

european chairs assembly

January 2018



“taking stock and seeing with new eyes”

These seem to be changeable times within Triratna, with plenty of debate about our community and approach to the Dharma life, and similarly there has been quite a bit of change within the membership at the European chairs meeting over the last year, with a number of chairs coming to the end of a long stint of chairing. So it seemed an appropriate time to *'take stock and look with fresh eyes'* in order to move forward with increasing clarity, inspiration and confidence.

Subhadassi very ably facilitated a day on this theme to help the chairs reflect on and explore four questions (i) how can this meeting best serve you? (ii) how can this meeting best serve your centre / project? (iii) how could this meeting best serve the wider movement? and (iv) how can you best serve the meeting?



The meeting also included, as usual, a day of reporting-in in small groups and plentiful opportunities for deepening friendships, connecting with other chairs to share experiences, and meeting in ‘focus’ groups to discuss topics of relevance; ranging from data protection to a look at the topic of ‘power & influence’.

A Day With the College

Saddhaloka, Mahamati, Maitreyabandhu and Ratnadharini have offered to attend ECAs regularly as representatives of the College of Public Preceptors to ensure better collaboration between the two bodies.

At this meeting, Saddhaloka reported on the changes planned for the running of the College, such as the greater emphasis of working in *kulas* and the establishment of the college chair’s council.

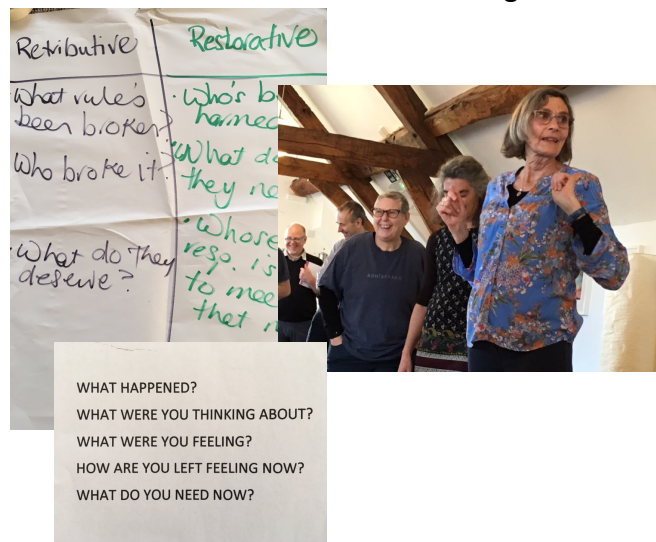
Ratnadharini talked about Insight Practices within the Order – starting off with asking the chairs *“What conditions have, in your experience, particularly contributed to the lessening of greed, hatred and delusion?”*



Restorative Process

One day of the meeting was given over to an introduction to restorative approaches to conflict resolution, very able facilitated by Janine Carroll from 'restorativenow.com' who has already led training days for other groups within Triratna and assisted the Adhithana kula.

Over the course of the day Janine led us on a journey, looking, amongst other things, at four choices of intervention in a given conflict situation, the difference of restorative and retributive relationships, and the question of what is needed both when we have caused harm ourselves or have been at the receiving end of it.



In addition, one evening of the week was spent enjoying 'Centre presentations', always a highlight at these meetings: this time from Barcelona and Buddhafield. And of course the meeting included a business meeting and an update on the 2018 development fund budget.



Updates and reports

The Sikkha Project aims to "strengthen within Triratna a single, progressive framework of dharma teaching and training at all levels, based on the five dimensions of the system of spiritual life". Ratnaguna informed us about this project which is currently involved in generating effective dharma teaching material and presenting training events while also contributing to creating and maintaining a culture that is uncompromisingly behind Bhante's vision of the dharma.

The chairs also heard updates from the FutureDharma Fund and from members of the Development Team on projects planned for the coming year. Munisha presented a Safeguarding Update 'Protecting Living Beings' and introduced the new safeguarding team, consisting of herself, Stthirajyoti and Amaladipa.

Last, but certainly not least, each day started and ended, as on any chairs meeting, with collective practice in the shrine room.

