

Annual Trustees report September 2022 to August 2023

Theravada Buddhist Trust (TBT)

Theravada (school of the elder monks) is a branch of Buddhism that uses the teaching of the oldest recorded Buddhist texts. It is the dominant form of religion in Myanmar (formerly Burma) and its neighbours, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Sri Lanka.

Annual report by the board of Trustees for the financial year ended 31 August 2023.

1. Objectives and activities

Our aims and objectives are clearly stated in our trust deeds which are summarised below:

(1) To advance the Theravada Buddhist practice in the Yorkshire area for the benefit of the public by encouraging and facilitating religious practice through provision of place of worship. This will hold religious ceremonies, mass chanting open to the public, prayers meetings, public celebration of religious festivals plus long and short stay meditation retreats.

(2) To promote awareness and understanding of Theravada Buddhism by providing regular religious teachings and meditation practice for the public.

(3) To provide religious devotional acts by facilitating the Buddhist reverend, visiting the sick for encouragement and support of pastoral work

2. Worship and prayer

There is regular chanting, group meditation and discussion of Buddha's teaching by attendees at the monastery as indicated by the daily programme below.

6:00 Chanting. 18:30 Chanting

Wednesday and Sunday 20:00 – 21:30 Group Meditation, Dhamma talks and reading of Buddhist scriptures like Anguittara Nikaya by Zoom meetings.

Second week of Saturday every month, 10:00 to 14:00 (offering food, chanting, group meditation and Dhamma discussion.)

The activities above give spiritual support and fulfilment to the Buddhist community in Sheffield and beyond. People from surrounding areas as far as Leeds, Manchester and even from London attended these meetings. The meditation and Dhamma discussion sessions are quite useful for the attendees to further their knowledge on the teachings of the Buddha and enhance their practice of insight meditation. These have been suspended at the moment.

Children's classes to learn Burmese literature and culture also bring enormous benefits to the children who are keen to learn their language of their homeland which they have left for so many years. Children are actively encouraged to be involved in these activities promoted by the monastery to maintain the culture of the ethnic minorities of Burma. These classes have been suspended since COVID-19.

3. Other religious and fund-raising activities

In addition to the above activities there are regular religious activities carried out under the direction of the resident Buddhist monk and teacher Venerable Ashin Gawsaka. These are important days in the Buddhist calendar as depicted below.

These events are well attended by devotees and members of the TBT. Most of these events are conducted in hired community halls or school sports halls to accommodate the number of people attending these events which include not only Myanmar devotees but also people from various backgrounds like British, Europeans and Asians.

i) Buddha Day or Vesak.

This ceremony was conducted on 6 May 2023

This is to honour the birth, enlightenment and passing away of the Buddha. In temples all over the world Buddhists engage in prayers and reflect on the virtues of wisdom, courage, and compassion of the Buddha.

TBT organised this event at the TBT monastery, Sheffield, which includes group chanting and praying, readings about Buddha's life and his achievements.

(ii). Waso robe ceremony

This ceremony was conducted on 5 August 2023

This ceremony commemorates the first sermon of the Buddha and marks the beginning of the Buddhist lent. Monks were offered new robes (Waso robes) and other requirements to tide them through the months ahead. Children were encouraged to do readings about the first sermon and group chanting of Buddha's first sermon were performed by the members of the Trust and attending guests. This was conducted at TBT monastery, Sheffield.

(iii) Abhidhamma Day

This is also called the Festival of Lights, marking the end of Buddhist Lent, held on the full moon day of Thadingyut (usually in October). This lasts for three days in Burma during which houses and streets are festively decorated and illuminated.

Usually it was celebrated by TBT members at TBT monastery Sheffield, by offering decorative lights to the Buddha, group chanting and refreshments for the guest. In accordance with the tradition younger members paid homage to the elders of the Trust and elders gave pocket money to the children.

The ceremony was conducted on 9-10-22

(iv) Kathina Ceremony 29-10-22

This is the largest alms giving ceremony of the Buddhist year. It occurs at the end of Vassa, or monsoon period, in October and November. During the rains retreat the Buddhist monks will have remained in one place for three months, and the Kathina celebration marks the time for them to move on. The festival also celebrates the offering of Kathina robe to the monks by lay people. This was celebrated by TBT members in a hired school sports hall/community hall due to large numbers of devotees attending. The ceremony began by offering lunch to the invited monks and guest.

The Kathina robes, gifts and cash were offered to the monks followed by talks and readings about Kathina ceremony, ending with a group prayer. All donations went to TBT. Devotees donated Kathina robes as usual. This year it was a collective sponsored event. All the members of the Theravada Buddhist Trust and Dhamma friends chipped in to celebrate this auspicious event.

4. Myanmar traditional community activities

(i). Annual Htamenae (crushed glutinous rice) ceremony.

This is historically a celebration of rice harvest marked by cooking of special sticky rice made with

sesame seeds, peanuts, and ginger.

TBT members cooked Htamenae in large woks and offer this to the Buddha, monks and attending guest. There was also group chanting, praying and sharing of merits. The ceremony was conducted on 4-2-23

(iii). Memorial days and Birthday celebrations

These were conducted by the resident monks. Between September 2022 and August 2023 there were 39 memorial services and 34 birthday blessings .

(iv). Regular second Saturday of the month meditation and collective food offering by TBT members. These were deferred since the pandemic.

(v). Ad Hoc visits to the monastery by families

There were 41 visits to the monastery to pay homage to the resident monks and make donations to TBT.

(vi). Bereavement support

The spiritual director regularly gives bereavement support to bereaved families in accordance with the Myanmar culture and Theravada Buddhist tradition. This is a much-needed service for the Myanmar community living in this area and beyond.

