

Lecture 166: Buddhist Dawn in the West Sangharakshita

Order members, mitras, and friends, Kulamitra has referred to my last public talk, in London, which was, of course, *The Glory of the Literary World*. In fact it wasn't so much a talk; I read a paper. Nowadays I tend to favour reading papers. To be quite frank, I've rather gone off giving talks and giving lectures. In the course of seven or eight years I must have given several thousand talks and lectures, sermons, discourses, addresses, and so on. And perhaps you'll understand if I have just a little bit gone off giving talks and lectures, so yes nowadays I do prefer to prepare papers and read them, and this is of course what I did last time I appeared in London on a public platform when I read my paper on *The Glory of the Literary World*. I thought it rather a good paper actually, and I think quite a few people agreed, yes, it was quite a good paper. I got a lot of feedback to that effect as I usually do, you know, just the odd friend at Padmaloka, I mean, the Padmaloka community, you know, speaking a few appreciative words. I also got a bit of appreciative feedback from letters, but I also got, indirectly, a bit of criticism. Well perhaps I shouldn't say criticism, maybe it was more like well perhaps I shouldn't even say complaint, but I gathered that not everybody was quite happy about my paper and my reading. You know, this paper, they felt that a paper of that sort you know rather too much to expect the average person, even the average FWBO person, even perhaps, the average order member, to take in in the course of an hour. They felt as though they'd been asked to take in just a little too much. The diet was perhaps - this is possibly a nice way of putting it, a little rich, a little concentrated, just a little indigestible. I must admit that at the time of reading this paper I did notice a few people, even order members, stifling their yawns, so I decided that on this occasion I wouldn't read a paper, I wouldn't prepare a paper and then just read it to you — I decided that I'd just give one of my old-fashioned talks, that is to say, you know, just preparing a few words and giving the talk more or less off the cuff. I have to admit that I find, found, it quite difficult to prepare just these few notes because, you know, my hand didn't seem to want to jot down just a few notes, it wanted to write a paper, so after I found instead of just having just two pages of notes I had four and five and six, I found, oh no dear, I'm writing a paper and I just mustn't do this because after all people are coming along to celebrate the EWBO anniversary, they want to enjoy themselves, they want to have fun, they don't want to listen quietly, very carefully, very attentively, to a paper that needs a lot of concentrated thought, so I just tore up, you know, those pages of notes which were becoming a paper and I started again, and I started again in this way, I started five or six times, but ended up with just two or three pages so to speak of very rough notes and I might not even stick to those, very closely' in fact I'm already, you know, introducing my topic in a completely different way from what I intended. But thinking about, it did seem as I said, more appropriate on an occasion like this I should give a talk. I should perhaps let myself go a little and not stick too clearly to my script or my text. A talk seems more appropriate to the occasion, and what is this occasion? The occasion is the anniversary of the FWBO — but what anniversary? The nineteenth anniversary, and as I sat at my desk, you know, in my study at Padmaloka, looking out across the lawn, I tried to allow this fact to sink in, as it were, you know, that the EWBO is nineteen years old. It's very difficult, you know, to imagine, it's very difficult to believe. Sometimes I don't feel nineteen years old myself, I don't feel as old as that sometimes. Sometimes I feel a lot older than that, but sometimes I don't feel

nineteen years old myself, and here's the EWBO nineteen years old today, or practically today. Nineteen years of the friends of the Western Buddhist Order. So as I sat there at my desk trying not to write a paper, I couldn't, you know, help thinking back to those very early days, letting my mind, you know, go back nineteen years. And after all, I think you all know, nostalgia is in the fashion — so why not, you know, be a little nostalgic, why not, you know, let my mind go back on this occasion to those very early days of the EWBO nineteen years ago, and as my mind goes back, what do I see? Well frankly I don't see very much. Mainly I see just me. In fact, right at the beginning, even before the time of Secura, our first tiny centre, it was just me. I can remember, one may say, the very moment when one might say the FWBO was not born, but conceived, and it was conceived in Calcutta, and in order to explain how the EWBO came to be conceived in Calcutta of all places I have to go a little back further [sic], I have to indulge in a little more nostalgia, in a sense. Most of you know that I spent twenty years in India. I've written about the early years in India in my volume of memoirs "A Thousand-Petalled Lotus". So twenty years in India, quite a large slice of anybody's life, and actually I had no intention of returning to the West. I was going to spend all my days in India, but then a call came, so to speak, and I felt, yes, I have to respond to that call, and after twenty years I came back to the West, to England, at the initiation of the English Sangha Trust and the Sangha Association, and for two years I worked mainly in London, but also around the country in the various little Buddhist centres and groups which existed in those days, and I functioned partly under the auspices of the Sangha Association, partly under the auspices of the Buddhist Society, and partly as it were independently, giving talks, teaching meditation, leading study and retreats and that sort of thing. So at the end of this two year period I felt that I ought to stay longer. There was quite a field ready and waiting in England, in Britain, for the seed of the Dharma, so I decided that I would go back to India, visit my Indian friends, explain to them what I was going to do, that I was going to transfer myself from India to the West, to England — I was going to work there. My work in India, my Buddhist work had at that time reached a sort of impasse — I couldn't get any further and I had been feeling a little frustrated for some time for various reasons that I won't go into now, so I decided that I would transfer my activities to the West, to England, and I'd carry on there, but first I had to go back to India for a few months, visit my teachers, especially Dardo Rinpoche, who I'm happy to say is still alive and well, and explain to them what I wanted to do, obtain their blessing and also visit my friends among the ex-untouchables, especially those in Pune, and Nagpur, and explain to them what I was going to do. So, so this I did. I left England, I explained to lots of people there what I was going to do so all my friends at the Sangha Association, my friends of the Buddhist Society. Bade me farewell, urged me to come back as quickly as possible — I promised I would, and off I went to India, visited Delhi, Pune, and Nagpur, and then I reached Calcutta, and in Calcutta I received a letter. This letter was from the trustees of the English Sangha Trust, and the gist of it was, we don't want you back. Now I'd told people I was coming back. I'd promised to come back, but the people who wrote this letter had thought of that - they suggested that I announced that I'd changed my mind. But of course I hadn't changed my mind, and despite the letter I came back, but when I received that letter I understood at once the significance, and I said to the friend who was accompanying me after I read this letter, "do you know what this letter means?" He said no. I said, "this letter means there's going to be a new Buddhist movement in Britain." So I went back, I found that the authorities of the Sangha Trust, the trustees, didn't want me back, the Buddhist Society didn't want me back. The doors of the existing Buddhist groups and societies were closed to me for

several years, so with faithful friends and followers who'd been attending my talks, my classes, at the Hampstead Buddhist vihara, friends who belonged, many of them, to the Sangha Association, we started up the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order, nineteen years ago. One day I hope to write a volume of memoirs giving the full story of how the EWBO was set up, the circumstances leading up to the setting up of the FWBO. I've given you this afternoon, this evening, the merest sketch — but this is the background — this is what led to the founding of the FWBO nineteen years ago. So how did we start? Where did we start? We started in London — we started in central London, of all places, because if one is going to do anything in Britain, one might as well start in the centre of things, one might as well start in London. So we started in a little basement underneath a shop, a Japanese shop, which afterwards became a Buddhist shop, in Monmouth Street. I don't know if any of you have ever passed down Monmouth Street. Monmouth Street is roughly between Charing Cross Road and Drury Lane, and it's quite a well-known street in English literature, believe it or not. I've encountered references to Monmouth Street going back to the seventeenth century. Dickens refers to Monmouth Street — in Dickens' time Monmouth Street was a famous street; it was famous because it consisted entirely of shops selling second-hand clothes and shoes. Well, when we started up our activities in Monmouth Street, things had changed a little bit, and here was this, the Japanese shop run by a friend of ours who formerly had been a member of the Sangha Association, and when we all got together we decided to start up activities and start the EWBO. He said, "well, you know there's this basement underneath my shop; it's only about..." what was it, twelve, fourteen square feet, no, twelve by fourteen feet, I think. He said, "if you like I'll approach my landlord and let's see if we can use it. So, yes, to cut a long story short, we got use of this basement, twelve by fourteen feet, underneath this, this Japanese shop in Monmouth Street, and it's to that little basement that my thoughts go back as they did this evening. I think I functioned there for about five years, we had, exactly nineteen years ago, I think virtually today — the actual anniversary is on the seventh — what is it today, the fifth — the actual anniversary is on the seventh, so in two days' time it will be exactly the nineteenth anniversary, and I remember it very well because just a few days before I'd been composing a special dedication ceremony, so these friends, the owner of this little Japanese shop and a few other friends, they set to work and they turned this little basement into a Japanese-style Buddhist shrine with a little image, a little altar and some very very small chairs. The chairs had to be very small because even with very very small chairs you couldn't really accommodate more than twenty people, putting absolutely side by side, so we had these twenty very small chairs because in those days, don't forget people couldn't sit cross-legged for meditation. They nearly all sat on chairs, and we had chairs in a basement shrine for many many years. Chairs have only disappeared from EWBO meditation centres comparatively recently. Even now we do keep a few chairs at the back for newcomers who can't sit on the floor. That was the situation there so that is what I remember. I can remember sitting cross-legged on my sort of raised seat at the far end next to the shrine. I had to be sort of squeezed in. I'd have people just sitting here right in front because it was, it was so small, and I had to be very careful not to bend over because here was a curtain behind me, yes, but behind this curtain there was a hole. That was originally a sort of coal hole, you know, leading into another little space right underneath the road where the coal used to be tipped in the old days, so I had to be very careful I didn't lean too far back because if I went through that curtain I'd go into the coal hole, so we had the dedication of what we call the tri ratna meditation centre and shrine, exactly nineteen years ago the day after tomorrow. We invited our

