**Marriages**

In the UK the law has recently changed to allow marriages to be celebrated in a much greater range of places. Click here for a general introduction. The change in the law has prompted some debate within UK Triratna centres. While each Centre is free to decide its own approach, the following are some notes from Vajratara who discussed this issue with Sangharakshita. At the end is a fuller discussion of the current state of (UK) law and how it might apply to Triratna Buddhist Centres, by Munisha.

– Weddings: Bhante made the point that there is no such thing as a Buddhist wedding.

– In a Buddhist country, the couple usually visit the Temple after their wedding ceremony and reception in order to ask for a blessing from a monk. They do not bring the whole wedding party with them. Bhante suggested that we follow that example.

– If an Order Member or Mitra wanted to get married, the legal part of the ceremony and the reception could take place elsewhere, and the couple, with perhaps a few close friends and relatives, could visit the Buddhist Centre for a blessing.

– The blessing ceremony could be a puja with the three traditional offerings, blessings and a short talk by an Order Member exhorting the couple to live as Buddhists.

– Bhante emphasised that there should be no full scale wedding and reception at a Buddhist Centre, nor should an Order Member go to the wedding ceremony or reception to give a blessing as part of their celebrations (though they could go as a guest).

– The principle is that the reception and wedding itself should be kept entirely separate from the blessings so that in no way could the wedding be interpreted as a Buddhist wedding.

– Bhante was also keen that the couple should be reminded to keep the wedding as simple as possible and not spend a lot of money on the ceremony. Any anniversaries could be similarly marked with a party elsewhere and a blessing at the Buddhist Centre.

A fuller discussion of the current state of UK law and how it might apply to Triratna Buddhist Centres, by Munisha, is available here: Munisha-UK-Marriage-Civil-Partnerships-Info