceable natural resources in the form of fuel. He's not dissatisfied with polluting the air with his exhaust fumes wherever he goes. And he's not dissatisfied, usually, with the way of life which obliges him to spend hours hunched over the wheel instead of walking. That would be dissatisfaction indeed!

So our dissatisfaction with the world is of much the same kind. We are dissatisfied, perhaps, with the amount of money that we earn, but we are not dissatisfied with the very **idea** of working for a wage, for a salary, at all. We are dissatisfied, perhaps, with our personal relationships, but we are not dissatisfied with the state of emotional dependence on which those relationships are usually based. If we are at all politically minded, if we are at all what is called patriotic, we are dissatisfied, perhaps, with the position of our own nation in world affairs, but we are not dissatisfied with nationalism. We are not dissatisfied with the whole concept, the whole ideology, of the sovereign national state. And of course, we are dissatisfied with wars and rumours of wars and conflict in all quarters of the globe, but we are not so dissatisfied with those **things** for the sake of which people go to war, for the sake of which they fight.

So usually we don't really want a new world at all; we only want an improved version - even a slightly improved version - of the old world. But the world of which we are dreaming tonight is a really new world; a world radically different from the old. So in what way is it different? Let me go to the very root of the matter at once, and put it in as few words as I possibly can. The new world is, the new world will be, a world of **individuals**; a world in which people relate to one another as individuals; a world in which one is, a world in which one will be, free to develop to the utmost of one's potential, and in which all the social, the economic and even political arrangements will help one to do that, to develop, to grow. The new world, therefore, is what we call a spiritual community, a spiritual community writ large; and our aim therefore must be to transform **this** world, the present world, the old world, into a spiritual community, because this is the only new world which is worth having, the only new world that is worth working for.

But how is one to do this? How is one to transform the present world into a spiritual community? How is one even to begin? Now before I go into this, I must deal with a possible objection, or at least must make certain things clear. There are quite a lot of people who are dissatisfied with the world, in one way or another, for one reason or another; dissatisfied with the way things are. There are quite a lot of people who would like to change them. Whether their dissatisfaction with the way things are is always deep enough I don't propose to enquire this evening. But they differ among themselves as regards the way in which things can be changed. Broadly speaking, we may say, there are two views. The first view says we must change the system. The first view says people are all right, basically. That is to say, all right as they are. It's simply that they are unlucky enough to live under the wrong system, under a bad system - even to be oppressed by that system - so one must change the system. Replace the wrong system with the right system and we shall then have a new world, a world in which everybody will be happy. That's one view. And the other view is that one must change the individual - and here 'the individual' is used in the popular sense, not in the sense in which I've been using it in these lectures. The individual, it is said by people

holding **this** view, is greedy, he is selfish, he is stupid and all the troubles of the world are due to this simple fact. There are wars between groups of people, between nations even, because people are not free from hatred. And there are economic crises in the world because people, at least some people, are not free from greed. And therefore, if we want to change the world, we must change ourselves, we must become different, we must become contented, unselfish, generous, wise, and there's no other way. Sometimes this point of view is put very forcibly indeed as a sort of moral appeal.

The first view, that we must change the system, is generally regarded as the secular view, not to say the materialistic view, and the second, that we must change ourselves, is generally regarded as the spiritual view. Personally, I cannot agree with either view completely. In fact they are not really mutually exclusive. Spiritual movements, especially those of Eastern origin - those which trace their descent from the wisdom of the East - are generally expected to adopt the second view; that is to say the spiritual view, the view that we must change ourselves, improve ourselves, and then everything will be all right; the world, almost automatically, will be a better and a happier place.