friends, those who were to form the nucleus of the FWBO. We squeezed some twenty-three or twenty-four of them into that tiny room, it was probably twenty-four with me. I remember that we used to go down into this little basement, down a winding staircase and then part of the back of that tiny basement room had been curtained off. There was a space about three times the size of this lectern where bante used to give private interviews to people, and where we used to keep the cups and saucers. We had to pretend, we had to pretend that these were private interviews because every word that was spoken behind the curtain could be heard all over the basement. Anyway technically they were private you know interviews, and people meeting me, coming to see me before the class started, or after the class had finished, used to, you know, pour off all their troubles; in those days people seemed to have lots of troubles, they don't seem to have so many these days, and technically nobody else could hear — people pretended they couldn't hear, while people pouring out their souls to me behind the curtain. I remember this very well and this was how we started, we had the dedication ceremony. I recited the dedication ceremony, you know, others recited after me. This is by the way the same dedication ceremony that appears in our puja book and which we use on occasions still, and in this way our tri ratna meditation centre and shrine, as we grandly called it, you know, was established. So I started a couple of weekly meditation classes, one for the people who'd been meditating with me at the Hampstead Buddhist vihara and one for completely new people, and these went on, you know, week after week, quite steadily and quite a lot of people passed through, and then of course, after a few weeks, or perhaps a few months, I started giving lectures, I started giving courses of lectures and I remember very well that the very first course of lectures I gave under the auspices of the FWBO was held at the Kingsway Hall in Holborn, and was on the subject of aspects of Buddhist psychology. You notice the psychology, because psychology was very popular in those days. Buddhists, those who thought of themselves as Buddhists, used to read mainly psychological literature, you know, Freud, Jung, Steckel [sic: the speaker may be referring to Stengel], Sullivan — who was the other one who was very popular? — on, Erich Fromm, he was very popular. Did I mention Jung? Yes. I mean, people used to read almost anything except the Buddhist scriptures in those days, they certainly read all these you know writers on different aspects of psychology unclear...] attract people, lure people with the magic word psychology, that would really draw them, so we had "Aspects of Buddhist Psychology". But of course under this they had the analytical psychology of the abidharma, you know, good tough material to begin with; they had I believe the depth psychology of the Yogacara, which brought in lots of Buddhist metaphysics and we even had, you know, the, what is it, archetypal symbolism of the life of the Buddha, because archetypal was another word that really drew them and we had something about the Tibetan Book of the Dead, something about death, and that rather to my surprise really drew them, they really came flocking to that lecture — that was the most successful lecture we had in the whole series, so, you know, under this this this [sic] banner of psychology, well one was able to put across really so much of Buddhism — people didn't seem to notice, and then there was the second series of lectures I gave. This series was at Centre House, was on the Buddhist noble eight-fold path. Here we came to really basic Buddhist material and of course the transcripts, the edited transcripts of those tape-recorded talks are still very much in circulation in the EWBO, were recently printed in our Mitrata series with all sorts of comments and explanations taken from seminars. So I rather like to think, I'm happy to think that, you know, in those early lectures given nineteen, eighteen years ago, are still in circulation in the FWBO and still so useful. Incidentally, they are being published almost at this very moment

by Buddhist friends of ours in Malaysia — Buddhists of Chinese origin and Chinese descent were so taken by these lectures when they encountered them on tape they wanted to publish them themselves, for us, and give us several thousand copies, so this is what is happening now. They're going to give us four thousand copies for free distribution, mainly in India, because that's where I think they'll do the greatest amount of good. So it's really interesting to think that lectures I gave in London, lectures I gave in Centre House in Kensington, you know, nearly nineteen years ago, are proving useful in this very year to Buddhists of Chinese origin in faraway Malaysia, and that they are reprinting these lectures in that way. And it was in addition to lectures we started having retreats; we went away into the country — we went to some retreat centres belonging to the Ockenden venture on the outskirts of Haslemere. The first of the places we used was Quartermaine, and again this brings back all sorts of memories to me nineteen years ago, eighteen years ago, seventeen years ago, we were having the first of our retreats, which were very experimental indeed at Quartermaine, just perhaps a couple of dozen people with a rather loosely organised programme — some meditation, I think a couple of talks by me, sometimes two a day, and communication exercises. We speedily found these very useful in removing people's inhibitions and blockages and so on, but I remember these early retreats mainly because I had to do and to take everything myself, including the communication exercises, including even the concluding puja and our evening meditation classes were still going on at Sakura, so what I used to do is immediately after taking the afternoon meditation I'd catch the train up to Waterloo, then I'd go up to Monmouth Street, I'd take the meditation class, someone would rush me by car to Waterloo Station, I'd catch the train and I'd get back, you know, to Quartermaine in time to take the concluding meditation, and I remember that on one occasion — I think we must have been going on for a year and a half or so — I entrusted the leading of the evening puja to Ananda unclear...] to Dharmachari Ananda. And I remember very very clearly — this is a real bit of nostalgia — I remember very clearly arriving at Quartermaine and entering the hallway — and the shrine was just next to the hall and listening at the door, and I could hear Ananda leading and I thought to myself, it's all right, they've got on all right without me. That was the first time that anybody had done anything of that sort. Now, of course, seven-fold pujas are led, one might say, all over the world, by order members. I don't even have to think about it. Order members are leading retreats, doing everything. Order members are taking classes, order members are giving lectures, order members are writing books, order members are going on solitary retreats, order members are spreading the Dharma far and wide. I don't have to do nearly as much as I used to do. So these are just some of the memories I have as I look back, and this is the way that we carried on for our first year, the first year of the FWBO, the twice weekly meditation classes in our little basement in Monmouth Street, the two series of lectures, spring and autumn, and our Easter and summer retreats. That was the FWBO, just a very small group of people, and then at the end of that first year something quite important happened — that was of course the first batch of ordinations. The private ordinations took place as convenient in the course of the previous week — not everybody received their private ordination at the same time. And then the public ordinations took place in Centre House where I was giving my eight-fold path lectures exactly eighteen years ago. I've got some slides for those ordinations which I'm going to dig out and I hope to show quite soon. I remember them though, I remember one thing in particular, that all the twelve people being ordained — there were some men and some women — wore for the occasion either a dark suit or a dark dress — I don't think you find that happening now. It's interesting that at that time that was

