



# The Triratna Buddhist Order and Community

a worldwide movement

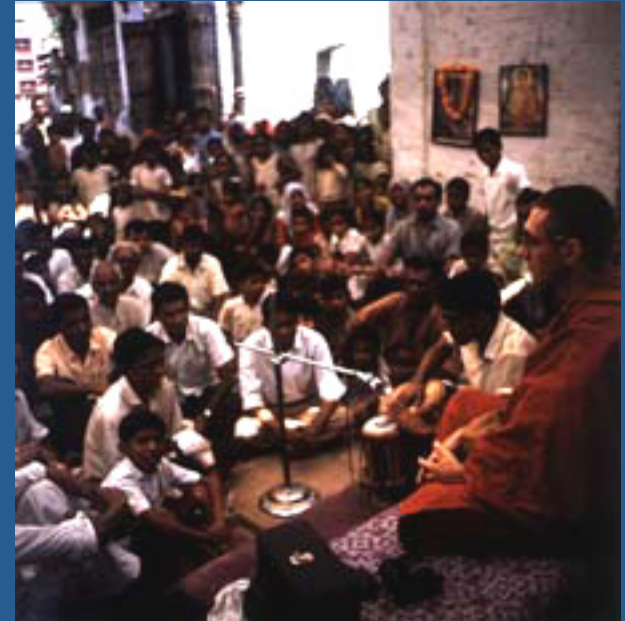
Munisha  
Communications and Liaison  
officer