But the FWBO does not share this view, this so-called spiritual view. In the FWBO we certainly are concerned with the development of the individual; we regard this as absolutely crucial, absolutely fundamental, even where the question of transforming the world into a spiritual community is concerned. But at the same time, we do recognise that external conditions can and do help or hinder. If we live under the right system, it is easier to develop, and if we live under the wrong system, it is more difficult. Not of course that if one lives under the right system one will develop automatically; one will still have to make the effort, must still want to develop. And some people, of course, we may say, are more dependent on external conditions than others, or, in other words, some are more truly individuals than others. Some will develop, however unfavourable external conditions may be. Will develop despite all obstacles, will find a way, will **make** a way, will push their way through. But others will not be able to develop perhaps, even if conditions are highly favourable; others in some cases, may even refuse to develop. In the case of the vast majority of people, we may say that external conditions are quite important, and do make quite a lot of difference. If we get the right conditions, almost certainly we will develop, and if we don't get the right conditions, probably we will not, so conditions are important. We see this very clearly in the matter of our retreats. After all, what is a retreat? What happens when we have a retreat? Well, what happens is that we simply take a group of people - sometimes ten, sometimes fifteen, twenty, even forty, fifty, sixty - away into the country. And what do we do? We put them down in a quiet pleasant place, in the midst of beautiful, natural, surroundings, and we keep them there for a week! [*Laughter*] or a fortnight; or in some cases for three weeks or even a month! We keep them there. And what do they do? I mean, what do we give them to do? Well, to begin with, they don't have to do any work, apart, perhaps, from a little cooking, turn by turn, a little washing up, a little gardening, one or two odd jobs and so on; that's all. That's all the work that they do. And what else do they do? They meditate, two or three or four times a day, in relatively short sessions. They chant. They participate in the Puja. They listen to lectures. They have discussions. And maybe they do the communication exercises. In other words, for a longer or a shorter period, we change the conditions under which people live. We give them **better** conditions, conditions more conducive to personal development, even ideal conditions. And when we do that, when we take people away on retreat, when we give them those conditions, what do we find happens? We find that people change. We see this actually happening before our eyes, day by day, and sometimes people change quite dramatically, even after just a few days. And how do they change? We find them becoming more relaxed. They might have arrived on the retreat all worried, harried, hassled, anxious, tired, negative, but they become more relaxed. And they become more emotionally positive; they cheer up; they actually laugh, and smile, and seem glad to be alive! And they become more sensitive, more aware, more aware of themselves, of one another, of their surroundings, of nature. More aware of the fact that they're alive, that they're living and breathing on this earth. And they become likewise, more free and more spontaneous, more themselves. And I've seen this, and many of you have seen this happen many and many a time. And though we've seen it happen many and many a time, each time the change seems almost magical.

But unfortunately the retreat has to come to an end, and people have to go back to wherever it is that they came from. I remember in the very early days, when we had our first retreats, and when people had their first taste of these better, these more ideal conditions; at the end of the retreat, when it was time to leave, time to go home, they'd stand in little clusters at the gates, just not wanting to go, and some of them would be shedding tears; just not wanting to go, because, usually, they had to go back to less helpful conditions. So because one has got to go back, maybe back to the boring job, back to the noisy crowded city, back perhaps to the unharmonious domestic surroundings, the change does not always last, but nevertheless, there's one lasting benefit; one has learned one thing at least, which one rarely if ever

forgets; and that is that it is possible to change. That, given the right conditions, one can develop, and develop more easily, provided of course that one makes the effort.

Now a few minutes ago I said that in offering a blueprint for a new world, the FWBO was offering something that does not exist. But it would now appear that that is not strictly true, because when we are on retreat, we experience, at least to a slight extent, and for a short time, what the new world will be like. What the new world **could** be like. We might even go so far as to say that the retreat **is** the new world, on a very small scale and for a very short time; but nonetheless it does show us what is possible. It shows us that the new world need not exist only in the imagination, that it need not be **only** a dream, shows us that the world could be transformed into a spiritual community.

This brings us back to our original question. How is one to transform the world into a spiritual community? How is one even to **begin**? Usually people who want to change the world do two things. First of all, they draw up a detailed comprehensive plan that provides for everything down to the last detail, and second, they try to get everybody else to adopt it - if necessary, by force. Some people, of course, do, or try to do, just one of these two things; they either think it's enough to draw up the plan and leave it to others to accept or reject it as they wish; or they try to seize power, political power, in the conviction that once power has been attained, one will know what to do anyway!