considered appropriate, you know, for ordination, to wear a dark suit or a dark dress, but obviously, you know, not now. So with these ordinations things really begun [sic] to get under way. We had not only the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order, we had the Western Buddhist Order itself, and that was the Buddhist dawn in the West, when we had not only the FWBO but the WBO, the Western Buddhist Order, that was the birth, you may say, if what I told you about Calcutta was the conception, this was the birth. You might say that that one-year period, the sort of period of the gestation, one might say, and the movement was fully born just eighteen years ago with the founding of the order, and that was the Buddhist dawn in the West. Now some of you might be surprised to hear me say that that was the Buddhist dawn in the West, but that is literally the truth. You might be thinking, well wasn't there Buddhism before that? Wasn't there Buddhism before the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order, before the Western Buddhist Order, in the West? Well in a sense there was. But again in a sense there wasn't. There hadn't really been a Buddhist dawn in the West, there'd been perhaps a Theravada dawn in the West, there'd been perhaps a Zen dawn in the West, but there hadn't really been, we may say, a Buddhist dawn in the West, because whatever of Buddhism was propagated, taught, was Buddhism according to the teachings of one particular school, one particular tradition. Buddhism as such, the Dharma as such, was not really taught, not really transmitted at all — and this is why we call ourselves, why we emphasize the fact that we call ourselves, the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order. We're just a Buddhist order — we're not a Theravada order, we're not a Zen order, we're not a Vajrayana order, we're not a Tantric order, we're just a Buddhist order, plain and simple, and we're a Buddhist order, a Buddhist movement in the sense that we take, we accept, we have recourse to, we derive inspiration from, the whole of the Buddhist tradition, the whole of the eastern Buddhist tradition, and this is very much the case in the movement, when it comes to reading, when it comes to study, study of scriptures. Sometimes, as many of you know, you'll find us pouring over Pali Buddhist texts of the Theravada tradition, you'll find us going through them word by word, and sometimes referring to the original Pali text. I'm glad to say that quite a few order members and mitras have learned to consult their Pali-English dictionary in the course of their studies. This is giving a certain amount of backbone to the study. So, yes, we study texts like the Udana, like the Dhammapada, the Sutta Nipata, the Majjhima Nikaya, which are all from the Pali canon. We derive strength and inspiration from those. Again, we study some of the great sutras of the Mahayana tradition — we study the Sutra of Golden Light, we study the Diamond Sutra, we study the Heart Sutra, we study the Perfection of Wisdom sutras in general, we study the Vimalakirti Nirdeśa, we study the White Lotus Sutra, we study especially the beautiful parables and myths of the White Lotus Sutra, and these Mahayana sutras, belonging to the Mahayana tradition, we derive strength, we derive inspiration, from them. And then again, perhaps, turning to the Zen tradition, a text which influenced me personally very much in my early days is one of the most important of Zen, or rather Chan texts, the so-called Sutra of Wei Lang or Hui Neng.

This was one of the two texts - the other being the Diamond Sutra — the reading of which made me realize I was a Buddhist. These two we study, these two we derive inspiration from — this great Zen, or Chan, text. For instance, just to give you another example, there's Hakuin's Song of Enlightenment, Hakuin being a great *winjai*, Japanese Zen master. I think nearly every person involved with the FWBO at some time or other, has heard this great Song of Enlightenment, recited, or read, in the context of a puja. So we derive great inspiration from that, and then, turning to Tibetan

Buddhism, well, it's difficult to know what not to mention. In this connection we derive inspiration from a work by Geshe Wangyal called *the Door of Liberation*, from Gampopa's *Jewel Ornament of Liberation*, from the songs of Milarepa, there are, you know, many order members, many mitras in the FWBO who take the songs of Milarepa round with them wherever they go, especially on solitary retreat. So we derive guidance, we derive inspiration from all these sources. I think it is the only, well, intelligent approach which is possible. I don't think it is really possible for Buddhists in the West to say, "I shall limit myself to the Pall canon, only that is the Buddha's teaching", or "I shall limit myself to the Mahayana sutras, only they contain the Buddha's real teaching", or "I shall confine myself to Zen literature, that's what it's really all about, the rest isn't worth wasting time on." In the Western Buddhist Order, in the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order, we can't possibly adopt that sort of attitude. We accept the whole Buddhist tradition, we accept all the Buddhist scriptures. That is not to say we derive inspiration from all of them equally — it is not to say that we even know all of them, but we certainly don't limit ourselves to any particular tradition or any particular set of scriptures. I think this is becoming increasingly the tendency, not only in the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order, but in other Buddhist movements, throughout the West, to recognize, to honour, and to derive inspiration from the scriptures and the teachings of all the great schools of traditional Buddhism. And then again, we're Buddhists in this sense that we're just Buddhist. I don't personally believe in trying to mix Buddhism with the teaching of other religions, just for the sake of mixing, for the sake of a purely theoretical syncretism. We go for refuge to the Buddha, Dharma, Sangha - and that means the Buddha and the Dharma and the Sangha — the teaching of the Buddha represents our major source of inspiration, so in the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order we don't try to produce a sort of mixture of Buddhism and Hinduism, or we don't try to produce a sort of mixture of Buddhism and Christianity, we don't try to produce a sort of mixture of Buddhism and theosophy, or Buddhism and the teachings of Christian [unclear], or Buddhism and the teaching of Gurdjieff. We are just Buddhist — but when I say we are just Buddhist, I still don't mean that in a narrow sense, because, what does Buddhist mean? What does Buddhism mean? What does the Dharma mean? What is the criterion? And the Buddha has given us himself a very clear criterion — the Dharma is whatever helps the individual to grow and to develop — if there is something, if there is some teaching in some other tradition, in some other literature, which helps us to grow, which helps us to develop, we are quite free as Buddhists to accept that, but the criterion is that it is in accordance with the Buddha's teaching. So we find some of our friends deriving great inspiration from some of the writings, some of the sayings, let's say, of William Blake. Others from some of the sayings, some of the writings, of Goethe, others, again, from some of the writings, some of the sayings, of Plato. So all of these we are quite free as it were to weave into the Dharma, because they also help us to grow and help us to develop. But how do we know what is going to help us grow? How do we know what is going to help us develop? It's not a question, as I said before, of any sort of superficial, purely theoretical syncretism. We refer to our own experience. If we are actually trying to grow, if we are actually making an effort to develop in the direction of enlightenment, we shall very quickly find out what helps us to grow in that way, and what hinders us, whether it's a particular teaching, or a particular practice, and so on. But in order to find this out, we can't find this out in any purely theoretical way. We have to find it out in the context of our own practice, our own spiritual experience, because you can't really decide what is going to help you develop spiritually unless you are trying to develop spiritually. It's no use just reading the books and saying, "oh yes, I think this

would help, oh yes, I think that won't help." You have to actually start living the spiritual life, trying to develop, trying to reach enlightenment, trying at least to become a stream entrant, and only then will you be able to tell what really helps and what doesn't help. Tell maybe not just by yourself but in consultation with your spiritual friends. So you can't really apply this criterion unless you try to practise the Buddha's teaching, unless you commit yourself to the three jewels. So we therefore find that the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order is not just Buddhist, it's also an order, It's a spiritual community if people committed to trying to become as the Buddha was, trying to gain enlightenment, trying, as I said, at least to obtain stream entry in this life. So we have not just the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order, we have the Western Buddhist order itself, this nucleus, as it were, now nearly 300 of them, people committed to the Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, who go for refuge to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, who are making an effort to develop, and effort to grow, an effort to reach enlightenment. And since they are making that effort, since they're trying to grow, they will know what it is helps them in that process, they will know what doesn't help them. So we have the Order, the Western Buddhist Order, known in India as the Trailokya Bauddha Mahasangha, the sangha, the Buddhist sangha of the three worlds. Trailokya, by the way, is not actually a Pali word, it's a Sanskrit word. The Pali equivalent would be Tiloka, and in case those who heard the talks that made up the symposium early on were a bit puzzled by this three world business, let me just offer a few words of explanation. What are these three worlds? Well, one can look at it in two ways. This is how I explained it originally in India when we formulated this term because clearly we couldn't have just a Western Buddhist Order there. Tiloka means the three worlds — so what are these three worlds? There's the kamaloka, the world of sensuous experience, there's the rupaloka, the world of higher. As it were, archetypal experience, with which we come into contact through our meditation and through our experience to some extent of the fine arts, and then beyond that the arupaloka, so-called formless world of higher, infinitely more refined, spiritual experience, beyond which is Nirvana, or enlightenment. So the Trailokya Buddha mahasangha is the sangha, the spiritual community of those people who have committed themselves to the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha, with a view to transcending the kamaloka, transcending the rupaloka, transcending even the arupaloka and gaining enlightenment. They become Trailokya vijayin, that is to say conquerors of the three worlds. This is why the Buddha is called Jina, or conqueror. He conquered the three worlds, he's transcended the mundane, he even in its most refined manifestations he has achieved enlightenment, or buddhahood. So this is the first meaning of tiloka, or Trailokya. The other is more modern you may say, or more up to date, because we've got in modern parlance the three worlds, we've got the developed world, we've got the undeveloped world, and in between you've got the developing world. Though we are functioning, or we hope to function, in all those worlds - in that world or those countries which are developed, which are not developed and which are developing. So we are a trailokya - or the Movement in India, the sangha in India - is trailokya in this sense too. So you might even say that we are trailokya in this sense too. So you might even say that we are [not only] trailokya in traditional spiritual terms ordinations but also in modern secular terms too. Incidentally, some of us have been thinking that even in the west this term 'Western' may not be altogether appropriate, so we may be giving consideration to changing it in the future, but that's another story. I'm not going into it now.

