

# Yearly Report 2016-17

# Chairman's Update on the Year: April 2016 to March 2017

## New Order Members

Another year and I am delighted to say we have another crop of new Order Members from the LBC Mandala – this time 8 new beings. In the summer we welcomed Danayutta, Dayanatha, Sagarasila, Vidyasakhi and Viryana. And then in the autumn there were 3 more Dharmacharis – Aryajit, Dharmajit, and Sanghajit. These 3 'Jit' brothers all have young children and therefore weren't able to go on a 4 month retreat. Instead they were ordained on a newly developed, 1-month retreat at Guhyaloka developed by Maitreyabandhu and led by Paramabandhu. Sadhu to all our new Order Members.

## Vajrasana

For me the highlight of the year was the opening of Vajrasana. At the end of last May, on a beautiful sunny weekend, Subhuti ritually opened our stunning new retreat centre. We had a day for the local community and another for the Sangha with several hundred people attending over the course of the weekend. Bhante had given us some relics of one of his main teachers, Dhardo Rimpoche, and as part of the opening ceremonies, Subhuti ritually interred these in the new stupa. We also interred some ashes of three former Order Members - Sangharatna, Vijayatara and Mahananda – who had been part of the LBC Sangha and who had left legacies that helped enable the project. The shrine room was ritually dedicated, there were dharma talks, and also presentation ceremonies for the architects, the teams of professionals, Chintamani who made the rupas, and other key people who worked on the project – not least Maitrivajri who was (and continues to be) our heroic Project Manager.

I believe that the new Vajrasana represents a milestone for our community. In the 'Architect's Journal' it was described as 'a new typology' and Bhante said that it "was indeed a step forward for Western Buddhism." It has been shortlisted in the World Architecture Festival awards and also in the upcoming Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) awards. Personally I am delighted by how many people have responded so positively to being on retreat there. The architecture wonderfully supports our way of practicing.

Perhaps even more importantly, it has meant that more

people than ever are going on retreat. For example, over the Christmas and New Year period, we had a record 250 people attending one of our retreats – either at Adhishthana or at Vajrasana. This will I'm sure have a deepening effect on our Sangha. It's also really pleasing to see the other London Centres, Centres in East Anglia and some others also use Vajrasana and benefit from being there.

Vajrasana has been the result of the generosity, hard work, love and dedication of many, many people over at least 5 years. It is a tremendous achievement that will benefit thousands of people for decades to come. Once again I want to say a very big thank you for everyone in our Sangha who has contributed to this wonderful development, and also all those that are helping to run retreats or supporting the project in other ways. I want to especially mention the community who have been living there and looking after the fabric of the place and also being wonderful hosts and supports for retreats. Jnanaruchi, Saddhaketu, Abhayavajra and Maitridaka (who was there for their first 6 months) have worked extremely hard to enable us to run our retreats and to keep Vajrasana looking beautiful.

## LBC Activities

It's been another tremendous year at the LBC. Many people comment on the very positive atmosphere in the Centre and I'm delighted to say that despite the fact that the Centre is really too small for our needs, we keep managing to welcome more people and the Sangha keeps growing – in breadth and depth.

There are too many activities for me to mention – see Maireyaraja's report for more detail. Here though I just want to highlight a few things. Firstly, there are Subhuti's on-going visits to the LBC as our President. Last year as well as ritually opening Vajrasana for us, he led our first retreat there. We are very fortunate to have Subhuti as our President and I feel very grateful for the energy and inspiration that he gives us.

I am also very pleased to have Suryagupta join the Council and the Centre team. Amongst other things Suryagupta is helping to develop our Breathing Space activities in a more strategic way. I hope that in time we will see these grow and provide an opportunity for more people to be supported by the Centre.

I want to mention the ongoing contributions of Lama's Pyjamas and Jambala – both of which have continued to be successful right livelihood businesses. Lama's continues to be the most profitable business the LBC's ever had, and it makes a very generous and welcome contribution to our finances. And recently Mahamani has joined as the manager of Jambala and given it a new look that has increased income and allowed the team to expand. As well as offering opportunities for Right Livelihood, these

businesses contribute to the local community and provide another doorway for people to encounter the Dharma.

I've also been very pleased to see our sub25 classes beginning to take off as currently we don't have very many people who are under 25. Having said that, I am delighted that our monthly Sunday School continues to be popular as does our annual Parents and Children's retreat. Ideally I'd like to see all ages represented in our Sangha – from children at the crèche on a Wednesday morning to teenagers and upwards.

The Council recently adopted ethical guidelines for all those teaching at our Centre. I'm pleased that these guidelines make more explicit the ethical standards that we ask of people teaching at our Centre. I am also pleased to see more energy going into training newer Order Members to teach the Dharma. This is something that I would like to see develop further.

I would also like to see more dharmacharinis more visible in our teaching at the Centre. Currently our public classes have more men than women who are teaching – though in saying that I am aware of the great deal of teaching, including Mitra Study leading, that is done by many dharmacharinis. The visibility of dharmacharinis as class leaders is an area that we have been addressing for some time, but recent discussions have highlighted the need to do more, and I want to continue to support this.