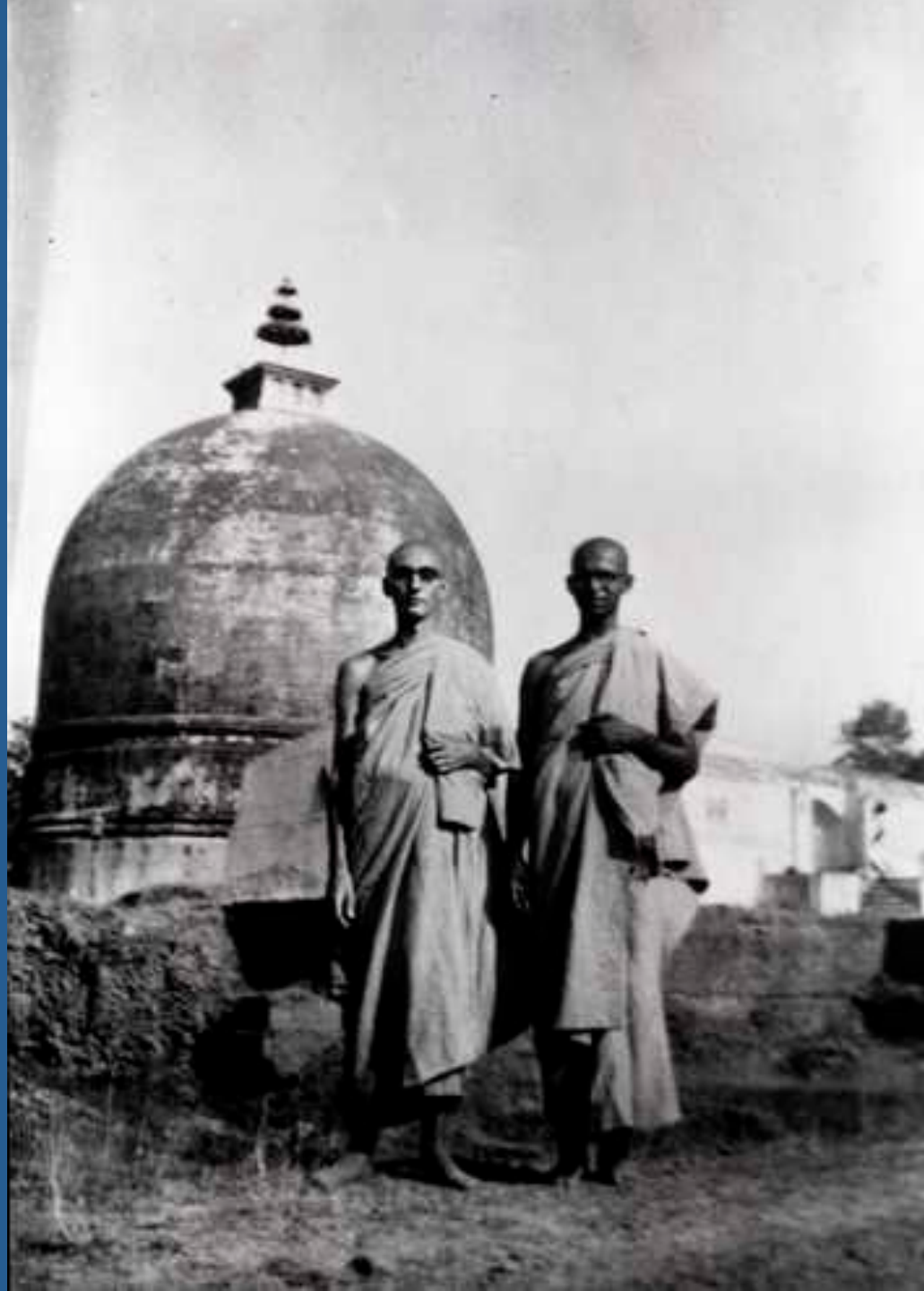
Triratna, Europe

[www.thebuddhistcentre.com](http://www.thebuddhistcentre.com)

# A very short history

- Founded by Sangharakshita, an Englishman from London
- 1945-64: a Theravadin monk in India
- Studied with teachers from other traditions
- Taught 'new Buddhists' in India, following the conversion of Dr Ambedkar in 1956.

















- 1964 Sangharakshita returned from India to London
- 1967 Founded the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order
- 1968 First ordinations to the Western Buddhist Order



And then there were the 1970s



2000 Sangharakshita handed on his  
responsibilities to a group of senior  
women and men:

the College of Public Preceptors



- 2010  
name change requested by Triratna in India  
Triratna Buddhist Order and  
Triratna Buddhist Community
- 2015 Sangharakshita is 90
- January 2016 There are 2000 living members of  
the Order



# Triratna's headquarters

Adhithana, Herefordshire, near Wales  
opened August 2013





# Triratna in Europe today

## Retreat centres and urban centres in

- Sweden
- UK
- Ireland
- Norway
- Finland
- Estonia
- Poland
- France
- Belgium
- Netherlands
- Germany
- Spain
- Russia
- Turkey



# European Chairs' Assembly





TRIRATNA IS AN INTERNATIONAL BUDDHIST  
COMMUNITY LOYAL TO SANGHARAKSHITA'S  
VISION, WORKING IN HARMONY AND  
SUSTAINED BY SPIRITUAL FRIENDSHIP;  
DEDICATED TO THE ATTAINMENT OF  
ENLIGHTENMENT FOR THE BENEFIT  
OF ALL BEINGS



OUR INFORMATION]

### FUND CRITERIA

ITS ARE TO ENCOURAGE GROWTH ('INCREASE IN NUMBER  
OPLE COMING TO LEARN BASIC MEDITATION AND  
MA')

FOLLOWING 'CATEGORIES' OF PROJECTS CONSIDERED

### GROWTH

9 APPLICATION  
THE FOLLOWING

- ① TACOMA, U  
A NEW CEN



VISION

TRIRATNA IS AN INTERNATIONAL BUDDHIST COMMUNITY LOYAL TO SANGHARAKSHITA'S VISION, WORKING IN HARMONY AND SUSTAINED BY SPIRITUAL FRIENDSHIP; DEDICATED TO THE ATTAINMENT OF ENLIGHTENMENT FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL BEINGS

WITH LOYALTY TO TEACHERS AND IN HARMONY WITH FRIENDS & BRETHREN

- DEVELOP UNITY, CONFIDENCE, CLARITY & COHERENCE AROUND BHANTE'S SYSTEM OF PRACTICE • VISION OF A COMPLETE DHARMA LIFE, AND THE CORE PRINCIPLES, TEACHINGS & PRACTICES OF THE TRIRATNA COMMUNITY
- DEVELOP EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP AND DECISION MAKING IN A WAY THAT ALLOWS AUTONOMY & INITIATIVE

