

# Around this mandala...

The newsletter of the Triratna Buddhist Centre in Bristol



Last week I had the blessing of being on the ordination retreat of Suryadaya and Viryanaya. My inspiration there was summed up by the

phrase 'Going For Refuge to the Three Jewels matters'. Of course I was very aware of my friend Sal going forth to commit herself fully to the spiritual life, and emerging as Suryadaya, and the significance of that for her. I was also aware of my friend Moksanandi who was witnessing that step as Suryadaya's private preceptor, and seeing how doing that calls for a deepening commitment for the preceptor too. And the whole event was clearly affecting all of us on the retreat, and people in Bristol and elsewhere who were thinking of us

It occurred to me that it is like that every time one of us deepens our commitment to pursuing our vision in this community a little more - it involves at least two people and affects many more. So even when someone makes an initial, maybe tentative, step of learning to meditate, that of course changes the new meditator, and also the person teaching. I know myself that communicating the Dharma demands I become clearer about what I'm doing and what I have confidence in. Then there's others on the team, in the class, and in the lives of all of us.

Each person learning to meditate, or deciding to come to the Centre regularly, or committing to a short course, or to a year-long course, or becoming a mitra, or asking to be ordained, or being ordained, or joining a class team, or conducting a mitra ceremony, or ordaining someone will be changing their lives a little, and having a positive effect on those around them. As we each take our next steps and do that in relationship with others, the Sangha grows and deepens we are co-creating the Sangha to the benefit of all. Whatever level our participation is at, we're all part of the same project. When I consider the possible extent of our influence, it truly does feel like a cosmic project, something so much bigger than we usually imagine, and I start to glimpse why our Sangha can be seen as a Bodhisattva. And how much Going for Refuge to the Three Jewels matters.

Jvālāmālīnī

## BRISTOL'S NEW DHARMACHARINI!



Last week on a very dark Tuesday night, I stepped out of the shrine room at Tiratanloka Women's Retreat Centre in Brecon onto a candlelit path leading down into the woodland in the river valley where Moksanandi, my Private Preceptor, was waiting for me in the exquisitely decorated and magical kuti to perform my private ordination ceremony. She was radiant and I felt an incredible mix of excitement, anticipation and joy - difficult to describe really. At the end of the ceremony she gave me my new name - Suryadaya - which means 'she whose compassion shines like the sun'. The name, of course, is a mix of qualities that Moksanandi has recognised in me and also which I aspire to develop in my life. I loved it immediately and it was very difficult keeping quiet over the next

### KAMALAMANI'S BOOK LAUNCH

For anyone interested in exploring the habitual patterns that so much shape our lives, and seeking to find more creative ways of being with ourselves and others, I wholeheartedly recommend Kamalamani's recently published book *Meditating with Character*. An experienced counsellor, trained in body psychotherapy, she outlines the ways in which our embodiment expresses itself. And as a member of the Triratna Order, she places this understanding clearly within the context of Buddhist meditation.

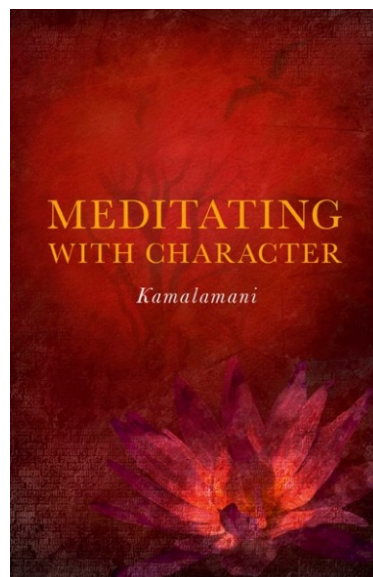
I have had a sense for some time of wanting to bring body awareness more into my practice and am very grateful to have found this very clear and friendly guide.

Dharmavajri



three days while I absorbed the significance of this big step. On Saturday 25th the sun came out in Wales and Tiratanaloka was full of flowers, flags and sunlight. Many of you - my pals from Bristol BC, my family and friends joined us along with people from Worcester and Birmingham who had come to witness the ordination of the other Dhamacharini, Virginia, who became Viryanaya, by Ratnadarini, our Public Preceptor. All I can say is that it was a wonderful wonderful day and I felt extraordinarily joyous and grateful. My special thanks to Moksanandi of course, and to Shraddhalocani, Dharmavajri, Jvalamalini, Khemajoti and Vimalavajri for joining me on this journey and helping create a really wonderful ordination retreat.

