



FWBO Resource Pack for newcomers

Introduction

This pack aims to give you a selection of background information to the FWBO, our approach to Buddhism, and the main meditation practices that we teach. It's intended for people who've fairly recently contacted us and want to know more: there's lots of leads to further material on who we are and what we do - even what we look like! Most of it is available for free on the internet.

Suggestions for things to include in future editions are welcome, please contact news@fwbo-news.org.

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- The Heart Sutra



Where to find stuff...

The FWBO has a rich collection of Dharma and meditation resources, much of it available for free on the internet. At the same time, it is a very decentralised movement, which results in a plethora of websites. This section aims to give you a one-stop guide for at least some of what is available.

Recommended reading

Four Reading Lists have been compiled for those wanting to explore the FWBO's Dharma teaching in more depth. They are printed following this section, and cover -

- Meditation
- Introductory
- Going deeper
- Mitra Study

Sangharakshita's books and other FWBO publications

may be obtained from Centre bookshops, or the FWBO's publishing house Windhorse Publications - see their website www.windhorsepublications.com.

Many of Sangharakshita's books, including his memoirs, poetry, and many Dharma books, are available free on-line from his website at www.sangharakshita.org/online_books.html.

On-line Dharma talks

Free Buddhist Audio offers over 1,000 online talks for free download by Sangharakshita and other senior Order Members. Find them at www.freebuddhistaudio.com. Their 'community pages' host talks from many local FWBO centres, including non-UK centres and in various languages.

Study material (including the FWBO Dharma Training Course)

The FWBO has an excellent Foundation Course for anyone wanting to learn the basics of Buddhism. Most FWBO Centres will offer study groups exploring the Course - group study is the recommended way to engage with it. However it's also available on-line at www.fwbomitracourse.com.

Following on from the Foundation Course is a new three-year Dharma Training Course for Mitras, also offered at most FWBO Centres and available as downloadable PDFs from the same website.

Two other sections of the FreeBuddhistAudio site contain the full text of most of Sangharakshita's lectures (at www.freebuddhistaudio.com/texts/talks) and the unedited text of most of his seminars (over 12,000,000 words!), available at www.freebuddhistaudio.com/texts/seminars Happy reading!

Contact details for FWBO Centres

are available at www.fwbo.org/contacts/addresses.html. Almost every FWBO centre has its own website, and details of these can be found here.

Details about retreats

may be obtained from FWBO Centres. Details of most UK FWBO retreats and some international ones can be seen on the FWBO's dedicated GoingOnRetreat website at www.goingonretreat.com

The FWBO has nearly 20 retreat centres around the world, including 8 or more in UK. Each has its own unique flavour: the only way to find what they are is of course to try them out! The names of the main ones are -



UK

Buddhafield
Buddhafield North and East
Dhanakosa
Dharmapala College
Padmaloka
Rivendell
Taraloka
Tiratanaloka
Vajraloka
Vajrasana

EUROPE

Abhayaloka (Finland)
Akasavana (Spain)
Dharmagiri (Sweden)
EcoDharma (Spain)
Guhyaloka (Spain)

INDIA

Bhaja
Bor Dharan
Dhammakranti

REST of WORLD

Aryaloka (USA)
Sudarshanaloka (New Zealand)
Vijayaloka (Australia)
Sagaraloka (Sri Lanka)

Young people's Dharma

The best way to hook up with other young Buddhists in the FWBO is to search Facebook for "young FWBO"; there's a young people's group there with 150+ members and details of special events.

Children and schools' Dharma material

The FWBO's **Clear Vision Trust**, at www.clear-vision.org, offers a wide range of teaching materials for schools, tailored to the UK curriculum.

It includes their very popular **Ask a Buddhist** service - a series of short video clips with some answers to some of the commonest questions Buddhists tend to get asked - especially by children! Recently expanded with many answers from younger Buddhists and Buddhist s from other traditions. It's at www.clear-vision.org/Students/AskaBud.aspx

What we look like

Photos of FWBO Centres are at **FWBO Photos** www.flickr.com/photos/fwbo/sets where you'll find a library of over 3,000 photos of FWBO Centres, shrines, and more.

Profiles of people/Order Members can be found on FWBO People at www.people.fwbo.org. Alternatively, the **Order Mosaic**, at www.fwbo-news.org/resources/mosaic/thumbnail, captures almost the whole of the Western Buddhist Order in a single clickable image of the thousand-armed Avalokitesvara.

Video clips of Bhante/ Order Members / other people in the FWBO are on **Videosangha**, which contains over 100 short videos on everything from the history of the FWBO to Buddhist Arts. Especially interesting are the accounts of people's first meetings with Sangharakshita, founder of the FWBO and the Western Buddhist Order. It's at www.videosangha.net.

More about the FWBO

FWBO News is the main channel for keeping up to date with what's happening around the world-wide FWBO and TBMSG. It's at www.fwbo-news.org; the site also contains a useful list of resources and feature articles.

The FWBO's main website is at www.fwbo.org; though look out for a revamp appearing sometime in 2010! There's a Facebook page at www.facebook.com/FriendsoftheWesternBuddhistOrder, plus many FWBO groups.



Social Engagement

The FWBO has always combined dharma practice with social engagement. TBMSG, the Indian wing of the Movement, runs a very wide range of social projects, mostly funded by the Karuna Trust: there's details at www.tbmsg.org or www.karuna.org.

