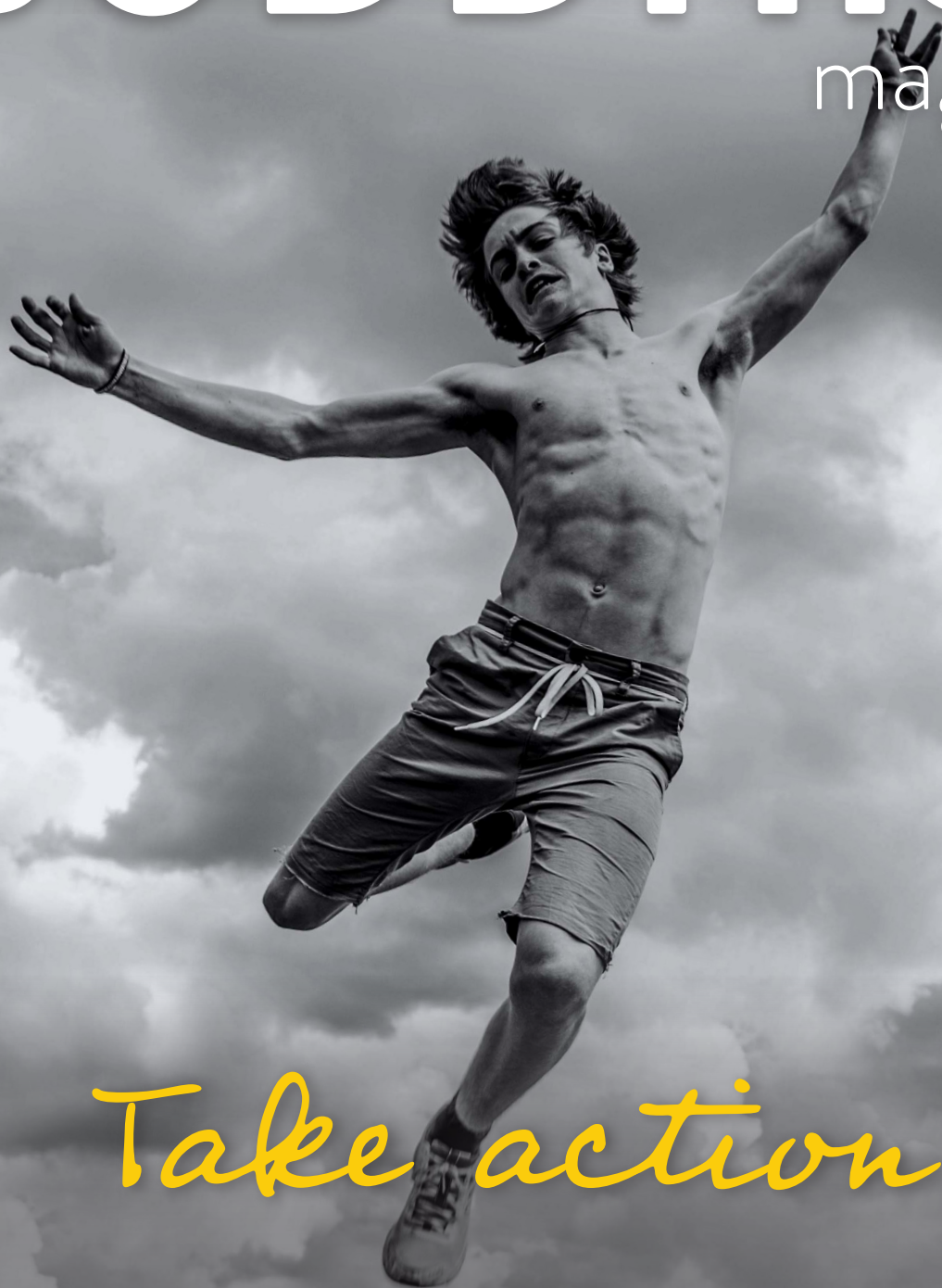


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EUROPEAN BUDDHIST

magazine



Take action!

Editorial

A European Buddhist Union which is relevant, respected and well known, is being able to contribute significantly to society and EU institutions. Hence, all efforts to be open and public as much as possible, creating a large base of people being interested about what we do and what we offer, and who want to contribute to our endeavors, will help us achieve our mission and vision in a beautiful way.

Thus, I am very pleased that some of our projects and networks are so nicely presented in this current issue, so they can be accessible to our EBU community and the broader public.

The European Buddhist Union is becoming a big house, giving a roof to everybody who would like to come on board and skillfully support our goals. Such a huge house can only exist online, which is why a new website has been built, in order to accommodate all projects and their needs: www.europeanbuddhistunion.org. This is also where you will find this magazine and even have it printed on glossy paper if you would like to hold it physically in your hands (which is a great feeling, honestly).

If we look back some 2600 years, we can see that the Buddha was a very active person. "Taking action" should therefore be an important aspect of every sincere Buddhist's practice.

I hope that reading the articles of our magazine will inspire you to be part of one of our projects or even start your own, with our enthusiastic support.

All my best in the Dharma,
Ron



Ron Eichhorn
European Buddhist Union
President

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a compassionate response to suffering

Editorial

Taking action!

As the snow is still covering the trees and paths, nature is asleep. This is how I like winter. It is the time for rest and digest so to say. But as the days get longer and there is a promise of spring, we start opening up like the first flowers of spring reaching towards sun and each other.

We chose the topic of this issue to be Taking action! since it is the reason European Buddhist Union actually is. To share wisdom from the Buddhist perspective, practice, take responsibility and take action. Together in the same boat.

In this issue we introduce our manifold and dear networks, committees and projects. These teams all of us can be part of. Isn't that great!

So join us like a fresh new spring flower, curious, open minded and fresh!

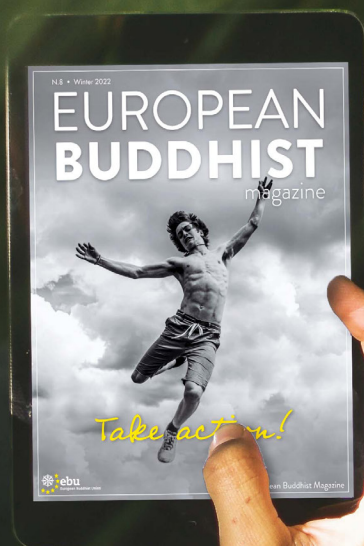
Let us take action for the benefit of all sentient beings!

Love
Emilia Amala

“ *The ultimate reason for meditating is to transform ourselves in order to be better able to transform the world.*

Matthieu Ricard ”

Emilia Amalā Raunio
European Buddhist Union
Editor in chief and Council member



ENJOY
READING!



Introducing our writers



Amalée follows the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism, is half French, half British, and grew up in a buddhist family. She is the EBU contact for the European Buddhist Youth Network, a network of young Buddhists of all traditions. Amalée has a deep love and appreciation for education, the planet, and Buddhist wisdom. She is currently training to become a secondary school teacher in the UK.



Stefano Davide Bettera is a writer and journalist. He published "La via occidentale alla meditazione" (Corriere della Sera - 2020), "Il Buddha era una persona concreta" (Rizzoli - 2019), "Karma Polis" (Franco Angeli - 2018), "Fai la cosa giusta" (Morellini - 2018), "Felice come un Buddha" (Morellini - 2017). He has been conducting research and study activities for years on the relationship between spirituality, philosophy and contemporary and ancient cultures. He is Vice President of the European Buddhist Union and on the board of the Italian Buddhist Union.



Carlo Luyckx became Buddhist in 1971 in Samye Ling, Scotland, the first Tibetan monastery in the West founded in 1967 by Chogyam Trungpa and Akong Tulku Rinpoche. He has since then been studying and practising in the Karma Kagyu school of Tibetan Buddhism. Having obtained in 1988 university degrees in Political Sciences and International Relations as well as in International Law at the Université Libre de Bruxelles, he became Deputy Director of BIPAR (Bureau International des Producteurs d'Assurances), a position which allowed him to have a concrete experience of the functioning of the European institutions in Brussels. Carlo is president of Belgian Buddhist Union since 2014 and responsible for the negotiations with the federal government and the regional authorities in the process of the official recognition of Buddhism in Belgium. Since 2021, he represents the European Buddhist Union to the European institutions in Brussels.



Johannes Cairns (Đồng Kiên) (b.1984) is a Buddhist monk aspirant in the Liên Tâm Monastery, Turku, Finland (by Dharma name Đồng Kiên), as well as a long-time student (by Dharma name Sūryamitra) of Venerable Taehye sunim, head of the Bodhidharma Association in Finland. He also has an academic background in Buddhist studies, and is currently working on a PhD on Buddhist climate activism (with a previous PhD and postdoc research experience also in natural sciences). Johannes considers practicing and realizing the Dharma to be his deepest purpose in life for the sake of both himself and other sentient beings. As part of this, Johannes is keenly interested in connecting fundamental Buddhist ethics and compassion with current societal circumstances, advocating for plant-based diets (including through active involvement with Finnish chapter of Dharma Voices for Animals) and climate change mitigating behaviors among Buddhists.