STRATEGIC AREAS

PROJECTS

GREATER CAPACITY AT ADHISTHANA FOR LARGER MEETINGS

RESOURCE THE 'COLLEGE' - SUPPORT FOR LEAD MEMBERS, SECRETARIAT & OTHER PRECEPTORS

RESOURCING - DEVELOPING JC AS CO-ORDINATING, UNIFYING & DECISION FACILITATING BODY

STUDY OF THE 'PAPERS'

EFFECTIVE INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS INCLUDING ON LINE

SECRETARIATS FOR THE THREE 'STRANDS'

MAINTAINING 'DHARMA' PERSPECTIVE / CONTEXT - FOR SECULAR MANIFESTNESS, DIRECT PRACTICE & OTHER 'NEW' STUFF

ADHISTHANA AS A FOCUS FOR THE COLLEGE, LEADERSHIP AND TRAINING

PROMOTE TBRL AND COMMUNITY LIVING

TRAINING AT ALL LEVELS WITH A CURRICULUM AND IN SPIRIT OF KM

PROMOTING WESTERN BUDDHIST ART

PROMOTING RETIREMENTS AS A MEANS TO EXPERIENCING DEPTH & INTENSITY

DEVELOP 'VIHARAS'

FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF ENLIGHTENMENT

- EMPHASISE A TOTAL DHARMA LIFE WITH A CLEAR 'PATHWAY' OF PRACTICE AND UNFOLDING, LEADING TO SPIRITUAL DEATH, SPIRITUAL REBIRTH AND BODHI, FROM THE FIRST POINT OF CONTACT THROUGH TO ORDINATION AND BEYOND
- RECOGNISE & PROMOTE THE VITAL IMPORTANCE OF KALYANA MITRATA, PERSONAL COMMUNICATION AND COLLECTIVE LIVING AND WORKING SITUATIONS AS PROVIDING INTENSITY AND DEPTH

FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL BEINGS

- EXEMPLIFY AND COMMUNICATE THE VISION OF A NEW SOCIETY AND THE DHARMA AS A RADICAL, EXCITING, TRANSFORMATIVE FORCE WHICH RESPONDS TO THE NEEDS OF THE WORLD & ISSUES IN SOCIETY AND INFLUENCES <sup>LOCAL</sup> NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL DEBATES
- TRIRATNA AS A COMMUNITY WITH EXCELLENT CENTRES AND THRIVING SANGHAS, DEVELOPING AND EXPANDING IN TO NEW PLACES & CULTURES AND CONTINUALLY ATTRACTING NEW PEOPLE

ONLINE DHARMA AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

SUPPORT FOR PIONEERS - SEED FUND AND TRAINING

PROMOTING 'INDIAN' DHARMA MARK AT CENTRES

ENCOURAGE 'YOUNG' PEOPLE E.G. INTENSIVE STUDY PROGRAMME

TRAINING FOR TEACHERS AND PROMOTING BEST PRACTICE & EXCELLENCE AT CENTRES

SPIRITUAL CARE FOR THE DYING

PROMOTING 'SIMPLICITY AND ETHICAL & SUSTAINABLE LIVING' (VEGETARIAN & VEGAN)

MONEY & FUNDRAISING TEAM - PROMOTING DANA ECONOMY, BUDDHIST BANK & BACK STOP FUNDING FOR PROJECTS

MAINTAINING TBRL AND PROJECTS FOR THOSE IN PAIN OR SUFFERING

LOOKING AFTER ELDERLY & THE SICK

ECONOMIC MODEL - FINANCIAL STRATEGY, PRIORS - ECONOMIC MODEL FOR MUT

ENHANCED BUDDHIST ACTION MONTH

2010 Strategic Priorities

1. RE-EMPHASISING POWER OF DHARMA TO TRANSFORM SOCIETY
2. FUNDRAISING - A WELL RESOURCES MUT
3. COMMUNAL LIVING & WORKING
4. ATTRACTING 'YOUNG' PEOPLE
5. INTERNATIONALITY

2013 FUND-RAISING PRIORITIES

1. GROWTH & PIONEERS - 'SOWING THE SEEDS OF SANGHA'
2. YOUNG BUDDHISTS
3. SOCIAL SEED FUND
4. TRIRATNA MEDIA
5. CARE & SUPPORT OF ELDERLY