In the West, recent years have seen a rapid rise in FWBO projects directed towards people suffering from pain, stress, addiction, and depression; mostly using mindfulness-based material such as MBCT. Breathworks and Breathing Space are the two largest, at www.breathworks-mindfulness.org.uk and www.lbc.org.uk/Breathingspacehome.htm. Bodywise is another FWBO 'brand' offering a wide range of exercise and treatments.

And in the Spanish mountains, EcoDharma (www.ecodharma.com) is an FWBO retreat centre dedicated to exploring how the Dharma and the FWBO can participate the development of an ecological consciousness.

Fundraising

The Karuna Trust has for 30 years been the FWBO's main fundraising project, raising well over £1 million/year for a wide range of social and Dhamma work in India. Find them at www.karuna.org - and find how to get involved at www.appeals.karuna.org.

There will be many other FWBO fundraising appeals in the air at any one time, as the movement grows both in India and world-wide. Many India ones use internet fundraising pages hosted by FWBO Dhammaloka: you'll find this at www.justgiving.com/Dhammaloka.

FWBO History and archives

The **Clear Vision photo archive** at www.clear-vision.org/Pictures/Default.aspx contains many historic images of Sangharakshita, the early days of the FWBO and TBMSG in India. The whole collection has been recently much expanded and rearranged.

Also, check the archive sets on FWBO Photos, www.flickr.com/photos/fwbo/sets, where they are collections covering Communities, People, Retreats, Right Livelihood, and India.

Beyond English

FWBO Translations, available at www.fwbo-news.com/resources/translations_2007.pdf, lists most existing translations of FWBO literature into the major world languages, including texts published on the web. There's a lot available in Spanish, French, German, and Dutch - and Hindi and Marathi in India.

Going deeper

If you're looking to get deeper involved in the FWBO, we'd recommend the booklet 'Becoming a Mitra?', prepared by the FWBO's Buddhist centre and available on-line at www.fwbo-news.org/features/bristol-mitra-booklet-jan07.pdf.

If you want to deepen further your practice of the Dharma and your involvement with our Sangha, you will probably be considering asking for Ordination into the Western Buddhist Order. There are around 1,000 men and women in the West preparing for ordination with us, and up to 1,500 in India.

In the UK, Padmaloka and Tiratanaloka retreat centres specialise in helping men and women respectively prepare to enter the Order. Both produce Handbooks outlining what they offer and what is expected; Tiratanaloka's is on-line at tiratanaloka.org/docs/handbook09.pdf. Padmaloka's can be obtained by contacting them directly.



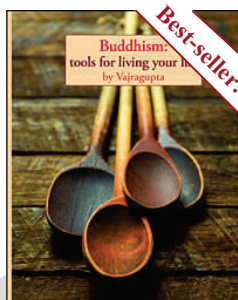


INTRODUCING BUDDHISM

Buddhism: Tools for Living Your Life

By Vajragupta

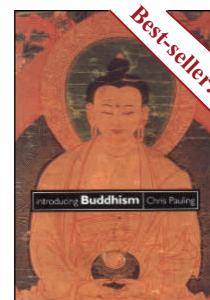
With tempting suggestions, anecdotes and reflections, this guide pinpoints what it means to lead a Buddhist life and how to fit it in amongst the everyday franticness of busy modern lives.



Introducing Buddhism

By Chris Pauling

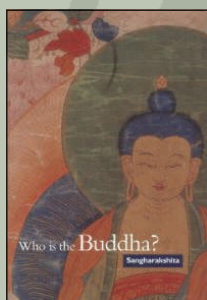
From awareness to wisdom, this concise guide explains the essential teachings and practices that form the basis of most schools of Buddhism.



Introductory books to help you study at home

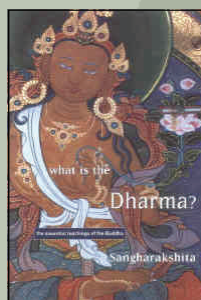
Who is the Buddha?

By Sangharakshita



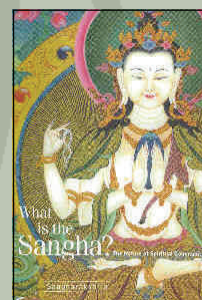
What is the Dharma?

By Sangharakshita

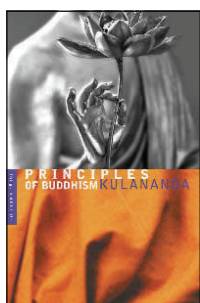


What is the Sangha?

By Sangharakshita



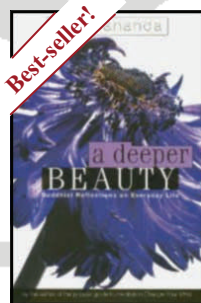
Written by the founder of the FWBO, these three essential texts introduce the *Three Jewels* which are central to Buddhism: The *Buddha* (the Enlightened One), the *Dharma* (the Buddha's teachings) and the *Sangha* (the spiritual community) .



Principles of Buddhism

By Kulananda

A concise overview which introduces the life of the Buddha, Buddhist ideals, Karma, Rebirth, Meditation and Buddhist schools .



A Deeper Beauty

By Paramananda

Using simple exercises and reflections the author, explores meaning, depth and stillness in lives often fuelled by activity and bombarded with information.

How to purchase Windhorse Publications Books

Check the bookshop at your local Buddhist Centre. If the book is not available, please leave a note to the bookshop manager or visit our website at www.windhorsepublications.com and order online.