Martin Landschein currently lives in Vienna, where he works as a psychosocial caretaker for the Windhorse organization. He holds a Master degree in Philosophy and Cultural Journalism. As a child of Buddhist parents, he practices in the Shambhala Buddhist tradition.



Dr Michael Daniel Vermeulen grew up in Belgium and lives in London. He is a philosopher, medical doctor and religious-studies scholar. From 2011 to 2015 he was the representative of the EBU to the European Union, after which he was co-founder and chair of the European Rainbow Sangha (for LGBTQI+ Buddhists, friends and allies). He has been a speaker on several United Nations conferences on topics related to Human Rights, Queer Buddhism and Buddhist Environmentalism. In his free time he plays saxophone and goes for walks in nature. Contact: mmdv68-ebufilo@yahoo.co.uk



Sara Manzi is a language teacher, peace educator and a Vipassana practitioner. She studied Social Sciences for Peace, African Studies and hold a teaching diploma. She does not strictly belong to a Buddhist sangha, but she feels mostly connected to the Forest Theravada tradition and to Santacittarama monastery in Italy. She is originally Italian, and she lives in The Netherlands with her husband and four years old daughter. She loves writing, reading children books, learning languages and instruments, and spend time in the nature with her family.



Isabelle Huet discovered the teachings of «Buddhism of Spirituel Friendship,Reiyukai» at the age of 20 and since then the practice has been part of her daily life. Having retired after 26 years of teaching, she now spends her time working for her Sangha as a benevolent secretary of the board. She has been a member of the EBU board for five years, this year in charge of the Conference. Last year she was appointed president of the inter-religious Sciences- Po Alumni Emouna. She is married living in Paris and has three children. She prapise taichi chuan and lyrical singing.



Gabriela Frey - EBU Network Coordinator.

A Buddhist for over 40 years, she practices in the Tibetan Sakya tradition. Passionate about true gender equality in Buddhist communities, she founded Sakyadhita France, the French branch of the International Association of Buddhist Women, and established the network of Buddhist women in Europe.



Dario Doshin Girolami. M.Phil., is a Soto-Zen priest and a Dharma Teacher in the lineage of Shunryu Suzuki Roshi. Former Adjunct Professor of Zen at John Cabot University and of Comparative Religion at the American University of Rome, he currently teaches Buddhism and holds regular seminars at the Faculty of Psychology at Sapienza University of Rome, and teaches Meditation at Rebibbia Prison - Rome. *Photo: Marco Girolami.*



Kirsten DeLeo is a meditation teacher, author and longtime Tibetan Buddhist practitioner. Kirsten helped to pioneer Authentic Presence, a training programme in contemplative end-of-life care. She currently supports the Spiritual Care Centres in Germany (Sukhavati) and Ireland (Dzogchen Beara). Her book "Present Through The End. A Caring Companion's Guide For Accompanying The Dying" is available in English and German. kirstendeleo.com



Keith Munnings practices within the Samatha Trust UK tradition and has taught meditation for many years, particularly a form of breathing mindfulness practice from Theravada Buddhism that develops samatha - vipassana. He started working as a healthcare chaplain some 15 years ago and has been involved with national multi-faith chaplaincy including developing training courses for Buddhists wishing to become chaplains.



Emilia Amalā Raunio is a yoga teacher and free writer. As Buddhist practitioner and background in food science her interest is to heal the world together with our everyday actions. She is a member and dharma teacher student at Bodhidharma association, vice president of Finnish Buddhist Union and council member of EBU. Emilia is also one of the hosts in EBU's European Buddha Podcast.



Ron Eichhorn is the president of the European Buddhist Union and a head disciple of the Supreme Matriarch Ji Kwang Dae Poep Sa Nim. He is abbot of the Berlin temple of the Yun Hwa Sangha and a professional film director. In his spare time, he likes to go sailing and plays the Ukulele.

European Buddhist Youth participation in the Interfaith Youth Convention on the European Green Deal

By Amalée

Young people who share my faith in the Buddha's teachings have been such a support in my life over the past few years. They nourish my path, my hope, they understand my existential lows as well as my awe at the world and our true nature. This connection, these friendships, are one of the most precious things in my life, and something I would wish for every young person to find: connection in which they feel understood and hopeful.

By joining the preparatory committee for the Interfaith Youth Convention in spring of 2021 - an opportunity which I received through the EBU - and over the course of many zoom meetings and email threads, I discovered the treasure and potential there is in interfaith cooperation. It is easy to recognise that other faith organisations have more experience than mine in certain types of engagement with

society and its political systems. Plugging into this experience and working with this interfaith group has certainly taught me a lot.

The initiative involved over 100 young Europeans aged 18 to 35, delegated by several faith-based organisations active at the European level and representing the Bahá'í, Buddhist, Christian, Jewish and Muslim confessions. The project aimed to provide young people of faith with an opportunity to exchange ideas and opinions on the European Green Deal.

The convention was held in two parts. The first took place on October 1st 2021. We reflected and discussed in working groups to formulate proposals on the European Green Deal regarding Housing and Energy, Mobility and Transport, Agriculture and Food, Production and Consumption, Education,

Ecology and Skills. As a moderator of one of the working groups I held discussions with young people from around Europe, hearing about their diverse experiences, thoughts, and beliefs: an eye- and heart-opening exchange.

In the second part, on November 25th 2021, we had the opportunity to share our proposals and concerns in a dialogue with Frans Timmermans, Vice-President of the European Commission and Commissioner for the European Green Deal. When I spoke with Frans Timmermans I was touched by the openness which emanated from him.

The report of the Interfaith Youth Convention on the European Green Deal^A sets out the 21 proposals developed by young people of faith throughout the convention so that they may be

A. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dDjg1VpS7WpeTTqr-t4T8yXGX-PeDbWlf/view?usp=sharing>



shared with a wider audience. For our Sanghas, this report can serve as a spark for reflection about what is important to us, a prompt to engage in meaningful dialogue on ecological issues and the European Green Deal, and a foundation for action in accordance with this. Read it, share it, take action.

After the report was published, we had a call as the convention's preparatory committee to get to know each other outside of the context of organisational matters. Here I found that the understanding and connection that I find with peers of my faith was also present with those of other faiths. Admittedly, this was not unexpected news to me, but the reminder brought a heart-warming joy.

To stay up to date with what the European Buddhist youth get up to next, after this exciting environmental and interfaith endeavor, you can sign up to our newsletter [here](#)^B. If you have any events, courses, projects, etc. you want to share with other young European Buddhists you can send an email to youthnetwork@europeanbuddhistunion.org and we will include it in the next newsletter. And feel free to share this information with young Buddhists, or young people interested in Buddhism, in your circles.

If reading the result of young people's work and discussion inspires you to take direct

^B <https://europeanbuddhistunion.org/ebu-youth-network>

environmental action, you can also connect with Dr Jake Lyne (kjlyne@gmail.com), Chair of the European Buddhist Union Ecodharma Group - a network of European Buddhists involved in the EBU with a specific interest in environmental issues. Their two project areas at the moment are **1)** SEE-FAB (Sustainable Environment on Earth for All Beings), a project that focuses on sustainability (energy, water, resources, biodiversity) in Buddhist Centres and Institutions in Europe, with a specific focus on youth engagement and **2)** Italian Buddhist Union Ecodharma, a project that will offer Ecosattva training and retreats and is also planning to develop a community based agroecology programme. 🧘



SASCE TRAINING KICKS OFF

A new step towards a safe Europe



By Stefano Davide Bettera

The **SASCE** project takes another important step towards reaching more people and ensuring the safety of religious places of worship in Europe. In fact, on December 11th, the EBU held a one-day Security and Crisis management Training at the Thon Hotel Bristol Stephanie in Brussels. Twenty one participants, from various communities, coming from all over Belgium were instructed by Ron Eichhorn, President of the EBU and Dany Choueka, Head of Crisis Management at Security and Crisis Center of the European Jewish Congress. The training had been organized by the Buddhist Union of Belgium and was accepted very well by the participants, with many questions asked. "If there had been a button which says "Continue", I would have pushed it immediately", one participant happily expressed.

Security awareness is key to prevent an incident

A crisis can happen anytime anywhere. While we may not be able to prevent a crisis from happening, we can drastically influence which impact it has, by managing it well. Prevention and protocols are crucial to be able to react well. In any context, togetherness makes us stronger. And safer. 90% of attacks are prevented thanks to people noticing unusual behavior, communication or objects. That's why the network of "Security Ambassadors" in each community is so important. That's why, again, we kindly ask for your support: together we build a structure where safety can be assured, not just for us, but for the public at large.

