

letter from the chair of the college of public preceptors

february 2026

Dear friends in the Dharma,

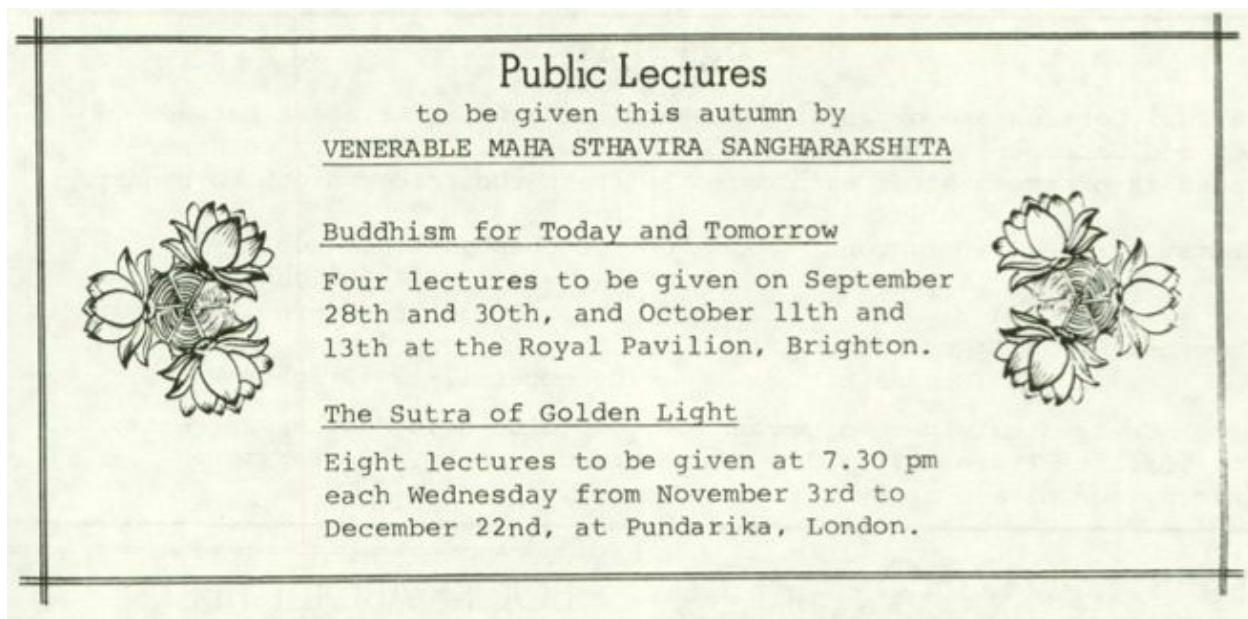
I first contacted Triratna in September 1976, as a 21 year-old student in Norwich, when it was still called the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order. I recall the atmosphere around the FWBO and the feeling that, if I took all my idealism and enthusiasm and threw myself into this young Buddhist movement, I would be part of something tremendously exciting. It would be transformative for me and make an important contribution to the world.



*Mahamati running Dharmachakra Tapes, 1978*

Of course, I discovered that changing either myself or contributing to the world was much less straightforward than I'd imagined. All the same, the last year and more, serving as Chair of the [College of Public Preceptors](#), has renewed my appreciation of all that we've achieved in our Order and movement. But what about the excitement of the 1970s, and Sangharakshita's visionary sense of what it really meant?

Sangharakshita set out Triratna's offering in his poem [Four Gifts](#) and a series of lectures, given in Brighton in the autumn of 1976 and later published as [Buddhism for Today - and Tomorrow](#). Together, these express the core of Triratna's vision: a creative presentation of the Buddha's teaching, rooted in tradition and shaped for modern life.



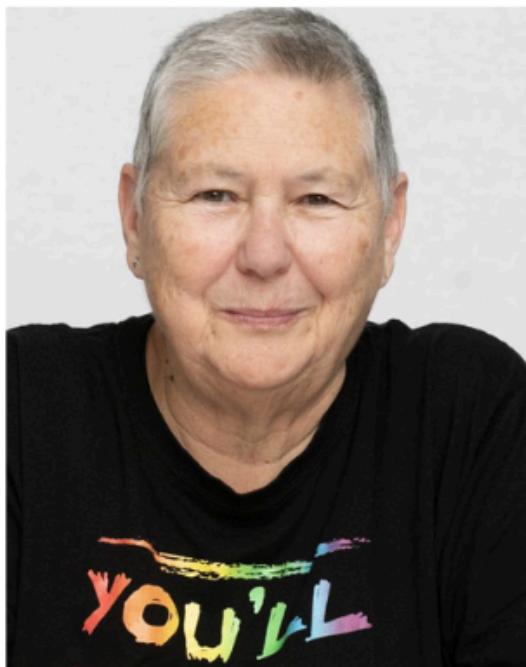
Original advert for Sangharakshita's lectures, 1976

I am very happy that, fifty years on, Triratna's [International Council](#) is inviting centres and Order members worldwide to explore these sources and ask what they mean today. Looking around the world, I see rapid change and deep divisions, but these gifts remain Triratna's distinctive contribution. It's a good time to ask how they should be

lived and shared.

In December I was in Germany for the Mainland European Order Forum. The theme was the Four Gifts, and during the gathering Simharava from Berlin gave an excellent [keynote talk](#), which we've included in a [timeline of events](#) on the Four Gifts theme continuing through this year. It's part of a [dedicated webpage](#), which also includes other resources. We'll add more events as the theme gathers momentum.

In early January I spent a week at [Adhisthana](#) for a meeting of the European Chairs Assembly (ECA). During the week Jnanagarbha, Convenor of the [International Council](#), hosted a session in which we heard from Centre Chairs about the different ways they're planning to mark the theme. Some Centres have already begun, including Parami at the [Glasgow Buddhist Centre](#), and you can hear her introduction [here](#).



Parami (left) and Simharava (right)

Looking back, fifty years on from those early lectures, offers a chance to enquire of ourselves and of each other what we've learnt about the radical vision put forward then, and how it can inspire our still relatively new Buddhist movement, now and into the future.

To support these reflections, we have formulated [some questions](#) for consideration and discussion, perhaps, in chapters and Going For Refuge groups, and more generally at Triratna Centres and groups.



This will be the first time people involved in Triratna as a whole have been invited to explore a common theme, connecting us across the world. Along with the other members of the International Council, I hope this will encourage a stronger, shared engagement with Triratna's core vision and greater clarity about what we offer, and confidence in its value.

Mahamati

Chair of the Preceptors College and Chair of the Triratna International Council