TRANSLATIONS

dephward



# Triratna's six distinctive emphases

1. Centrality of Going for Refuge (as the defining characteristic of a Buddhist)
2. A unified Order
3. Ecumenical
4. Spiritual friendship (*kalyana mitrata*)
5. Team-based Right Livelihood
6. The importance of the arts in spiritual life

# A unified Order



- One ordination
- Neither lay nor monastic
- Women and men ordained equally from the beginning
- Celibacy is a option and not a higher ordination
- No distinction as to sexual orientation or caste (India)

# Ordination

- 10 precepts (3 body; 3 speech; 4 mind)
- 4 vows:
  1. With loyalty to my teachers, I accept this ordination
  2. In harmony with friends and brethren...
  3. For the sake of Enlightenment...
  4. For the benefit of all beings...

# Triratna is ecumenical

- Modern Buddhists are heirs to the entire Buddhist tradition
- Not part of any one traditional school of Buddhism
- “Buddhayana”, or “ekayana”
- Draw **selectively** and **coherently** on teachings from several schools



# Triratna's 'System of practice'

1. Integration
2. Positive emotion
3. Spiritual death
4. Spiritual rebirth
5. Just sitting

More details about the system:

<https://thebuddhistcentre.com/text/system>

# Triratna Buddhist Order statistics 2015



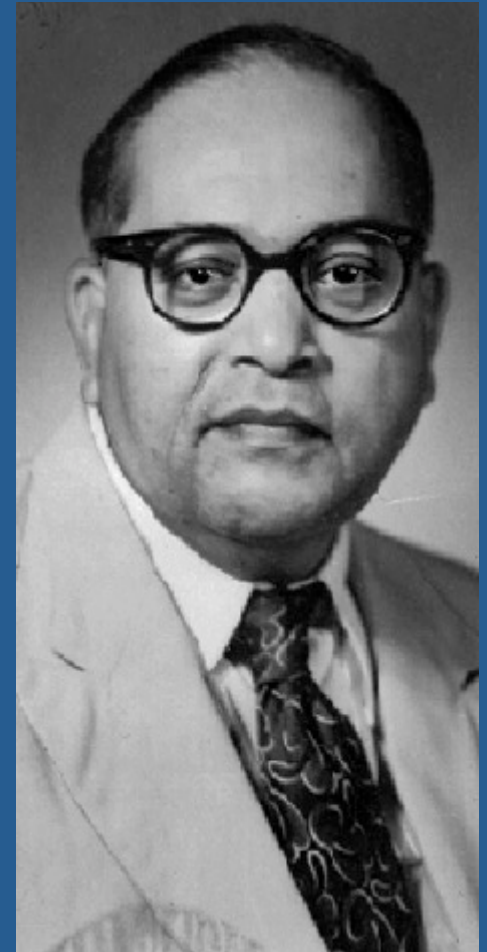
- Worldwide: 748 women; 1,195 men, including
- India: 135 women; 393 men
- Europe: 496 women and 667 men including
- UK: 409 women; 547 men
- Europe (not including the UK): 87 women; 120 men

# More statistics 2015

- The average age of the Order is around 55 but...
- Young Buddhist Project :
  - 73 local Young Facilitators have trained and led events for about 1,000 under-35s around Europe.
  - there are 64 men and 71 women under 35 training for ordination.

# Triratna in India

- 135 ordained women; 393 men
- 850 women training for ordination
- Vast and peaceful social revolution
- Began with Dr Ambedkar's conversion to Buddhism from Hindu Untouchability, in 1956.
- Mass conversions
- Huge task of social empowerment
- [www.karuna.org](http://www.karuna.org)
- The gypsy movement: Jai Bhim Network, Hungary





# Spiritual friendship

- Friend-Mitra-Order member
- Progression in understanding, commitment and responsibility – and **friendship**
- Triratna is a worldwide network of friendships.
- This enables us to survive huge cultural differences; eg India.
- Legally there are many Triratnas but Triratna as a whole exists only in the heart.