Often, verbal aggression, racist or discriminatory attitudes are the first step towards real violence. That is why we need to be vigilant right now and to acquire a sensitivity, a culture, which can help us to devise appropriate solutions and tools to deal with the danger. Religious bigotry and racial animosity often lead to a sharp increase in violent attacks. Xenophobia and systematic violence can seriously endanger our communities. The first vow

of the bodhisattva - "Beings are innumerable; we vow to save them all" - invites us to work together to protect freedom. As the sutras remind us, spiritual friendship is the whole of the Buddhist path. When someone is suffering, we come together as a community.

A project for the people

But for SASCE to be truly effective, the cooperation of people in each European country is crucial: one of the most important actions in the work we are going to carry out over the next years concerns monitoring possible risks and threats that could endanger places of worship and the various communities in our countries. It is clear that some of our partners have been dealing with serious crisis situations for some time, and their experience and cooperation in this process is fundamental. This is why we have come up with the idea of SASCE Ambassadors, i.e. people who can report situations of danger, threats, aggression or episodes that in some way concern the violation of human rights, starting with religious rights and including discrimination, in their own territory or country. In fact, no one knows better

than the people who live in the cultural and social context of a specific area, the language used on social networks, in the media or linked to episodes of discrimination or racism. This kind of attention and reports can really be a fundamental help in building a more inclusive Europe and society that respects the rights of all. We support each other, we help each other because our lives are inexorably connected. We do not suffer alone, nor do we heal alone. Only when we come together as a sangha can we truly support the freedom of others. For compassion can arise from racial suffering, for the fragments to be inseparable from the whole. Similarly, the cooperation between the various Muslim, Christian, Buddhist and Jewish communities that lies at the heart of the SASCE project will enable the various partners to share and make available to a wider

audience the best practices of mutual security and to build bridges that can make Europe more united, peaceful and tolerant.

Become a SASCE Ambassador!

As part of this initiative, the four partner organisations have developed tools to improve security awareness and crisis management that are the content of the trainings. These tools will also be disseminated by a network of ambassadors, as well as through broader communication campaigns. Finally, the project also aims to build trust and cooperation between civil society and national authorities by facilitating formalised channels of communication between community leadership and implementing public authorities. That's why we continuously need

reports on any incidents which happen or have occurred in and around the European Buddhist community. Reports concern situations of danger, threats, aggression, episodes that in some way concern: the violation of human rights, starting with religious rights and including discrimination, in their own territory or country. The EBU is delighted that the Commission has placed its trust in this joint project, which is also an opportunity to network in a truly community spirit and to raise awareness of the importance of places of worship in Europe's social fabric. Therefore we ask people to put their reports on the report section of the SASCE website and let the partners know if they are willing to act as safety sentinels in their own place. Only in this way together we can make a difference and build a safer home for all of us.



Pictures: Siefano Davide Bettera



ABOUT SASCE

The European Commission has allocated €3 million to the 'Safer and Stronger Communities in Europe (SASCE)' project, a multi-level approach to drastically increase security in and around places of worship. The project, which started in May, is the result of a partnership between the European Buddhist Union (EBU), the European Conference of Churches (CEC), Faith Matters and the Security and Crisis Centre (SACC) of the European Jewish Congress (EJC). For the first time, representatives of the four religious communities will work together on a joint project to improve security. "Safer and Stronger Communities in Europe (SASCE)" project, funded by the European Commission, which for the first time brings together the European Buddhist Union, the European Conference of Churches, Faith Matters and the Security and Crisis Centre (SACC) of the European Jewish Congress (EJC) to protect places of worship and build bridges for a more united Europe.

Further information on: <https://www.sasce.eu> 🙏



Participation by the EBU in a Seminar in the European Parliament

By Carlo Luyckx



On the 16th of November 2021, the European Parliament organized a seminar in Brussels on the [Conference on the Future of Europe^A](#), at the initiative of Roberta Metsola, then first Vice-President of the Parliament, who was elected President on the 18th of January 2022. The seminar was held within the framework of [Article 17 of the Treaty of Lisbon^B](#), which is the legal basis for an open, transparent and regular dialogue between the EU institutions and churches, religious associations, and philosophical and non-confessional organizations. Since the European Buddhist Union had already met Roberta Metsola in May 2021 to draw attention on the EBU's willingness to participate actively

in the Article 17 dialogue for which she was in charge in the European Parliament, the EBU has been invited to participate in the seminar with a speech on a topic of its choice. Given the fact that an important topic of the Conference on the Future of Europe concerns the environment and climate change, EBU President Ron Eichhorn entrusted Carlo Luyckx with the task of representing the EBU with a presentation on animal welfare.

Because the speech of each of the nine representatives of religions and philosophies was limited to only five minutes, the following article reproduces the EBU speech but has been expanded for this magazine to further illustrate the environmental effects of factory farming and to include some quotes from the Buddha on meat consumption.

The presentations of the topics chosen by the faith and philosophical representatives were followed by a debate with the Members of the European Parliament present and with the public attending online. The event was filmed and can be viewed on the European Parliament website at the following link. If you don't want to watch the whole seminar, as the time is indicated at the bottom of the screen, to see the five-minute presentation on animal welfare, you can go directly to 12:42:15. The speeches on behalf of the EBU during the debate can be seen at 13:18:35 and at 13:48:35.

https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/article-17-dialogue-on-conference-on-future-of-europe_2021116-1100-SPECIAL-SEMINAR_vd

A. <https://futureu.europa.eu/?locale=en>

B. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/en/heard/religious-and-non-confessional-dialogue>

Animal Welfare



Since I am speaking on behalf of the European Buddhist Union, representing over 4 million Buddhists in Europe, first of all, I want to draw attention to the fact that for Buddhism, the human being is not the centre of the universe. Buddhists do not believe that this world and the humans have been created by some supreme being who also created the animals to be their food, to give their skins and to serve them in many ways. Humans are part of nature, exactly in the same way as all other forms of life on planet Earth. Humans are gifted with a kind of intelligence different from that of animals, but this difference does not imply superiority. It does not give humans the kind of divine right

to decide over life and death of other forms of life.

Buddhism is not alone in claiming that animals have a mind, the capacity to think, to experience emotions, intentions and, most importantly, to experience suffering. This is not some kind of religious belief. Scientific research over many years has proven exactly this.

[The Cambridge declaration on Consciousness^A](#), signed by a prominent international group of cognitive neuroscientists, neuropharmacologists, neurophysiologists, neuroanatomists and computational neuroscientists gathered on 7 July 2012 at the University of Cambridge states: “The absence of a

A. <https://fcmconference.org/img/CambridgeDeclarationOnConsciousness.pdf>

neocortex does not appear to preclude an organism from experiencing affective states. Convergent evidence indicates that non-human animals have the neuroanatomical, neurochemical, and neurophysiological substrates of conscious states along with the capacity to exhibit intentional behaviours. Consequently, the weight of evidence indicates that humans are not unique in possessing the neurological substrates that generate consciousness. Non-human animals, including all mammals and birds, and many other creatures, including octopuses, also possess these neurological substrates.”

To feed eight billion humans, we kill every year over sixty billion



land animals and one thousand billion sea animals. These are the figures given by the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization. The FAO also indicates that in 2018 only, 346 billion kilos of meat was consumed.

One fifth of the meat produced for consumption is wasted, which means that twelve billion land animals are killed for nothing. Thirty-five percent of sea animals are wasted, which means 350 billion of fish and shellfish are killed for nothing. This is without counting that every year, according to the FAO, seven million tons of fish are caught unnecessarily, as well as large numbers of marine mammals, turtles and birds caught in nets. When we buy 500 grams of shrimps, we have to be aware that 13 kilos of other marine animals have been killed and thrown back into the sea. In the case of tuna fishing, 145 other non-target species are also killed and discarded.¹

This mass killing, unequalled in human history, poses a major ethical challenge. Humans have always exploited animals, first by hunting them and then by domesticating them. But it was not until the beginning of the 20th century that this exploitation took on a gigantic scale. The countless written testimonies and covertly filmed footage in slaughterhouses are

horrifying. However, the result of this cruel slaughtering is nicely wrapped up to be sold in the supermarkets. When it comes on the table nobody seems to have any consideration for or, more surprisingly, any knowledge about the suffering endured by these sentient beings that have become a "product". The famous French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss wrote in a predictive manner in 1996: *"The day will come when the idea that people in the past raised and slaughtered living beings and complacently displayed their tattered flesh in shop windows, will undoubtedly inspire the same repulsion as the cannibalistic meals of American, Oceanian or African savages did to 17th and 18th century travellers."*²

In addition to the scientific proof that animals have a

conscience and suffer like human beings, and the ethical considerations that this entails, this overconsumption of meat aggravates hunger in the world, causes ecological imbalances and is bad for our health.

