

# Triratna Buddhist Community

News from the Sydney Buddhist Centre

and Vijayaloka Retreat Centre

NOVEMBER 2011



## Order activities

Every second year the Triratna Buddhist Order holds a series of international events that order members from all around the world can attend. In August many of us from Sydney were in England: Chittaprabha, Khemadhamma, Sudrishti, Viraja, Prakashika, Pamojjacitta, and Nagasuri. Also present were: Gambhiraja (moving to Sydney in mid-November and has always been closely associated with us), and Carunalaka (now living in England but still very much in touch with many of us here). Brief reports of the events now follow, in the order they were held.

### International Chairmen's meeting

Chittaprabha, chairwoman of the SBC, attended the International Chairmen's meeting held at Padmaloka, Norfolk, in early August. Many issues concerning the life and well-being of the Triratna community were considered, including youth initiatives, fund raising, and the new developments and needs of Free Buddhist Audio who have a magnificent new omnibus website: [thebuddhistcentre.com](http://thebuddhistcentre.com)

### Men's and Women's order convention

The men's order convention was held at Padmaloka, and the women's at nearby Wymondham College. Both conventions focussed on the Three Jewels.

Parami, Vajratara and Nagasuri spoke on the *Buddha, Dharma and Sangha Vandanas* (available on *FreeBuddhistAudio*); Vajragupta on *Where are all the Men?* Maitreyabandhu on *Dharma Wondrous Strange*; and Subhuti on *The Empty Throne* (available on *Videosangha*).

### Combined order convention

The Buddha encouraged large meetings to build harmony and unity. Thus, following that practice, over 600 people were present at the combined order convention held at Wymondham College.

There were three talks on *Seeking the Buddha – Through history* by Vishvapani, *–Through symbol, myth and archetype* by Dhammadinna, and *– Through reality* by Jnanavaca.

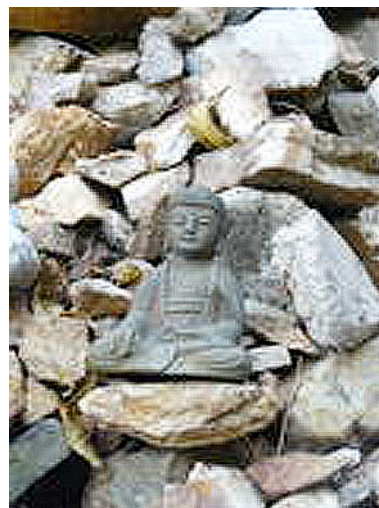
We discussed important issues facing the order and community. There were talks, meditations, led reflections, and pujas. All were sources of great inspiration and faith, together with deepening clarity and comprehension of the Dharma.

### First international council meeting

The first International Council meeting took place at Padmaloka, with 37 members representing the three strands of our order and movement: the public preceptors, the order, and the community.

This council will meet together every second year around the time of each international combined convention. It has a steering group to keep an eye on all matters. The group will meet face-to-face once between each general council meeting, and more frequently by *Skype*.

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*The first international council*

The Triratna Order and community has six areas around the world: the South Pacific, North America, Mexico and Latin America, India, Europe, and the UK.

Delegates from the South Pacific were: Sudaya from Melbourne (representing the Community), Buddhadasa also from Melbourne (representing the public preceptor), Nagasuri from Sydney (representing the order), and Guhyasiddhi from New Zealand (representing the order).

The council created its agenda. The key matter involved a very inspiring discussion about initiating dialogue throughout the order and movement about the Triratna system of training in all its aspects, and at all levels, from newcomers to long-established order members.

The council hopes that over a period of two to three years we will evolve a clear and detailed description of the Triratna way of life. It is of course a whole way of life, including the practice of ethics, meditation, study, spiritual friendship, team-based right livelihood, and community living.

Other topics included fundraising for major initiatives like Free Buddhist Audio, new retreat centres, the ordination process in India, and other major new initiatives that will inevitably develop.

## **Four recent ordinations in the Sydney sangha**

The Sydney sangha has three new dharmacharini. At the women's ordination retreat at Shambala in Golden Bay New Zealand in May, Anne Barrey became Dharmamodini (*She who rejoices in the Dharma*), Cheryl Hyde became Kamalamayi (*She who is full of the lotus*), and Jenny Cornish became Yasokaruna (*She whose compassion is beautiful*).

We also have a new dharmachari. During a four month retreat at Guhyaloka in Spain, Ross Pierce was transformed, and returned to us as Dharmagatu (*He who sings the Dharma*).



*New Mitras: Kelly, Ben, Em*

## More ordinations in Sydney soon

We're also looking forward to two more Australian dharmachari. It is anticipated that Guy Holden from Sydney, and David Spotswood from Melbourne will be publicly ordained at Vijayaloka at noon on 21 January 2012. All will be welcome to attend the ceremony.

