



# Building a Home for the Buddha

By the people, for the people



**Sravasti Abbey**  
A Buddhist Monastery

**Annual Report**  
**2022**



# A Message from Founder and Abbess Bhikshuni Thubten Chodron

*B*uilding was the overriding theme of 2022, and it continues into 2023. Although we've been building since I (and two cats) moved onto the Sravasti Abbey property in 2003, constructing the new Buddha Hall is taking us to another level. We are not doing this alone and are encouraged by the tremendous outpouring of support from all of you, our Dharma friends and benefactors. Construction of this Buddha Hall really is by the people and for the people.

Watching the Buddha Hall come into being is exciting. We were inspired when Peter Griffin, the sculptor making the three large statues for the main altar in the Buddha Hall, visited the Abbey for three months last summer. The central statue is, of course, Shakyamuni Buddha, and to his right will be Ananda, his attendant. To his left will be Mahaprajapati, the Buddha's stepmother who brought him up. She is also the founder of the sangha of bhikshunis (fully ordained nuns). Despite her important role in Buddhist history, we know of only four statues of her. We will be delighted when the fifth statue takes her place on the Abbey's main altar.

Of course this is not about physical construction in and of itself. As we watch world events unfold, we feel an urgency to share Buddha's teachings to overcome violence with love, compassion, forgiveness and wisdom. By virtue of the Abbey's growth, the Buddha Hall has become essential to forwarding our aim to create peace in a chaotic world.



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*While we are building the Buddha Hall, we are also growing the monastic community, deepening our practice, nourishing an ever-widening network of Dharma friends, and building bridges to Dharma communities around the world.*

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## Sharing the Dharma

We were delighted to see increasing in-person attendance at retreats and courses as Covid concerns relaxed. The community has grown in recent years, and our returning guests have been surprised (and happy) to see all the new faces. New friends are joining us now as well.

Most of our annual events—including Exploring Buddhism for Young Adults, Exploring Monastic Life, and Labor Day, Memorial Day, and other retreats—were offered in person and online in 2022. Hosting so many virtuous activities continues to stretch our capacity. For example, the dining room is doing double-duty, serving as both an eating and a teach-

ing space so that we can stream Dharma talks and meditations for people all over the world.

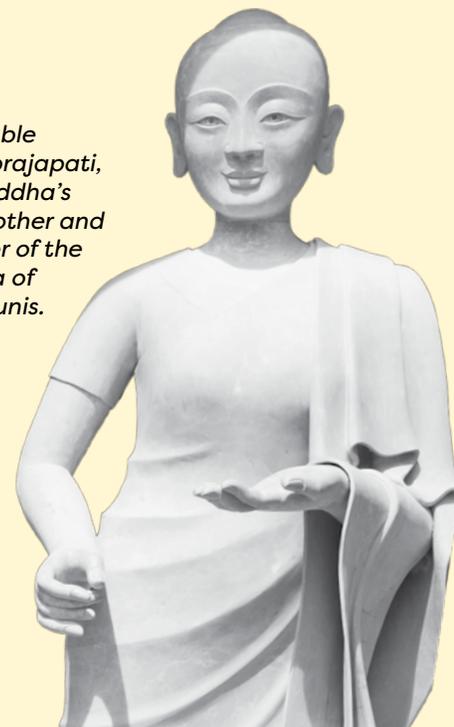
Zoom has opened up many opportunities to teach. I gave more than 40 talks in nine countries without leaving the Abbey. Ven. Sangye Khadro also gave many teachings online to seekers around the world.

In June I traveled with Ven. Damcho to

Seoul, South Korea to present a paper for an international conference on Buddhist nuns, where we learned about a renowned Korean Zen master, Daehaeng Sunim. At a time when Korea was facing extreme financial hardship, she still insisted on building a temple to spiritually support and uplift the citizens. Her courage inspired us.

Then, in December, after a three-year hiatus, I returned to Singapore, joyfully sharing the Dharma again in a place and with some people I've known for decades.

*Venerable Mahaprajapati, the Buddha's stepmother and founder of the sangha of bhikshunis.*



## Growing the monastic community and the Dharma

The Abbey's principal mission is to support a flourishing monastic community so that the Buddha's teachings will flourish in a new land. We offered a second round of our three-week Siksamana Training Course, an intensive program where the fully ordained monastics instructed the Abbey's juniors and five guest nuns. We rejoiced to give two novice



Ven. Master Jian Hu and Geshe Dadul Namgyal gave novice ordination to Stephen Taul, now Ven. Thubten Ngawang.

ordinations this year to one nun (Ven. Thubten Monlam) and one monk (Ven. Thubten Ngawang). As these two people became novices, three more anagarikas (8-precept holders) came to train at the Abbey.

