Ethics in Action
Sustaining the Dharma

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

Sravasti Abbey
A Buddhist Monastery
Creating Peace in a Chaotic World
Ethics in Action
Sustaining the Dharma

A message from Sravasti Abbey Founder and Abbess
Bhikshuni Thubten Chodron

In the Buddha’s time, whenever he established a new training guideline for monks and nuns, he proclaimed ten benefits of the monastic precepts. The most important of these, he said, was the tenth one—to sustain the Dharma forever.

To sustain the Dharma forever—this is the overarching purpose of Sravasti Abbey.

Training in the Dharma
In 2019, the Abbey community devoted ourselves first to Dharma study and practice. In addition to the courses that I teach, three highly respected Lharampa Geshe scholars—Geshe Yeshe Thabkhe, Geshe Dadul Namgyal, and Geshe Yeshi Lhundup—challenged and delighted us with their philosophical teachings.

The community also completed our two-year study of Daniel Perdue’s *Course in Buddhist Reasoning & Debate*. We now have budding English-language debaters, and everyone’s analytical skills are sharper.

Professor Jeffery Hopkins continues to offer his insightful (and witty) weekly Madhyamaka teachings. What a treasure! In addition, senior bhikshuni Ven. Sangye Khadro spent most of the year with us and offered both public courses and private teachings for the community.

Sharing the Dharma: Compassionate Engagement
The main way the Abbey benefits society is through offering the Dharma with programs at the Abbey, traveling to give teachings elsewhere, posting teachings online, and publishing books and articles.

Abbey monastics gave teachings in North America, Asia, Australia, and the UK. We also shared the Dharma...
in workshops, panels, and other events closer to home.

I was fortunate to speak at a conference at Ganden Monastery in South India honoring the life and legacy of our lineage founder, Lama Tsongkhapa. What a privilege to sit among so many esteemed scholars—Tibetan and Western, including His Holiness the Dalai Lama—of Tibetan Buddhism!

Abbey nuns shared meditations at the International Conference on Hate Studies at Gonzaga University, the regional Veterans for Peace Conference, and Stanford University’s Contemplation by Design Summit. Monastics also spoke at prisons, churches, rallies, events concerned with climate change, and a hospice. Our weekly meditation class at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Spokane continued. It’s been going for 11 years and has benefited many people.

In addition to our annual program for young adults, university and high school groups visited the Abbey. We continued our work with Youth Emergency Services. I personally enjoyed sharing Buddhism with a group of teens studying different religions at Temple Beth Shalom, and we continued our interfaith dialogue and friendship with two local Catholic sisters.

Publications

We released six new books in 2019. I am especially happy about the latest volumes in The Library of Wisdom and Compassion series by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and myself—_Samsara, Nirvana, and Buddha Nature_ (Volume 3) and _Following in the Buddha’s Footsteps_ (Volume 4), published by Wisdom Publications. More books are on the way. I think we’re looking at ten volumes!

Shambhala Publications released _Awaken Every Day: 365 Buddhist Reflections to Invite Mindfulness and Joy_ and re-released my lamrim book in paperback with a new title, _Guided Buddhist Meditations_.

The Abbey translated, edited, and self-published _Building Community: Living and Learning with the Sangha_, a Garland of Guidance by Venerable Bhikshuni Master Wuyin Shih and nuns of the Luminary International Buddhist Society in Taiwan. This complements our support for Buddhist monastics of all traditions and our annual Exploring Monastic Life program for aspirants and the newly ordained.

We also self-published _Unlocking Your Potential: How to Get Out of Your Own Way_, which I co-authored with former inmate Calvin Malone. We’ve shipped hundreds of copies to inmates through our prison outreach program. That’s in addition to prison visits, sending books and videos, and correspondence. We touch over 1,000 inmates each year and share resources with other Buddhist groups that reach out to the incarcerated.

By far our biggest measurable outreach is through the Sravasti Abbey YouTube channel, where we added over 500 new videos and received over 640,000 views in 2019 alone. In addition to posting the teachings from our courses, we share short Bodhisattva’s Breakfast Corner talks that give helpful advice on how to skillfully and beneficially respond to global controversies, tragedies, and natural disasters.
There’s More

Our community continues to grow. Venerable Tenzin Tsepal received full ordination in March. I was honored to serve as one of the bhikshuni witnesses at her Triple Platform ceremony in Taiwan. Christina Manriquez ordained as a novice, becoming Venerable Thubten Kunga, in May. We are now 12 bhikshunis (fully ordained nuns), three novice nuns, and one fully ordained monk.