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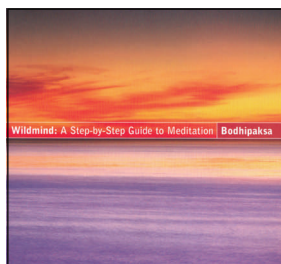


MEDITATION

Wildmind

By Bodhipaksa

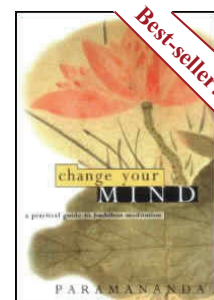
Featuring detailed chapters on practical issues such as attention and posture, this illustrated guide explores different ways to start or deepen your meditation practice.



Change Your Mind

By Paramananda

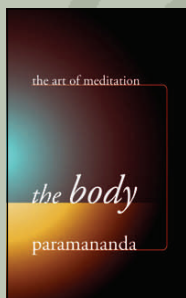
A compact and readable guide dealing imaginatively with the practical difficulties of meditation, meeting distraction and doubt with determination and humour.



First books to help you practice meditation

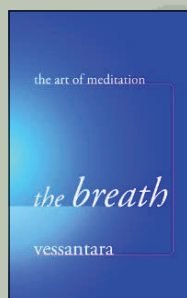
The Body

By Paramananda



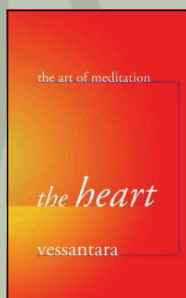
The Breath

By Vessantara

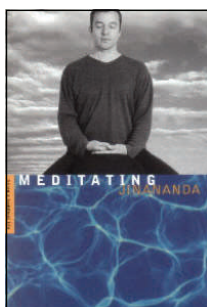


The Heart

By Vessantara



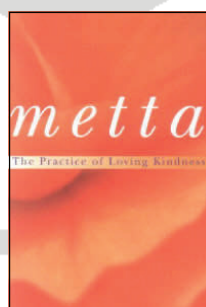
These three pocket-sized guides, written by two of our best-selling authors, will help you develop or deepen your meditation practice through varied exercises. Each book provides clear instructions on how to meditate and practical ways to integrate meditation to daily life.



Meditating

By Jinananda

Realistic, witty and accessible, this pocket-sized guide is peppered with humour and troubleshooting tips.



Metta: The Practice of Loving Kindness

Edited by Nagabodhi

A collection of reflections on metta, a meditation practice which focuses on kindness at its purest and strongest.

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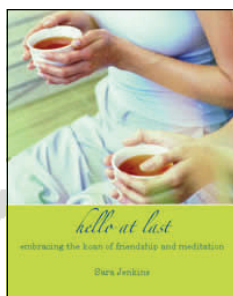
DEVELOPING BUDDHISM

Buddhism & Relationships

Hello at Last

By Sara Jenkins

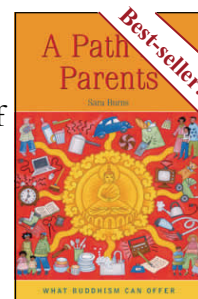
An experienced Zen student under Cheri Huber, the author uses simple practices and exercises to show how to bridge the gap between meditation and social interaction.



A Path for Parents

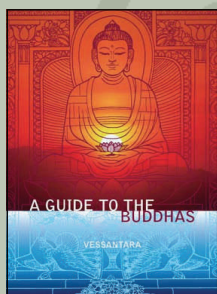
By Sara Burns

An honest and accessible account of how parents can grow spiritually while raising children.



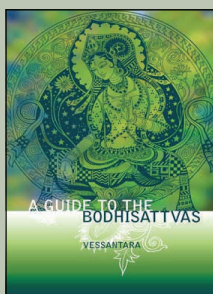
A Guide to the Buddhas

By Vessantara



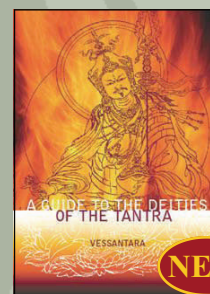
A Guide to the Bodhisattvas

By Vessantara



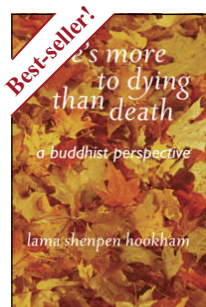
A Guide to the Deities of the Tantra

By Vessantara



This series of three informative guides by one of our best-selling authors introduces the historical and archetypal figures from within the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. Each book focuses on a different set of figures and features full colour illustrations.

Buddhism & Death

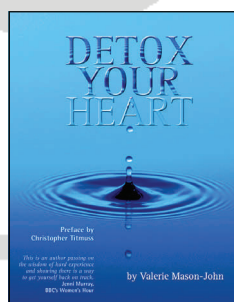


There's More to Dying than Death

By Lama Shenpen Hookham

Drawing on Tibetan Buddhism, this book presents meditation as a way to come to terms with death and explains topics such as impermanence and rebirth.

Buddhism & Anger



Detox Your Heart

By Valerie Mason-John

A guide on how to creatively manage anger from an experienced Buddhist and anger management trainer.

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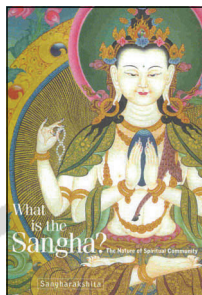
MITRA STUDY

Study texts for the new mitra study course

What is the Sangha?