Now, I mentioned a few minutes ago those first ordinations, and on the day on which the public

ordinations were given, 18 years ago, I gave; I was going to say remember but to tell the truth I don't remember: I had to consult my notes, but I gave two talks and the first of these talks was on the upasaka ordination in the Western Buddhist Order. The other was on the bodhisattva vow, interestingly enough. But in the first of these talks I referred to the four grades of ordination. Because this was the way in which we were thinking those days, so perhaps it may be of interest to some of you to hear about this, in the course of this talk (lecture) I spoke first of all of the upasika and upasaka being the feminine gender of ordination, and then I spoke about the maha upasika or maha upasaka ordinations, about the bodhisattva ordination and the bhikkhu ordination, these being the traditional ordinations you might say, and at that time we thought in terms of having an order having a sangha in which you as it were moved up through these grades. But I thought like that only for a while. Later on we changed that, in fact we changed that quite soon as a result of our own growing and deepening experience of the real meaning of spiritual community, the real meaning of going for refuge; the real meaning of having a sangha, what we felt and what I especially felt was that the central thing, the main thing in Buddhism was going for refuge, going for refuge to the Buddha, going for refuge to the Dharma, going for refuge to the sangha, it was the absolutely central act that made one a Buddhist, everything else was secondary, whether you were a monk or a layman, a nun or a laywoman, whether you were living in the forest alone or whether you were living at home with your wife and your family that was all secondary; the main thing was that you went for refuge to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. So the spiritual community consisted of all those who went for refuge in this way, to the Buddha, the Dharma as the sangha. That was the most important thing anybody could do in the course of his or her own life. So as the months and the years went by the going for refuge seemed to us of such overwhelming significance that one could only really speak in terms of one ordination, that one occasion on which you committed yourself to the Buddha as the ultimate spiritual teacher, to the Dharma as his teaching of the path to enlightenment, and the sangha the spiritual community of his followers, those who were treading that path. That seemed to be the main thing that seemed to be what Buddhism was all about. So there was no question of grades of ordination, there was no question of a lower ordination, or a higher ordination; there was just ordination, there was just going for refuge to the Buddha the Dharma and the Sangha. But though there may not have been different grades, there were different levels, and this was also something that we discovered quite soon because you can go for refuge with more or less energy, more or less force, more or less conviction. More or less experience both mundane and spiritual, so we came to distinguish in the one going for refuge different levels and in particular we came to distinguish between what I've called effective going for refuge and real going for refuge. So what does one mean by effective going for refuge? Effective going for refuge means when you not being enlightened but wishing to become enlightened, wishing to follow the path of the Buddha with total sincerity, dedicate yourself, commit yourself to the Buddha the Dharma and the Sangha. As fully as you possibly can. Wishing to make the Buddha, the Dharma and Sangha absolutely central in your life. Wishing to place them as we often say, in the very centre of your mandala: this is effective going for refuge. But inasmuch as your not enlightened, not really in a sense on the path to enlightenment, not the higher path you can slip back if you're not careful you can withdraw. And in the very early days of the FWBO, in the very early days of the Western Buddhist Order some people did withdraw, many people did withdraw, they found it rather too much, they found that they'd bitten off rather more than they could chew.

I've mentioned that on the occasion of that first public ordination ceremony twelve people were ordained; well most of them didn't last for more than a couple of years, and there is in fact only one who is still effectively with us, and that is Ananda. Who is the only person who can share with me therefore nineteen year memories of the FWBO and the WBO. Another who stayed with us in a sense all the course because he stayed right up until the time of his death just three or four years ago was Vangisa. And it was really a great blow to the whole movement and especially to the Order when we lost Vangisa; I was in Crete at the time and I received the news quite late about a week after he actually died. I can remember receiving the news, and I can remember how I felt thinking of Vangisa. Because Vangisa was one of those who was coming along to my lectures at the Hampstead Buddhist Vihara, he was a member of the Sangha Association and when the Sangha Trust decided they didn't want me back well he was one of those who followed me into the FWBO, in fact even helped to set up the FWBO, and he was with us and very much with us through all sorts of personal difficulties and illness and so on right up until almost the hour of his death, in fact I think he took his last class, his last meditation class just a few hours before he died. So many were not able to maintain that original commitment. Yes, of that original one dozen only Ananda is still effectively with us. But of course as the years went by that sort of thing became less and less likely because the movement as a whole, the order as a whole became stronger and stronger and more and more support was able to be given to those who were having difficulties with their spiritual lives difficulties in following the spiritual path. So effective ordination is ordination which, or effective going for refuge is going for refuge which though utterly sincere at the time is nonetheless not permanent inasmuch as Insight has not arisen. Transcendental experience has not arisen, you can still slip back. Obviously most order members are still in that position, most order members therefore need to be very careful, not to speak of mitras and you know friends who are just beginning to set their foot upon the path. But real going for refuge is that going for refuge which you experience after you have entered the stream. I am not going to say anything about entering the stream, it's a subject on which I've touched many times before; if anyone is especially interested well there is my lecture now published as a booklet on Going for Refuge where I distinguish in fact four different levels of going for refuge. But once one has gone for refuge effectively, one's main object must be to go for refuge in what I call the real sense, that is to say the sense in which you can no longer not go for refuge, because Insight has arisen into the true nature of existence and you can no longer fall back, you can only go forward. You've passed what we call the point of no return. So though we don't have anymore grades of ordination we've only got one ordination, the ordination for everybody, and though we attach supreme importance and significance to that, there are these different levels of going for refuge and there's especially the level of effective going for refuge from which you can fall back or fall away and real going for refuge, away from which you cannot possibly fall. But we don't really have grades of ordination in the Order anymore though we've just got this one ordination, what we call now the Dharmachari ordination, or in the case of women dharmacharini ordination; there is still one might say some trace of these grades in an informal sort of way. We sometimes speak of senior and responsible order members. In fact we might even say we've had three or four senior and responsible order members on the platform this afternoon; then one might say very roughly corresponds to the maha upasikas and maha upasakas, but not in any sort of formal way or formal sense. And then of course we've got anagarikas. Those who change one of the precepts, one of the ten precepts taken by all Dharmacharis and dharmacharinis, change it from abstention from sexual misconduct to

abstention from non-celibacy. In other words they take a precept of chastity, there aren't many of those in the order but I hope that before long there will be a few more. So they one might say in a sense correspond to bhikkshus and bhikkshunis. But then what about the other ordination I mentioned, the traditional Buddhist ordination - the Bodhisattva ordination? Well this isn't really and shouldn't really be considered as a separate ordination at all. The bodhisattva ordination really represents the altruistic aspect of 'the going for refuge itself. You go for refuge, not just for your own sake, but for 'the sake of all. You go for refuge, you seek to attain enlightenment not for the sake of a personal gratification, for yourself, but so that you can be of greater service, of greater use 'to other people; in fact more than that you see that you cant really separate your own personal development from that of other people. One cant really adopt a purely self regarding attitude to the spiritual life; there is a self regarding attitude or aspect but there's also an other regarding aspect and 'these two have to be combined in the Buddhist spiritual life.

You are trying to develop yourself but you're trying to develop in association, in contact with other people, you can't really separate yourself and devote yourself exclusively 'to your own spiritual development and welfare; the other regarding and the self regarding aspects go together. So one might regard the going for refuge to use that nomenclature as representing the self regarding aspect, but one might say that the bodhisattva ordination, the bodhisattva vow represent the other regarding aspect or even the other regarding aspect of the going for refuge itself; this may be a little obscure but this is also spelled out in the booklet which I mentioned earlier, so I cab perhaps refer you to that.