(vii). Ordination to monk-hood

Every Myanmar men has to enter monk-hood temporarily as a novice and a monk at least once in their lifetime at a certain age to learn Buddhist scriptures and meditation. These ceremonies are conducted by the resident monk for those who wish to go through with this experience.

There was one ceremony this period.

5. Activities of the resident monks

Ashin Gawsaka

He visited USA from 18-03-23 to 31-05-23 and went to many Myanmar Theravada Buddhist monasteries in USA to observe Buddhist ceremonies there. He also exchanged views on how missionary work was done in USA and UK.

There were 11 home visits/ housewarming blessings .

Both the resident monks were invited to other Myanmar monasteries in Birmingham, London and Manchester to attend Kathina, Waso and ordination ceremonies.

Ashin Khemika Linkara

Since his arrival he has been busy carrying out religious activities including Dhamma talks, meditation sessions and standing in for Ashin Gawsaka when he is away. He had to return to Myanmar on 12-7-23 to manage his own monastery there. A farewell ceremony was held on 12-07-23, which was well attended by members of Theravada Buddhist Trust and many devotees.

He continued to hold Dhamma teaching sessions from Myanmar by Zoom for devotees here on Wednesdays.

6. Structure, Governance and Management

Governing document

TBT is a charitable trust registered with the Charity Commission in December 2014 (reg. Charity number 1160584.) and governed by a Trust Deed approved by the Charity Commission on December 2014. This is available on the Charity Commission web site.

Organisational structure

The trustees of the charity are responsible for the general management and activities of the charity.

The trustees give their time freely and receive no remuneration or any other financial benefits from TBT.

7. Reference and administrative information

Charity registration number: 1160584

Resident monk and spiritual director Venerable Ashin Gawsaka

Board of Trustees

Dr. Ye Myint (Chairman)

Khun Saing (Secretary)

Min Min Zin (Treasurer)

Dr. Tin Maung Myint (member)

Ko Aung Myint (member)

Win Maw (member)

Dr. Soe Naing (member)

Dr. Maung Maung (member and joint treasurer)

Dr. Yin Thu Aung (member)

Contact: 59 Southey Green Road, Sheffield S5 8GU

Tel. 0114 3487865/ 07729243899

Website: www.dhammikaramavihara.co.uk

Facebook: Dhammikarama monastery

8. Use of volunteers

There are about 10 dedicated volunteers who help in the religious events. Their work includes moving chairs, cooking, cleaning, putting up decorations, washing up, throwing waste, and serving food to the guest on large occasions. These volunteers also regularly clear the garden and cut down the branches of overgrown trees. We would like to acknowledge their hard work, dedication, and support to the organisation.

9. Humanitarian aid efforts

Due to the political crisis in Myanmar there are a lot of needy places there. Following donations were made by TBT members and Dhamma friends

- (I) Wetlet village fire disaster – A collective donation of £3000 was made to this village by members of the Dhammikarama monastery and their Dhamma friends in August 2022
- (II) A donation of £600 was made to people who were disabled in Myanmar due to injuries sustained in the war. All Dhamma friends in Sheffield contributed to this fund.

10. Future direction of the Trust

1.To encourage younger members of the trust to be more involved in the work of the trust. It is envisaged that these young members will become more active and take on more responsibilities. Currently there are young members from South Yorkshire and beyond who are starting to take on some responsibilities.

2.To give support to members of local Buddhist community (particularly to promising youngsters) who are in genuine need for their education/career progression via special awards/grants as well as rewarding them for excellence.

3. To plan an effective use of the the garden space in the monastery by pulling down the old garage and build a garden building in the area where the ground has been levelled.

4. To set up a another bank account with the Charity Aid Foundation Bank.

5. To apply to the Local Council to grant a piece of land where we can build a place of worship .

11. Financial report (to be submitted by the accountant)

Receipts and payments accounts

For the period from	01/09/2022	To	31/08/2023
------------------------	------------	----	------------

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
	34,682	-	-	34,682	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	34,682	-	-	34,682	-
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	34,682	-	-	34,682	-
A3 Payments					
	19,232	-	-	19,232	-
	-	1,724	-	1,724	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	19,232	1,724	-	20,956	-
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	19,232	1,724	-	20,956	-
Net of receipts/(payments)	15,450	- 1,724	-	13,726	-
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	-	-	-	-	-
Cash funds this year end	15,450	- 1,724	-	13,726	-

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds		172,398	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	172,398	-	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	Agreement Error	Agreement Error	OK
B2 Other monetary assets	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
B3 Investment assets	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B5 Liabilities	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval	
	DR. MAUNG MAUNG	DR. MAUNG MAUNG	04/06/2024	
	DR. TIN MAUNG MYINT	DR. TIN MAUNG MYINT	04/06/2024	



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees

THERAVADA BUDDHIST TRUST

On accounts for the year
ended

29-AUGUST-2023

Charity no
(if any)

1160584

Set out on pages

1-3

**Responsibilities of
Trustees and
independent examiner**

The charity's trustees are responsible for preparing annual report and accounts in accordance with applicable law and regulations. The trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 ("The Charities Act") and that an independent examination is needed.

As an independent examiner, it is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act
- follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention

**Basis of independent
examiner's statement**

My examination was completed in accordance with general guidance provided by the Charity Commission. The work was done through the review of accounting records kept by the charity and consider reasonable and completeness of the accounts presented with those records. Any unusual transactions or disclosures in the accounts are being considered and seek explanation from the trustees for anything of any concerns. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that will be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair" view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

**Independent
examiner's statement**

Regarding my examination, nothing has come to my attention;

1. that give reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: Khine Shwe War

Date: 10/06/2024

Name: Khine Shwe War

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

Association of Chartered Certified Accountants

Address:	132 Dunedin Road
	London
	E10 5NL

Section B**Disclosure**

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.