
ECA JAN 2017 REPORT

Leadership

was the topic at the heart of this year's winter meeting of the European Chairs Assembly. It took place in the welcoming environment of Adhithana, where a record 60+ chairs and representatives from the main Tiratna projects met for a week of friendship, inspiration, discussion, training and practice.

Jnanacandra from Essen welcomed the meeting on the first night and fronted the closing event. 12 chairs were at the meeting for the first time (probably a record!) and 8 chairs left the meeting: we had so many rejoicings we had to spread them over several days!



The first day was spent in the reporting-in groups, as is commonly the case on these meetings, to allow everyone present to arrive and connect. The deepening friendships that develop over the years are for many chairs an important aspect of these meetings.

On Day 2 the first item on the agenda were four short talks on the topic of '**Chair as spiritual practice**'. Thought-provoking and useful offerings from Dassini (Glasgow), Saddhanandi, (Adhithana) Sujana (Norwich) and Amalamati (Valencia).

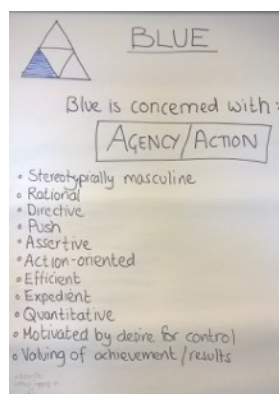


Verses from the Seven Point Mind Training popped up in more than one talk....

"When the world is filled with negativity, transform adverse conditions into the path of awakening."

"Drive all blame into one"

"Be grateful to everyone and everything"



Workshops on leadership

led by Subhadassi and Arthavadin

Subhadassi invited the chairs to explore how they can be better leaders than they already are, using image and reflection.

He invited chairs to reflect on the question "How can I live and work in a way that enriches and protects the lineage of inspiration?" and asked us to ponder where we might reside on the levels of action:

- admin
- management
- leadership
- pointing out that if the last is too hard it's easy to divert to lower levels.



Jnavaca

suggested the four tantric rites as one way to explore leadership as well as offering some general observations about the Movement. He talked of the Rite of

- **Fascination:** *this attracts people to the dharma. As chairs we need to have a degree of this – we need to be inspired and confident; have confidence in Bhante's vision.*
- **Maturation:** *leaders bestow blessings - "a leader gives credit rather than taking credit"*
- **Pacification:** *we need a big perspective - "Leaders take the blame; they don't give blame"; "A leader uses conflict rather than avoids conflict"*
- **Destruction:** *A leader is more concerned with what 'is right', than with 'being right'. We need to apply the rite of destruction at times, skilfully; for example to stop the culture of secularisation.*





The chairs meeting also included:

a powerpoint presentation and update from Munisha on the state of **safeguarding and ethical guidelines** in Triratna

an **update on the future dharma fund**. Amalavajra pointed out that £25,000 of the already dispersed grants are for funding activities beyond the UK, a trend he hopes to continue. The next fundraising round will focus on 'Triratna @ 50' - how we can act coherently and collectively to have the best possible effect on this world over the next 50 years?



Clearvision's new chair Sanghadhara shared his vision for the project - explaining what Clearvision does, and their plans and projects for the future

'pop up talks': short presentation by chairs on a variety of topics: bright ideas - passing on of what has worked well at Centres - pointers to more effective meditation teaching - ways to involve volunteers; amongst other things

Update on **Buddhist Action Month 2017**: the theme is 'Connecting for Change'



for questions or further information please contact mokshini@triratnadevelopment.org

Arthavadin introduced chairs to a simple and effective model of leadership development - the "BRY an D White Model" :) - designed to help find out who we are as individuals, and what our strengths and weaknesses are. Blue (action), Red (relational) and Yellow (reflective) are used to stand for broad character types to help us explore both how we may function and how we may be seen and respond to others.



50 years of Triratna

Over the weekend of 8 & 9 April the Triratna Buddhist Community world-wide will celebrate and mark its founding; or rather the founding of the 'Friends of the Western Buddhist Order' on 6 April 1967. Each Triratna Centre is invited to create a short video clip or collection of images and upload; so we can co-create a sense of **#Triratna50** through time and across the world!



Saddhaloka gave a presentation on behalf of College Public Preceptors -

He mentioned Bhante's recent confessional statement, saying that we need to both fully take on board the difficult aspects of our history, and remember the incredible gift that Bhante has given us, and reaffirm that he is our founder and teacher. He went on to speak about the current resurgence of interest in Insight in the Order and movement, seeing this as a very positive development. He noted though, that we have to take care not to over identify Insight with just one teaching, such as the ten fetters, or one particular method or approach. Bhante has always placed Insight firmly in the context of the Bodhisattva Ideal, with all of its mystery, beauty and sense of wonder. He speculated that we might be finding ourselves re-enacting within Triratna an aspect in the history of the Buddhist tradition - needing to re-assert the Mahayana emphasis on the Bodhisattva Ideal in the face of increasing individualism and a limited focus on personal insight.

He gave a presentation on bodhicitta, following on from one given by Subhuti at the November 2016 College meeting, and suggested that bodhicitta needs to be given fresh emphasis. We do not want to detract from the interest in Insight, but we need to make sure it is embedded in this greater context where the most profound wisdom is seen as inseparable from the deepest love and compassion of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

'If the roots go deep enough, the tree will flourish abundantly'
Dilgo Khyentse