So as well as being the friends of the western Buddhist order and the friends of the western Buddhist Order it is also the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order. There is an emphasis on western. At least there was initially or is still initially. Yes, in the order we are committed to the Buddha, the Dharma and the sangha. But were committed to them under what conditions? In what situation? well under 'the conditions of, in the situation as represented by modern western life. We cant pretend that were ancient Indians, not living in fifth century BC Magadha. Were not even living in 20 century Ceylon. Were not living in mediaeval India. Were not living in Japan, not living in Tibet. Were living here in the west, were living here In Britain, here in England and 'the conditions in which we 'try 'to go for refuge, 'the conditions under which we practice Buddhism and 'try to follow the spiritual path are rather different from 'those under which people have 'tried to follow that same path in the East and especially in recent times. So we have top be aware of this fact. We cant escape the recognition of this fact that we are trying 'to practice the dharma, admittedly 'the same dharma under very different conditions under which people practiced It in the Buddha's 'time, and very different from the conditions under which 'they practiced it in many parts of the Buddhist east even today. So this Is why we call ourselves the friends of 'the western Buddhist order. Its not that were following a particular kind of Buddhism called western Buddhism. Its not that were even trying to adapt Buddhism itself 'to any particular western point of view, no. We commit ourselves 'to 'the dharma, the same dharma which all 'true Buddhists have committed 'themselves 'through the ages but we have 'to practice 'that dharma that same dharma under very different conditions and 'this is what we mean, this is what we indicate by using this term western.

Of course more recently the FWBO has spread 'to 'the east, which is rather interesting because 'the

east one might say is being Invaded by 'the west. Even the east has been westernized. There are many people in eastern Buddhist countries whose outlook is quite western and as I indicated earlier on well some of 'those people at least are very intrigued or even attracted by 'the particular way in which we 'try to present Buddhism and try to live Buddhism because the conditions under which were trying to do that in the west are to some extent duplicated in at least some parts of 'the traditional Buddhist east. All right there's a lot more I could say on 'this score but perhaps I'd better not because we seem to be going on at rather some length, and after all I'm not reading a paper I'm giving a 'talk. So it's not only Buddhist, not only and order not only western. There's also friends - friends of the western Buddhist order so what does this signify? Well what this signifies is we don't have an ordinary formal membership, that is to say you can't join the FWBO just by giving a subscription. You can get our new Buddhist magazine regularly by paying a subscription but you can't join 'the FWBO much less still the western Buddhist order in that way 'though I can remember years ago I think 'this was in 1952 I attended a meeting at Sanchi and I found that an Indian gentleman had established newly established an order of his own - a Buddhist order. And he was going round propagating this order enrolling members and he was really doing it a grand style, he'd equipped himself in a beautiful saffron suit of satin - saffron trousers, saffron jacket; don't laugh we may be wearing these things ourself one day and he was going round enrolling members of his sangha he 'tried enroll me, he told me there were four classes of membership, and of course 'the higher the grade of membership the larger 'the subscription you'd have to pay-. There were stream entrant members, 'there were non-returner members, there were once returner members and there of course were arahant members. If you wanted 'to be an arahant member 'then it was five hundred rupees you'd have 'to pay in order to join. Well some people may do things in 'that sort of way but what I felt very strongly was you can't really join a Buddhist movement in 'that way, you might be able to join a society devoted 'to the study of Buddhism in that way; but you couldn't join a real live Buddhist movement in 'that way, you could only join a real live Buddhist movement by being actually involved in it. And there were different degrees or levels of involvement; so therefore we find the FWBO is made up of are members only so to speak in an informal sense in a spiritual sense if you like. First of all there's the order members as we sometimes call them the Dharmacharis and dharmacharinis 'they are the committed people they have committed themselves wholeheartedly, body speech and mind to the Buddha the dharma and the sangha. And 'then we've got the friends, with a capital f Who are people who are not committed just interested, 'they just come along sometimes perhaps they come along only once a year 'to Wesak or to the anniversary of 'the friends of the western Buddhist order but 'they're also part and parcel of the movement, so on the one hand you've got the order members the committed, and on 'the other hand you've got the interested, the friends, in the middle you've got 'the mitras; we could call 'them 'the involved, they're not yet committed some of 'them may be thinking about commitment but they're certainly more than just interested. So we've got our sort of informal spiritual membership consisting of 'the interested, 'the involved and the committed; so this is why we speak of the friends of the western Buddhist order and this is 'the FWBO. So this again we may say is 'the Buddhist dawn in the west and it was started, 'that dawn began just 19 years ago and since then I think I may say that that dawn has been gradually growing brighter and brighter, and in the course of those 19 years all sorts of things have happened, we started off in that tiny basement in Monmouth street, that's where we were 19 years ago 'today practically but now you'll find large FWBO centres and communities and coops in I

'think its at least a dozen countries now. There's nearly 300 order members a very large proportion who are working full time for the movement one way or another. We've got double that number of mitras and if we include India I think we've got several hundred thousand friends, so quite a lot has happened. We've got communities and retreat centres of different kinds as you've already heard in the course of the day, I think for instance of Vajraloka the mens meditation center, I think of Aryaloka which has been started about a year ago in 'the United states, I think of our retreat centre in India outside Lonartha at Bhaja near those ancient Buddhist caves. I also think of all our publications during the course of 18 or 19 years, so quite a lot has happened I'm not even going to try to recapitulate briefly, what I'm going to do is this, I've said something about the events of the first year of the FWBO's existence culminating in the first ordinations but then I'd like just now to speak briefly about what I feel are 'the main events of the last year, the last twelve months, the three main events in fact occurring between April 1985 and April 1986. So three main events which will give one perhaps some idea of the way in which or the directions in which the FWBO is expanding and progressing. And the first of these is the establishment of the women's retreat centre in shropshire. There was quite a bit of discussion, I think quite a prolonged discussion as to what this women's country retreat center should be called but the name of which the order members concerned eventually came up was Taraloka, and of course when It was announced everyone felt it was really appropriate because what does Tara mean Tara is the great female bodhisattva although bodhisattvas are neither male nor female, but Tam is a bodhisattva appearing in female form, this is to put It correctly. And the word or the name Tara means She who ferries across, ferries across the ocean of birth, old age, disease and death so in the Buddhist east especially In China and Japan and Tibet all sort of beautiful positive associations have gathered around the name and the figure of the bodhisattva Tara. Tara also means incidentally star, and of course you guide yourself by the stars, the spiritual ideal represented by Tara guides you, inspire you . ferries you across, even in a sense saves you. Taraloka is the world of Tara. I mentioned loka earlier on when I spoke of the three lokas. So Tara loka is the world or the plane or the dimension inhabited by ruled over by inspired by the Bodhisatta Tara. So the women order members and mitras and friends who have been working ,who are working to establish Taraloka as a women's retreat centre are trying to create a sort of world or abode of Tara where the Tara principle reigns supreme, and I am sure that when they've succeeded in doing that Taraloka will exercise an enormous influence not only on the women who are involved with the FWBO but on the movement as a whole and throughout the movement as a whole. So the establishment of Tara loka is one of the three main events of the last year. I also hope that the establishment of Taraloka will help speed up the process of ordination for women in the movement. When one is ordained of course one goes for refuge that is an Individual act. You must want to go for refuge, it is what you want to do this is what we emphasize very much but obviously you are greatly helped if there are facilities like meditation classes, study groups and country retreat centres. If you have recourse to facilities of this sort they can greatly help you in your progress to enlightenment, in your committing of yourself to the Buddha, dharma and sangha your becoming ready for ordination. So I really do hope that as soon as the women's country retreat centre Taraloka is fully established we shall see many more women preparing themselves for ordination perhaps more quickly than has usually been the case in the past. And while I'm on the subject, I don't often speak about women In the movement as distinct from the men or the men as distinct from the women but while I am on the subject of the women in the movement and of course this is some people might

