

## EUROPEAN CHAIRS ASSEMBLY JULY 2017

The chairs of the European Triratna Buddhist Centres meet twice a year, usually at Adhithana - this time their July meeting was held at Vajrasana; the LBC's 'new' retreat centre, to which Jnanavaca introduced us on the first day.



The ECA exists to help help create a vibrant and united Triratna Community in Europe. There are three principle aspects to the meeting - it is a place for developing friendships and making connections; it aims to be a source of inspiration both for personal practice and for developing our local sanghas, and thirdly it is a place of support for chairs by setting vision, making collective decisions, and providing resources and training to help chairs run their centre or project.



Each day is framed by a double period of meditation in the morning, and Meditation and Puja on most evenings.



64 chairs and representatives from major Triratna projects from Europe and beyond - from as far as Australia and South America - met at Vajrasana in July 2017 for the European Chairs Assembly - one of the largest meetings yet!

**Maitreyabandhu** gave two talks on 'bodhicitta and Bhante's vision', which was followed by discussion and the bodhicitta practice.



The talks ranged from reference to 'the indefinable spirit of the Order' to *silā-samadhi-prajña* and the fact 'we need all three, all the time'; to looking at tendencies in the way we talk about Insight as well as how we talk about 'changing the world' - changing the world often seems to be always about others and not ourselves! - and about the Triratna Buddhist Community as the expression of bodhicitta.

In a world that is increasingly divided, how do we create a model of 'we' so we can hold that indefinable spirit of the Order and pass it on to future generations....



Members of the **Adhithana Kula** reported back on developments of both their work and that of the College of Public Preceptors and put a series of questions to the chairs for discussion.

This was followed by a day of '**Taking Stock**' - including a much appreciated morning of assimilation and reflection on the previous days' material; led with warmth and creativity by Subhadassi.



Sanghadhara from Clearvision recording one of the talks

*"We need our insight tested by love; and our love tested by insight - otherwise our love just becomes another kind of attachment and if insight is not tested by love, it becomes not worth having." Maitreyabandhu*



### **Metta for Merida**

Vajranatha gave a moving report on the very challenging situation in Venezuela and asked for help from the chairs present. There is now a page on thebuddhistcentre online for [metta for merida](#)



Part of every meeting involves the chairs being informed by a range of central Triratna projects as these affect and influence their work at Buddhist Centres - so this time we had **updates and reports** from the buddhistcentre online, the futuredharma fund, the Abhayaratna Trust, the

Karuna Trust; as well as presentations on safeguarding, and on the Chairs' Development Fund



and Keturaja shared his "Thoughts on Developing a Triratna Economy".

Chairs Meetings are of course not just about business however, and this time the meeting included **two talks on the theme of how to help create a thriving Buddhist Centre:**

### **How do Centres Grow?!**

Danapriya shared from the wealth of his experiences of helping create the thriving Deal & East Kent Triratna group with a practical and inspiring list of suggestions how to attract, inspire and involve people.

### **How to Create Intensity and Depth at Centres**

Ratnaghosha explored how we may move from 'uttana' - 'superficial, thoughtless' to 'ghambira' - 'deep, profound, the unfathomable' by emphasising the importance of reflection and solitary retreats on the one hand, and collective practice on the other.

**Pop-ups:** It seems to have become part of the tradition of chairs meeting - at least at the moment - to end the event with a space for 'pop-ups': 10 minute talks that any of the chairs or reps present may decide to offer, on any topic that they want to bring to the attention of the meeting - this can include bright ideas, suggestions for future meetings, reflections, proposals, events that have worked well at their Centre, and so on.

For further info on any aspect of this summary of the July 2017 ECA meeting please contact [mokshini@triratnadevelopment.org](mailto:mokshini@triratnadevelopment.org)