Despite having fewer team based right livelihood businesses than 10 years ago, I am glad to say we have around 30 people employed by the LBC. I am pleased that we are keeping our culture of single-sex teams alive, with the intensity of kalyana mitrata that these provide. I am also glad that we give opportunities for people to work for 'support' rather than for a wage. The renunciation required in order to live on support, and the emphasis that is given to working out of generosity, are powerful practices. I want to rejoice in the dedication of all those who work in our Mandala on this basis.

The Centre also tries to practice generosity to other Triratna institutions. Most notably we give in the region of £27,000 each year to the European Chairs Assembly (ECA). This forms about a quarter of the income of the ECA and is used to support Movement-wide projects. In addition many people from our Mandala are involved in Movement wide institutions and initiatives – the College of Public Preceptors, the Presidents Meeting, the Mitra Convenors Executives – to name a few. Personally a fair portion of my time is taken up with my work as part of the European Chairs Executive, which takes a lead in ensuring harmony and co-operation between all our Centres in Europe. I have also recently taken on being Chair of the Future Dharma Fund – a fund that I hope will mean our Movement is well resourced for the next 50 years. In addition I am a trustee of the Windhorse Trust, which makes grants and loans to projects in our Movement.

Over the last 18 months I have also been a member of a 'working group' looking to integrate 'Insight Inquiry' – a practice that many Order Members have found beneficial - into our System of Practice. I think it is important that as a large Centre we are networked into and positively contributing to the wider Triratna Order and Movement.

I want to finish by saying a heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributes to the Centre and to the LBC Mandala. There are hundreds of people contributing in many, many ways. I feel very proud of what the LBC achieves and the positive difference we make as a Sangha to the lives of thousands of people. As we celebrate the Movement's 50th anniversary, I am very glad that we have continued to communicate a presentation of the Dharma that we have inherited from Sangharakshita – one that I believe is really needed in the world in which we live. And personally I feel blessed to be part of our Sangha. Thank you.

Yours in the Dharma,

**Jnanavaca**  
**Chairman**  
**[jnanavaca@lbc.org.uk](mailto:jnanavaca@lbc.org.uk)**

# Treasurer's report for the financial year 2015-16

These figures are from the LBC Management Accounts, as in previous years. They contrast the financial year 2015-16 with 2014-15, our present position and outlook. The LBC Council Members' Report and Financial Statements are also available at:  
<http://bit.ly/2mFV0ke>

## Income

### Property income

Property income fell by 1.5% from £287,900 in 2014-15 to £283,542 in 2015-16. This was due to completing sales of the final inherited flats from Mahananda, which significantly funded the Vajrasana building project. Looking forward, property income should remain stable. The community premises are steadily occupied; the commercially let premises of the restaurant and flat provide steady rent, as do the charity shops. We are starting a new community later this year, in a property owned by Prakasha, for which we will charge a modest management charge.

### LBC income

LBC income rose by 23% from £409,862 in 2014-15 to £504,055 in 2015-16. This was most significantly attributable to the ongoing success of the Vajrasana fundraising campaign, particularly new and increased standing order payments, and the launch of yoga classes. Looking forward, the Centre appears to be reaching its physical capacity, and further increases are likely to be more modest than in recent years. Standing order income also fell last year after completion of the building project. However, the launch of the new fundraising campaign at the beginning of this year already looks promising.

### Retreat income

Retreat income rose by 3% from £108,319 in 2014-15 to £111,881 in 2015-16. This was the second year of the Vajrasana closure for the building project, while we continued to run retreats at other venues. Moving forward, Vajrasana successfully re-opened last May and is now run by our trading subsidiary, Pure Land Limited. It looks to be our greatest potential for future income growth in the coming years.

### Breathing Space income

Breathing Space income rose by 6% from £71,049 in 2014-15 to £75,273 in 2015-16. We still have the free funding places and carers' grants from Tower Hamlets Council, as well as a new contract with L&Q Housing

Association, which will hopefully develop and expand alongside other new ventures.

### Charity shop income

Charity shop income rose by 3% from £162,747 in 2014-15 to £167,483 in 2015-16. Lama's Pyjamas has more than doubled its income since opening, but is reaching something of an impressive plateau. Importantly, it provides one of the most significant sources of surplus for the LBC. Jambala Bookshop has also seen, and should continue to see, further increased income under the new management and team.

### Total income

Total income rose by 10% from £1,039,877 in 2014-15 to £1,142,164 in 2015-16. This was very pleasing, especially in the context of having Vajrasana closed. Looking forward, we should be looking for our consolidated income to approach £1,300,000 with the new retreat centre.

## Expenses

### LBC expenses

LBC expenses rose by 0.2% from £436,738 in 2014-15 to £437,418 in 2015-16. This was more than covered by corresponding income.

### Support expenses

Support expenses rose by 5% from £335,669 in 2014-15 to £354,117 in 2015-16. This was primarily attributable to supporting two new team members to teach yoga, which was covered by additional yoga income.

### Retreat expenses

Retreat expenses fell by 4% from £109,579 in 2014-15 to £104,688 in 2015-16.

### Total expenses

Total expenses rose by 3% from £899,132 in 2014-15 to £922,988 in 2015-16.

### Surplus/deficit

Our surplus rose 45% from £150,745 in 2014-15 to £219,176 in 2015-16.

