

Charity Details and Ethical Guidelines

A Registered Charity

Taraloka is a registered charity (registration no. 274500). There is more information in our entry on the Charity Commission Website (www.charitycommission.gov.uk/Showcharity/RegisterOfCharities).

Ethical Guidelines

These Guidelines are intended as a statement of our values as mitras and Order members teaching, leading or administering retreats or other activities at Taraloka Buddhist Retreat Centre. The guidelines are appropriate for all those involved in retreats or other public events, whether external volunteers for Taraloka, or members of Taraloka's residential community. The guidelines are framed around five fundamental ethical precepts taught by the Buddha, and observed by the vast majority of Buddhist traditions, including Triratna.

1

I undertake to abstain from harming living beings. With deeds of loving-kindness I purify my body.

Taraloka Buddhist Retreat Centre aims to support the awakening of the individual, in a manner appropriate to each person. In all our dealings with one another we aspire to behave in a spirit of kindness, expressing kalyana mitrata, or spiritual friendship.

Our spiritual community has been defined by Sangharakshita as a 'free association of individuals'. Respecting this, it is important that individuals in positions of trust and authority do not misuse their position or authority for their own benefit or to influence others inappropriately.

We wish to minimise the harm we do, to any living being and to the natural world that sustains us.

We affirm that physical violence and displays of anger have no place among us. As far as possible, conflicts will be resolved through discussion and, if necessary, with mediation.

We will buy only vegan products and ingredients as far as possible, and serve or permit to be served only vegetarian food at the Centre. This expresses an attitude of metta and non-harm towards all living beings and towards the entire natural world, consistent with Triratna's practical approach to ethics.

Taraloka Buddhist Retreat Centre is part of the Triratna Sustainable Centres scheme. We are committed to protecting the environment and reducing our carbon footprint by following the ten-point plan outlined in our 'Sustainable Centre' certificate, which is displayed in our front lobby.

2

I undertake to abstain from taking the not given. With open-handed generosity, I purify my body.

The worldwide Triratna Buddhist Community depends upon the generosity of everyone involved with it.

We operate a 'dana' economy, an economy based on generosity, at Taraloka Buddhist Retreat Centre. Teachers undertake to share their understanding of the Dharma in a spirit of generosity, making the Buddha's teachings available to all regardless of financial circumstances.

We value openness, transparency and accountability. Those with responsibility for collecting or administering the Buddhist Centre's financial or material resources will do so with the utmost care and respect for the generosity of donors who support the Centre financially, in consultation with others as appropriate.

Where misuse is deemed to have occurred, we will investigate and take action promptly.

Taraloka Buddhist Retreat Centre is also part of the broader community and the natural world. We will express generosity through our engagement in altruistic activity locally and nationally. We undertake to make responsible and ethical purchases. We try to avoid taking the not-given in relation to the environment by minimizing the Centre's consumption of natural resources, in accordance with the Triratna Sustainable Centre Scheme.

3

I undertake to abstain from sexual misconduct. With stillness, simplicity and contentment I purify my body.

Triratna is a community of people practising the Buddha's teachings together. As such it is natural that close relationships should develop between us, and that some of these may be sexual relationships.

We encourage people to conduct their sexual relationships ethically, with awareness and kindness, with people of whatever sex.

People in teaching roles, or otherwise helping to lead Taraloka activities, have a particular responsibility for kalyanamitrata, or spiritual friendship.

Sexual partnerships have developed between many members of our sangha. These include sexual relationships between members of the Order and people for whom they were formerly teachers. Whilst we recognise that such relationships can be healthy and beneficial, we also know from experience that this is a matter requiring careful consideration. With this in mind, we agree the following:

1. It is not appropriate to engage in sexual activity or to pursue a relationship which we feel may become sexual while at Taraloka, and particularly not while on retreat at Taraloka. Retreats should remain protected spaces in which, as far as is possible, an atmosphere of stillness, simplicity and contentment is fostered.
2. After leaving the retreat, a person teaching the Dharma at Taraloka will not become involved in a sexual relationship with anyone (be they newcomers or more experienced Buddhists) for whom she is that person's main point of contact with the Dharma.