say a rather controversial topic but let Bhante walk in where angels fear to tread, I think conditions and facilities for women in the FWBO are particularly good as compared with at least some other Buddhist groups. I have the feeling that in some other Buddhist groups belonging to this or that tradition of Buddhism the women are rather under the shadow of the men, the nuns very much under the shadow of the monks. In some Buddhist groups the nuns can't really do anything without the permission of the monks, so there's nothing like that in the FWBO. Whether women happen to be mitras or friends or order members are at least as independent as the men are. They've no more need the permission of men friends or men order members than the men friends or mitras or order members need the permission of their corresponding feminine counterparts; I hope that is quite clear. So I really think and I've given quite a bit of thought to this that in the friends of the western Buddhist order and especially in the western Buddhist order itself women probably have far more or far better facilities for personal individual growth and development in the direction of enlightenment than probably any other Buddhist group in the west and I think it would be well if we were more mindful of this and not only more mindful of it but perhaps spread the word around a little bit more as sometimes perhaps people do. Any way what I really wanted to say is that now Taraloka has been established there will be in Taraloka a facility which will enable women in the movement to prepare themselves more quickly for ordination than has been the case in the past. Not that I want to hurry anybody but sometimes increased or improved facilities can help very much. I particularly want to see chapters of the women's wing of the movement in places like Brighton and Manchester and Glasgow where we don't at the moment have them and where therefore a certain imbalance exists in the order itself and the movement. So perhaps when the anniversary comes round next year we may have a rather different story to tell. So that was the first of the three main events I feel of the establishment of Taraloka the second the ordinations which took place last December in India. Ordinations have been taking place every year since we started so what was special about those ordinations in India well what was special about them was Bhante, Venerable Sangharakshita did not perform them or confer them. So it was a historic occasion. I mentioned there were nearly 300 order members present and I've ordained nearly all those people individually. Which has meant quite a lot of work, quite a lot of preparation, quite a lot of personal contact and personal assessment and exchange. In the case of some order members I've seen them dozens and dozens of times and talked with them dozens and dozens of times and been on retreat with them many many times before they were ordained so I've had a very close contact. But as the movement has been expanding into a number of different countries it is becoming more and more difficult for me to get around. Not only as regards giving ordinations but as all sorts of other things. In fact the movement had hardly begun before I started handing over whatever responsibilities I could. I couldn't hand over very much during the first few years but in the course of the last five, six, seven, eight years especially I've been handing over more and more of my responsibilities because I felt this was the only way in which the movement especially the order would really grow and after all some order members have been order members for ten, twelve, fifteen years and quite a few of them are very experienced people who can do quite a lot, some of them can do things I can't do. Some of them can operate word processors, about which I know absolutely nothing and in which I'm completely incompetent. Lots of them can drive motor cars and all sorts of other wonderful things. And I think some of them are beginning to give lectures which are nearly as good as mine, and in fact I really look forward to the time, I think it shouldn't take more than five years when at least some of them will be able to give better lectures

than me. When that day comes I shall feel that not that I can retire but that I can really sort of congratulate myself on a job well done. And It is possible because I can remember the days when some of our most accomplished speakers who could hold you spell bound for a whole hour could just stammer their way through a ten minute speech in our speaker's class. I can remember these days. So when I hear them in the course of various events and celebrations holding forth such confidence and with such knowledge and inspiration I think well ten years ago, twelve years ago you could hardly speak at all. So I feel really pleased and I dont think its expecting too much to expect well in five years time theyll be able to do better than I do. This brings me in a way to an important principle which I formulated some years ago. That if your disciples dont do better than youre able to do, you havent succeeded. Because afterall their able to stand on your shoulders SO they should be able to go further than you. Think of my position when I started on my buddhist career, when I was sixteen seventeen years of age in London. What was there then? There was no FWBO, there was hardly a buddhist society; there was a buddhist socety which I used to go along to when I was eighteen and nineteen before I left for India but that was all therewas. There was just a few books, few translations, not many, not like what we have now, and we used to meet just about once a week. Yes it was once a week and there was an annual Wesak celebration. I was certainly the youngest person around, most of the people going along in those days to buddhist society classes were definitely middle aged and I was still a teen ager. SO there was no sort of spiritual guidance, there was no one to whom I could really turn, even when I went to India I went around I met many spiritual teachers Many buddhists in Sri Lanka, in Singapore and other places but the sort of help and guidance people in the FWBO now get I certainly didnt get, there were so many things I had to work out for myself, find out for myself, discover for myself, change for myself. So people coming into contact with the FWBO these days have a very very good opportunity, all sorts of wonderful facilities available to them. Sometimes I think that people in contact with the FWBO in this country or even in other countries dont always recognize their extrordinary good fortune, youve only got to walk In the door of the center and there it Is all laid on for you. There are order members just hovering around waiting to explain things to you, waiting to explain that the image there is not an idol and we dont indulge in idol worship, and that meditation doesnt mean going into a trance. So all these helpful order members, and there are classes, if you want to meditate theres a meditation class, if you want to learn the dharma, study the scriptures, there are study groups theres a three year mitra study course. I f you want to go on retreat you can. If you want to go on a large mixed retreat, yes there are large mixed retreats for men and women, if you want to go on a single sex retreat, either for men or for women theyre available too, want to go on a meditation retreat yes there are meditation retreats. I f you want to practise hatha yoga yes you can do that under the auspices of the FWBO. All sorts of things I needent go into. SO all these facilities are available to you that werent available in my day and I really do sometimes think that people in contact with the FWBO, even part and parcel of the FWBO dont always realize their extrordinary good fortune. I think I can honestly say that the facilities available to you, to anyone going to an FWBO centre or living in an FWBO community, working in an FWBO coop the facilities available are such that If you really took full and proper advantage of them within ten or fifteen years you could be a stream entrant. And thats a tremendous thing but that is what the position really is, which means you could be enjoying a state of completely positive emotion all the time, very nearly complete mental clarity all the time. You could be always full of energy, full of joy. You could be free from delusion, be helpful to other

people, a source of inspiration to other people. All you would have to do is to take full and sincere advantage of the opportunities that are available to you in an FWBO centre, that's all you'd have to do. SO I didn't have all these facilities but these are now at your disposal. So you should be able to do better than I've done and I will not in a sense have done my duty if at the time of my departure at least shall we say 50 or 60 of you are able to do quite a lot better than I have been able to do. So handing over responsibilities.

I've been handing over responsibilities as long as I've been able but of course until just a few months ago this very great responsibility of conferring ordination I've not been able to hand over, but I've made a start now even with this and in December last three order members, three dharmacharis, Subhuti, Kamalashila, Suvajra went to India on my behalf, I couldn't go for one reason or another, went to India and in the context of an ordination retreat in our beautiful retreat and meditation centre at Bhaja ordained some seventeen people. When I received that news, when I heard that they'd arrived safely though one of them was sick but anyway they arrived safely they were on the retreat, they conferred the ordinations, 17 more order members in the world and all without Bhante having done anything. Some of the people who were ordained I've never seen because they've started coming along or at least recognizably coming along since my last visit to India so six or seven order members now in the world in India have become order members, have got as far as that without any personal contact with me at all. So I really feel that the order is beginning to be established its beginning not to depend upon me, and this is an enormously important step I think I said at the time it was the most important step ever taken by the order next to the actual establishment of the order itself eighteen years ago, it is as important a step as that because it ensures the perpetuity at least the continuation of the order, no longer dependant for its continuation on myself and as I said it was a great relief because I sometimes used to think well supposing I'm involved in an air accident as would happen. Supposing I have a heart attack and I've not yet handed over this responsibility what will happen to the movement, what will happen to the order? But now I've begun to hand over even this responsibility, so even if I was to be involved in an air accident next week or if I was to have a heart attack in the middle of this talk let's hope I don't! well the movement and the order the order as the heart of the movement would still be able to continue.

So I felt not only great joy but great relief when I received the news that the seventeen people had been ordained by Subhuti, Kamalashila and Suvajra But supposing Bhante manages to hand over all his responsibilities, well what's Bhante going to do then? Is he going to retire? No he's certainly not going to retire because he still has quite a lot of work to do especially literary work as I hand over more and more organizational responsibilities I hope to be able to devote myself more and more to literary work. I sometimes feel extremely embarrassed with my literary work because I meet somebody after a year who comes up to me maybe he's an order member or she or maybe it's a mitra or maybe a friend and they say oh hello Bhante how are you? How are you getting on with your memoirs? And I have to confess that I'm very sorry but for the last year I've not been able to do any work at all on this second long promised volume of memoirs and sometimes their face just falls a little bit because perhaps they were thinking the next volume of memoirs will be out in just a couple of months but no I'm afraid I've only written about 250 (printed) pages of this volume and I've got about another 500 pages to do to bring the story down to 1956 or 7 so this is the sort of thing I shall be getting on with and there's all sorts of other literary plans and I hope that at least some of the