Geshe Dadul Namgyal of Drepung Loseling Monastery was with us much of the year while on leave from his work with the Emory-Tibet Science Initiative. His sincere practice and Dharma wisdom enhanced our community's activities. (We are happy to add that after retiring from Emory in January 2023, Geshela has formally joined our community!)

## Learning Dharma classics

Geshe Yeshe Thabkhe is an esteemed scholar and a living Dharma treasure.

At 92, his brilliant wisdom flows through the teachings he has shared with us via Zoom. After completing Kamalashila's *Stages of Meditation*—*Middle Section*, he agreed to teach *The Rice Seedling Sutra*. What fortune!

We continue to treasure our weekly private teachings with Dr. Jeffrey Hopkins, and we welcomed Geshe Yeshe Lhundup for a six-week residency to continue his teaching on Je Tsongkhapa's *Illumination of the Thought*. Geshe Yeshe and Geshe Dadul were debate partners in their student years at Drepung Loseling, which made for lively and enriching Q&A sessions! Like all Abbey teachings, the talks are freely offered on the Abbey's YouTube channel.

## Writing books

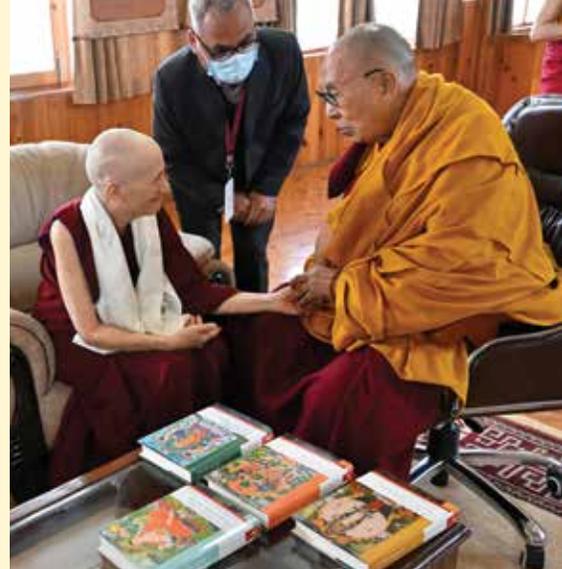
As the sounds of construction swell outside my window, writing and editing *The Library of Wisdom and Compassion*—the book series based on the teachings of His Holiness the Dalai Lama—remain my personal focus.

Volume 7, *Searching for the Self*, came out in May 2022, and Volume 8, *Realizing the Profound View*, was



Friends of Sravasti Abbey - Singapore

released in December. I was honored to have a very brief meeting with His Holiness to offer the four most recent volumes to him directly. With his kind blessing, the series will continue with a few more books. Volume 9 will be out later this year.



Offering recent volumes in *The Library of Wisdom and Compassion* to His Holiness.

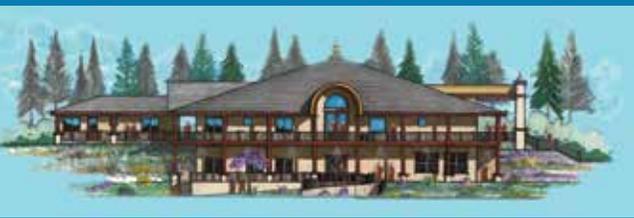
## Spreading far and wide

There's so much to share: our forest stewardship, the ever-growing prison program, community outreach, and the debut of Buddha Bear. You'll find a summary and photos in the following pages.

Just as the Buddha Hall is by the people and for the people, so are all our Dharma activities. The Abbey is "by the people" in that every acre of land, every morsel of food, every book we've published, every talk we've given, every prayer we've said arises in dependence on the kindness of others, especially you, our supporters. It is "for the people" in that we train to dedicate our efforts to benefit you and all beings.

We frequently recall Lama Tsongkhapa's aspirational verses, praying to share the Buddha's teachings in regions where they have not been known before. This is what we are doing at Sravasti Abbey, and this is what your offerings support. With the Buddha Hall project and the Abbey's numerous Dharma programs, we are building a spiritual home for all sentient beings, a beacon of peace in a chaotic world.

