



# Varapunya Bulletin

*Helping hand, Healing hearts*

ปีที่ ๑/๒๕๕๘/๒ - Year 1/2016/2

It is an April 2016. 'Time waits no one'. It travels at its own pace, but yet time can fly away, without knowing through the days and the months or it can be dying to see the sunshine on the horizon. Time can be very difficult for people. They can find it difficult to sleep or get bored with something as a long waiting queue. Similarly there are only limited things one can do within a length of time. Time for them is less or not enough. Whatever the case, time is walking in its own natural way but we have to learn to manage or adjust in accordance with it.



In this Bulletin, I intend to give you over view of centre's activities and experience from personal journey to the East. I will try to illustrate as it comes.

## **New Year and Phapah Ceremony**

The year 2016 at the centre began with the New Years Eve and carried on into the early hours of the 1st of January, chanting and blessings. The centre over the past year had been very productive and many changes took place. The centre organised a fundraising New Year Celebration with the main support of Prapisiri Herd and Ratana Kaiyakit along with her family and friends. The centre was specially blessed to have two monks from Wat Mahathat Kings Bromley England for the ceremony. Every members of the centre enjoyed the event and rejoiced.

## **Ajahn's journey to the East**

In the middle of January, I (Ajahn Sujan) left the centre to visit Thailand, India, Nepal and China to attend the ceremonies, family visit, conferences and self-retreat.

My first stop was in **Thailand** where on behalf of the centre, I attended the Inauguration ceremony of the Pagoda at Wat Chommon Temple in Mae Hongson province, Thailand. The Pagoda is one of the important pagodas of Mae Sariang province, which was renovated by Venerable Phramaha Patphong, the centre's great supporter and well wisher from Thailand. Meanwhile, I also paid my respect to the most Venerable His Holiness Somdet Phramaha Ratchamangalacharn, the acting supreme patriarch of Thailand and the Abbot of Wat Paknam, Bangkok, Thailand. On this visit, I presented the brief activity report of the centre to him for his blessings.

I then travelled to **India** for self-retreat. I stayed at one of the most sacred sites of Buddhism, Buddhagaya, This is the place where the Buddha had attended the enlightenment. It was my fourth visit to the site. I stayed for ten days self-retreat for the development of meditation and spiritual

closeness with Buddha nature. It was very uplifting and full of wonderful moments, the experience was full of insights. The Buddhagaya itself is an amazing place. Every time when I travel to Buddhagaya, amazingly I found that tiredness evaporates and feeling of energised. As a result, no matter how far was I travelling, I always pay a visit to the main temple and meditate. As with other people who travel there I spend time talking to them and they also feel the same way as I do.

February, I travelled to **China**. I went to the Theravada Buddhist conference in Xishung Banna, Yunnan China. The first ever to be held there, which was organised by the Buddhist Sangha of Yunnan. I presented a paper on the Theory of 'Theravada Buddhist Culture in Scotland; Introduction and adaptation', which included: history and adaptation focusing on the centres activities and its role on propagating Buddhist teachings in the city of Aberdeen.

Yunnan province is at the heart of Buddhist culture, the three schools; Theravada, Mahayana and Tibetan are all mutually practiced in Yunnan. There are some temples where monastic from all three schools are living and practicing together. I had a chance to visit two Buddhist colleges and explore around the different shrines. I also had the opportunity to present a special lecture at the Yunnan University on the topic 'Theravada Buddhism in the West; Establishment and Adaptation'.

Life is uncertain but death is. People die at all stages in life. Young to old and old to death. As it says suffering is inevitable but pain is choice. Death is inevitable but learning to deal with it our choice. I personally had several losses in a number of consecutive years. My father died two years ago, my mother died a year later and then the family home was completely flattened by the devastating earthquake in 2015 in **Nepal**.

I have learned a lot during these loses past few years. One of the most important, would be my practice has given me a lot of strength and ability to understand the uncertainty of life. Meanwhile, it also has served my family members and relatives immensely. This year in Nepal, I attended the one year memorial service for my mother. It was painful but I felt glad to be there for my departed mother. It gave me a lot of relief and comfort before and after the ceremony by just being there.

### **Ajahn Peera at the centre**

Friendship is the greatest gift one could have in life. The most Venerable Ajahn Laow (Phra Panyabuddhivithet) the Abbot of Wat Mahathat UK, offered his kind support to the centre and arranged for visiting Monk Ajahn Peera to come and stay at the centre and



continue to teach and run the centre's activities for the community while I was on vacation. The centre was really blessed by his presence and knowledge. Members benefited greatly and enjoyed his joyful presence. New classes of meditation for beginners on Wednesday nights were established by Ajahn Peera along with Mr Dawson who also gives guidance as the interest in Aberdeen has increased. While managing the day to day running of the centre Ajahn Peera also

contributed to local schools as they requested a Monk to give talks regarding Buddhism to pupils. On several occasions he was requested to attend Manor Park Primary School to teach the pupils about Meditation. The pupils were very inquisitive and thoroughly enjoyed Ajahn Peera's attendance. They showed their appreciation by drawing on cards of their experience and writing messages for Ajahn Peera.