By Sangharakshita

An exploration of the nature of the spiritual community, considering its place in society as well as its meaning for the individual.



Know your Mind

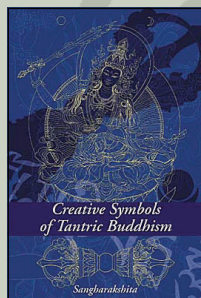
By Sangharakshita

A clear and accessible introduction to the psychology of the *Abhidharma* which explores the nature of mind and how it functions.



Creative Symbols of Tantric Buddhism

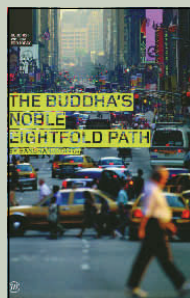
By Sangharakshita



An illustrated introduction to the rich symbolism of the Tantric tradition with chapters on archetypal figures, ritual objects and offerings.

The Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path

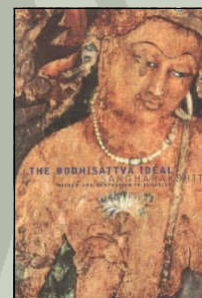
By Sangharakshita



This introduction to the Buddha's essential and most widely known teachings takes the reader deeper while remaining practical, inspiring and accessible.

The Bodhisattva Ideal

By Sangharakshita



A study of *Bodhisattvas*, skilful beings beloved of the Mahayana tradition, who are dedicated to the attainment of Enlightenment.

The Inconceivable Emancipation

By Sangharakshita

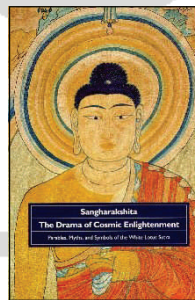
A commentary of the *Vimalakirti-Nirdeśa*, an ancient Mahayana Buddhist scripture which has greatly influenced Zen and Tibetan traditions.



The Drama of Cosmic Enlightenment

By Sangharakshita

This illustrated commentary of the *White Lotus Sutra* shows, through helpful question and answer sections after each chapter, how its myths and parables relate to modern life.



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Buddhist Meditation:

a brief guide

Introduction

Buddhist meditation includes any method of meditation that has Enlightenment as its ultimate aim. Buddhist meditation practices are designed to provide us with a grounding in certain basic human qualities, to help us to become a happy, healthy human being - a necessary foundation for any deeper spiritual practice. From these we can deepen into 'insight' meditations.

This leaflet summarises two central Buddhist practices: the Mindfulness of Breathing, and the Metta Bhavana, both of which are taught at FWBO (Friends of the Western Buddhist Order) centres worldwide. These lead us naturally into deeper, more reflective, states of mind that may help us develop insight into the true nature of reality. Both go back to the time of the Buddha and have been practised ever since by millions of people of all types across the world. In essence, meditation teaches us to take full responsibility for our own states of mind, and offers us a means of transforming negative and reactive patterns in our minds into positive and creative ones. Such change can have a deeply transformative effect, and lead to new understandings of life.

The secret of success for any meditation is good preparation and regular practice. Preparation includes both setting up our meditation posture, finding a suitable place for meditation, and - if we are to go at all deeply into meditation - leading an ethically simple and uncompromised life. To practise regularly we need confidence in the practice and in our own ability to change. As we go on, this confidence becomes more and more deeply rooted in our own personal experience.

The Mindfulness of Breathing: developing calm and concentration

This practice helps us to develop a calm and concentrated mind. We learn to pull together the many scattered fragments of our emotional and mental energy into a single unified whole, with the natural consequence that our minds become more energised, focused, and wholehearted, and therefore, that our experience of life becomes clearer and more vivid, our choices more conscious and more meaningful. Some traditions say the Buddha was doing this practice as he became Enlightened.

This practice makes a very good companion to the Metta Bhavana. Both were taught and strongly recommended by the Buddha. We suggest that anyone developing a serious meditation practice alternates them equally.

Summary of the four stages of the practice:

- Begin by setting up your meditation posture and sitting quietly for a minute or two, to relax and settle yourself. Check your body for tension, and become aware of its general level of energy. Check the overall tone of your energy, emotions, and mental activity, acknowledging these as your starting point for this particular session of meditation.

- 1 Feel the sensation of the breathing as it flows naturally in and out of the body. Just after each breath leaves the body, mark it with a (mental) count of 'one', then 'two', etc. Count ten breaths, then start again at one.
 - 2 After doing this for a short while (say 4-5 minutes) start counting each breath just before it enters the body, counting in the same way as before.
 - 3 After a few minutes of stage 2, stop counting altogether, and simply follow with your mind the whole flow of your breathing.
 - 4 Finally, direct your attention to the point where you most clearly feel the air entering and leaving the body. Focus your attention on the subtle sensations made by the air stimulating that point.
- To end the practice, relax your effort and sit quietly doing nothing for a minute or two, absorbing the effects of the practice, and gradually allowing your attention to expand out again into your surroundings. It is important to end slowly and sensitively. Take time to reflect on how it went.

Throughout the practice, keep an overall perspective on how it is going, and look for ways to move into deeper states of concentration. These include adjusting your posture to balance energy that is too sluggish or too excited, consciously developing interest in your experience, and looking for enjoyment in the practice.