### Building project

The Vajrasana building project was completed last May. There is still some final snagging and additional work, but, as things stand, we are looking at a net build of around £4,300,000. In addition, there are professional fees at 15%, coming to £645,000, and further costs for demolition, rupa, stupa and furniture making a total net forecast spend of around £ 5,500,000. The trading subsidiary can reclaim around £1,100,000 VAT.

### Property sales

The building project was significantly funded from

the sale of five flats we inherited from Mahananda. We sold them for a combined total of £3,322,250. This was pleasing, given that they were valued at £1,600,000 when we inherited them around seven years ago. This was substantially higher than valuations before putting them on the market.

The flats previously generated up to £83,627 rental income per year. Partially because of high property values in the area and also because of long-standing tenants and a sitting tenant, this was our lowest-yielding property: at 2.5% yield against sale price. Given the surplus mentioned above, we are comfortable without the rental income.

Furthermore, the income is expected to be replaced and even exceeded by increased income from Vajrasana, alongside increased fundraising and other increased LBC income streams.

### **Finance / borrowing**

Our total loans as at 31 March 2015 were £875,657. Given that our annual income is in excess of £1,000,000 and our substantial asset base, this is a remarkably low leverage.

We secured an additional loan of up to £1,000,000 from Triodos at 2.25% over base interest rate, 2.75% minimum. Thus far, we have drawn upon £700,000. Our monthly loan repayments on current borrowings are around 10% of expenses, at £7,146 per month, at 2% over base, 3.5% minimum. Given our current surplus, we can comfortably cover this additional borrowing, especially bearing in mind the potential for increased income from Vajrasana of up to £150,000 per year.

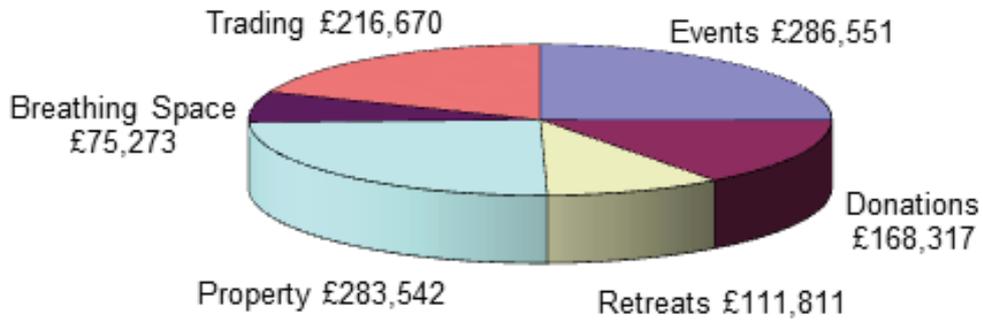
Furthermore, we need to bear in mind that we are loaning around £6,000,000 to our trading subsidiary to purchase the retreat centre and complete the building project. The trading subsidiary needs to meet the subsequent loan repayments to the charity. However, with the increased potential for income, this is not looking problematic.

### **Conclusion**

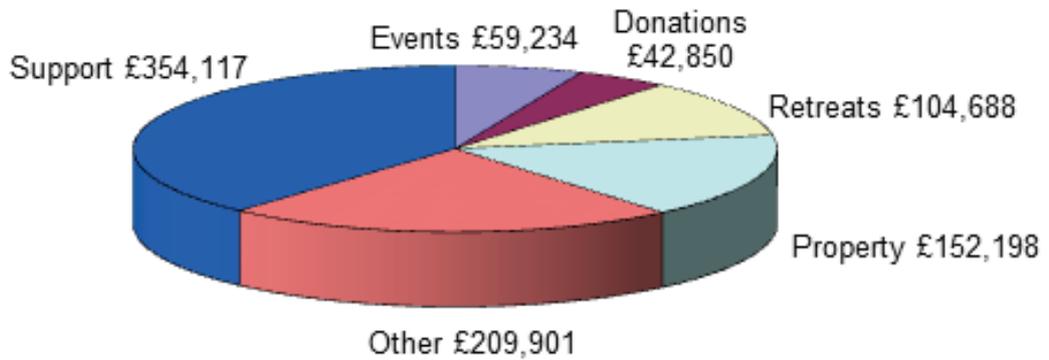
We have come through a period of substantial change and re-gearing, with property sales, alongside increased borrowing. However, we appear to be retaining a strong financial position, with increased income, alongside maintaining our surplus. Unfortunate though it may have been having to close our old businesses, it feels like we have made the right decisions in consolidating our resources around our urban base and the residential retreat centre, alongside the focus on the charity shops.

## **Jnanadeva**

### LBC income 2015-16



### LBC expenses 2015-16



**Apr 2015 - Mar 2016**

**Apr 2014 - Mar 2015**

**Ordinary Income/Expense**

**Income**

Breathing Space	75,273	71,049
LBC	504,055	409,862
Property	283,542	287,900
Charity Shops	167,483	162,747
Retreats	111,881	108,319
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>1,142,164</b>	<b>1,039,877</b>

**Expense**

LBC	437,418	436,738
Support	354,117	335,699
Charity Shops	26,765	22,146
Retreats	104,688	109,579
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>922,988</b>	<b>889,132</b>

**Surplus / deficit**                      **219,176**                      **150,745**

# Secretary's Update

## April 2016 to March 2017

In this report I will describe the ongoing work of the LBC with information about some of the significant changes that have happened within the LBC or LBC Community Mandala over the last year. I will then list the range of activities that the LBC has been able to offer.