Now from the Buddhist point of view, neither of these two courses is very satisfactory. Buddhists have, to begin with, a distrust of abstract theory, theories which are not directly related to the needs of the concrete human situation. Buddhism, the Dharma, lays down broad general principles, yes, but it leaves to the individual judgement the actual specific application of those principles. We find this, for instance, in the field of ethics. Buddhism lays down certain general ethical principles, for instance that we should do no harm to other living beings; the principle of non-violence - principle, if you like, of love. Again, it lays down the principle that one should not take what is not given; in positive form, the principle of generosity. It indicates some of the more obvious applications of these principles, but it leaves us to do the rest of the work within the context of our own lives ourselves. So it's just the same in connection with the new world, the ideal world. In Buddhist texts, in some of the scriptures, there are descriptions of such a world, but the descriptions are very general; they are inspirational rather than informative, and again we are left to work out the details for ourselves.

Again, from the Buddhist point of view, there is no question of seizing power, whether on a large scale or a small scale, and then implementing our plan. The spiritual community - and this cannot be emphasised too much - the spiritual community is **not a power structure**. The spiritual community is not **based** upon power; that is to say, based upon power in the sense of the coercive power or authority of one person over another. And the spiritual community cannot be extended by means of such power. The new world cannot be brought into existence by the exercise of such power. The spiritual community can be brought into existence only by persuasion, whether that persuasion be exercised through words or through personal example. So the new world, too, can be brought into existence only by means of persuasion; otherwise we have only a variant of the old world, with all the old problems.

So what are we to do? Well, the answer is really quite simple. What we have to do is to go back to what I was talking about in the last lecture, the lecture which was a talk, back to the nucleus of the new society; in other words back to the FWBO, the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order, and the WBO, the Western Buddhist Order, themselves. If we want to bring the new world into existence, we have to do it by expanding that nucleus, multiplying that nucleus and pushing out extensions of it, of them, into the world.

Now what do we mean by this? What is the mechanism of the process? Let me give you just two examples connected with two quite important aspects of all our lives. But before I do that, let me make just one thing clear, which is that the world consists of people in the plural; society consists of people, of people related to one another in various ways, and it's just the same with the spiritual community; it consists of individuals in the plural. The nucleus of the spiritual community, too, consists of individuals. The FWBO and the WBO consist of individuals. Individual Order members; individual Mitras, individual Friends; all of whom are related to one another. In the case of Order members, related by virtue of their common spiritual commitment to the Three Jewels, to their personal development, to helping one another. Now when I speak of pushing out extensions of the WBO and the FWBO into the world, I am not referring to the individual action of individual Order members, Mitras and Friends, I am referring to the actions of **teams** of such persons - I am avoiding the use of the word 'groups' for obvious reasons - **teams** of such persons, **teams** of such individuals.

Take for instance the question of Right Livelihood. This is important because, broadly speaking, we all have to work. Let this be the first of our examples. Right Livelihood is an integral part of spiritual life, an integral part of personal development. It's the fifth factor of the Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path and it consists in earning one's living in such a way that no harm is done to any living being and no harm, also, to oneself, whether physical, psychological, ethical or spiritual. Ideally, of course, the way in which one earns one's living should actually help others to grow, directly or indirectly, and also help oneself to grow. Now even in the present world, under the existing system, the individual **can** practise Right Livelihood; that's not very difficult, especially if he's not thinking in terms of earning as much money as possible as quickly as possible; if he's not thinking in terms of 'success' and if he's prepared to reduce his standard of living, to go without luxuries. But I'm not thinking of **that**. In the present context, I'm not thinking of the practice of Right Livelihood by individuals, or by the individual, as an individual, under the present system. The practice of right livelihood in this way will certainly help the individual to grow as an individual, especially if he or she is more determined and more self sufficient than people usually are. But this kind of practice of Right Livelihood will not help bring into existence a new world. So in the present context I'm thinking in terms of **teams** of Order members, **teams** of Mitras and Friends, practising Right Livelihood, as it were collectively.