From the point of view of the environment and climate change:

Only two and a half percent of the world's water is freshwater, of which nearly three quarters is contained in glaciers and eternal snow.³ Forty percent of the world's population suffers from water scarcity, both in terms of quantity and quality. It is estimated that half of the world's drinking water consumption is for the production of meat and dairy products. In Europe, more than fifty percent of polluted water comes from intensive animal breeding, including fish farms. In the USA, eighty



Picture: Annie Spratt-unsplash

percent of drinking water is used for animal farming. Producing one kilo of meat requires fifteen thousand litres of water, which is fifty times more than for producing one kilo of wheat.⁴

The production of one kilo of beef generates fifty times more greenhouse gas emissions than the production of one kilo of wheat.⁵ Livestock farming contributes eighteen percent of greenhouse gas emissions, second only to buildings and ahead of transport.

Animal excrement also generate huge amounts of ammonia that pollute rivers and seashores and cause an invasion of algae that suffocates aquatic life.

On average, a bovine animal produces twenty-three thousand kilos of excrement per year. Factory farmed animals produce hundred thirty times more than humans, in other words, forty thousand kilos per second.⁶

Sixty percent of the world's available land is used for livestock production. One hectare of land can feed fifty vegetarians or two meat eaters. To produce one kilo of meat, you need the same amount of land as for growing two hundred kilos of tomatoes or hundred sixty kilos of potatoes or eighty kilos of apples.⁷ One acre of cereals gives five times more proteins than one acre to produce meat. One acre of lentils or beans gives ten times more proteins.

According to the FAO, livestock is responsible for seventy percent of current deforestation.

On average, rich countries consume ten times more meat than poor countries. A French person eats eighty-five kilos of meat per year and an American hundred twenty kilos, compared to only two and a half kilos for an Indian.⁸

It is said that eating meat is necessary to be healthy.

Many studies, such as those by Harvard University in 2012, have established that eating meat, especially red meat, increases the risk of colon and stomach cancer, as well as cardiovascular disease. There are over 600 million vegetarians living in good health on this planet, which is more than the population of the EU. As you probably already have guessed, I am one of them.

Buddhism does not prohibit eating meat. Nonetheless, it is said not to eat it when you know that the animal has been killed for your meal. At least, when one is eating meat, one can thank the animal in thought and make wishes so that it may quickly reach enlightenment.

Certain Mahayana sutras, however, unequivocally condemn the consumption of meat. An example is the Lankavatara Sutra, which states: *"So as not to become a source of terror, Bodhisattvas established in benevolence*

should not eat food containing meat. (...) Meat is food for wild beasts; it is unfitting to eat it. (...) People kill animals for profit and exchange goods for the meat. One person kills, another person buys — both are at fault." Similarly, in the Great Parinirvana Sutra, the Buddha says, *"Eating meat destroys great compassion"* and advises his disciples to avoid the consumption of meat, *"just as they would avoid the flesh of their own children"*.⁹

However, since people are not going to stop eating meat, by eating a bit less meat they can improve their health, improve the environment and save many animal lives.

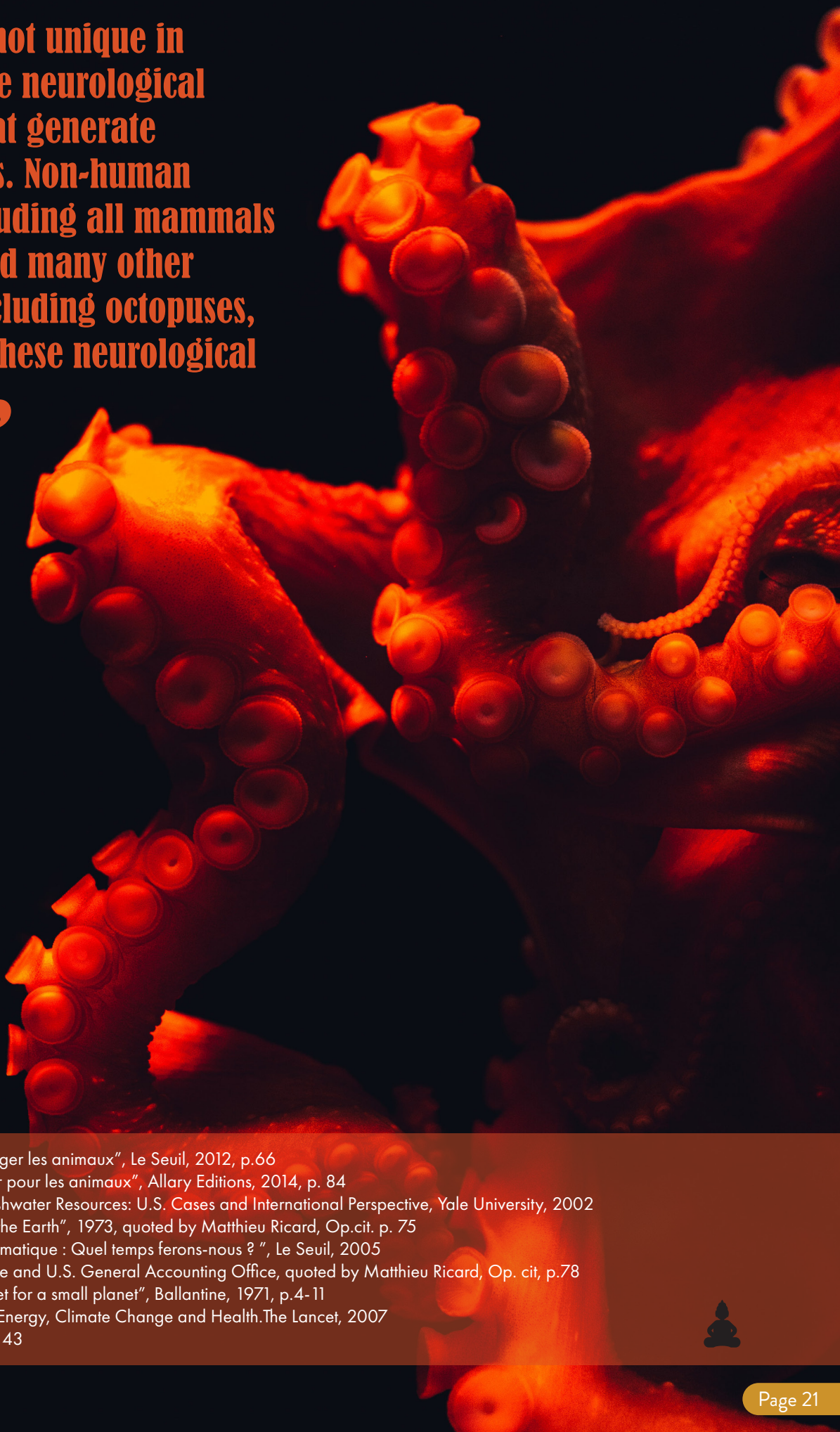
Several EU Member States have already passed laws on animal welfare, for example to protect them against cruelty, for minimum living space, to transport them safely, to recognize them legally as sentient living beings instead of movable goods. It is important that the EU continues to produce legislation in this field so as to improve and harmonize the situation for the better in all Member States.

Europe has been an example to the world in establishing democracy, the rule of law and human rights. The Future of Europe also lies in promoting respect of animal rights.

I thank you for your attention.

Carlo Luyckx

“Humans are not unique in possessing the neurological substrates that generate consciousness. Non-human animals, including all mammals and birds, and many other creatures, including octopuses, also possess these neurological substrates.”



- 1 Jonathan Foer, *“Faut-il manger les animaux”*, Le Seuil, 2012, p.66
- 2 Matthieu Ricard, *“Plaidoyer pour les animaux”*, Allary Editions, 2014, p. 84
- 3 Human Population and Freshwater Resources: U.S. Cases and International Perspective, Yale University, 2002
- 4 G. Borgström, *“Harvesting the Earth”*, 1973, quoted by Matthieu Ricard, Op.cit. p. 75
- 5 J.-M. Jancovici, *“L’avenir climatique : Quel temps ferons-nous ?”*, Le Seuil, 2005
- 6 Source: Worldwatch Institute and U.S. General Accounting Office, quoted by Matthieu Ricard, Op. cit, p.78
- 7 Frances Moore-Lappé, *“Diet for a small planet”*, Ballantine, 1971, p.4- 11
- 8 Food, Livestock Production,Energy, Climate Change and Health.The Lancet, 2007
- 9 Matthieu Ricard, Op. cit. p. 43



The Buddha and harming life



By Johannes Cairns (Đồng Kiên)



The first of the five ethical precepts in Buddhism common to the fourfold Sangha, refraining from killing, concerns harming life. The other precepts can be interpreted as extensions of the first precept. Taking what is not given, unskillful use of sexuality and unskillful (false, divisive, harsh, or idle) speech are all forms of harming life, while ingesting intoxicants makes one prone to harming life through breaking the other precepts.

