



Lokamitra aboard

We are delighted to welcome Dhammachari Lokamitra of Pune, India, to our advisory board. He has worked tirelessly among the Dalit community since the 1970s. Dh. Lokamitra submitted the following. Lokamitra was born Jeremy Goody in London in 1947. He was ordained into the Western Buddhist Order (WBO) in January 1974 as a Dhammachari, and given the name Lokamitra. In

1975 he became Chairman of the North London Buddhist Centre of the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order (FWBO). In 1977 he visited India, stopping in Nagpur to meet some of Sangharakshita's former disciples. By chance he arrived on the 21st anniversary of Dr. Ambedkar's momentous conversion to Buddhism in Nagpur in 1956 along with 500,000 followers who were previously designated as Untouchables in the Hindu caste system. This day changed his life. Encouraged by Sangharakshita, he decided to remain in India. For the first twenty years he helped initiate and guide the activities of Trailokya Bauddha Mahasangha, Sahayaka Gana (TBMSG), the Indian name for FWBO, and its social wing Bahujan Hitay especially amongst the followers of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. In 1984 he married a local Buddhist and they have two children.

TBMSG now has over twenty Dharma centres, as well as four retreat centres, while Bahujan Hitay runs over 25 hostels for children who otherwise would not easily get an education, as well as about 80 community health and education projects in the slums of Bombay, Nagpur, Pune and other towns.

In recent years Lokamitra has concentrated on the following projects:

1. Establishing the Nagarjuna Institute in Nagpur to train Buddhists from different parts of India in basic Buddhist teachings and practices;
2. Developing the Jambudvipa Trust in Pune. This trains and advises social workers and activists from socially deprived communities in different parts of India, and is especially concerned with responding to the needs of such communities in times of calamities. Jambudvipa made a considerable contribution to relief following the Gujarat Earthquake and the Tsunami in South India; and
3. Creating understanding and bridges between Buddhist followers of Dr. Ambedkar and other Buddhists in India and abroad. Please visit www.jambudvipa.org for information about this inspiring work.