So what does one mean by this? One means that, for instance, a number of Order members, Mitras and Friends would set up, let us say, a business organisation, in much the same way as they might set up an autonomous FWBO. I referred to this briefly in the last lecture. What **kind** of business it would be would, of course, be determined by the principles of Right Livelihood, as well as by the needs of the movement itself. It would, of course, be non-profit-making; that is to say, the profits would not go to anyone for his or her private benefit; they'd be ploughed back into the business itself, or used to finance other FWBO activities, activities which did not themselves produce any income, or which were even being run at a loss.

Now there are many advantages accruing from this type of arrangement, this type of set-up. First of all, those involved - that is to say, the members of the team - would be provided with a means of Right Livelihood. They wouldn't receive a wage or salary; they'd receive whatever they needed just for their living expenses. Moreover, the work would be shared among a larger number of people than would be usual outside in the world, so that all those participating need then work only part-time, and they'd be free to devote the rest of their time to other spiritual activities such as meditation, study, taking classes, the arts and so on. Secondly, Order members, Mitras and Friends and so on would be working together. This is very important. Not working together in the ordinary way; they'd be working together on the basis of a common spiritual commitment. Nowadays one hears in some circles quite a lot of talk about communication, quite a lot of talk about relating to people, but often, one must admit, a lot of nonsense is talked. One of the best ways of communicating with and relating to people is by **working** with them. In fact, working with people who share the same spiritual ideals as oneself is itself a spiritual practice, itself a means of spiritual development. So in this way, one kills, as it were, to use a rather un-Buddhistic metaphor [*Laughter*], two birds with one stone - one not only practises Right Livelihood, which is in itself a spiritual practice, one also works within a spiritual framework, an ultimately spiritual framework, with other spiritually committed people. And that's another spiritual practice in itself.

Thirdly, one produces something of positive value, of value to society at large, value to the Movement. It could be something quite basic, like food, or clothing - or something of cultural value, cultural significance - like books and magazines on the Dharma. The hypothetical business could also be a kind of service, like the repair and decoration of houses, or like, say, catering. And fourthly, from this sort of set-up one would earn money for the movement. A lot of our activities, a lot of the Friends' activities, at present are run purely as services. They don't bring in any income. At the same time there are running expenses to be met. So where is the money to come from? The FWBO is essentially a spiritual movement, a Buddhist movement, so it's difficult to appeal direct to the general public. We don't have any pull with the general public, as, for instance Oxfam has, or Save the Children, or Christian Aid. And our own Friends, our own supporters, are quite poor. We don't have any wealthy backers. So the money must come mainly from within the movement; we have to earn the money ourselves. And business-type set-ups such as I've described are one way of doing this.

So one can see that there are quite a number of advantages in this type of set-up. It provides Order members and others with Right Livelihood, enables them to work together, produces things of positive value, and earns money for the movement. We already have within the FWBO two or three enterprises of this type, such as the Windhorse Publications and the Windhorse Press.

Well, so much for Right Livelihood. For Right Livelihood as an example of the way in which teams of Order members and others can function in the world, the way in which they can push out extensions of the WBO and the FWBO into the world.

Let me give you another example, a second example. The example of spiritual community, that is to say spiritual community in the narrower sense of a small group of spiritually committed people living together under one roof. First of all, though, I want to say something, just a few words more, about Right Livelihood, or rather about one particular aspect of it.