## New mitras

Two mitra ceremonies were held at the centre. Paula Yanis and John Bell became mitras in July; and Ben Reeson, Em Ingram-Shute and Kelly McKeon in October. Congratulations to you all. (See photographs on Pages 2 & 3)

## Retreats at Vijayaloka

Over recent months there have been several retreats at Vijayaloka including the men's and the women's intensive meditation retreats, and a *Silence into sound* retreat (led again by Suryagita from New Zealand).

Future retreats include:

- The always-popular Boxing Day 2011 to New Year's Day 2012 *Wake up to radiance* retreat on the Satipatthana Sutta. It will be led by Vidyamala, Sudrishti, and Viraja.
- In January and early February 2012 there will be a men's ordination training retreat followed by a regional combined order convention, and later a retreat for dharmacharini from Australia and New Zealand.
- In February Vidyamala and Sona will lead a week-long *Breathworks* training retreat.
- Following *Breathworks*, Parami will lead a weekend sangha retreat introducing our Dharma theme for 2012: *Sangha – A whole way of life*.
- Later in the year it is highly likely Suryagita will return to lead a retreat.
- In late September Paramananda, author of many wonderful books on meditation including *Change your mind*, will lead a week-long meditation retreat open to experienced meditators.
- There will also be our usual beginner's meditation retreats, the meditation intensives, work retreats, and study retreats.

The programme for both Vijayaloka retreats and centre activities will be out early in the New Year. Look for it on our website.



*New Mitras: Paula and John*

## Around the centre

There has been the usual constant round of activities: courses, study nights, day and evening sangha gatherings, full moon pujas, and many special events.

The last two evening beginners' meditation courses were booked out, and already people are enquiring for next year.

Newcomers can always come to the led drop-in meditation sessions on Tuesday at lunch time 12:30—1:30pm, and on Saturday mornings 10:20—11:30am. During January these sessions will also be available on Wednesdays from 7pm.

In October we had a week-long urban retreat based on the *Eight Worldly Winds*.

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Yashokaruna and Jim Pescud ran their first *Breathworks* course at the centre over recent months: eight Sunday morning meetings and a concluding all-day workshop on Sunday 30 October.

We propose to install a disabled toilet at the centre for which we have a NSW Community Building Partnership Grant.

### **Next year at the centre**

On Monday 2 January Maitreyabandhu (poet, author, and teacher) will lead a meditation and talk on *The Transcending imagination: Imagination and fantasy in the spiritual life*.

For the whole of 2012, our Dharma theme will be *Sangha – A whole way of life*. It will apply to retreats at Vijayaloka, and both weekend and day events at the centre.

## **Thanks to volunteers**

We have many steadfast volunteers who exemplify the principle of service within the sangha, and who help to keep things ticking along nicely – often invisibly. Thanks to:

- Jonathan O’Keeffe and Greg Schiemer for organising the recent spring clean at the centre
- Jonathan, Greg, Dharmalata and Stephen Groenewegen who are our regular cleaners (Stephen has also taken care of our library)
- Kevin Griffith for maintenance work round the Centre
- Janet Bremner who has the vital task of supplying tea, coffee and biscuits, and other centre requirements
- Dharmamodini who is responsible for banking (and who does many other things besides)
- Paula Yanis who creates our beautiful shrines
- Lisa Kelly who till recently took care of our pot plants (now Kelly McKeon’s responsibility), and composting (now JP Williamson’s job)
- Julian Narborough for managing our bookshop. Kelly is now our new librarian.

At Vijayaloka we also have a team of willing helpers. The renovation of the cottage is proceeding well: many thanks to Khemadhamma

and Ben Reeson for this excellent effort, and to Glen Cecil from Canberra who has been helping with the electrics.

Thanks also to:

- Chittaprabha who helps out in many ways
- Pamojjacitta and Glen Davies who take care of maintenance
- Jonathan and Kelly who are often seen gardening
- Kamalamayi and sometimes Jill Robertson who do the garbage removal, cleaning and fit-out for retreats
- Last but not least, a special thank you to Tim Lamble, who miraculously and at little cost fixed our ailing dishwasher! More recently he and his friend Phillip Worledge have replaced three staircases onto the verandas with sturdy metal ones.

## **Why not volunteer yourself?**

We are always in need of more volunteers to help us keep the centre and Vijayaloka open, welcoming and able to offer the Dharma to anyone who steps towards us.

If you would like to be involved please contact one of the sangha members mentioned above or Prakashika at the centre (02 9519 0440). Together we create and maintain sangha.



*Installing new steps at Vijayaloka: Tim Lamble and Kevin Griffith*

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*Compiled by Kamalamayi and Nagasuri*

*Layout by Tim Lamble*