### Ongoing projects

People at the LBC continue to explore and practise the Four Sangharavastus (the Means of Unification of the Sangha). In 2016 the focus was on Dana (generosity). In January 2017 Jnanavaca launched the theme for the year at the LBC in his talk 'The Wisdom of Words'.

#### Regular Classes

Jnanavaca, Subhadramati, Silapiya, Kusalasara, Sanghajit, Dayabhadra, Akashamitra, Devamitra and Suryagupta currently lead the Dharma Night class. Regular Seminars and Introduction to Buddhism and Meditation courses have helped to keep the class vibrant. Vidyadaka, Sanghasiha, Maitripushpa, Maitreyaraja and Mahamani run and develop the Tuesday Night class. The Wednesday Day class continues with Shraddhapushpa, Achalapriya, Jyotismati, Abhayanandi, Sajjana and Kalyanavaca. The current Order team for the Wednesday Night Class is Maitreyabandhu, Subhadramati, Vidyasakhi, Ajjavin, Vajrabandhu, Devamitra, Shraddhasiddhi, Dayanatha and Singhamanas. Sukhasiddhi left the team last year. The Yoga, Chi Kung & Meditation Class is currently led by Jayaka, Priyavajra, Danayutta and Holly Murray. Amitajyoti left the team. The Friday Class is still run by Nandaraja and Svadhi. Sajjana left the team. Devamitra's Young Men's study group on Saturday mornings ceased after a few months. Ambaranta, Akashadevi, Bodhipaksini and Sanghasiha ceased running an early morning meditation session called Monday Morning Metta after about an eighteen-month run. Mahamani, Satyapurna, Sudurjaya and Tareshvari have been leading a monthly Women's class on Saturday afternoons. The Lunchtime classes run from Monday to Saturday generally with two teachers so that newcomers can be taught and regulars guided. The regular lunchtime leaders currently are: Mangala, Jayaka, Sajjana, Sumana, Sanghasiha, Danayutta, Maitrida, Vajrabandhu, Kusalasara, Maitreyaraja, Tareshvari, Sargarasila, Dayaruci, Vandanaajyoti and Sahajamani. Dayavira, Shraddhasiddhi and Sraddhasara ceased teaching lunchtime classes regularly. Weekly Introductory classes and courses were taught at St Martin's Lane by Order Members including Vajrabandhu, Maitrida and Mangala.

Experienced LBC Mitras including Lynda Rose, Ollie Brock, Todd Donnelly, Sam Farquarson, Fiona Johnston, David Ford and others also ran these courses.

#### Outreach

The LBC continued to run two drop-in Meditation classes at St Martin's Lane in Central London until August 2016. In the autumn the LBC ran four-week Meditation courses in the mornings and afternoons. This year the LBC has reduced the rental time for the room at St Martin's Lane from one day to half a day, and is continuing to run Buddhist Meditation Foundation courses in the morning.

The LBC still runs Carer's retreats and drop-in classes.

We have responded to a number of other outreach requests, reflecting increased interest in mindfulness and meditation generally.

Vanaraji, Upeksadhi and others continue developing the Mid-Essex Buddhist Centre. On 1 February they held their first evening in their own rented space, a significant step for their growing Sangha. The Hornchurch Buddhist group continues to be run by Nandaketu and Saddhabhaya. Stow Sangha in Walthamstow continues to be run by Ambaranta, Maitrida, Sahajamani and Rebecca Glyn Jones.

#### Sub35 Activities

This has been a year of change for Sub35 activities. Two of the teaching team, Dayanatha and Sagarasila, returned from their ordination retreats; there were several very successful weekend retreats at the newly refurbished Vajrasana retreat centre. Monthly events have been reduced to concentrate resources on the most successful aspects of the programme. The organising team now includes: David Basak, Dayanatha, Sagarasila, Tara Allitt and Kevin Croke. Gaelle Tuffigo and Steph Delany have left the team. There are now two monthly classes: one for newcomers and the other for women. Several weekend retreats planned for 2017. The team have met with Jnanavaca and Shraddhasiddhi regularly to discuss development.

#### Sub25 Activities

The Sub25 project has gone from strength to strength this year, with the average attendance rising from 4-8 to around 30. The core teaching team includes Alex Green, Danayutta and Singhamanas, plus a support team of Esther Denton, Gus Miller, Harry Hammick and others. At the core of the Sub25 project is an evening class on the third Friday of each month, with additional events such as day retreats and practice mornings.

#### Yoga for Meditation

Danayutta, Holly and others continue to run eleven regular weekly Yoga for Meditation classes at the LBC a week, plus Yoga for Meditation Days and Courses. They have also started running Meditation and Yoga retreats.

The classes, courses, days and retreats are proving popular and are establishing a following.

### **Lama's Pyjamas Charity Shop**

Padmalila, Abhayanandi, Sraddhagita Sally Ramsden and have been running the Lama's shop. Sraddhagita left the team in February. She made a valuable contribution as a very experienced right livelihood team member over a number of years. Nikki Moores has joined the team.

### **Jambala Charity Shop**

Mahamani, Heather and Esther are the current team for the Jambala shop. The business has been growing and they are looking to develop their work by running more craft workshops.