In the last lecture - the one that was a talk - I mentioned that the WBO, the Western Buddhist Order, was not a monastic community, that is to say not a community of monks. And the Indian word that we usually translate in this country as 'monk' is bhikshu or bhikkhu, and 'monk' is not a very satisfactory translation, it has all the wrong connotations. 'Bhikshu' literally means 'one who lives on alms'. Traditionally the bhikkhu or bhikshu goes once a day from door to door and collects cooked food, so he has no need to cook himself, and therefore no need to work. His life is very very much simplified. He's just directly dependent on the lay public, not only for food but for clothing and shelter, and he's free, therefore, to devote his whole time to spiritual pursuits, whether by way of meditation or study or teaching and writing. And, as I related in the last lecture, I have myself had some experience in India of this way of life. And it's possible, this way of life is possible, the way of life of the monk, the bhikshu, the bhikkhu, is possible, because the general public, the public at large, believe in the same spiritual values as does the monk, even though they do not practise them to anything like the same extent. And the general public, therefore, is happy to support the monk; they believe that they also benefit by so doing. Needless to say, it's not possible to be a monk, a bhikshu, a bhikkhu, in England. In other words, it's not possible to depend directly on the general public for alms. In fact, if one tried to beg food, cooked food, from door to door, one would probably be arrested! The general public does not believe in the same spiritual values as the monk, and probably the police force doesn't either. *[Laughter]* Not even in the spiritual values of the Christian monk, not to speak of the Buddhist monk.

I am sorry to say that the same state of affairs is beginning to develop in India. Since my day, which was nearly twenty-five years ago, things have changed, and I am told that notices have appeared outside villages in Northern India saying that sadhus, i.e. monks, ascetics, holy men - sadhus who beg will be prosecuted. They are nowadays considered to be, in some modern progressive quarters in India, non-productive elements, that is to say they are non-productive in the economic sense. So what are we to do? What is the Buddhist monk in England to do? I've said that the bhikshu, the bhikkhu, means 'one who depends on alms', but there is another interpretation, which is that the bhikshu, the bhikkhu, is 'one who **shares**', one who shares, that is to say, in the common wealth, one who is supported out of the surplus that society produces. So suppose that there are various business-type FWBOs, and suppose that these produce a surplus - in other words make a profit - then it becomes possible not only to provide Right Livelihood for a team of Order members - the team of Order members and others running that particular enterprise, it becomes possible also to support those Order members who are devoting the whole of their time to meditation, study, etc., and such Order members will then be, in effect, monks, at least from the economic point of view. They won't be dependent on the general public, they'll be dependent on the movement, on one or more of the FWBOs. In other words, dependent on those who share the same spiritual ideals. And this arrangement, we may say, is already in operation on a small scale. Already there are some Order members who are supported by the movement, and who therefore are in a position to give all their time and energy to the work of the movement as well as to their own spiritual practice, and such Order members may be regarded as the heart of the movement. They may not be wearing yellow robes, but in certain important respects, they are living like monks, and it may one day be necessary to regularise their position.

Now the fact that such monks depend not on the general public but on the movement is very significant. It means that, in a way, the movement has taken the place of society; that is to say, the movement is itself a society; a society within a society; even, a world within a world - a small world within the greater world. The significance of this will emerge a little later on.

Meanwhile, let me give the second example of the way in which the team of Order members can function in the world. The example of spiritual community, in the narrower sense of spiritually committed individuals living together under the same roof. We don't usually live in communities, of course, we usually live in families. Basically, these consist of parents and children, or even, nowadays, sometimes, one parent and one child. Families didn't use to be so small. In the old days they were generally much bigger and included not only parents and children but unmarried aunts, grandparents, distant cousins, plus

various dependents. This is still the case in some parts of the world, especially in the East. This is what we call the 'extended family'. But in most modern western countries, families are very un-extended indeed! They are so small as to be claustrophobic! So that there's very limited scope for personal relations and what relations there are within this very tiny family group tend to be rather overloaded and therefore tend to produce psychological tensions and even to explode, sending the bits flying in all directions. So what is the solution? The solution, which more and more people seem to be adopting, is for people to live in communities, especially in spiritual communities, communities based on devotion to a common spiritual ideal. In the case of the FWBO this means that one has a group, say, of Order members living together plus Mitras and Friends - living together on a basis of common commitment to the Three Jewels, common commitment to spiritual development. And a number of Order members and others are actually living together in this way. I don't know exactly how many communities there are. There must be at least ten or twelve of them, mostly in the London area, and they represent one particular kind of collective presence of the FWBO in the world, or one particular aspect of the new world.