things that I'm able to produce after my so called retirement will be of use and help to the movement. And as you've already heard we are looking for a property in Spain and it may be that I spend more and more time there, not just yet but perhaps in three or four years time, not only participating in ordination retreats but getting on quietly and peacefully with my literary work. So I'm only too willing to hand over responsibilities of all kinds large and small. You've had a glimpse into the workings of the order office this afternoon and I can assure you that the order office is a very busy place and I've already managed to hand over all sorts of responsibilities and duties and little activities but there's a lot more to be handed over. I've even started handing on the responsibility for writing books. We have now other authors in the FWBO and the order. Subhuti has produced a couple of books, Nagabodhi is producing a book, Kamalashila is producing a book, Ratnaprabha is producing a book, so we shall be creating a larger and larger literature which will really introduce people to Buddhism in a manner that they can understand and provide them with a basis for actual practice. So yes I'm very willing to hand over all my responsibilities, I'd be very happy in a sense if I didn't have any responsibilities at all. But of course people have got to be ready to take over the responsibilities. It is part of my responsibilities that I can hand over my responsibilities only to those who I feel sure are able to take on those responsibilities. Fortunately Subhuti, Kamalashila and Suvajra were genuinely able to take over the responsibility for conferring those ordinations in India. And I know from the reports I received from very many people there that there was really no difference between the way in which they conferred the ordinations and the way in which I would have conferred them. In a way people missed me but in a way they didn't, the ordinations were conferred and that was the main thing. But there are not many other order members who could have taken on that responsibility, perhaps so far there aren't any others, certainly very very few. So people must be ready to take on responsibilities, so another question arises, a great question arises why are not more people not ready to take on responsibilities? Why is it that I'm not able to hand over more responsibilities than I have handed over so far? Well just in a few words one might say that the people, not just order members but mitras and friends too are not sufficiently active. Now I put active within single inverted commas because I don't mean active in the ordinary sense I don't mean just busy. What I mean is that there's a certain lack of motivation. People are not sufficiently alive in the spiritual sense, not sufficiently mature in the spiritual sense because one of the signs of maturity is you can take on responsibility. So I've been thinking about this quite a lot, this question of motivation and what motivates people and members of the order office community will know that I've been thinking aloud on this topic at lunch time on quite a number of occasions. And I must say my thoughts are not fully formulated yet, but even though they're not formulated, though I'm still in a way thinking, I'll just share with you some of my ideas. I start from the standpoint of survival. We're all alive, there are lots of other living things in the world, on this earth, not only human beings there's animals, insects, plants. And one thing they have in common is that they all want to survive, they all seek to survive, all struggle to survive and this is certainly true of human beings in the earlier stages of evolution, history, pre history. That they struggled to survive, had to struggle, wasn't easy to survive; perhaps it was easy in some remote mythological golden age but not in one which we have any real knowledge. You had to gather food, fend off wild beasts, protect yourself from all sorts of natural calamities, so one might say that men were kept on their toes by the need to survive, they were motivated by the need to survive until very very recent times the vast majority of human beings had to spend much of the time and nearly all of their energies just in order to survive, in more recent

times just earning a living. So this is what kept them going, because if they didn't keep going if they didn't work didn't earn well they'd simply starve, so they were motivated, active. But in modern times what does one find happening? In some favoured parts of the world people don't need to struggle, work in order to survive, they can survive without doing anything at all, well how is that? In some parts of the world we've got what we call the welfare state and there's such a thing as the dole and you can survive without working, you can survive without making any effort, and in the western world there are quite a lot of people in this sort of position though not many people in the eastern world in this sort of position, not many people In the developing world less still in the undeveloped world, but in the developed world including Britain there are quite a few people who can survive quite easily without working. So what sort of position do they find themselves in? What is It that motivates them? Do they have anything to motivate them? Now that they no longer have to work, make an effort to survive, in many cases they don't. So what happens when an ordinary person doesn't have to work in order to survive, you can survive without working, well they just sort of drift, they become sort of lazy, what happens to their energies? Their energies don't perhaps have any proper outlet and their energies turn sort of negative, become even destructive and in this way you get vandalism, hooliganism, violence which we have seen a great increase in in the course of the last few years. There have been all sorts of quite horrific incidents. So I think this is really the reason, that people whose energies that have normally gone into the struggle to survive no longer have to struggle to survive, and their energies have not yet found employment perhaps their energies are too crude as yet to find employment in any other way. Some people are able to channel their energies into the arts into creativity and a very very few into spiritual life. Now I think a lot of people in the FWBO, a lot of people in our own movement are in a sort of intermediate position. Many of them don't have to work in order to survive. Some of them may even be quite literally on the dole but their energies are not aroused and stimulated by that need to survive by that need to earn a living. At the same time their energies are engaged in cultural activities and spiritual activities but only to a quite limited extent. They haven't succeeded in completely shifting their energies out of the survival gear into a higher cultural and spiritual gear in many cases. A few have, some of the best known, some of the most successful in a spiritual sense, some of the most senior and experienced order members have succeeded in doing that, in other words they've succeeded in transferring, sublimating those energies which ordinarily would have gone into the struggle for survival into purely cultural, religious and spiritual channels, into Buddhist channels, into Dharmic channels. All their energies are therefore behind everything they do in the movement. We all know such people who can go from one activity to another, after they give a talk they can help to lead a meditation class, they'll lead it, after to help you to go out with you to give you some advice, spend an hour with you they can do It, all their energies are as it were available for the movement, available for the Buddha, available for the Dharma, available for the Sangha. But a lot of people in the FWBO are in a sort of intermediate position. They've not yet been able to transfer all their energies disengaged though they are from the struggle for survival into purely cultural and spiritual channels. So they remain as It were half alive, their not very active and therefore since they're not very alive and not very active it isn't possible for anyone to hand over to them anything very much in the way of responsibilities. So I have been thinking about this quite a lot recently because I' do sometimes wonder to be frank why some order members don't do more, why some mitras don't do more, why some friends don't do more than they actually do because there is so much to be done, there are so many people in this western world of

ours even in Britain needing the Dharma who could benefit from the Dharma. But not very many people even in the movement feel a real urge to go out and communicate it to them even though they know It could help them, it could benefit them so very very much. You read all sorts of terrible stories in the newspaper, hearing on the radio, people committing suicide, taking to alcohol, becoming alcoholics, people becoming dependent upon drugs, this is really dreadful, and If we have any sort of spark of metta and karuna within us we should really want to communicate with these people and bring to them the awareness that there is another way you don't have to Indulge in all these dreadful things, it is possible for you to live as a human being, grow as a human being, develop as a human being. It is really tragic and extraordinary that in our welfare state where so many facilities are provided to so many people some have to have recourse to alcohol and drugs and a number of such people is increasing as well as the number of people who are having recourse to violence. Something has gone wrong seriously somewhere and we could put it right or help to put it right if we were more outward going in communicating the Dharma, could have a greater impact than the FWBO has as yet had. So we have to strengthen our motivation. I mentioned the three order members, SUBhuti, Kamalashila and Suvajra who went to India to whom I handed over that sort of responsibility and I ought really to be able to hand over that sort of responsibility to every order member who has been an order member say for ten years. They ought by this time to be able to take on that sort of responsibility. And some order members are of course already very busy, but they could be relieved from some of their present responsibilities if mitras were more active, and mitras could be relieved of some of their responsibilities if friends were more active. One just needs a greater, a stronger motivation, a more effective channeling of one's energies away from the need to survive but into definitely cultural and spiritual channels instead of them half stagnating somewhere in between which is what is happening in the case of quite a few people in the FWBO at the moment. So how are we to strengthen our motivation? I'm going to conclude and I really am going to conclude just with a few hints on how we could do this. How we could strengthen our motivation, whether we're an order member, whether we're a mitra, whether we're a friend because these things apply to all of us. First of all avoid distractions. I think these words should perhaps be written in letters of gold above the entrance to every city centre. London as we know is a great place for distractions, it's not only the capital of Great Britain it's the distraction capital. From the minute you come down you're bombarded with all sorts of distractions. If you give in to these distractions if you allow yourself to be distracted by all the things you can be distracted by I needn't go into details. You'll never be able to consolidate your energies, you'll never be able to direct all your energies into cultural and spiritual channels so this is the first thing that you must do, just avoid distractions. And then you must lead a regular lifestyle, there must be regular meditation, there must be regular study, there must be regular retreats including solitary retreats, there must be regular contact and communication with spiritual friends. In other words there needs to be constant reminders, of what your real goal is, what your real interest in life is where your true interest lies, there must be constant reminders through these various activities. And then there must be what we call Kalyana Mitrata, and especially what I've called vertical Kalyana Mitrata; you must have good regular contact with your spiritual friends. It's so easy to get out of touch, out of contact with spiritual life, it's so easy to forget. This is what people very often tell me sometimes in person sometimes in writing, they just don't come along perhaps to a class or if they're an order member to a chapter meeting for a few weeks or a few months and they feel right out of touch, and they can feel strangely alienated so you