Metta Bhavana:

the development of loving-kindness

Metta is almost impossible to translate adequately, but refers to strong, even passionate, feelings of love, friendliness, and compassion towards all life - feelings felt equally towards all, and completely free from emotional self-interest or grasping. It is sometimes referred to as 'universal loving-kindness'. It is a fundamental attitude of positivity and love that will express itself spontaneously and appropriately in action: as compassion towards the suffering, joy at others' good fortune, help where help is needed, generosity towards the needy, and so on.

Summary of the five stages of the practice:

- Begin as for the Mindfulness of Breathing, checking your overall energy, emotions, and mental activity, acknowledging these as your starting point.

- 1 As you become more fully aware of yourself, develop a response of friendliness, interest, and kindness towards yourself, wishing yourself "happiness and the causes of happiness, freedom from suffering and the causes of suffering, growth and development". One approach is to repeat a suitable sentence to yourself over and over, listening for the resonances in your heart. Another way is to remember a time when you felt this way, and feed that memory with

awareness, thereby bringing it into life in the present. Another is to imaginatively give yourself a gift - a flower, jewel, or flame, symbolising self-metta.

- 2 Move the focus of your awareness onto a good friend and work creatively to contact, develop, and deepen metta towards them, using similar methods to stage 1. Avoid choosing someone for whom you feel sexual or parental feelings.
 - 3 Bring to mind a 'neutral' person, someone for whom you have no clear like or dislike. Look for ways to contact metta for them and then develop and deepen it. This may mean 'bringing them to life' in your mind, reflecting on what you have most deeply in common, or simply taking an imaginative interest in them.
 - 4 Turn your attention to a 'difficult' person. Experience how you actually feel towards them, and try to cultivate a fresh and more mettaful response, perhaps looking for a deeper understanding of them.
 - 5 Lastly, bring to mind all four people and develop metta equally towards all of them. Broaden out to include those around you, in the local area, the country, the world - other forms of life - all life. Develop strong, impartial, universal metta towards all life.
- To end, as in the Mindfulness of Breathing, relax your effort, and gradually expand your awareness outwards slowly and sensitively.

Working in Meditation: going deeper

Once you have learnt the basic practice, there are many ways to take your experience deeper. The art of meditation is always to find a creative way to take your practice one step deeper.

posture

The three keys to a good meditation posture are to be comfortable, relaxed, and alert. Experiment to find what suits you. Your knees should rest firmly on the ground to give you stability, your hands supported in front of you, your buttocks at the correct height, your head balanced, and your muscles relaxed.

the hindrances

Broadly speaking, we may suffer from too little energy available for our meditation or from too much unfocussed and distracted energy. Working with posture is the first thing to try: sitting up straighter or opening our eyes if our energy is low, bringing our attention down into our stomach or relaxing our muscles if it is too high and scattered.

Beyond this we may use the traditional list of the *Five Hindrances*:

- Sloth and Torpor

- Doubt and Indecision

both states of too little energy:

stimulate mind and body

- + Sense-Desire

- + Restlessness and Worry

- + Ill-Will

all excess/unfocussed energy;

-reduce distraction, calm the mind

Work with these by naming them, thus acquiring a perspective on them; cultivating the opposite; considering the consequences of living forever in them; or - if all else fails - allowing them to pass in their own time by adopting a 'sky-like mind'.

daily practice

A daily meditation practice is essential for real progress in meditation. Finding a place and time that suit you, meditating with others, keeping a meditation journal, reading and learning more about meditation - all these may help you to develop a regular practice. Keep your practice clear, bright, and creative.

Enjoy! ♥



Buddhism: a rough guide

Buddhism is a path of practice and spiritual development leading to Insight into the true nature of life. Buddhist practices are means of changing oneself in order to develop the qualities of awareness, kindness, and wisdom. The experience developed within the Buddhist tradition over thousands of years has created an incomparable resource for all those who wish to follow such a path - a path which ultimately culminates in Enlightenment or Buddhahood.

The basic tenets of Buddhist teaching are straightforward and practical: nothing is fixed or permanent; actions have consequences; change is possible. Thus Buddhism addresses itself to all people irrespective of race, nationality, or gender.

Buddhism teaches practical methods (such as meditation) which enable people to realise and utilise its teachings in order to transform their experience, to be fully responsible for their lives and to develop the qualities of Wisdom and Compassion.

There are many ways to describe the path of Buddhism; this leaflet presents its teaching of the well-known Noble Eightfold Path in a simple two-part division: the Path of Vision and the Path of Transformation.

The text is based on the first two of the Eight-Fold Path lectures given by Sangharakshita.

The Path of Vision: glimpsing the nature of existence

Buddhism begins with a vision of the nature of existence, the Truth or the Reality of things. This is the Path of Vision, darsana-marga in Sanskrit, the first step of the Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path.

Perfect Vision represents the phase of initial spiritual insight and experience. This may arise many different ways for different people: personal tragedy and loss; spontaneous mystical experience; by experience of nature or the arts, from deep thought, philosophical study, or meditation; as the result of altruistic activity or our whole experience of life; even in a dream. There is no uniform pattern. But however it arises, we should be very careful we do not lose or forget it: this so easily happens.

Buddhism itself has employed many means to communicate its vision of Truth: images such as the Wheel of Life and the Six Realms, representations of the Buddha himself and later elaborations such as the Mandala of the Five Buddhas, also the very image of the Path itself. All these communicate in some way a vision of our actual present state of spiritual bondage, our future potential state of Enlightenment and the way leading from the one to the other.

