

Online Meditation Course for Young Buddhists in Mainland Europe

From Amritapurna

A summary given for the Sikkha seminar *How to Attract and Engage Young People*, which took place on Saturday 24th April 2021. The course itself took place online in February 2021.

Vision

How to *engage* young people throughout Europe more with their practice and their Sanghas?

Team and Participants

Dharmasara (Berlin) and Amritapurna (The Netherlands) approached Order Members from Triratna Centres all over Europe with the request to invite young people (up to 35) who:

1. Had sufficient English
2. Already had a connection with Triratna
3. Already had a regular meditation practice
4. Could commit to meditate daily

Most of the local Order Members volunteered as facilitators of same language groups in weekly Zoom meetings. Five Order Members facilitated four international groups in English.

Course Content

Vajradevi from the UK led the course. She did the following:

1. Gave daily input.
2. Led two weekly Zoom meetings, which ran in parallel on Mondays and Tuesdays. Participants went to one of these evenings.
3. Led the final Zoom meeting of the course.

Sadayasihi, who was also a group facilitator, created a space/community on TBCO with:

1. An introduction video.
2. The daily material.
3. A space for questions.
4. PayPal accounts for dana.
5. Zoom links for all events.
6. A space for each language (but this was not used much).

Course Strengths

1. All involved got a sense of the broader Sangha.
2. All involved received excellent Dharma teaching which was clear and practical.
3. They could talk about their practice in their own language.
4. In the international groups, people had a chance to meet others from other Centres
5. In groups, facilitators and participants (who were mostly of different generations) could connect.

Course Weaknesses

1. There was little time for the breakout groups

2. It proved tricky with different time zones – **for some it's late, for some it's early, for majority** it was ok.
3. Some people left the course without notifying anyone.
4. A lack of continuity of attendance of some participants led to fragmented groups.
5. **Some people didn't have good enough English**
6. Without clear suggestions to share in the groups, the discussion was sometimes vague, which did not help the group process.

Course Opportunities / Improvements

1. One more person on the team to let people in before the start of Zoom sessions and put them in random groups so they can meet others in an informal way.
2. Give participants the email address of their facilitator with the request to email them, introduce themselves and let them know they would like to join the course. So, then the initiative is theirs.
3. Ask facilitators to meet up as a group (a week) before the start of the course
4. **Having meditation 'buddies' for the course** – maybe suggesting that the participants organize this themselves.
5. Have the committed young people inviting new young people themselves.