

The Buddhist Cooperation Council of Sweden (SBS)

Activity Report 2015

Member Organizations

Association 3 Jewels

Association for Diamond Way Buddhism, Buddhist Center in Stockholm

Association for Tibetan Buddhism in Gothenburg

Association for Tibetan Buddhism in Malmö – Lund, Karma Yönten Ling

BLIA - Buddha's Light International Association, Stockholm chapter

Buddha Dhamma Saddha association - Wat Pha Gothenburg

Buddhist Association in Lappland Sweden, Buddharama Temple Fredrika

Buddhist Association in Luleå

Buddhist Community - Karme Tenpe Gyaltzen (KTG)

Buddhist Vihara Association / Stockholm Buddhist Vihara

Burma Buddhist compound Sweden - Tiratana Buddhist Convent

Sakya Changchub Chöling

Swedish Soto – Zen Association

Thai Buddhist Association in Sweden, Buddharama Temple Värmdö

Triratna Buddhist Community

Vipassanagruppen

Vietnamese Buddhist Cultural Association in Bjuv, Dai Bi Tam temple

Vietnamese Buddhist Cultural Association in Malmö, Thay Tien temple

Vietnamese Culture and Buddhist Association in Gothenburg, Phat Quang Temple

Wat Sanghabaramee

Wat Santinivas

Zen Buddhist Society

Board of Directors

Chairwoman: Trudy Fredriksson (Buddhist Community – KTG)

Deputy Chairman: Bhante Dhammaratana Nayaka Maha Thera (Buddhist Vihara Association / Stockholm Buddhist Vihara)

Treasurer: Eva Abrahmsén (Sakya Changchub Chöling)

Secretary: Ekaterina (Katya) Panova (Association for Tibetan Buddhism in Gothenburg)

Member: Daniel Trung Pham (Vietnamese Culture and Buddhist Association in Gothenburg, Phat Quang Temple)

Member: Pramaha Boonthin Taosiri (Thai Buddhist Society/Buddharama Temples)

Meetings

The Buddhist Cooperation Council of Sweden (SBS) held one Annual meeting and three board meetings during the year. On 24 May the Annual meeting was held at Chua Phat Quang temple in Gothenburg. An environmental conference was taking place at the temple on 23 May, following up the discussion from the previous year's conference in conjunction to the Annual meeting 2014 in Rosersberg. The subject discussed this year was "Our Actions are required for a Sustainable Environment". See the respective minutes.

Trudy Fredriksson (TF) was commissioned by the government as a council member and participated in several meetings at the Swedish Commission for Government Support to Faith Communities (SST) www.sst.a.se and the Government's Council for contact with faith communities www.regeringen.se/sb/d/15931. Bhante Dhammaratana was a deputy at the SST's council. TF also took part in the meetings of the SST's reviewing group for spiritual care in the hospitals.

In October, the SBS board had an annually recurring meeting with the Secretary General, Åke Göransson and Åsa E Hole, the Administrator for Governmental grants at the SST.

Katja Panova (KP) took part in the SST counsel for increased dialogue on democracy and human rights, with particular focus on women's participation, influence and visibility in faith communities.

Several Buddhist representatives from SBS member organizations participated in courses for religious leaders and for Treasurers and Secretaries arranged by SST in Gothenburg and Stockholm. In June TF visited the new temple, Wat Buddharam in Boden and Wat Sanghabaram together with Leif Magnusson.

Governmental grants from SST

The governmental grant amounted in 2015 to 363 120 SEK, of which 9 % (31 800 SEK) for the SBS key activities and 91% (331 320 SEK) for 12 member organizations. Five organizations received additionally start-up grants of 24.000 SEK/each: 1. BLIA - Buddha's Light International Association, 2. Association 3 Jewels, 3. The Vietnamese Culture and Buddhist Association in Gothenburg, 4. The Burma Buddhist Association Sweden and 5. The Buddhist Association in Lappland, Sweden. A grant of 160 000 SEK for security enhancing measures were given to Wat Pha in Gothenburg and 80 000 SEK for the disability adaption to KTG in Fellingsbro.

Spiritual care and crises management

Starting from the year 2015, KP's employment as the Buddhist coordinator for spiritual care in the hospitals, has increased to 40%, while TF's employment remained 30% granted by SST.

During 2015 the coordinators have been working within the following fields:

- To be a recourse for Buddhist patients, hospital staffs and hospital churches in different queries about Buddhist spiritual care in connection with sickness and death, and when needed to refer to a appropriate Buddhist representative from the different Buddhist traditions.
- To strengthen and develop the work of the Buddhist contact persons through education and follow up.
- To meet and inform management and hospital staffs, as well as the Hospital Churches, about the Buddhist spiritual care, crises management and our contact list of Buddhist representatives.
- Follow-up meetings and discussions with the hospitals about the further development and spreading of the information about the spiritual care and crises management.
- Meetings with many other authorities about the crises management and refugee support.