### **Parent's, Children's and Young People's Activities**

The Wednesday Day Class continues to run a crèche for children under five year olds. This popular class teaches newcomers and regulars as well as running practice mornings.

The Buddhist Sunday School run by Jyotismati and team on the last Sunday of the month for 3-10 year olds has been growing and attracting up to sixty parents and children.

Srivati has enlarged the team and continues to organise, lead and run an 'Open Mind' after school club for young people aged between 11 & 16 on Tuesday afternoons.

### **Bodhi Tree and Mindfulness in Schools**

Srivati has been working with Suryagupta to develop the Bodhi Tree Educational visits project. A new website has been developed to promote the Mindfulness in Schools aspect of the work. Srivati and team still host Buddhist visits at the Centre under the auspices of Bodhi Tree which is a separate charity. Both aspects of the work are growing.

### **Presidential Visit**

Subhuti officiated at the ceremonial re-opening of Vajrasana Retreat Centre. He gave a series of inspiring Dharma talks.

### **LBC Council**

The current LBC Council comprises of Jnanavaca, Subhadramati, Paramabandhu, Srivati, Vidyadaka, Maitrivajri, Jayaka, Sraddhagita, Suryagupta and Abhayavajra.

### **Pure Land Limited and Vajrasana Retreat Centre**

Pure Land Limited, the LBC's trading subsidiary, is managing the Vajrasana Retreat Centre. Jnanavaca, Maitreyabandhu and Maitreyaraja are the Directors of Pure Land Limited. Maitreyabandhu and Maitreyaraja also attend LBC Council meetings.

### **The Administration Team**

Working on the admin team helped Sargarasila to prepare to join the Triratna Order. He contributed well for about eighteen months to Breathing Space and financial administration and work on the LBC website. He decided not to re-join the team following his Ordination.

Charlie Byles joined the team last March and is currently helping to administer Breathing Space courses and doing Finance work. Alex Green joined the team last autumn last and is now the Bookings Manager.

Other team members are Vidyadaka, Vajrabandhu, Jayaka, Bryan Hamilton, Luke Doherty, Singhamanas, Jnanadeva, Maitreyaraja and Ollie Brock. Priyavajra continues with the team post-retirement on a voluntary basis 2.5 days per week.

Vidyadaka currently manages the team, but will be supporting the four month Ordination Course at Guhyaloka from April-July 2017.

Ollie Brock who will be getting ordained this year at Guhyaloka. Ollie Fitzgerald will cover work while Ollie Brock is away for four months.

### **Women's Kula (Team)**

Suryagupta started working for the Centre in the autumn of 2016. Currently she is focusing on supporting and developing the various right livelihood businesses at the LBC, including Breathing Space, yoga, Lamas and Jambala. She will also support new right livelihood initiatives that arise within the LBC mandala. Her title is development manager and her role may evolve with time in response to the needs of the LBC.

Subhadramati took sabbatical leave from April to September 2016. She has resumed as Women's Mitra Convenor and Fundraiser.

Shraddhasiddhi covered for Subhadramati's absence and then carried on working for the Centre until February this year. She left after a 4 year spell in which she worked with Subhadramati particularly supporting the Women's Mitra Sangha, managing the Yoga project at the LBC, supporting the LBC fundraising drive as well as doing a great deal of teaching.

Maitrivajri continues to focus on the Vajrasana building project with the Vajrasana Sub-Committee. The contractual agreement will end in May 2017. Maitrivajri is overseeing snagging and repair works being completed. She intends to take a sabbatical in late 2017.

Danayutta and Holly Murray continue to teach and co-ordinate the yoga for meditation classes, courses, days and retreat at the LBC and at Vajrasana. They are also helping with the general running of the Centre.

## **LBC Communities**

Six residential communities occupy LBC-owned property owned – four women's and two men's. There are several other communities / Buddhist house-shares in the locality. Dayabhadra and Maitreyaraja will launch a new men's community with four male Mitras in the autumn at a house owned by Prakasha. He will receive rent and the LBC will manage the property.

## **Vajrasana Retreat Centre Community.**

Abhayavajra, Jnanaruchi and Saddhaketu live on site to maintain and run the Centre. Maitridaka left the community in November. There is a vacancy for one person to join the team, particularly to maintain and develop the gardens at Vajrasana.

## **Teacher's Training Week**

Maitreyabandhu and Subhadramati led a training week for Meditation Teachers within the Triratna Community at the LBC. This was an endeavour to help to train newer Order Members at smaller Centres and pass on some of the teaching experience that has built up at the LBC over many years. There will be another training week in 2017.

## **Special Events and Retreats**

I would like to end this report with a list of the activities that the LBC has offered over the last year (with apologies for any omissions) to remind us of the full scope of the Centre's offering in its great variety, breadth and depth of teaching. Thank you to all those who have helped to make this possible over the last year. The LBC is a huge collaborative and generous endeavour. No-one at the LBC is paid to teach; all those who contribute to classes, courses and retreats (both leaders and support teams) do so voluntarily. This is a remarkable record of generosity and kalyanamitratā (spiritual friendship).