Suryadaya



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'As, one by one, we make

our own commitment,

an ever-widening

circle, the

Sangha grows'

*The Threefold Puja*







## GETTING TO KNOW KARUNAVAPI

I was Ordained in 2008 at Akasavana, our women's Ordination Retreat Centre in the Spanish mountains. Karunavapi means 'she who is a Lake of Compassion'. Born in Newcastle upon Tyne, I originally moved to Bristol at the age of 15 with a boyfriend.

Since then I have lived in Bristol, for around 20 years in my house in South Bristol, sharing with two other Buddhists. I manage the Healing Rooms above Bristol Buddhist Centre, where I work as a Holistic Massage Therapist, and run our school visiting project.

### What's your favourite Dharma book?

*The Dhammapadam. It contains the most essential teachings of the Buddha and I love that it's a compilation of what are said to be the Buddha's utterances over many years, brought together by his disciples. I found my first copy magically in a bookshop in Crete after having all my belongings stolen.*

### What's your favourite windhorse book?

*At the moment, it's Maitreyabandhu's book 'Life with Full Attention'. I've been following it with my Chapter and found it really helpful in establishing a firmer base of mindfulness practice in my everyday life. 'Meeting the Buddhas' is one that I probably pull off my shelf most often. I particularly love the story of the birth of Green Tara.*

### What was your first Dharma book?

*'Old path, white clouds'. The life story of the Buddha by Thich Nhat Hanh. I love to read stories about people. It helps me to relate. I enjoyed the poetic style too.*

### What fascinated you into practising the Dharma?

*Hmmm.... I was attracted by a curious friendliness in those I met at the Buddhist Centre.*

### What is your favourite image of Enlightenment?

*A spring deep in the heart of the lake, with many manifestations playing on the surface. Green Tara dancing.*

### Who is the living person you most admire?

*My private preceptor, Padmasuri. I remember one of the first times I met her was on a Karuna Appeal. I have a photo of her on my shrine, sitting and reading to us from the manuscript of one of her books. She is concentrating yet smiling. There is a picture beside her of Sangharakshita with one of his teachers, Dhardo Rimpoche.*

### What's your most annoying habit?

*Acting from a wrong view/story that 'I'm not good enough. I'm not as good as other people'. Withdrawing when I get overwhelmed is one of these manifestations that annoys me and plenty of other people.*

### What's your favourite dinner?

*Vegetarian Mezze at Caffè Sazz on North Street in Bedminster, with Silajala (well, I don't eat him, he's with me. I enjoy connection more than food so the person has to be there with me).*

### Have you any regrets?

*Yes. That I hurt someone I cared about by staying out all night and not letting him know I wouldn't be home.*

### The most significant day in your life?

*1st June 2008. My private Ordination. It was a stormy day in the Spanish mountains and I wrote in my diary that I wouldn't have wanted it any other way. I was given my name and I felt the stillness and depth in me. I have felt it every day since then.*

## OPEN DOORS DAY AT BRISTOL BUDDHIST CENTRE



MANDALA MAKING



MEDITATION 'TASTER'

After the success of our last centre open day in September, we thought it would be great to have another one soon after. None of us really knew how popular this would be - a great opportunity to capture the imagination of people full of New Year resolutions, or a bit of a post-Xmas damp squib?

There was a real sense, when we were putting up the bunting a little before doors-open time, of really not knowing what the day would bring. But a steady stream of people began to trickle in even before the doors were officially open and there were already around 15 by the time the opening ceremony kicked things off.

As it happened, it was almost as busy as our September open day had been with new people coming and going throughout the day and many who had come just to try out one of the 'taster' sessions in the morning ended up staying all day. There were curious people who had never tried any meditation before and had just wandered in off of Gloucester Road; people who for a long time had been

interested in trying meditation and finding out a bit about Buddhism and were pleased to have finally made a first step. Others had dabbled with meditation on and off but had not quite found what they were looking for, as well as some who had just come for the yoga session but were also interested to find out about what else we do.



There was a great buzz about the centre all day, a plentiful supply of delicious homemade cake (many thanks to everyone who contributed!); a craft space to make your own mandalas where people sat happily together and chatted over a cup of tea as they worked, and pairs of meditators in the shop window providing a very public and eye-catching face to the day's activities.

For me, the open days feel like such a great way to reach out and welcome in our local community and to offer the gift of the Dharma; metta and dana in action. It was a really lovely way for the Sangha to come and work together. I'm looking forward to the next one already!

Sarah Thorne



## TWO MITRA CEREMONIES

On 16th January 2012 we welcomed two more friends into our mitra Sangha: Michelle Healey and Dan Berridge. It was a pleasure for me to rejoice in Michelle's merits and to hear Janaka reading Shraddhalocani and Steve Jackson's rejoicings in Dan. Michelle's good friend and colleague, who is an Anglican Priest, came to celebrate the occasion, as did Dan's wife Nikki.

Karunavapi