The monastic code goes so far as to define the following as offences requiring confession due to harming life: digging the soil, using or inappropriately discarding water containing living beings, and damaging living plants. If even simple and minuscule life forms, according to the ancient Indian conception of biology, are not to be harmed through such actions, how much more so should cherishing life be extended to large animals similar to us humans in so many ways?

*All tremble at violence; all fear death.
Putting oneself in the place of another, one should
not kill nor cause another to kill.*

*All tremble at violence; life is dear to all.
Putting oneself in the place of another, one should
not kill nor cause another to kill.*

*One who, while himself seeking happiness,
oppresses with violence other beings who also
desire happiness, will not attain happiness
hereafter.*

*One who, while himself seeking happiness,
does not oppress with violence other beings
who also desire happiness, will find happiness
hereafter.*

Dhammapada⁷

A "Dandavagga: Violence" (Dhp X), translated from the Pali by Acharya Buddharakkhita.
Access to Insight (BCBS Edition), 30 November 2013,
<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/dhp/dhp.10.budd.html>



The Jātaka tales, considered to have been compiled sometime after the early stratum of texts in the Pali canon, contain numerous examples of the Buddha-to-be (Bodhisattva) performing actions of kindness to protect the lives of different animals. These include sacrificing his own life. The merit accumulated by such virtuous actions over countless past lives is thought to have primed the Bodhisattva to ultimately become the Buddha of our Era.

The practical implications of harmlessness have been interpreted in different ways by different Buddhist traditions and over time. Nevertheless, it is clear that protecting animal and other life forms, as well as the ecosystems enabling their sustenance and survival, is virtuous behavior to be encouraged, so long as the behavior arises from a mind state of loving kindness and renouncing self-serving agendas. Such ethical behavior will support and be supported by the development of meditation (mindfulness and absorption) and insight, which together form the three principal constituents of Buddhist practice—most emblematically encoded in the Noble Eightfold Path.

*Wishing: In gladness and in safety,
May all beings be at ease.*

*Whatever living beings there may be;
Whether they are weak or strong, omitting none,
The great or the mighty, medium, short or small,
The seen and the unseen,*

*Those living near and far away,
Those born and to-be-born
May all beings be at ease!*

*Let none deceive another,
Or despise any being in any state.*

*Let none through anger or ill-will
Wish harm upon another.*

*Even as a mother protects with her life
Her child, her only child,*

*So with a boundless heart
Should one cherish all living beings;*

*Radiating kindness over the entire world:
Spreading upwards to the skies,*

*And downwards to the depths;
Outwards and unbounded,*

Freed from hatred and ill-will.

Karaṇīyamettā Sutta^A



A "Karaṇīya Metta Sutta: The Buddha's Words on Loving-Kindness" (Sn 1.8), translated from the Pali by The Amaravati Sangha. Access to Insight (BCBS Edition), 2 November 2013, <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/snp/snp.1.08.amar.html>



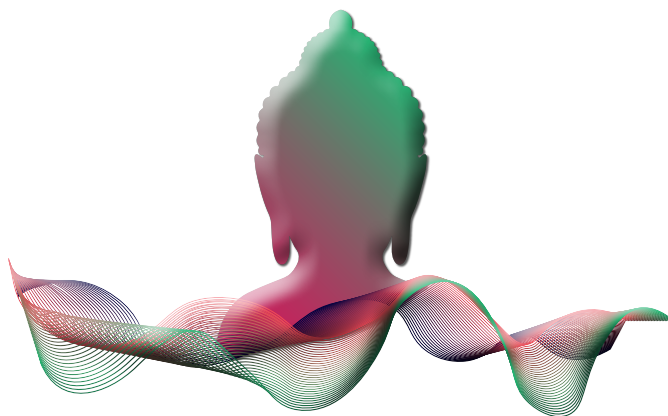
European Buddha Podcast



ebu

European Buddhist Union

By Martin Landschein



The **"European Buddha" podcast** has been around since April 2021. Once a month, the two hosts, Emilia Raunio from Helsinki and Martin Landschein from Vienna, interview guests from the large and diverse EBU - Network.

The first topics dealt with the basic feeling of the time formed by the challenge that touched us all and were at the same time a steppingstone into the core teachings of Buddhism. From here the journey began to explore what was already laid out in the podcast title.

The topic of the trailer episode with president of EBU Ron Eichhorn was: "Who is the European Buddha?" And he said it well: "It is only a matter of time before we have a Buddha in Europe". The history of Buddhism has always been a history of transition.

From India to Tibet, to China, to Japan and to the West. There is much to explore about these transitions and Buddhism has long entered our culture and society in various ways.

If one look closely, one get to know fascinating variants of this process. For example, when chan master Žarko Andričević from Croatia joined us in the podcast he talked about "Dukkha" and that Buddhism was received differently in Eastern Europe due to certain conditions at a certain time. In this way, the podcast is a great

introduction to learn about Buddhism while also being a great showcase of the richness of its traditions and practitioners.

Addition to the great stories and teachings in the podcast we like to share Buddhist practices, meditation and contemplations.

At its core, the podcast is for anyone curious about the wisdom of Buddhism - how it takes root and how it is applied. May it be a map of inspiration and benefit!

You can find the podcast on different platforms where the podcast is available:

<https://anchor.fm/europeanbuddha> 

**Feel free to check it out,
subscribe and enjoy!**





Dharma for all: a very short history of Buddhism as a Safe Space for Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity (SOGI)

By Dr. Michael D Vermeulen

Gautama was the spiritual head of his lay and monastic Sangha for more than four decades. His Sangha was open to people from all layers of society ranging from royalty to prostitutes. For many it was also a safe space where they were protected from discrimination in a very patriarchal society based on the apartheid of the cast system.

The lay Sangha

Sexual violence in particular was very common. Therefore the third lay precept orders lay Buddhists to avoid causing suffering by their sexual behaviour. In the scriptures adultery is the typical example of such 'misconduct' because it not only harms others but also reflects greed. Later specifications mostly focussed on protecting certain people at risk, such as children and widows. Sexual misconduct "is exploitive sex, non-consensual sex, sex that harms others. It is unwholesome and destructive in a heterosexual as well as in

a homosexual context." (Zen teacher Robert Aitken Roshi, 1995)

There is no indication that same-sex relationships or gender diverse persons were not allowed to join the lay Sangha. Furthermore, we know that the Buddha was asked for advice on a very broad range of sexual practices. When we analyse his words we can see that he never used homo-negative language. It also shows that he was not ignorant or naive on human sexual passions and was well aware of sexual and gender diversity. If this had been an issue for him, the Buddha had plenty of opportunities to condemn it or to state that to practise the Dharma one should only live a heterosexual, cisgender or even celibate life. He did not.

On the contrary; in the Vasettha Sutta [M.98] the Buddha explicitly refuses to stigmatise people or justify some sort of apartheid: *'With humans no differences of birth make a distinctive mark in them: nor in the hairs nor in the head, nor in the ears nor in the eyes... nor in the genitals or ways of mating... nor in their colour or in voice...*

Distinction among human beings is purely verbal designation.'

The monastic Sangha

However, almost all the Buddha's counsels on sex are part of the *Vinaya*, the monastic code. In there the context is always that of a monk or a nun struggling to control their lust. In other words: the tension in the *Vinaya* is between celibacy and sexuality, not between hetero- and homosexual behaviour. The negative language sometimes used towards sex is to maintain a safe space for those who committed to celibacy, but sex is not condemned as such and there is never any reference to a homo-negative doctrine or worldview.

In the *Vinaya* the Buddha also shows openness to transgender people as he pragmatically ruled that a trans-female monk could join the nuns and a trans-male nun could join the monks [Vin III.35]. The story speaks of a rather magical sudden change of gender but we have to keep in mind that 2500 years ago people did not have the vocabulary at hand that we have in our time. In a culture that made no difference between physical, psychological and

social gender - differences which were only made clear in the 20th-century - it seems meaningful that in their effort to put the 'coming out' of a trans-person into words they would describe it as a 'sudden change' of gender.

The sex-addicted monk

But early Buddhism was not fully free of discrimination. Especially within the monastic Sangha certain people were excluded from ordination, often to avoid tensions with the law or to stop gossip in the community. Many of these rules seem to have been initiated in the first centuries after the Buddha's passing when the survival of the young monastic Sangha was very dependent on social acceptance.

There is one story in particular of a monk with an uncontrollable sexual lust [Vin I.85-86].

Nowadays we would diagnose him as a sex addict which was understandably a troublesome situation for a community of celibates. Because he was not able to commit to the vow of celibacy - but also because of gossip in the village - he could not remain a monk.

Unfortunately he also happened to be a *pandaka* and the story was later used as a justification

to expel all *pandakas* from the monastic Sangha. It is not clear what the full meaning of *pandaka* was in early Buddhism but we do know that it was one of four categories to describe gender diversity based on genital features: someone was born as a man, as a woman, as having both male and female genitals (*ubhato-byanjanaka*) or with no - or no fully formed - male or female genitals (*pandaka*).