Conceptually speaking, Perfect Vision is often explained in terms of experiencing the truth of Buddhist concepts such as the Three Laksanas or Characteristics of Conditioned Existence: these teach that conditioned existence is 'marked', or shot through, with dukkha, or unsatisfactoriness; anitya, or impermanence; and anatman, or the absence of any fixed selfhood. Other formulations include the Four Noble Truths, Karma and Rebirth, and the Four Sunyatas or Emptinesses.

Buddhist concepts may be compared to a map, whose study can lead us to a glimpse of the mountain itself: however the territory is described, it is important to remember Perfect Vision is a glimpse of Reality that is quite simple, direct, and immediate, and more of the nature of a spiritual experience than intellectual understanding.

After Vision comes Transformation: transformation of one's whole being in all its heights and depths, from top to bottom, in accordance with one's insight and experience.



The Path of Transformation:

cease to do evil, learn to do good

The Path of Transformation is a complete, total, thoroughgoing transformation of one's emotional life, speech, communication with other people, relationships, livelihood and more. The Path of Transformation aims to enable us to bring the whole of our being on all levels up to the level of the highest moments of our lives. This is what it really means to follow the Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path.

Buddhism sees life as a process of constant change, and its practices aim to take advantage of this fact. It means that one can change for the better. The decisive factor in changing oneself is the mind, and Buddhism has developed many methods for working on the mind - most importantly, the practise of meditation. Meditation is a way of developing more positive states of mind that are characterised by calm, concentration, awareness, and kindness. Using the awareness developed in meditation it is possible to have a deep understanding of oneself, other people, and of life itself.

One aspect of Transformation is a giving up of all that limits us or holds us back. This is the practice of renunciation or nekkhama. This springs naturally from a decrease of craving within us, consequent upon our vision of the true nature of conditioned things. It manifests as stillness, simplicity, and contentment.

The positive aspect of transformation consists in cultivating the remainder of the Eightfold Path:

Perfect Emotion,
Perfect Speech,
Perfect Action,
Perfect Livelihood,
Perfect Effort,
Perfect Mindfulness, and
Perfect Meditation.

To take just the first, the positive aspect of Perfect Emotion consists in developing dana, maitri and karuna: generosity, loving-kindness, and compassion. These are followed by mudita and upeksa: sympathetic joy and tranquillity, and finally sraddha - faith and devotion.

The central problem of the spiritual life - for most people at least - is to find emotional equivalents for their intellectual understanding. This is illustrated in the well-known story of the great Indian teacher Bodhidharma meeting the Emperor of China.

The Emperor asked, 'What is the fundamental principle of Buddhism?' Bodhidharma answered 'Cease to do evil, learn to do good, purify the heart'. The Emperor was rather taken back, and said 'Is that all? Even a child of three can understand that!' And Bodhidharma replied: 'Yes your majesty: but even an old man of eighty cannot put it into practice!'



Introduction to the FWBO

Buddhism for the modern world

The FWBO (Friends of the Western Buddhist Order) is an international network dedicated to communicating Buddhist truths in ways appropriate to the modern world.

It was founded in London in 1968 by Sangharakshita. Having originally taken ordination as a Theravadin Bhikkhu in India, during his twenty years practicing Buddhism on the Indo-Tibetan border he went on to take initiations from a number of the Lamas escaping the Chinese occupation of Tibet. When he returned to England, he experienced first-hand the limited context in which Westerners had to practice the Dharma and his response was to found a new Buddhist movement.

Bringing Buddhism into an entirely new culture implied to Sangharakshita that we needed to go back to basics — to look at the principles underlying all forms of Buddhism and work out how best to apply them in this new context. So the FWBO is based on the principle of 'critical ecumenicalism': aligned to no one traditional school, but drawing on the whole stream of Buddhist inspiration.

Now that Buddhism has come to the West, Westerners are faced with the task of creating new and viable Buddhist traditions for the modern world. The FWBO has pioneered new structures that allow people to live out Buddhist teachings as an authentic Buddhist way of life in the 21st century: team-based right livelihood businesses, communities, socially engaged fundraising projects such as the Karuna Trust, and more. Over the last forty years the FWBO has grown to be one of the largest Buddhist movements in the West, with centres and activities in many cities around the world including India.

According to Sangharakshita, the FWBO/TBMSG has six distinctive features, which constitute its particular individuality - an individuality which has developed as a result of practicing the Dharma under the conditions of modern, industrialised, urbanised, secularised, living; conditions which are fast becoming worldwide.

First, the FWBO/TBMSG is an ecumenical movement, signifying that in principle it accepts the whole Buddhist tradition as it has developed over the centuries in the East. Specifically it bases itself upon the principle of critical ecumenicalism, trying to understand what the various texts and traditions

really mean - and to apply that meaning to the living of our lives as Buddhists.

Secondly, it is a unified movement in the sense that membership of the FWBO/TBMSG is open to all regardless of nationality, race, colour, education, class or caste, cultural background, gender, sexual orientation, or age: it seeks to welcome and value all as individuals. More specifically, the Western Buddhist Order is open to both men and women on fully equal terms: this is revolutionary compared to traditional Eastern Buddhism, where ordination (or its equivalent) is generally not open to women.

Thirdly, it holds the act of Going for Refuge to the Three Jewels (the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha) to be the central and definitive act of a Buddhist.