## **Festival Days**

Buddha Day was led by Jnanavaca, Sraddhagita and team; Dharma Day was led by Vandanjyoti, Akashamitra and team; Padmasambhava Day was led by Maitreyabandhu, Abhayanandi and team; Sangha Day was led by Shraddhasiddhi, Jayaka and team; Parinirvana Day was led by Suryagupta, Silapiya and team. A Vajrasattva afternoon was led by Vidyadaka & team. The 108 year Puja dedicated to Ugyen Sangharakshita, the founder of the Triratna Buddhist Order and Community was led by Maitreyabandhu & team. The Dr Ambedkar Festival Day was led by Maitreyaraja, Svadhi and team. A Ratnasambhava Day was led by Sraddhagita and Dayaruci and team.

Regular full moon pujas were led by a wide range of Order members and class support teams.

## **Retreats**

The following retreats were held in 2016 or planned

for 2017: Introductory Weekend retreats (7 in 2016, 7 planned for 2017) and Regular's weekend retreats (4 in 2016, 3 planned for 2017), Sub35 Retreats (4 in 2016, 2 planned for 2017). Sub25 Retreats (0 in 2016, 1 planned for 2017); Women's Weekend led by Sudurjaya, Mahamani and Tareshvari and team; an Open, Introductory, 9 day spring retreat led by Manjusihā and Vandanjyoti and team; an Intensive meditation retreat for men led by Jnanavaca, Maitreyabandhu and team; an Intensive meditation retreat for women led by Sudurjaya, Shubha, Vishvantara and Maitrivajri and team; an Open Introductory 7 day Summer Retreat, led by Maitreyaraja, Srivati and team; the International Urban Retreat led by Subhadramati, Singhamanas, Vidyadaka, Shraddhasiddhi & team; an Open Introductory Winter Retreat held at Adhithana and led by Maitreyabandhu, Shraddhasiddhi & team. The Winter Retreat at Vajrasana led by Jnanavaca, Subhadramati and team; Jyotismati, Prasannavira and team led a Parent's and Children's retreat; Women's Mitra weekend led by Shraddhasiddhi, Mahamani and Kusalasara.

With the increased capacity at Vajrasana the LBC now enables many more people to get on retreat. For example 250 people attended the Winter Retreats at Adhithana and Vajrasana last year.

## **Day Events.**

The following day events were held: Devamitra led a Day on Virya (energy); Buddhism and 12 Step Days led by Sanghasihā and Shraddhasiddhi; Transforming Self and World mornings organised by Tessa Howarth and team and led by a number of Order Members; a series of three Saturday Meditation Mornings, led by Maitreyabandhu, Subhadramati and teams; regular Compassionate Communication days led by Vajraghanta; Total Immersion Day led by Kalyanavaca and Sraddhasara; Art of Tea sessions led by Prabhasvara; Heart of Mantra Days led by Dayabhadra; 'Before I Die' day led by Ambaranta and Kalyanavaca. Chi Kung mornings led by Jayaka. A Metta Total Immersion Day led by Dharmaprabha. Monthly Introductory Meditation days and monthly regulars' Meditation Days led by a range of Order Members; Atula and Ambaranta organised a special evening on New Year's Eve with an all-night meditation; Singhamanas and Vidyadaka organised a 'Night of Furious Intensity' -another meditation session through the night; Women's and Men's Order days; Three Open Days, the one in September in partnership with the Open House London architectural event.

## **Courses**

Lunchtime Dharma/Deepening in Meditation courses were run by Maitreyabandhu, Vidyadaka and Jayaka. Maitreyabandhu led a Journey and the Guide course. Jnanavaca led a Consciousness Unfolds course. Maitreyabandhu, Shraddhasiddhi; Vidyadaka and Mahamani led Life with Full Attention courses.

## Arts Events

Poetry East continues at the LBC organised and run by Maitreyabandhu and team. Amitajyoti and team ran an Art East event. Film nights were led by Maitreyaraja, Svadhi, Sanghasiha, Vidyasakhi and Kusalasara. Maitreyabandhu launched Devamitra's book.

## Fundraising Events

There were Summer and Winter Fayres run by Holly Murray, Shraddhasiddhi & teams.

In January Subhadramati launched a new fundraising campaign called 'Creating the Three Jewels' to help fund the LBC's ongoing running costs.

## Conclusion

If you have any ideas about what you'd like to contribute or what you would like to see happening at the LBC do contact me.

The LBC Community is a multi-faceted jewel in the heart of the east end of London. There are many ways to join in with the array of activities that the Centre offers. Do find a way to make your unique contribution. Next year it will be forty years since the LBC first opened its doors. Come and participate in the Centre and help it to thrive in the years ahead.

## Maitreyaraja

# Women's Mitra Convenors Report April 2016-March 2017

## Ordinations

I'm very pleased to report that two women have been ordained since my last report – Vidyasakhi and Danayutta. Danayutta's was my first public ordination; all the more delightful since I vividly remember meeting her as a complete newcomer on one of our winter retreats not so long ago. One more woman has been invited to the three-month ordination course at Akashavana – Lynda Rose.

## Mitra news

Twenty women have become Mitras since my last report, and thirteen women have asked for ordination. This brings the total on my women's mitra list to just over 200, about half of whom have asked for ordination.