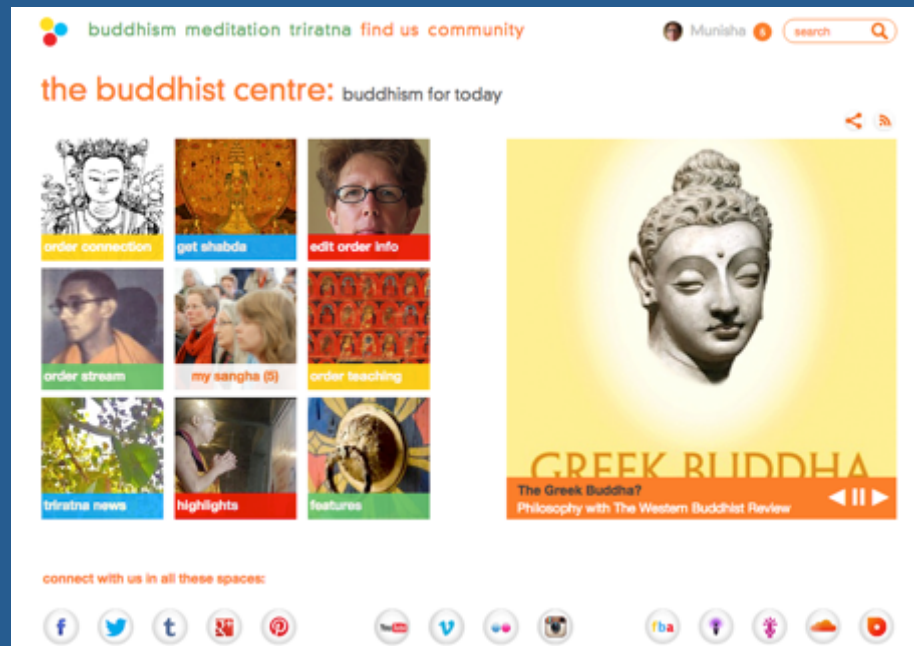


# Some current issues/features

- Coherence of teaching and practice
- Ageing and Young Buddhists
- Attracting more women than men (except in Sweden!)
- Gender identity
- Internationality and language
- Very white, outside India
- Online communications
- Buddhist Action Month and global warming

# Triratna as a whole exists only in the heart...

(...and online)



www.thebuddhistcentre.com

# Triratna online

- The Buddhist Centre Online:  
[www.thebuddhistcentre.com](http://www.thebuddhistcentre.com)
- Free Buddhist Audio:  
[www.freebuddhistaudio.com](http://www.freebuddhistaudio.com)
- Clear Vision: photo archive; Dharma video for schools and children  
[www.clear-vision.org](http://www.clear-vision.org)
- VideoSangha: free Triratna **video**  
[www.videosangha.net](http://www.videosangha.net)

# Triratna in the Buddhist world

- Triratna actively works with other Buddhists
- In fact Triratna is one of just 3 or 4 Buddhist organisations in **Europe** who support someone with money to work with other Buddhists.
- This *may* indicate that we are one of the most outward-facing Buddhist movements in the world.



# Triratna in the Buddhist world

- 1-4 million Buddhists in Europe (mostly Germany, Italy, France and UK)
- About 250,000 Buddhists in the UK, 9000 in Ireland
- Triratna, the NKT and SGI-UK are the three largest Buddhist organisations in the UK
- But more than 60% of UK's Buddhists are minority ethnic
- Triratna is 99% white (outside India)
- And most of Europe's Buddhists don't belong to any organisation
- Conclusion: Triratna is very significant but not representative!

# How Triratna is viewed: 1

- Among those we *work* with, respected and appreciated
- Most Buddhist organisations not interested in working together
- UK Buddhist chaplaincy group impressed with Triratna chaplains.
- Shenpen Hookham's praise for Bhante.
- We're also active in UK prison chaplaincy.

# How Triratna is viewed: 2

- Probably few understand us because we are so unusual:
  - The Order, not lay, not monastic, is a huge single worldwide ordained sangha
  - not just a lot of individual “teachers” from one vertical lineage, teaching in separate little sanghas.
  - Our centres are all legally independent.
  - We’re not legally registered in any one country.
- There *are* still critics out there: people with no recent experience of us.
- Relatively little online controversy about us.



