

An Update On Restorative Process In Triratna

October 2018

This is a report on the Restorative work undertaken over the last year within Triratna, which was introduced in the Adhithana kula's posts of 13th April and 15th June 2017, entitled "A Reconciliation process" and "Why Restorative approach?"

Read ["A Reconciliation process"](#)

Read ["Why Restorative approach?"](#)

[Listen to our podcast on Restorative Process in Triratna](#)

In 2017 Triratna's Adhithana kula undertook to:

1. Offer training in 'Restorative' practice within Triratna, as part of a process of learning to go deeper with difficult conversations; revisiting and learning further from past mistakes; and offering clear policies, protocols, processes and training to help us all deal with the challenges of community more effectively now and in the future.
2. Review Triratna centres and projects where there has been disharmony, to see what was done to address these at the time and whether there is anything more that can be done.
3. Offer a Restorative process with an external facilitator where there has been unresolved conflict, breach of trust, harm or disharmony between individuals.

Here is what the Kula has done under each of these headings.

1. Offering training in 'Restorative' practice within Triratna, as part of a process of learning to go deeper with difficult conversations; revisiting and learning further from past mistakes; and offering clear policies, protocols, processes and training to help us all deal with the challenges of community more effectively now and in the future.

In March 2017, the Adhithana Kula, in consultation with Triratna's College of Public Preceptors and International Council Steering Group, undertook to explore the potential for the use of "Restorative" skills within Triratna. This arose from awareness of a need to find more effective ways of addressing disharmony when relationships have become

strained or broken down.

“Restorative” practice, or process, is a methodology that can be used in many situations “to prevent conflict, build relationships and repair harm by enabling people to communicate effectively and positively”. Having developed from a process used in the criminal justice system it has been successfully adapted for many other situations including schools, children’s services, workplaces, hospitals and communities.

In April 2017 at an international meeting of Triratna presidents, 22 presidents participated in a day’s training with Janine Carroll, an external specialist in Restorative process, 12 of whom went on to complete an additional two days’ training in July 2017. The training was much appreciated and several presidents have since applied their training to conflict situations in the centres where they are president.

Visit the Restorative Now website for more details on Janine’s approach:
www.restorativenow.com

Introductory training in Restorative process also took place at the January 2018 meeting of the European Chairs’ Assembly. Further introductory days have been offered for Order members and Regional Order Convenors; further two-day training sessions are also being offered to Chairs and others. A network of those who have had the three days training is being formed, to offer mutual support and advice and have a pool of facilitators who can offer help when needed.

2. A review of Triratna centres and projects where there has been disharmony, to see what was done to address these at the time, and whether there is anything more that can be done.

Restorative practice may be used both to address matters from the past and current or potential difficulties. A Restorative co-ordinating group has been set up to monitor this work, whose members are Jnanasiddhi, Shantigarbha, (both professionals in this field) and Ratnadarini (a member of the Adhithana Kula).

At present several Sanghas are using Restorative process to resolve past difficulties, the details of which are confidential to those involved.

A range of issues have been referred to the Restorative co-ordinating group, who have followed through with a restorative approach. A notice has gone out in Shabda, outlining the work of the Co-ordinating group and how it can be contacted by those who feel a restorative process might be of help.

3. Offering a Restorative process with an external facilitator where there has been unresolved conflict, breach of trust, harm or disharmony between individuals.

We began with those men who had sexual contact with Sangharakshita in the 1970s and 1980s.

This has been the source of much speculation, discomfort and uncertainty in Triratna, as well as a subject of debate and concern in the public domain. While Sangharakshita is still alive it is important to us to do as much as we can to heal the past. We therefore asked Janine Carroll, our external specialist in Restorative process, to work with us.

Our first task was to ascertain who we might contact and how. Over about three months we contacted a number of Order members from the 1970s and 1980s, when the Buddhist community was still very small and Sangharakshita's sexual activity was well known. We cross-checked several times. As far as we can tell, 25 men were sexually involved with Sangharakshita.

We have attempted to contact all those men still living, using an intermediary first for those that have left the Order.

This work is confidential to those involved, but everyone contacted has been offered the services of the external facilitator, Janine Carroll. There have been three requests for a Restorative process, not all with Sangharakshita.

Sangharakshita has also met with Janine, the external facilitator, and has said he is happy that this work is taking place. Despite considerable publicity no other ex-partners have come forward, but anyone else is welcome to contact us at kula@adhithana.org.

We have also offered Restorative conversations in other situations not connected to Sangharakshita, and we expect this to continue.

Janine has commented generally on the progress of Restorative work and training in Triratna:

“This progress is encouraging and emphasises the merit in implementing this culture change, and the importance Triratna's leaders place upon the quality of relationships, and Triratna's capacity to address any disharmony effectively.”

Having introduced Restorative practice to Triratna in a relatively short time, we intend at the end of 2018 to review its integration and its alignment with our values as Buddhists.