In our commitment to forest stewardship, dozens of guests and volunteers helped clean up 10 acres of forest in the stretch we call Manjushri’s Meadow.

The Meditation Hall again overflowed with guests for most courses and retreats, making it definitive: it’s time to build the new Buddha Hall. Architect Tim Wilson is just finishing a beautiful design that includes meditation spaces, classrooms, and a library. You’ll soon hear much more about that!

Continuing our Mission

When I survey our life and service at Sravasti Abbey, I know we are part of something much bigger than ourselves. Together with you, we are establishing the Buddha’s teachings in a time and place where they have not been before and where the Buddha’s wisdom and compassion are desperately needed. That’s why having a monastic community is so important.

Each person associated with the Abbey is needed to sustain the Buddha’s precious teachings here.

A monastic community that holds precepts and practices together enables the force of the Dharma to continue. People like you then recognize, “There’s a group of people practicing ethical conduct, love, and compassion. I can connect with them to nourish my deepest aspirations.”

Our actions, speech, and thoughts matter. They affect the lives of others and ourselves, for better or for worse. Thus, each person associated with the Abbey is needed to sustain the Buddha’s precious teachings here. When we practice these—whether or not we call ourselves Buddhist—we create peace in our chaotic world.

Thank you so much for your kind heart and for your support. We are completely interdependent. Without each one of you, Sravasti Abbey could not be here.
Sravasti Abbey Programs
Sustain the Dharma

2019 Courses & Retreats
Ven. Thubten Chodron led courses and retreats unless otherwise noted.

- Vajrasattva Three-month Winter Retreat
- Chandrakirti's *Supplement to the Treatise on the Middle Way* with Geshe Yeshi Lhundup
- Peaceful Living, Peaceful Dying Retreat with Ven. Sangye Khadro
- How to See Yourself As You Really Are Retreat
- Young Adults Explore Buddhism (15th annual)
- One-week Manjushri Retreat
- Exploring Monastic Life (15th annual)

- Dharmakirti’s *Pramanavarttika* with Geshe Yeshe Thabkhe (via Ustream)
- Developing Concentration Retreat
- Six Perfections with Geshe Dadul Namgyal
- *The Foundation of Buddhist Practice* Course
- Nyung Ne Retreat with Ven. Tenzin Tsepal
- New Year’s Vajrasattva Retreat with Ven. Tenzin Tsepal and Ven. Thubten Chodron

Sharing the Dharma
Around the World

**United States**
Ven. Chodron and other Abbey monastics gave talks and led retreats in:
- **California**: Long Beach & Stanford
- **Idaho**: Sandpoint & Coeur d’Alene
- **New York**: Brooklyn
- **Tennessee**: Nashville
- **Utah**: Salt Lake City
- **Washington**: Spokane, Chattaroy, & Seattle

**Internationally**
Ven. Chodron gave live teachings in:
- Australia
- Hong Kong
- India
- Malaysia
- Singapore
- Taiwan
- UK

**Via Internet and video**, she also taught in:
- Australia
- France
- Jewel Heart Centers in the US

Ethics in Action | Sustaining the Dharma through Monastic Rites & Education

“If this Pratimoksha Sutra remains long in the world, the Buddhadharma will be widespread, and because it is widespread, nirvana can be attained.”

—Shakyamuni Buddha, *Pratimoksha Sutra*

- Conducted monastic rites in accordance with Vinaya
  - Fortnightly posadha ceremony to purify and restore precepts
  - Sixth varsa retreat and pravarana ceremony
  - Kathina ceremony for offering robe of merit
- Completed weekly teachings on *The Course in Buddhist Reasoning and Debate* with Ven. Thubten Chodron
- Completed weekly teachings on *Approaching the Buddhist Path* with Ven. Thubten Chodron
- Weekly classes on Buddhist philosophy with Dr. Jeffrey Hopkins via Internet
- Daily Bodhisattva’s Breakfast Corner teachings
- Weekly classes on sksamana precepts and training rules with Ven. Thubten Chodron
- Supplemental lo rig teachings and *Pramanavarttika* reviews with Ven. Sangye Khadro
- Community discussions, private Tibetan instruction, and diverse skills training
Sustaining the Dharma