### **Ajahn Vimokkha at the Centre**

One of the centre's objectives is to invite qualified Masters to the centre, for the benefit of members and people who are interested in Buddhist studies and the practice of Buddhist meditation. One of the great masters visiting the centre was Ajahn Dr. Vimokkha, the abbot of Wat Pippalivanaram, Thailand, a well known meditation master. On March the 18 to the 24th of March this year we were blessed again by his presence. He has a very unique dynamic style of teaching meditation which is very popular with people around the world. The classes were very well attended over the 5 days which included a day retreat. This is Ajahn Dr Vimokkha's fourth year of teachings here at the centre.

The community and I value and appreciate Ajahn Dr Vimokkha, as he has a very rich knowledge on the theory and practice of meditation. On behalf of the centre I whole heartily would like to extend my appreciation and thank him for his continued spiritual support for the centre and visiting us here and running the day retreat and daily teachings.

### **Learning never ends.**

One needs to keep an open heart and mind to learn new things. On my return to the UK at the end of March I went to a four days intensive Chaplaincy Training course at Buddhist Society in London. The Society is the first Buddhist organisation of its kind the UK. The purpose of attending the training is to extend centre's service to the other institutions. The training is designed in accordance with the Buddhist concept of 'Kalyanmitta' concentrating on seven qualities of the good friend. Buddhist chaplains have to develop a clear mind, open and a compassionate heart towards fellow beings. A very deep knowledgeable course.

### **Out reach**

Ajahn Peera was requested to attend Dublin for a religious ceremony organised by Wat Buddhamahathat, Ireland, which was established around five years ago. His visit to Dublin has enabled the centre to extend our relationship and friendship with other Buddhist centres and Temples reaching out far and beyond.

## Gratitude

The centre would struggle to stand and provide our valuable service to the wider community without kind and generous support from all the members who have been very supportive, providing financial support and support in different activities. Through this bulletin, on behalf of the centre I would like to extend my gratitude and appreciation for the continued support from everyone and hoping for the support in the future.



Similarly, I would also like to extend my thanks to Ajahn Peera for his tireless contribution to be at the centre running its activities. As the beginners class on a Wednesday is very popular I would like to thank Mr Dawson for his tireless commitment and kindly giving his assistance guiding the meditation classes along with Ajahn Peera. Meanwhile, my appreciation for every member who have kindly looked after and assisted the Sangha at the centre. Particularly, all upasika who generously continue offering lunch and assisting in educational visits in Scotland. Furthermore, I also would like to extend my appreciation to Ajahn Dr. Vimokkha, who continued his support visiting the centre and providing retreats and teachings to the members of the centre.

Overall, Thank You everyone for your continued support.

There are many activities ahead for the next three months.

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| April 9th -10th | - Holistic Way fair at the Elphinston Hall, University of Aberdeen    |
| April 13th      | - Songkran Blessings at the centre                                    |
| April 14th      | - 19th Songkran Festivals at Wat Mahathat UK, Kings Bromley           |
| May 22nd        | - Vesak Celebration at the centre, Aberdeen                           |
| May 29th        | - Vesak Celebration in London, Lumbini Nepalese Buddha Dharma Society |
| June 12th       | - Dhamma studies Exam at the centre                                   |

### **Meditation and Buddhist studies Classes at the centre:**

1. Tuesday Evening: 7 – 9 pm. guided meditation and end with discussions.
2. Wednesday Evening: 7 - 9 pm ; good for beginners
3. Sunday Morning session 10:00 am -11:15 am (everyone is welcome)
4. Friday Dhamma studies at 7 pm ( This is only for old students)

The Centre provides all services and classes are free. The centre intends to assist finding everyone's true self, which is priceless. Therefore, the centre provides classes and services free. To provide such valuable services the centre needs your support in different ways. It runs entirely from donation. If you are willing to support please send your donation to the centre or **to the HSBC Bank 'Varapunya Meditation Centre' Sort Code: 40-01-25 Account No: 8139-2948**

Finally, this year's Kathina Ceremony will be on Sunday 30th October 2016. I cordially invite everyone to join the centre to celebrate and raise fund to support the centre.

May the protective power of the triple gem; the Buddha, the dhamma and the sangha bring you a happy and successful life and finally attain the ultimate happiness of Nibbana.