really need to keep in contact with your spiritual friends because it's only your spiritual friends who are going to reach out to you and rescue you and gently draw you back when you get into that sort of situation. So contact with your spiritual friends, Kalyana mitrata especially what I've called vertical kalyana mitrata spiritual contact with others more experienced than you are yourself, with more emotional positivity, more insight, greater clarity, greater freedom, greater spontaneity, greater energy; have as much contact with them as you possibly can. This is a very important way of strengthening your motivation. And then keep up your spiritual practice and especially keep up your meditation practice, keep up your mindfulness of breathing, keep up your metta bhavana. These will help you to strengthen your motivation and in the same way keep up your Dharma study. Dharma study is a wonderful thing, we've got all those wonderful Buddhist texts and scriptures though I spoke about just a few minutes ago, we've got the Pali scriptures and the Mahayana sutras, these great Tibetan works of Buddhist literature, there's such a wonderful fund of inspiration in them. So why bother, unless you're a chairman or someone like that who needs to keep in touch with the outside world, why bother to read newspapers, why bother to read Time Out and City Limits and Woman's Own, Motorcyclist, why bother to read these things; soak yourself in the scriptures, become familiar with them they're tremendous sources of inspiration and then perhaps last of all and this may remind you of the Buddha's own last words remain constantly mindful. I'm afraid in recent months and even in the last couple of years I've become a bit concerned about the comparative lack of mindfulness in the FWBO, I've been taking people up on this. Sometimes even scolding them, even beating them; this mindfulness, not mindfulness in the context of meditation but ordinary mindfulness in the affairs of day to day life, someone forgets to shut a door, someone in the community doesn't wash up his or her own cups and saucers, apparently at the back of that person's mind there is a sort of unconscious feeling that mother is still around, hovering somewhere, mother will do it for you but of course in a spiritual community there's no mother you should do it yourself. So people are very unmindful still I find. There was a time at Padmaloka a couple of years ago when I became (I don't know why perhaps there was reason) very much aware that people were slamming doors. Why on earth did they slam doors? because my study is situated immediately above the front door at Padmaloka and I used to wonder why was it that when people went out through that door they always slammed it violently behind them so that the whole front of the building shook including my study. SO I used to ask people please don't slam the door on your way out but so many people just couldn't remember this they went on merrily slamming the door and all sorts of other little incidents of this kind and I became more and more conscious of the fact that the level of mindfulness in this very ordinary basic sense in the FWBO as a whole not excluding order members I'm afraid was quite low. SO this is something I think that everybody should give very very serious attention to. So if in these various ways you can all strengthen your motivation, if you can avoid distractions, if you can adopt a regular lifestyle, if you can have recourse to spiritual friendship especially vertical spiritual friendship, if you can keep up your spiritual practice your meditation practice, your Dharma study, and if you can remain mindful in the ordinary affairs of everyday life then you will certainly strengthen your motivation, more and more of your energies will flow into cultural and spiritual into Dharmic channels. Mitras will be able to hand over more and more of their responsibilities to friends, order members will be able to hand over more and more of their responsibilities to mitras and Bhante will be able to hand over more and more of his responsibilities at least to the senior and responsible order members and then we may say there really will be a

Buddhist dawn in the west. I haven't quite finished but I'm going to be very brief. The third and the last great event of the past year well it's already been touched upon more than touched upon, I'm only going to not much more than mention it and that is the launching of Golden Drum, our new magazine. Nagabodhi has already spoken about that, I must say it gives me very great satisfaction to be present on this occasion and actually to see and to hear Golden Drum the first issue of Golden Drum being launched by Nagabodhi. I have personally wanted a magazine for the FWBO for years and years but I wasn't going to have it prematurely, I felt we had to be ready, we had to have the resources in the way not just of finance but contributors, we needed to have a certain degree of intellectual and spiritual maturity in our contributors before we could really effectively communicate the message of the FWBO through a real magazine. SO I hope that Golden Drum will make what the FWBO stands for more and more widely known in the west and then there will be a Buddhist dawn not only in the west but perhaps in many other parts of the world. As I mentioned earlier on in the day, as I mentioned in the course of the afternoon, just a week ago in fact I was in Spain, I was staying with some friends in the Alicante area and of course the climate was completely different the weather was completely different, I could hardly believe it because the whole of the week that I was there the sky was absolutely blue not a fleck of cloud in the sky a deep blue sky for a whole week, and the weather was beautifully warm in fact it was hot and I was given by these friends with whom I was staying a beautiful room on the first floor of a sort of villa and I used to go out on the little balcony a little wrought iron balcony early in the morning and I had a beautiful view, below me there were orange groves, olive groves, little farm houses, cactus bushes, and in the distance well ignoring the towers of Benidorm was the sea. During the day that sea was a brilliant blue but I used to go and sit out there early in the morning before the sun rose and at that time of day the sea was a sort of gun metal blue and you know what that sort of colour is, gun metal blue and I used to sit and wait for the sun to rise and sure enough I'd see just a tip just a dot of fiery orange rising in the east from behind this gun metal blue sea then I'd see just a bit more it would seem to rise with remarkable speed and I'd see a whole segment and see perhaps a third of the disc of the sun and then a half of the disc of the sun and then I'd see the whole sun and due to the mist though it was so bright I could actually look at it and it was a sort of beautiful rosy red, quite soft at that time of day almost like a full moon more than a sun but as it rose higher and higher into the heavens it became more and more brilliant more and more like a sort of disc of burnished gold and after a few minutes when it seemed to be a few inches right above the horizon it was of course difficult to look at it and as I watched in the mornings from my veranda I knew that I was going to have to speak this evening on this very subject I had to give my title though I didn't have much of an idea of what I was going to talk about but I'd already given this title a Buddhist dawn in the west and I was thinking as I watched that rising sun in some ways this is like the Buddhist dawn in the west and in some respects it isn't because as I watched the rising of the sun, as I watched the dawn in Alicante there were no clouds, there was just this pure blue sky and then the sun rising as it were out of the sea but the dawn of Buddhism in the west the dawn of the FWBO didn't take place quite like that because it had to rise from amidst quite a few clouds as I indicated at the beginning but gradually of course that Buddhist dawn in the west transcended those clouds it rose above those clouds and perhaps there are one or two clouds here and there in the sky of Buddhism in Britain of Buddhism in the west. I think we can say that the sun of the FWBO has risen above them and it is shining more and more brilliantly and more and more gloriously and one can see that sun one can see that golden disc not just as a sun one can see

it as a Golden Drum in fact I think In the sutra itself the Golden Drum is compared to the sun, the sun is the golden drum and the golden drum is the sun. I can even remember in one of the Upanishads to quote a non-Buddhistic source a certain sage a certain seer speaks of the sun as a sort of golden door. A door which you have to open by means of your spiritual practice, a golden door through which you pass into a higher into a spiritual world. So that's one way in which we can think of that golden disc the sun or the drum or the drum or the sun and Nagabodhi spoke of beating that golden drum not just in terms of the magazine of that name but in terms of the movement as a whole. It's as though the movement as a whole is not just a sun it's not just a question of a dawn, the movement as a whole is a golden drum and you may remember in the sutra at the very beginning there's a figure I think he's described as a Brahmin but a Brahmin in the spiritual sense who is beating upon that great golden drum. So that's what I've been doing this evening, beating upon this golden drum and perhaps tryin gto rouse you a little bit and get a little bit of response from you because now that I've started handing over I certainly don't think my movement it's becoming less and less my movement in a sense every day and I'm very happy to see that. It's your movement the movement is the order member's the mitras and the friends. So we're celebrating finished celebrating or when we've had a concluding puja at the LBC we will have finished celebrating the nineteenth anniversary of the friends of the western buddhist order. So for me this has been a very enjoyable occasion I might say in a sense a nostalgic occasion but again also a very inspiring occasion because I could even say that I'm beginning to hear that golden drum which is the FWBO sending forth quite a vigorous note quite a sound without my even sometimes touching it and I quite like just sitting and listening to the sound of that golden drum which is sending forth that beautiful music, the music of the Dharma without perhaps my even having to touch it.

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