2019 Publications

- Samsara, Nirvana, and Buddha Nature, Volume 3 of The Library of Wisdom and Compassion by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Thubten Chodron (Wisdom Publications)
- Following in the Buddha’s Footsteps, Volume 4 of The Library of Wisdom and Compassion by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Thubten Chodron (Wisdom Publications)
- Guided Buddhist Meditations: Essential Practices on the Stages of the Path by Thubten Chodron (Shambhala Publications)
- Awaken Every Day: 365 Buddhist Reflections to Invite Mindfulness and Joy by Thubten Chodron (Shambhala Publications)
- Building Community: Living and Learning with the Sangha by Venerable Master Wuyin and Luminary Temple Nuns, translated by Thubten Damcho and Lynne Mallinson, edited by Thubten Chodron (Sravasti Abbey)
- Unlocking Your Potential: How to Get Out of Your Own Way by Thubten Chodron and Calvin Malone (Sravasti Abbey)

Translations

- Teachings and Rites for Sramaneri/as (into German)
- Approaching the Buddhist Path (into Spanish & Chinese)
- Buddhism: One Teacher, Many Traditions (into Russian & Vietnamese)

Reaching Out Online and Afar

YouTube Channel
- 537 teachings uploaded
- 643,541 views

Insight Timer
- 8,937 followers
- 186,000 plays

Livestream
- 11,050 views

Vajrasattva Retreat from Afar
- 267 participants, including 130+ incarcerated people

Sravasti Abbey Friends Education (SAFE) distance learning program
- 229 students enrolled

Gen Heywood Photography

So many people came for the monthly Sharing the Dharma Day, we had to hold it in the dining room!

Ven. Chodron was interviewed by Dan Harris on his Ten Percent Happier podcast.

Singapore class meets weekly to watch teachings via Livestream.
Conferences & Presentations

In addition to giving Dharma talks and teachings, Abbey monastics are increasingly asked to participate in panels and conferences, and to offer programs for schools and other groups. Here are some of the organizations and events that hosted Sravasti Abbey monastic presentations in 2019.

- Airway Heights Correctional Center, Airway Heights, Washington (WA)
- British Library, London, UK
- Contemplation by Design Summit, Stanford University, California (CA)
- Coyote Ridge Corrections Center, Connell, WA
- Cultural Anthropology Class, Sandpoint High School, Sandpoint, Idaho (ID)
- Climate Strike, Spokane, WA
- Diversity Council, North Idaho College, Coeur d’Alene, ID
- Dornsife Center for Community Engagement, Whitworth University, Spokane, WA
- Earth Day Vigil, Spokane, WA
- Gardenia Center, Sandpoint, ID
- Hospice of North Idaho, Coeur d’Alene, ID
- Idaho Correctional Institution, Orofino, WA
- Interfaith Panel, Earth Stewardship, Unity Spiritual Center, Spokane, WA
- Interfaith Panel, Social Work, North Idaho College, Coeur d’Alene, ID
- Interfaith Pride Worship Service, Spokane, WA
- International Conference on Hate Studies, Gonzaga University, Spokane, WA
- International Conference on Jé Tsongkhapa: Life, Thought, and Legacy, Ganden Monastery, Mundgod, India
- Mindful Leadership and Communication program, Gonzaga University, Spokane, WA
- My Little Gems Preschool, Singapore
- New Horizons in Buddhism Conference, Sakyadhita International Association of Buddhist Women, Blue Mountains, NSW, Australia
- North Idaho Unitarian Universalists, Coeur d’Alene, ID
- Riverside High School, Riverside, WA
- Souls Center, Spokane, WA
- Temple Beth Shalom, Spokane, WA
- Unitarian Universalist Church of Spokane, WA
- Unity Spiritual Center, Coeur d’Alene, ID
- Utah Council on Conflict Resolution, Salt Lake City
- Veterans for Peace regional conference, Spokane, WA
- Walla Walla State Penitentiary, Walla Walla, WA
- Youth Emergency Services, Newport, WA
Sustaining the Dharma with Your Support

How we used your offerings in 2019

“Sravasti Abbey has given me the most precious gift of all, the gift of the Dharma. I cannot envision a more worthwhile cause than to support the Abbey in its efforts to spread the Dharma’s message of peace, love, and compassion. That is why I have decided to devote my time, energy, and financial support so that Sravasti Abbey can continue to grow and flourish.” —Ken Mondal, Spokane, WA

We value transparency in all our activities.

However, we no longer think it’s wise to publish financial reports or donors’ names on the web. Write the office for a complete copy of the Annual Report that includes the financial report and benefactors.
2019 Volunteers

Thank you for all you give—time, material support, prayers, and good wishes. Your support as benefactors and volunteers brings ethics into action and sustains the Dharma.

The Abbey community dedicates merit on your behalf daily and during our Lama Chopa puja twice a month. We love reciting your names out loud as we rejoice in your generosity.