Now even spiritual communities can be of several kinds. They can be located either in the town or city or in the countryside. They can be mixed - that is to say consisting of both men and women, with or without children - or they can be single-sex communities, consisting of either men or women, and on the whole, from a spiritual point of view we've found, in the course of the last few years, that the single-sex communities are definitely the more successful. Now the advantages of living in a spiritual community are obvious. One can enjoy the regular companionship of other spiritually committed people. One can relate at the deepest level of one's being. And this is very stimulating, very inspiring, at the same time very demanding - one isn't allowed to get away with very much in such a community! And secondly, one can live more economically. One can buy, for instance, foodstuffs in bulk, one can pool resources, on a very ordinary everyday level; one can share the use of things like refrigerator, car, washing machine etc., and also share household chores. This, of course, applies to communities in general. And if there are children in the community, then one can share the babysitting. Three; spiritual community can also function as a kind of informal centre; one can give outside friends and visitors a glimpse of a new way of life, even a glimpse of a new world.

So I've given two examples, examples of the way in which teams of Order members and others push out extensions of the FWBO into the world. The examples of businesses and spiritual communities, in the narrower sense.

I could mention a number of others. For instance, schools, farms and market gardens, light industry, theatre groups, all run in the same way, all run on the same basis and for the same purpose, but there's no time for them tonight. In any case, I hope I've said enough to give you some idea of the kind of picture that I have in mind.

At the centre of the picture there is a tree. This tree grows straight and strong and it has many branches. It has an abundance of leaves and flowers and fruit, and this tree is the Order, the Western Buddhist Order, the fellowship of spiritually committed individuals. And around this tree are a number of smaller trees, trees sprung from seeds dropped by the first tree, and these are the different organisational set-ups through which the Order functions, through which it gives itself. Not just FWBO Centres in the ordinary sense, but also businesses, spiritual communities, and so on. And in this way one has not just a single tree, but a whole grove of trees, in fact, in other words, one has a whole society, a whole world contained within the larger society and the larger world. And not only that, there's not just one main tree growing in one particular place; there are **many** such trees growing in **many** places; some relatively near the first main tree, and some relatively far away; and they all grow straight, and they all grow strong and they all have many branches. They all have an abundance of leaves and flowers and fruit, and they are all surrounded by a number of smaller trees, and these are the different, as we call them, Chapters of the Order, each surrounded by its subsidiary organisations.

So thus one has not just one grove, one has **many** groves; not just one small society, one small world existing within the larger society, the larger world, one has **many** such societies, many such worlds, and the groves are growing. Not only growing, multiplying. And if they went on multiplying, they could overspread the whole earth, so that the whole earth would be one large grove, and you'd then have a completely green world, you'd have a new world.

Now the meaning of this picture is not difficult to perceive. It's not difficult to understand what it is trying to tell us about the emergence of a new world. We have to start with individuals, with spiritually committed individuals, with individuals who are trying to develop, but not with individuals singly; with

teams of individuals, and these teams will set up structures which will help people to grow; structures of many different kinds corresponding to the different aspects of human life, corresponding to people's needs, whether economic or social or artistic and so on, and these structures, taken together, will constitute on a very small scale, a new world, and such a new world we do have in the Western Buddhist Order, the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order, and their associated activities. We don't have a detailed blueprint of a new world; we have something that is perhaps even better - the living, growing seed of a new world. The real blueprint for the oak tree is the acorn.

Well, with those words, I reach the end of this lecture, and come, in fact to the end of the present short series of lectures. I've tried to cover, in the course of these four lectures, quite a lot of ground. I can only hope I've not tried to cover too much. I hope that I've at least been able to leave you with four things; with a Method of Personal Development for you to practise; with a Vision of Human Existence to inspire you; with The Nucleus of A New Society to enjoy with one another, and with the Blueprint for a New World for which to work together. This is what the FWBO has to offer the modern man and the modern woman. This is Buddhism for today, and tomorrow.

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