## Leadership and teaching

I continue to be passionate about teaching at our bigger 'public' classes so that people can see women in leadership roles, and also because it gives me a great opportunity to connect with lots of people coming to the Centre, especially with those who wish to take their involvement deeper. So you'll find me at the Wednesday evening drop-in class, the Monday Dharma night, weekend retreats, the urban retreat, many 'open days' and the winter retreat – this time round I was co-leading the first big 'regulars' winter retreat at the new Vajrasana.

I also continue to lead weekly study for the women in Lamas Pyjamas and Jambala. This remains a highlight of my week.

Together with Maitreyabandhu I have been pioneering training events for people leading classes, etc., both at the LBC and further afield. I'm finding this particularly rewarding and it's a great way for the LBC to reach out to other Centres.

## Shraddhasiddhi

On a more personal note last year was unusual because after being mitra convenor for just over 8 years I had six months away, mostly on retreat. I was keen that we maintain the momentum in the mitra Sangha in my absence and I was delighted that Shraddhasiddhi agreed to be acting mitra convenor. I rejoice in Shraddhasiddhi for all her work at this time. She showed great care and responsiveness. I was sad when she announced her departure from the LBC for new pastures, but pleased that

she will be keeping her connections with the Centre.

### **Triratna 'controversy'**

Since the publication of the 'Observer' article I have been involved with others in organizing for mitras so that they can express and explore any concerns, as well as meeting one-to-one with anyone who wants to. I am very happy to continue doing so.

For myself, my understanding of what it means to be devoted to my precious teacher Bhante Sangharakshita has only deepened during this time.

### **Looking ahead**

Finally I have returned from my absence with more energy than ever before for our work at the LBC. I am particularly addressing how to help women make their Going for Refuge effective and become ordained. To this end Maitrivajri, Suryagupta and I are looking at how to work even more closely with the team at Tiratanaloka. I am excited by this prospect.

Yours in the Dharma,

### **Subhadramati**

# **Men's Mitra Convenors Report April 2016-March 2017**

It's been an exciting year for me personally and certainly for the LBC and the men's Sangha. Some positive factors converged mainly to do with the reopening of the Vajrasana Retreat Centre. It's magnificent! Many years ago I was involved in lots of working retreats at Vajrasana, so it has a place in my heart. I was keen for it to be a place of worship, contemplation and stillness. I was also keen to do some practice there with the men's Sangha. All this came together on our annual men's intensive Sangha retreat attended by over fifty. I believe that makes it the largest men's retreat the LBC has run to date. We'll be going back this year and all men are invited.

My head has been in a spin with the number of discussions I've been involved in to help men towards Ordination. The process of preparing to join the Order can be long and involves much discussion and encouragement. All this is done in the context of Kalyanamitrata (Spiritual Friendship). For those interested in this area, Subhuti wrote a paper with the help and direction of Bhante Sangharakshita called 'Initiation into a New Life'. He elucidates Bhante's teaching on the Five Great Stages of the Path. There are emphases on the Ordination ceremony, and on truly committing oneself to what is meaningful and goes beyond our selves. In my own reflections I've been thinking of this commitment as going beyond my own life. As I try to help others now, I believe that my actions will continue to have an effect after my death in ways I don't fully understand.

I think that not having meaning in our lives is a major source of suffering. Without meaning everything centres on us, and that is misery. I'm glad we have a vibrant Sangha of men who have requested Ordination, and pleased that last year twenty men made their request, a very high number. For the first time during my time as Men's Mitra Convenor, those who have requested Ordination outnumber those who have not.

In 2016, six men were invited to join the Order. Three men came from Samaggavasa Community - an affirmation that living together in a single-sex environment provides very positive and supportive conditions in which to prepare for Ordination and to grow. Sargarasila, Viryanaga and Dayanatha were ordained on the four-month retreat at Guyhaloka in Spain.

The other three men, Aryajit, Sanghajit and Dharmajit were also ordained in Spain but on a one-month retreat. All have young children. They not able to attend a four month retreat. The shorter retreat was run especially for men with similar family commitments. It's great to see them all back and settling into their new life as Order members.

Four more men have been invited on the four month retreat to join the Order this year. I know three of them personally and I will be very pleased to see them take the next step. Two of them are from my Mitra study group - David Ford and Sam Farquarson. Ollie Brock is also going; I work with him in the LBC office. They have all lived in Sukhavati community and know each other pretty well. Kevin Croke, who works for Karuna, is also going. All these men have contributed so much to the Sangha and I'm sure they will find even more creative ways to do that.

From my perspective the men's Sangha is in very good health, to a large extent due to all the goodwill and work involved in Kalyanamitrata. We have a very strong tradition of spiritual friendship at the LBC. That's why it's thriving, and that's why I'm pleased to announce a new men's community is being set up not far from the LBC. It should be up and running by the end of the summer,  
Yours in the Dharma

**Yours in the Dharma**  
**Jayaka**

# Breathing Space

## Report - 2015-2016

The Breathing Space 'Mindfulness for Health' project at the London Buddhist Centre included in 2015-2016 the following Mindfulness Based Approaches (MBAs):

- Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) for depression
- Mindfulness Based Addiction Recovery training for mindfulness teachers and health professionals.
- Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction course (MBSR)
- Kindness Behaviour Training (KBT) for depression and addiction
- Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction drop-in classes for carers
- Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction retreats for carers
- Mindfulness Based Approaches retreats for depression, addiction and stress.