3. If interest in a relationship does develop over time between one of us and a person we have taught, we will not pursue the relationship until the less experienced person has established effective friendships with other Order members.

4. Once we are no longer a person's main teacher we will leave a gap of several months before entering into a sexual relationship with them. Strength of feeling for the Dharma can easily be confused with feelings for us as Dharma teachers.

5. If over time, a mutual interest in such a relationship does develop, we would expect the person in the teaching role, before pursuing the relationship in any way, to discuss the situation with a peer group such as a chapter, community, other teachers, or with their kalyana mitras or preceptors (as applicable), and to seek advice from such friends before taking any further steps towards the development of a sexual relationship.

6. The person in the teaching role would also try to ensure that the less Triratna-experienced person has adequate opportunity to meet with another Order member, preferably of the same gender as the newer person, who can offer some support or guidance.

We will not engage in sexual behaviour with anyone under the legal age of consent. As adults, we accept full responsibility for avoiding such relationships.

Where inappropriate sexual behaviour is deemed to have occurred, we will investigate and take action promptly. Please also see Taraloka's Safeguarding Policy.

4

I undertake to abstain from false speech. With truthful communication, I purify my speech.

In all our dealings with one another, we are committed to truthful, meaningful and harmonious speech which encourages spiritual growth and creates community.

We affirm that swearing and harsh language have no place among us.

We agree to hold and share information carefully and respectfully, motivated by desire for the wellbeing and spiritual progress of those we discuss.

Through skilful communication we seek to create at Taraloka an atmosphere of friendliness, co-operation and trust. Recognising that these values may be expressed differently across the many cultures in our worldwide movement, we aspire to practise the speech precepts with sensitivity for different cultural norms.

5

I undertake to abstain from intoxication. With mindfulness clear and radiant I purify my mind.

Taraloka Buddhist Retreat Centre aims to provide a context for the development of wisdom and compassion through deepening awareness and the practice of mindfulness. Intoxicants, by their very nature, undermine and hinder the development of awareness.

Therefore we will not serve, or permit to be served, alcohol or other intoxicants on Taraloka retreats or other public events.

In the spirit of exemplification, those engaged in teaching, leading, supporting or administering activities for Taraloka are also expected to demonstrate a responsible attitude to alcohol and other intoxicants.

Procedures

If at any time there is a perceived breach of these guidelines, the Trustees ask that it be made known in the first instance to the Chair of Trustees or any member of the Taraloka Retreat Team.

Please email

retreatteam(at)taraloka(dot)org(dot)uk

The current retreat team are:

Maitridevi (Chair)

Maitrisiddhi (Treasurer)

Mahamani (Safeguarding Officer)

Suryahridaya (Retreat Team)

Taraloka's President is Candraprabha. If you feel the Taraloka Retreat Team have not adequately responded to your concerns, or if you wish to contact someone outside of the Taraloka situation, any Triratna Order Member will be able to put you in touch with Candraprabha.

(A centre's President is a senior Triratna order member who lives and works elsewhere, but who acts as a kalyana mitra (good friend) to the centre. They maintain regular contact with the centre, yet keep an outside perspective.)

General Remarks

The inspiration for these ethical guidelines has been a process currently taking place across the wider Triratna Buddhist Community to clarify thinking in these areas.

The guidelines are to be kept under review by the Retreat Team of Taraloka's residential community. Any recommended changes are to be referred to the Council of Trustees.

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

Retreats at Taraloka are for women aged 18 or over. However, children do visit us from time to time, for example as friends, family or neighbours. We take very seriously our responsibilities for the safeguarding of children.

We also take seriously our responsibilities to safeguard 'vulnerable adults', or adults who may be temporarily vulnerable while on retreat.

Taraloka has full Child and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding policies.