At some point a prejudice arose associating the intersex characteristics of *ubhato-byanjanakas* and *pandakas* with an inability to control sexual lust. The oldest texts - the Pali *Vinaya* - never suggest that all *pandakas* are sex addicts. The main reason for the ban seems to have been fear for gossip. But by the time of Mahayana the tone is totally different: the *Mulasarvastivada Vinaya* describes a *pandaka* as a sex-obsessed rogue with character traits that resemble an anti-social personality disorder.

A present-day interpretation of this ban should focus on these prejudices, not on the wrong link with intersex characteristics. The underlying thought is that people who suffer from certain mental health conditions - such as sex addiction or personality

disorders - need treatment before they can be ordained.

Much later *pandaka* was sometimes confused with gay men or with people who have passive anal sex. Because a *pandaka* has no - or no fully formed - penis or vagina they can obviously only have oral or passive anal sex with a man. But *pandaka* refers to gender, not to sexual behaviour or orientation. Furthermore, there is another story in the *Vinaya* of two male novices who had sex with each other [Vin I.79]. They were not expelled from the monastic Sangha nor were either of them identified as *pandaka*. So men who have sex with men were clearly not equated to *pandakas*.

The Great Silence

Over time Buddhist scholastics would try to micromanage lay sexuality with lots of specific rules. Interestingly, these were exclusively written by male clergy and they focus entirely on male behaviour or that of the women married to them. The sexual activity of non-married women was never in their focus and thus not commented upon.

It would take almost a millennium before someone would state that sex between men was not

“ *With humans no differences of birth make a
distinctive mark in them:
nor in the hairs nor in the head,
nor in the ears nor in the eyes...
nor in the genitals or ways of mating...
nor in their colour or in voice...
Distinction among human beings is purely
verbal designation.* ”



allowed for lay Buddhists. The earliest source is the Indian *Viniscaya-samgrahani*, the Collection of Conclusions. This is one of four supplements to the *Yogacarabhumi*, which itself is a large treatise with various authors and historical layers. According to tradition it was written by Asanga (4th-century CE - 9 centuries after the Buddha) the founder of the Yogachara philosophy.

But the formulation is that men should not have sex with 'men belonging to someone else or to oneself' in other words: enslaved men. So the goal of this precept was to protect enslaved men from exploitation by their masters. Centuries later Tibetan teachers would adopt these Indian scholastic rules. The selling of sexual services of male slaves to other men was a common practice in India, but not in Tibet. Tsongkhapa - not familiar with this practice - tried to make sense of this rule by interpreting it as 'men should not have sex either with themselves or with another [man].'
(Cabezón, 2017)

In total there are very few such texts which is remarkable given the enormous body of Buddhist literature. That does not mean all Buddhist cultures developed a positive acceptance. But

homo-negative Buddhists clearly felt no urge for condemnation either. To them sex between men was unskillful on the path to Awakening, yet never a ground for discrimination or a motive to deny gay men a safe space.

Nonetheless, the vast majority of Buddhists were silent as early Buddhism had been for many centuries. So Robert Aitken seemed right when he testified: *"My impression from my own monastic experience suggests that homosexuality has not been taken as an aberration, and so did not receive comment."*

Far East meets Far West

The main positive exception to this Great Silence was pre-modern Japan. In there the monks were allowed to have sex and to marry. According to legend it was Kukai (774–835), the likely founder of the Japanese Vajrayana Shingon or Mantra school, who introduced gay sex to Japan on his return from studying Tantra in China. Male same-sex relations were later idealised in Buddhist sermons from the 12th and 13th century and within the samurai warrior communities.

Obviously same-sex relations were not unknown in Japan before Kukai but the legend is

not unfounded: in many periods of its 3000 year old culture, male and female same-sex relations were an integral part in all layers of the pre-Communist Chinese society, from imperial courts to ordinary labourers. The province of Fujian was famous for male same-sex marriages. Members of The Golden Orchid sisterhoods in the silk industry of the province Guangdong performed Buddhist and secular female same-sex marriages. They also had the right to adopt abandoned or orphaned girls as their legal daughters and heirs.

Another exception arose when Buddhists were confronted with the stigmatisations and social exclusions of LGBTQI+ people in America. For centuries western cultures were dominated by the Theistic Ideology which stated it was 'god or gay,' in other words: you could not be spiritual and queer at the same time. To LGBTQI+ people in the West, religious and public spaces were per definition hostile spaces where they were exposed to hate-speech, bullying and even violence.

During the 19th-century gold rush many Buddhists migrated from China and Japan to California. Equality was central to their spirituality, in line with the universal Buddhist virtue of

compassion to all sentient beings and with Buddha Amitabha's Primal Vow to save all beings without any discrimination. These migrants were regularly subject to discrimination and identified the suffering of the LGBTQI+ community with their own. It raised the insight that silence does not always guarantee a safe space but could also be negative when it masks and maintains the status quo of a discriminating society.

Spirituality and Human Rights

Consequently Buddhists engaged in campaigns for social justice and took steps to be more inclusive. In the early 1970s the Pure Land tradition Jodo Shinshu performed the first Buddhist same-sex marriages

in the West. This was decades before the first legalisation of modern secular same-sex marriages but in line with such traditions in pre-Communist China.

At present all major Buddhist traditions in Europe and America host meditations and retreats for LGBTQI+ practitioners and offer same-sex marriage ceremonies. Many have queer teachers too. Slowly but surely, Buddhists in Asian countries are also advocating less silence within their traditions and more equality within their societies; often fighting hostility and discriminations that were imposed under colonial rule or imported during westernisation campaigns in the 19th-century.

The European Buddhist Union was founded in 1975 and endorses the full implementation of Human Rights for all. In 2015, the Rainbow Sangha became their official network for LGBTQI+ Buddhists, friends and allies. Giving a voice to queer Buddhists and making queer history known within Buddhism helps to end isolation and suffering. Co-founder Dario Doshin Girolami: *"It's an indispensable spiritual work and a social justice work. The whole Universe is like a symphony that we co-create. How do we want to contribute?"* 🧘



“ *It's an indispensable spiritual work and a social justice work. The whole Universe is like a symphony that we co-create. How do we want to contribute?* ”

Dharma Parenting Project Launch

By Sara Manzi



What does mean being a Buddhist parent? What does mean being a child of a Buddhist parent? How can parents or family members share the Buddhist teachings with the children in a child-friendly language? How can we use at best the Dharma compass in the daily family chores?

Those questions have been rolling in my mind since I was expecting my first child, four years ago. My practice of meditation has changed a lot since then, nor a schedule routine neither a long and solitary retreat but instead daily emotional roller coaster and a full weekly family schedule. I took refuge into books and the countless articles on the Internet about parenthood, mindfulness, and Buddhism. But trying to fit motherhood and practice can be overwhelming and a complex journey. At a certain point, I recognized the strong attachment to my previous

meditation routine and realized that I should just be there for my child. Enjoying the present moment in all colours and nuances, from the joyful to the agitated episodes of daily life.

Despite the best way to introduce my child to the dharma is to practice myself, I see the need to reflect and share with a sangha the challenging experience of parenthood in spiritual terms. During a sunny holiday in Corrèze, I sent a message to the EBU proposing to create a space where family members can connect to share and support their dharmic journey, the struggles, and successes of family life according to the Dharma.

Thanks to the positive response, the Dharma Parenting project has now a team composed by Isabelle, Emilia, and me and in March, we will launch the project organizing the first online sangha meeting. Besides that, the intention is to create a blog where to collect resources and contacts in relation to Buddhism and parenting.

The aim of the online meetings is to provide a virtual room where

can share their practical experience but also tools that can benefit the children's dharmic development. The first meeting will take place Sunday 13th March from 5.00 PM until 6.15 PM (CET) on Zoom. We will start with 5 minutes guided meditation and after a brief introduction of the team we will have a sharing moment starting from this question: **'How do we use our Buddhist practice in the daily life in the relationship with our children?'**. If you would like to participate, please send an email to dharmaparenting@europeanbuddhistunion.org and you will receive further information and the Zoom link. 🧘

The first meeting will take place on Sunday 13th of March 2022, from 5.00 PM until 6.15 PM (CET) on Zoom

Welcome to the EBU conference

“Buddhism in Europe: Unity in Diversity”

23 | 24 | 25
April 2022
Nantes (FR)

By Isabelle Huet

Since its foundation, the EBU has organised international conferences and congresses on Buddhism in Europe.

The first European Buddhist Congress took place in Berlin in 1933, with participants from several European countries (Germany, France, UK, Czechoslovakia).

It was at first already a success, if one considers that it laid the foundations for the aims of the European Buddhist Union: bringing together the various Buddhist tendencies (traditions), creating links among Buddhist leaders and, thanks to the conferences, opening Buddhism to a large public of men and women. The Second World War put an end to this movement.