### **Breathing Space activities held in 2015-2016**

In 2015-2016 we ran:

- 5 MBSR courses
- 2 MBSR outreach courses
- 5 MBCT courses
- 2 KBT courses
- 1 MBAR training for health professionals
- 1 Pain Management course
- 2 MBA retreats
- 4 MBSR retreats for carers
- 48 MBSR drop-in classes for carers.

### **Outreach and working with professionals**

Apart from the above list of courses and retreats, mindfulness sessions have also taken place at organisations such as Queen Mary University, London and Quadrant housing association management team, the Financial Conduct Authority and Busaba Eathai (restaurant). We have continued fostering a close working relationship with the Carer's Centre in Tower Hamlets, and delivered four taster sessions during the year. We continue promoting Breathing Space in schools in conjunction with Bodhi Tree, a charity headed by Srivati that supports religious education and spiritual development in schools, colleges and the work place. This year we are pleased to be running Mindfulness Based Addiction Recovery (MBAR) Training for Health Professionals and Mindfulness Teachers. This is being delivered by Vimalasara.

### **Marketing and publicity**

In addition to the outreach activities marketing activities have taken place, such as:

#### **Advertisements in local press**

- Permanent banner on LBC homepage
- Targeted electronic mail outs to all participants of course
- One-on-one meetings with local psychologists and health professionals
- Three open days with talks and presentations on Mindfulness Based Approaches at Breathing Space.
- Facebook advertisements
- Google advertisements
- Big Issue advertisements

### **Funding**

#### **Mainstream Grant (MSG) funding from London Borough of Tower Hamlets**

Breathing Space successfully retendered with London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH) until 2018 to continue delivering free places on MBCT, MBSR and MBAR courses, and free places for the two-day MBA retreats. Interest in the free places scheme continues to be high, especially for the MBCT and MBSR.

#### **Caring for the carers initiative**

In 2015-2016 we ran four retreats and 48 drop-in classes for carers living in East London. We are pleased that our contract has been extended to the end of 2017. We hope to retender after that point.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

#### **Breathing Space courses and retreats**

In 2014-2015 we reached 410 people attending Breathing Space activities, and in 2015-16 it was over 429. It has been another good year in terms of the number of people they reached. Of participants who finished a Breathing Space course and took part in the free place scheme (MBCT/MBAR/MBSR), the great majority rated the course as either 'helpful' or 'very helpful'.

#### **LBTH free places scheme for MBCT/MBAR/MBSR courses and retreats**

Breathing Space has continued to provide quarterly monitoring reports on quantitative outputs, outcomes, and equalities, as well as bi-quarterly monitoring meetings with LBTH. All targets were met, and this year 30 places were awarded to local community residents on a low income. Of scheme participants on free places who completed courses or retreats and returned feedback forms, 90% of the course participants rated the service as 'helpful' or 'very helpful' to them.

#### **Caring for the Carers**

We provide three-monthly monitoring reports for the 26 retreat places and 48 weekly drop-in classes for carers

in the Tower Hamlets, which LBTH is funding. These retreats have continued as a valuable resource for carers. This year 100% of the participating carers stated they were “very satisfied” by the retreat.

## Courses and Teachers

This year we delivered a new course for managing pain and illness. Thanks to Kalyanavaca and Karen Liebenguth for supporting this initiative, which we hope to continue in the coming year.

On behalf of the LBC and the Breathing Space project, I would like to thank the following teachers who have generously supported activities in the financial year 2014/2015:

Paramabandhu  
Sanghasiha  
Priyavajra  
Maitreyaraja  
Satyavasin  
Jayaka  
Dayabhadra  
Srivati  
Prajnadevi  
Sagarasila  
Luke Doherty  
Fiona Johnston  
Sujhayini  
Kalyanavaca.

Breathing Space teachers continue to be supervised by Dr Paramabandhu Groves, an NHS consultant psychiatrist and experienced MBA teacher who initiated the Breathing Space project at the LBC. Breathing Space is keen on augment the teachers’ pool further to ensure that we can continue our existing programme and grow it over time.

## Outreach project

Last year we partnered with London & Quadrant housing association in Leyton to deliver two six week MBSR outreach courses for residents and carers who live in the London Borough of Waltham Forest. The courses were successful. On the back of this success we initiated a nine-month meditation group in Leyton, with 15 people turning up each week. We also delivered the same MBSR course for L & Q residents in Wandsworth and are currently delivering the second course, with between 15 and 20 people turning up each week. We hope to carry on delivering this work in the coming year. Thanks to the following people for supporting this initiative:

Mangala  
Charlie Byles  
Mike MacFarlane  
Priyavajra.

## Looking Forward

We are now planning the future development of

the Breathing space project under the leadership of Suryagupta, with Vidyadaka, Jnanavaca, Paramabandhu, Jnanadeva, Srivati, Maitreyabandhu and Luke Doherty.

## Summary

With over 420 people attending a Breathing Space activity in 2015-2016, it has been another good year in terms of the people we have reached. The interest in MBAs among the general public has continued, which is promising for Breathing Space and the project’s future development. Public sector support has continued, with LBTH funding the free place scheme for MBSR/MBCT/MBAR courses until 2018. LBTH has continued to fund the Caring for the Carers project, with retreats for a total of 26 carers as well as weekly drop-in classes at the LBC.

## Luke