For more information, see the appendix: The report about spiritual care and crises management.

Buddhist graveyard in Stockholm – five year anniversary of the Stupa

A project group of four persons – Wendy Har from BLIA, Tien Lai from Phat Quang temple, Fredrik Busk from Triratna and Chandra Nawaratne from Stockholm Buddhist Vihara, planned and carried out the celebration of the five year anniversary of the Buddhist Stupa at the Strandkyrkogården. Marie Eriksson updated the brochure with the information about the Buddhist graveyard. BLIA has translated the summary of the brochure to Chinese. The brochure has been printed in 2000 copies for distribution to the funeral bureaus and to the Buddhist organizations in Stockholm area.

SBS homepage

Katja Panova has administered the home page, alongside creating the new one, currently worked on, before it can be launched during 2016.

European Buddhist Union (EBU) www.e-b-u.org

TF attended in the EBU meeting with the network of the National Unions in Frankfurt in January. TF was also responsible for coordinating the NU network during the year 2015. She also participated in the EBU's General meeting on September 24-27 at the Rigpa Center in Berlin, Germany, see the respective minutes.

The United Nation's Vesak festival

Katja Panova represented SBS on festival celebrations in Bangkok, Thailand in May and read a greeting from SBS and the message from "Refuse to Hate!", where religious leaders all over Sweden jointly act through the Interreligious Council of

Sweden against hate and for peace. The message read at the Vesak-event, was then published on the: buddhistchannel.tv/index.php?id=3,12333,0,0,1,0.

Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, MSB

TF participated in several meetings with the MSB group council. Due to the increased tension in the society and in particular during the Autumn 2015, in connection to the difficult refugee situation, many authorities, in addition to MSB, invited the representatives from SBS and other faith communities to take part in regular discussions. An appeal to contribute with practical efforts has been forwarded on two occasions to the contact persons for spiritual care and crisis management. For more information, read the Report about spiritual care and crises management.

Interreligious Council of Sweden (SIR)

Trudy and Bhante Dhammaratana attended meetings at the Interreligious Council of Sweden (SIR). SIR has in close collaboration with the Christian Council of Sweden arranged the “Refuse to Hate!” manifestation in Stockholm, Gothenburg, Malmö and Umeå during February 2015, when the World Interfaith Harmony Week started.

In Storkyrkan in Stockholm, the “Refuse to Hate!” message was handed over in the presence of the Swedish Royal family. In addition to the representatives from the Swedish Jewish Communities, Catholic Church, Syrian Orthodox Church and Muslim Council of Sweden, also delegates from SBS were present, with Venerable Phra Maha Boonsee, Venerable Ru Hai, TF, et.al. On the same day the same manifestation was arranged in Stockholm by SBS during “A meeting for Peace” at Sakya Changchub Chöling. The “Refuse to Hate!” manifestation was also arranged at the Phat Quang temple in Gothenburg and in Malmö. During a meeting with SIR at the Ministry of Culture, TF handed over the baton with the message to Alice Bah Kuhnke, Minister for Religious affairs, Culture and Democracy. TF has also participated in several meetings with the SIR’s steering group. In October, Bhante Dhammaratana and Trudy signed a statement from SIR, concerning the refugee situation. More information about SIR: www.interreligiosaradet.se.

Coexist

Within the interfaith network Coexist with the City of Malmö, the SBS representative Leif Magnusson et al. from Karma Yönten Ling, have regularly during the year met representatives of other faiths and discussed about the current issues, regarding safety, diversity and co-existence. Various representatives also had meetings with the groups of teachers and students at different schools in Malmö. In December the Coexist had a meeting with Alice Bah Kuhnke, Minister for Religious affairs, Culture and Democracy. The meeting was held at the Muslim Assembly and was dealing with authorities’ relation to the faith communities in times of crises, considering the difficult situation in Malmö in Autumn, with the arriving refugees.

Also international incidents, like the attempts in Copenhagen and Paris and possible consequences of those incidents locally in Malmö, were also a part of the dialogue in Coexist. The ongoing work to prevent and to counteract religious radicalization has showed to be successful.

Interfaith Peace Forum (IFF)

During the year, Eva Abrahamsen and many other representatives from SBS member organizations, participated in meetings with IFF and “Walks for Friendship” in Stockholm.

TF participated in the arrangements by the Interreligious council of Örebro, during the towns 750 years anniversary. TF read a Buddhist text about peace and the “Refuse to Hate!” manifesto, handing over the baton with the message to the Chairwoman of the Örebro Municipality, Lena Baastad. TF also participated in a discussion panel at the conference “Faith and Action” at the Multicultural center in Botkyrka, connected to the work with refugees.

Other activities

SBS has further addressed various other issues of the members, of various organizations, institutions and individuals.

The board would like to express their cordial gratitude to everyone who by various efforts has contributed to the SBS activities

Stockholm, April 2016.

The Board of the Buddhist Cooperation Council of Sweden.