Fourthly, it places great on spiritual friendship or kalyana mitrata, and fifthly, on team based right livelihood, where it has been a pioneer in the field. Sixthly and lastly, it emphasises the importance of the Arts for the spiritual life, seeing them as potentially bearers of spiritual values, which can help people to transform their lives.

In the last 40 years the FWBO has grown into a movement with dozens of centres all over the world. And not only in the West — the FWBO has a substantial presence in India, as well as Dharma activities in other developing countries. Sangharakshita has now handed-on responsibility for the FWBO's spiritual vitality to his followers. The FWBO is entering a new phase of growth and consolidation, learning from, and building upon its history, and developing into a broad-based, mature and experienced spiritual community. It is playing a significant role in bringing Buddhism to the West.

In India the FWBO is known as the Trailokya Bauddha Mahasangha (TBMSG), where it has been established for some 30 years. The work in India has two aspects: firstly providing facilities for teaching the Dharma among Buddhists from the communities formerly known as 'untouchable', and secondly running social work projects to contribute to the betterment of those communities. Much of this is funded by the Karuna Trust and other FWBO projects in the West.



Basic FWBO texts

The Threefold Puja

Opening Reverence

We reverence the Buddha,
The Perfectly Enlightened One,
The Shower of the Way.

We reverence the Dharma,
The Teaching of the Buddha,
Which leads from darkness to light.

We reverence the Sangha,
The fellowship of the Buddha's disciples,
That inspires and guides.

Offerings to the Buddha

Reverencing the Buddha, we offer flowers:
Flowers that today are fresh and sweetly blooming,
Flowers that tomorrow are faded and fallen.
Our bodies too, like flowers, will pass away.

Reverencing the Buddha, we offer candles:
To him who is the light, we offer light.
From his greater lamp a lesser lamp we light within
us:
The lamp of Bodhi shining within our hearts.

Reverencing the Buddha, we offer incense:
incense whose fragrance pervades the air.
The fragrance of the perfect life, sweeter than
incense
Spreads in all directions throughout the world

Reverence to the Three Jewels

We reverence the Buddha, and aspire to follow
him.
The Buddha was born as we are born.
What the Buddha attained we too can attain
What the Buddha overcame we too can overcome.

We reverence the Dharma, and aspire to follow it
With body, speech and mind, until the end.
The truth in all its aspects, the path in all its stages,
We aspire to study, practise, realise.

We reverence the Sangha, and aspire to follow it;
The fellowship of those who tread the way.
As, one by one, we make our own commitment,
An ever-widening circle, the Sangha grows.

The Dedication Ceremony

We dedicate this place to the Three Jewels:
To the Buddha, the Ideal of Enlightenment to which
we aspire;
To the Dharma, the Path of the Teaching which we
follow;
To the Sangha, the spiritual fellowship with one
another which we enjoy.

Here may no idle word be spoken;
Here may no unquiet thought disturb our minds.

To the observance of the Five Precepts
We dedicate this place;
To the practice of meditation
We dedicate this place;
To the development of wisdom
We dedicate this place;
To the attainment of Enlightenment
We dedicate this place.

Though in the world outside there is strife
Here may there be peace;
Though in the world outside there is hate
Here may there be love;
Though in the world outside there is grief

Here may there be joy.

Not by the chanting of the sacred Scriptures,
Not by the sprinkling of holy water,
But by own efforts towards Enlightenment
We dedicate this place.

Around this Mandala, this sacred spot,
May the lotus petals of purity open;
Around this Mandala, this sacred spot,
May the vajra-wall of determination extend;
Around this Mandala, this sacred spot,
May the flames that transmute Samsara into
Nirvana arise.

Here seated, here practising,
May our mind become Buddha,
May our thought become Dharma,
May our communication with one another be
Sangha.

For the happiness of all beings,
For the benefit of all beings,
With body, speech, and mind,
We dedicate this place.



The Sevenfold Puja

WORSHIP

With mandarava, blue lotus and jasmine,
With all flowers, pleasing and fragrant,
And with garlands skilfully woven,
I pay honour to the princes of the sages,
So worthy of veneration.
I envelop them in clouds of incense,
Sweet and penetrating;
I make them offerings of food, hard and soft,
And pleasing kinds of liquids to drink.
I offer them lamps encrusted with jewels,
Festooned with golden lotus,
On the paving, sprinkled with perfume,
I scatter handfuls of beautiful flowers.

AVALOKITESVARA MANTRA

Om Mani Padme Hum

SALUTATION

As many atoms as there are,
In the thousand million worlds,
So many times I make reverent salutation
To all the Buddhas of the three eras,
To the Saddharma,
And to the excellent Community.
I pay homage to all the shrines
And places in which the Bodhisattvas have been.
I make profound obeisance to the teachers
And those to whom respectful salutation is due.

GOING FOR REFUGE

This very day,
I go for my refuge
To the powerful Protectors,
Whose purpose is to guard the universe,
The mighty conquerors who overcome suffering
everywhere.
Wholeheartedly also I take my refuge
In the Dharma they have ascertained,
Which is the abode of security against the
rounds of rebirth;
Likewise in the host of Bodhisattvas
I take my refuge.

refuges and precepts

CONFESSION OF EVIL

The evil which I have heaped up
Through my ignorance and foolishness -
Evil in the world of everyday experience,
As well as evil in understanding and intelligence
-

All that I acknowledge to the Protectors.
Standing before them
With hands raised in reverence,
And terrified of suffering,
I pay salutations again and again.
May the leaders receive this kindly,
Just as it is, with its many faults!
What is not good, O Protectors,
I shall not do again.