It was only in 1975, with the creation of the EBU in London and the filing of the statutes of a non-profit association under French law, that the congress and conference activities resumed.

Since that date EBU has organised a congress every four years and, since 2016 a conference every two years.

The variety of the conference titles shows EBU's desire to make Buddha's teachings available to a greater number of Europeans.

These include:

- Buddhism in Europe Today (1979 Unesco Paris)
- The Teaching and Practice of Buddhism in Europe (Turin 1984)
- Buddhism in Western Culture Today (1988 Unesco Paris)
- Unity and Diversity - Buddhism in Europe (Berlin 1992)
- Unity and Diversity - Ethical and Spiritual Visions for the World (Unesco Paris 2000).

In 2016, the new conference format:

- Buddhism in Action (Berlin 2016)
- Spreading Wisdom and Compassion in European Societies (Malaga 2018).

Here Now Us, How Buddhism Can Benefit Europe (April 2020 Nantes France), cancelled due to the first wave of Covid.

- Death and Dying from a Buddhist Perspective. For the first time, the conference which took place in April 2021 was held online because of the ongoing pandemic. The event was very much appreciated by attendees. (You can consult and print the magazine related to the conference theme on our site).

The EBU has decided to hold an in-person conference in Nantes, France on 23/24/25 April 2022.

"Buddhism in Europe: Unity in Diversity".

Due to the current uncertain circumstances, participation will also be **available online**. Six speakers from the main Buddhist traditions will share the teachings of their practice, covering an extraordinarily broad spectrum of Buddhism in Europe. As we share a common wish as Buddhists to create harmony and peace in our hearts, minds and all around us through the precious Teachings of the Buddha, the conference is an exceptional and unique opportunity to meet and share experiences. It is in this joy of learning from our differences that we grow and respect each other. We have already experienced this many times, with great pleasure.

We therefore encourage you to book your weekend. All of the details can be found on the site.

<https://europeanbuddhistunion.org/>



We look forward to seeing you there!

Introducing our speakers



Dharmacharini Vassika

I am a member of the Triratna Buddhist Order, founded in the UK in 1968 by Urgyen Sangharakshita.

One of Sangharakshita's great contributions to Western Buddhism was his search for what unifies the various Buddhist schools and currents, over time and across cultural divides. Our teachings and practices derive from the whole Buddhist tradition and the central unifying factor is our going for refuge to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. I will explore this and how it manifests in a life dedicated to the Dharma.

Dharmacharini Vassika, Triratna Buddhist Order, UK.

David Brazier

In Europe we have a very large number of very small sanghas. This is not necessarily a bad thing as it presents opportunities for creative development and cross fertilisation. I am an English Pureland Buddhist with a background also in Zen, currently involved in trying to establish a residential project for elderly Buddhists in cooperation with a Kargyu French lama in the Tibetan tradition. Not long ago I brought out a book on Zen through the publishing arm of the Triratna Order. There is clearly a lot of scope for co-operation and although it can have its trials it is well worth the effort.

Dharmavidya David Brazier, Global Sangha, France.



Claudine Carayol

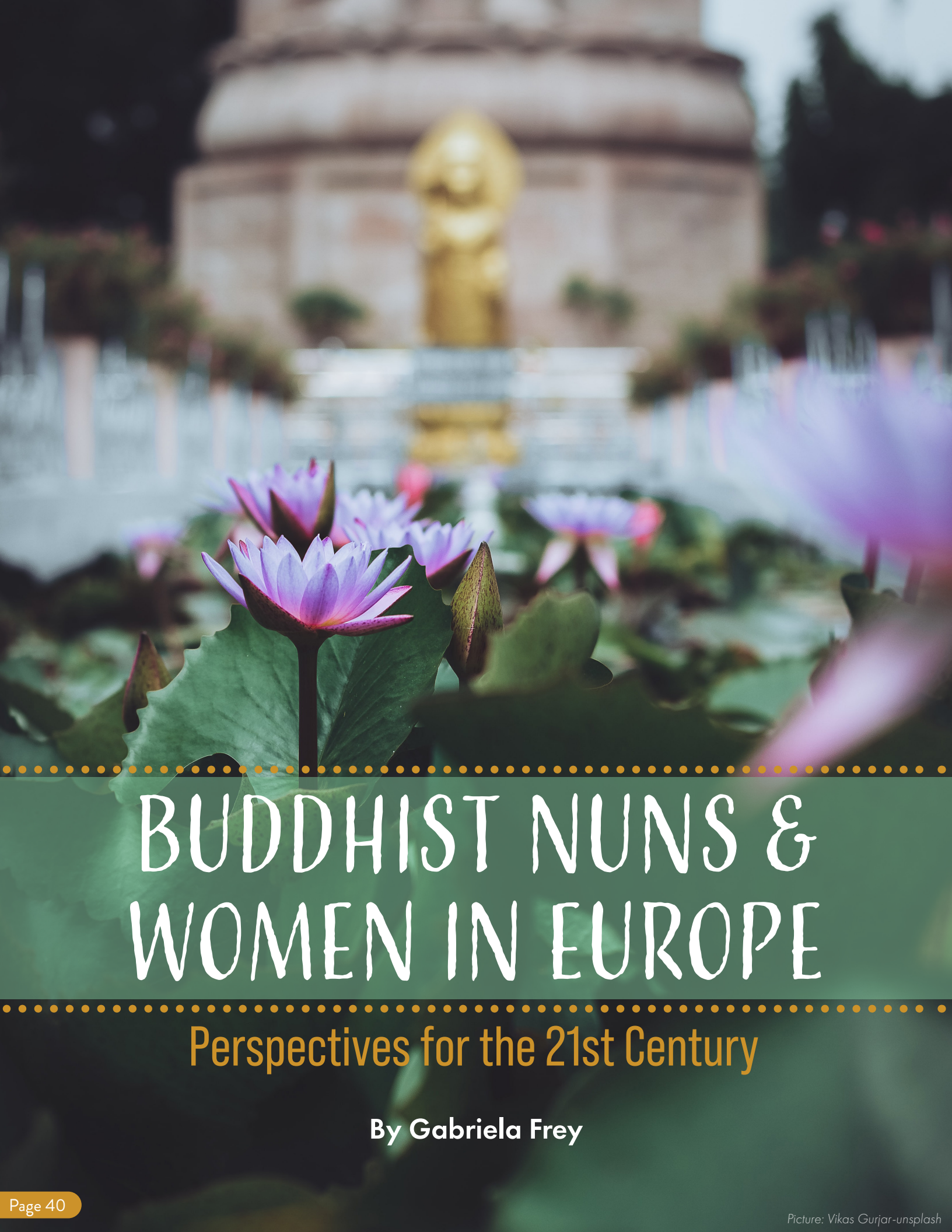
The Buddha's pluralistic and universalist vision is based on wisdom - the awareness of the interdependence, uniqueness and diversity of all existence, and the potential for all beings to awaken to their essential Buddha nature. This vision comes to life in reality through compassion and gratitude towards all beings - all of whom participate in our earthly existence. Diversity is the ground for transformation and awakening.

The European Buddhist Union is a federation of Buddhist schools from many Asian countries established in European countries. The European Buddhist Union was created to promote unity in diversity, to foster friendship between all Buddhist schools, to help the development of Buddhism in Europe and, consequently, to promote peace between the peoples of Europe. By its example of openness, tolerance and non-violence, it is potentially a source of inspiration and harmony for all Europeans and for the world.

The diversity of Buddhist schools and traditions is a richness and an opportunity for human beings, so diverse in their nature and aspirations, to encounter, through the tradition that inspires them, the Dharma with its unique flavor.

Claudine Carayol
Le bouddhisme de l'Amitié Spirituelle
France





BUDDHIST NUNS & WOMEN IN EUROPE

Perspectives for the 21st Century

By Gabriela Frey



Cross-border Solidarity of Buddhist Women in Europe

The topic of the 17th Sakyadhita Congress in December 2021 reflects very closely the many years of cooperation between Sakyadhita members in France and Germany. Bhikshuni Jampa Tsedroen (Dr. Carola Roloff), founding member of Sakyadhita Int., started in 1987 to make known work and goals of Sakyadhita in Germany and in Europe. Thanks to her encounter with Gabriela Frey Sakyadhita France was founded in 2006 as registered charity association in Strasbourg, seat of several European Institutions.

Jointly Achieving a Lot with Few Resources

With our few resources available to Buddhist women and nuns, important projects can be planned and realised only collectively, such as conferences, social projects, websites, organising teaching tours of female Buddhist teachers, contributions to interfaith and intra-Buddhist forums, etc. When Sakyadhita France became a member of the European Buddhist Union (EBU) in 2007, it started to represent the European branches of Sakyadhita there and launched the EBU-shared interest network "Women and Buddhism" with its trilingual website www.buddhistwomen.eu Sakyadhita members facilitated the EBU in 2008 to obtain the participatory status in the Council of Europe in the Conference of INGOs. Since then Gabriela Frey has officially represented the European Buddhists in the Council of Europe.