REJOICING IN MERIT

I rejoice with delight
In the good done by all beings,
Through which they obtain rest
With the end of suffering.
May those who have suffered be happy!
I rejoice in the release of beings
From the sufferings of the rounds of existence;
I rejoice in the nature of the Bodhisattva
And the Buddha,
Who are Protectors.
I rejoice in the arising of the Will to
Enlightenment,
And the Teaching:
Those oceans which bring happiness to all
beings,
And are the abode of welfare of all beings.

ENTREATY AND SUPPLICATION

Saluting them with folded hands
I entreat the Buddhas in all the quarters:
May they make shine the lamp of the Dharma
For those wandering in the suffering of delusion!
With hands folded in reverence
I implore the conquerors desiring to enter
Nirvana:
May they remain here for endless ages,
So that life in this world does not grow dark.

Reading and the Heart Sutra



TRANSFERENCE OF MERIT AND SELF-SURRENDER

May the merit gained
In my acting thus
Go to the alleviation of the suffering of all beings.
My personality throughout my existences,
My possessions,
And my merit in all three ways,
I give up without regard to myself
For the benefit of all beings.
Just as the earth and other elements
Are serviceable in many ways
To the infinite number of beings,
Inhabiting limitless space,
So may I become
That which maintains all beings
Situating throughout space,
So long as all have not attained
To peace.

mantras
om ah hum jetsun guru Padma siddhi hum
(Padmasambhava mantra)
om mani padme hum (Avalokitesvara)
om a ra pa ca na dhih (Manjusri)
om vajrapani hum (Vajrapani)
om tare tuttara ture svaha (Tara)
om amideva hrih (Amitabha)
om muni muni maha muni sakyamuni svaha
(Sakyamuni Buddha)
om ah hum vajra guru padma siddhi hum
(Padmasambhava)
gate gate paragate parasamgate bodhi svaha
(Prajnaparamita/blue sky)

om santi santi santi

the Refuges and Precepts

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato
Sammāsambuddhassa
Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato
Sammāsambuddhassa
Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato
Sammāsambuddhassa

Buddham Saranam Gacchami
Dhammam Saranam Gacchami
Sangham Saranam Gacchami

Dutiyampi Buddham Saranam Gacchami
Dutiyampi Dhammam Saranam Gacchami
Dutiyampi Sangham Saranam Gacchami

Tatiyampi Buddham Saranam Gacchami
Tatiyampi Dhammam Saranam Gacchami
Tatiyampi Sangham Saranam Gacchami

translation

Homage to Him, the Blessed One, the Worthy One,
the Perfectly Enlightened One! (x3)

To the Buddha for refuge I go.
To the Dharma for refuge I go.
To the Sangha for refuge I go.

For the second time to the Buddha for refuge I go.
For the second time to the Dharma for refuge I go.
For the second time to the Sangha for refuge I go.

For the third time to the Buddha for refuge I go.
For the third time to the Dharma for refuge I go.
For the third time to the Sangha for refuge I go.

five precepts

Panātipata Veramani Sikkhapadam Samādiyami
Adinnādāna Veramani Sikkhapadam Samādiyami
Kamesu Micchacara Veramani Sikkhapadam
Samādiyami
Musavāda Veramani Sikkhapadam Samādiyami
Surameraya Majja Pamadatthana Veramani
Sikkhapadam Samādiyami

sadhu sadhu sadhu

the positive precepts

With deeds of loving kindness, I purify my body.
With open-handed generosity, I purify my body.
With stillness, simplicity, and contentment, I purify
my body.
With truthful communication, I purify my speech.
With mindfulness clear and radiant, I purify my
mind.

translation

I undertake to abstain from taking life.
I undertake to abstain from taking the not-given.
I undertake to abstain from sexual misconduct.
I undertake to abstain from false speech.
I undertake to abstain from taking intoxicants.



The Heart Sutra

The Bodhisattva of Compassion,
When he meditated deeply,
Saw the emptiness of all five skandhas
And sundered the bonds that caused him
suffering.

Here then,
Form is no other than emptiness,
Emptiness no other than form.
Form is only emptiness,
Emptiness only form.
Feeling, thought, and choice,
Consciousness itself,
Are the same as this.

All things are by nature void
They are not born or destroyed
Nor are they stained or pure
Nor do they wax or wane

So, in emptiness, no form,
No feeling, thought, or choice,
Nor is there consciousness.
No eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind;
No colour, sound, smell, taste, touch,
Or what the mind takes hold of,
Nor even act of sensing.

No ignorance or end of it,
Nor all that comes of ignorance;
No withering, no death,
No end of them.

Nor is there pain, or cause of pain,
Or cease in pain, or noble path
To lead from pain;
Not even wisdom to attain!
Attainment too is emptiness.

So know that the Bodhisattva
Holding to nothing whatever,
But dwelling in Prajna wisdom,
Is freed of delusive hindrance,
Rid of the fear bred by it,
And reaches clearest Nirvana.

All Buddhas of past and present,
Buddhas of future time,
Using this Prajna wisdom,
Come to full and perfect vision.

Hear then the great dharani,
The radiant peerless mantra,
The Prajnaparamita
Whose words allay all pain;
Hear and believe its truth!

Gate Gate Paragate Parasamgate Bodhi Svaha