For Human Rights & Inter-Religious Dialogue

Together we are particularly engaged in the topics of human rights & religion, gender equality & interfaith dialogue at European level. A special highlight in 2016 was Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo's participation in a conference at the Council of Europe with an interfaith debate "Are religions a place for women's emancipation? Progress and setbacks." Since 2021, Gabriela Frey has been elected Co-Chair of the Committee for the Inter-religious and Inter-convictional Dialogue in the Conference of INGOs at the Council of Europe.

Buddhist Women & Nuns in Europe

Ordained women have shaped the Buddhist tradition in teaching and practice but always lacked support and recognition. But within the last 2.500 years, social conditions

have changed tremendously. Committed women no longer accept the obvious discrepancy between the Buddha's teachings transmitted to us and the reality lived today. Full ordination is indispensable, to allow nuns of all Buddhist schools to lead a self-determined life according to the Vinaya. Only then nuns can fully realise the full spectrum of a monastic education and develop a monastic life style in independent monasteries.

Lack of Support & Infrastructure

The desire for a monastic life can only grow among women if a corresponding infrastructure is available to them. However, this infrastructure is rarely available in Europe as women and nuns often are lacking substantial support. Many women cannot afford to take nun's vows, or they abandon them quite soon due to various hindrances and isolation. Yet well trained Buddhist nuns and women could provide orientation and support for people in difficult life situations, especially in these troubled times.

A Very Special Female Interfaith Solidarity

The German director of studies Mrs. Ursula Brambosch-Schaelen learned about the difficult situation of Buddhist women and nuns. Before she died in 2015, she left 500,000€ to the German Buddhist Union (DBU) for the benefit of Buddhist nun projects. Bhikshuni Jampa Tsedroen (Dr. Carola Roloff), Gabriela Frey (President Sakyadhita France) Rev. Vajramala (Honorary DBU-Chair) together with other members of the German Buddhist Union were able to establish the **Brambosch-Schaelen Foundation for Buddhist Nuns** on 1 April 2019 after two-years of preparation.

Modern Perspectives for Buddhist Nuns

The purpose of this foundation is to promote Buddhist nun projects and to support women on their way to ordination. The foundation aims to raise public awareness about the living conditions of Buddhist nuns of different traditions and to facilitate their integration into European society. With her generous legacy, Ursula Brambosch-Schaelen has set an example and created the financial basis for sustainably promoting and **improving the life conditions of Buddhist nuns in Germany/Europe**. The Christian benefactress intended that the work should not be focused on the preservation of out-dated traditions, but on opening up to modern perspectives for Western Buddhist nuns, who wish to live self-determinedly according to the Vinaya in the 21st century.



Founding of Sakyadhita Germany as Registered Association

According to its statutes, the Brambosch-Schaelen foundation is limited to a duration of 20 years. To ensure that the support for Buddhist nuns and women will exist beyond this period, the German Sakyadhita branch had to be founded as a non-profit association. On 10 December 2021, the founding meeting of Sakyadhita Germany as a registered association was held online, due to Corona restrictions. The founding and the elected board members are long-term Sakyadhita members

from Germany and France. Thus a solid basis could be created to offer sustainable support and promote better life conditions for Buddhist women aspiring to become sramanerikas and bhiksunis in Germany and in Europe.

The funds of the foundation can only provide start-up financing for monastery projects or support existing communities of nuns. Much remains to be done. But with the new Sakyadhita Germany Team, Sakyadhita France and many other friends in Europe a very promising team to meet the challenges. 🧘



Picture: Gabriela Frey

For Further Information:

- **European Network of Buddhist Women** www.buddhistwomen.eu
- **Sakyadhita Germany** <https://sakyadhita-germany.org/>
- **Sakyadhita France** <https://sakyadhitafrance.org/>
- **Brambosch-Schaelen-Foundation** www.brambosch-schaelen-stiftung.de

Buddhist chaplaincy: a compassionate response to suffering

By Dario Doshin Girolami, Kirsten DeLeo and Keith Munnings



The seeds of modern Buddhist chaplaincy were planted by the Buddha himself. He showed us a path towards peace in the midst of all that is difficult, uncomfortable, and confusing. Then as now, the world is faced with the very same causes of suffering that motivated the Buddha to teach and serve beings. By comforting people in need, modern Buddhist chaplains are walking in the footsteps of the Buddha and are nurturing these very seeds he sowed more than 2500 years ago.

Chaplaincy is a compassionate service that can foster care for the whole being. We can describe a holistic model for working with what has become broken as a series of concentric circles, moving from relating to and transforming our inner experiences and relationships to others to the environmental and even global level.

At the very core of Buddhist chaplaincy lies the wish to alleviate suffering in all its various forms: the pain caused by illness, injury and loss, the suffering caused by disturbing thoughts and difficult emotions like fear, anger, agony, depression, guilt or loneliness, and painful experience of dying. Therefore, the many places where Buddhist chaplains are being asked to contribute to are some of the main places of suffering in our society including prisons, hospitals, hospices and so on.

Currently, only very few European countries offer recognized and accredited educational opportunities in Buddhist Chaplaincy or Buddhist Spiritual Care. To develop, organize and support Buddhist chaplaincy within Europe, the European Buddhist Union has set about creating the Network of Buddhist Chaplains of Europe. The network will provide support, training opportunities and materials for those engaged in Buddhist chaplaincy, also, identify religious, spiritual and pastoral needs within and outside of Buddhist communities,

and encourage wider community cohesion and social integration.

To these ends, the first general meeting of the network was held - online - on April 25, 2021, and attended by chaplains from Italy, the UK, France, Germany, Belgium, Ireland, Austria, Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden. We gathered to get to know each other, talk about our experiences and support each other.

In the morning, Keith Munnings (from Buddhist Healthcare Chaplaincy Trust/UK) shared about Buddhist chaplaincy in hospitals, Kirsten DeLeo and Oliver Peters (Sukhavati/Germany and Dzogchen Beara Spiritual Care Centre/Ireland) on Buddhist chaplaincy in hospices, Alie Jimon Rozendal on Buddhist chaplaincy in the armed forces (from Chaplaincy Services Ministry of Defence/Netherlands), and Dario Girolami (from Centro Zen L'Arco/Italy) on Buddhist chaplaincy in prisons.

In the afternoon, the group discussed the following: What makes a chaplain a "Buddhist

chaplain"? What kind of training is needed? What is the difference between a lay and an ordained chaplain? Do lay chaplains offer ceremonies? Which ones? Do chaplains follow a Buddhist code of ethics? Do they receive supervision from their Dharma teacher? What are the "hidden" motivations to be a chaplain?

Another long-term goal being worked on by Dario Girolami, together with Kirsten DeLeo and Keith Munnings, is creating a course of study and experiential training for Buddhist chaplains throughout Europe supported by the European Buddhist Union and possibly in collaboration with a European University. The hope is to provide a university-level certificate accepted across all of Europe. An existing

inspiring example is that of the "Chaplaincy Training Program" of the Institute of Buddhist Studies in Berkeley/California, thanks to collaboration with our dhamma sister Rev. Daijaku Kinst, who is in charge of the course.

After the meeting in April 2021, the small Steering Group invited seasoned chaplains to join the newly formed EBU Network of Buddhist Chaplains. The first meeting was held on January 22 2022 and was attended by 12 practitioners. The meeting reflected upon motivations, expectations and purposes on the Network and raised concerns and worries.

A strong sense was shared for the great potential value in our collaborative efforts, particularly towards gaining

wider recognition of our possible greater contributions to the world of chaplaincy. It was felt important that a Buddhist approach to spiritual care needs to be developed and, more specifically, the will was expressed to create accredited training fully recognised in each of our own widely diversely and different national locations.

Things are moving in Italy. Two days of training was conducted in May 2021 in prison work for Italian Buddhist Union (UBI) Religious Ministers, at the invitation of Rev. Elena Seishin Viviani. The course aimed to introduce the ministers to the prison dimension by helping them identify the liturgy suitable for each event connected to a prisoner's life, how to organize a meditation course within





the different penitentiary institutions, and how to manage personal interviews with the prisoners, in particular concerning confessional confidentiality. The training also included how to prevent and manage burnout deriving from contact with the prison dimension and how to manage relations with chaplains of other religions, with police and civilian personnel.

In the UK, a new training programme 'Tools for Chaplaincy' was launched in October 2021 with 14 participants. The course has two key aims:

- Enabling participants to explore their own development and formation through Buddhist practice and understand what aspects of their experience equips them for Buddhist Chaplaincy/Buddhist Spiritual Care.
- Exploring the nature of different public sector locations and, through a process of self-reflection, support participants better understand how and where their prior experiential learning may provide a firm foundation for Buddhist Chaplaincy.

Buddhist chaplaincy has only just begun in Europe....and is looking very promising. 🧘

COLOFON

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