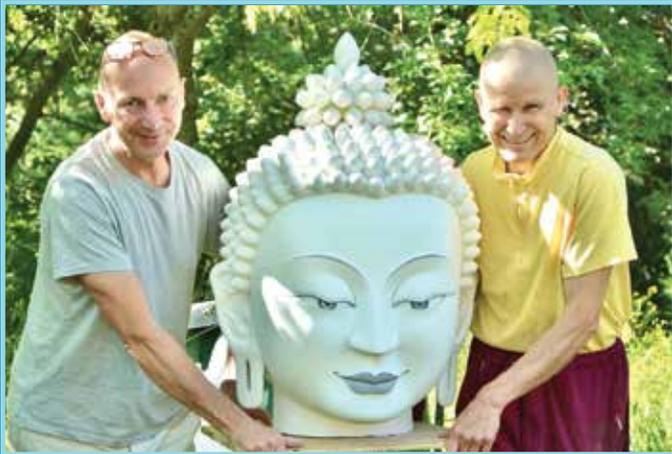
*Bhikshuni Thubten Chodron*



# BUDDHA HALL

By the People, for the People

*A spiritual home for all sentient beings*



*Peter Griffin and Ven. Losang transport Buddha statue parts to store until it's time to assemble them on the main altar.*



*In July, backhoes began to break ground. By December, they had framed the library and lower level.*

After years of preparation and a two-year Covid-related delay, the Abbey joyfully launched Buddha Hall construction with a ground blessing ceremony in July 2022. By year's end, John Young Construction crews had laid the bottom floor slab and were framing the downstairs rooms.

Three generous donors combined their gifts to offer \$500,000, and then invited Abbey friends to match that sum. Hundreds of people responded to meet the goal. Thank you for your tremendous support!

Training and preserving the sangha is essential to preserving and spreading the Dharma, which is our main mission. We aspire to one day be able to offer full monastic ordination, in English, for both monks and nuns. The Buddha Hall is necessary to fulfill that aspiration.

Thank you for sharing the vision. Your enthusiasm for the Buddha Hall project is the key to its fruition. May the good karma you create by this support sustain your practice for lifetimes to come.



*Costs, originally projected at \$6.7 million, have risen as we meet inflation and other unexpected issues. The Abbey still needs about \$2.5 million to fully fund Buddha Hall construction.*



*Ven. Samten and Ven. Tarpa lead the Abbey's indomitable Buddha Hall building team.*

# Sharing the Dharma

*These are the many ways  
your gifts benefited others*

The Abbey offered a full schedule of Dharma activities on-site, most of which were also livestreamed. In addition to our almost daily Bodhisattva's Breakfast Corner (BBC) talks on YouTube, monastics gave talks, teachings, and retreats—online or in person—for over 60 Dharma centers, educational and religious institutions, and social service groups in 14 countries: Australia, Canada, India, France, Mexico, the Netherlands, Scotland, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Turkey, and the United States. Ranging from months-long series to one-time discussions, topics covered classical Buddhist literature as well as contemporary social issues.

## Online outreach by the numbers

- **YouTube Channel**
  - 609 teachings uploaded
  - 692,515 views
  - 29,739 channel subscribers
- **Vimeo Livestream teachings:** 19,710 views
- **Insight Timer Meditation App:** 353,321 listens
- **2022 Retreat from Afar:** 371 participants, including 96 in prison
- **Sravasti Abbey Friends Education (SAFE) online learning program:** 354 participants

## Weekly teachings

**Stages of Meditation: The Middle Section** (Kamalashila) with Geshe Yeshe Thabkhe

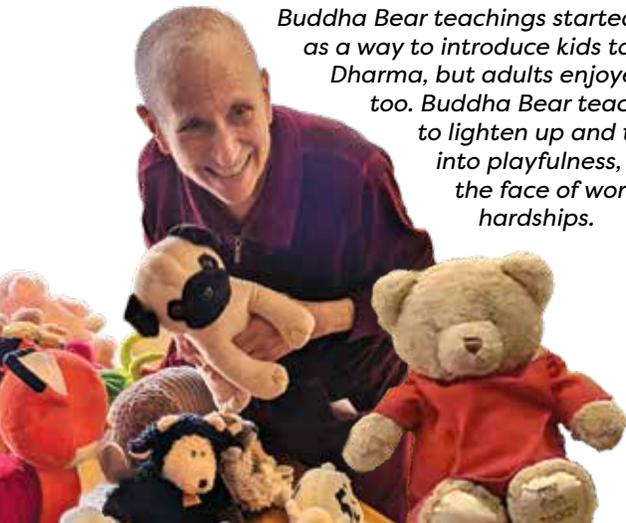
**The Rice Seedling Sutra** with Geshe Yeshe Thabkhe

**Illumination of the Thought** (Je Tsongkhapa) with Geshe Yeshe Lhundup

**Engaging in the Bodhisattva's Deeds** (Shantideva) with Ven. Thubten Chodron

**Samsara, Nirvana, and Buddha Nature** (HH the Dalai Lama & Thubten Chodron) with Ven. Thubten Chodron

*Buddha Bear teachings started out as a way to introduce kids to the Dharma, but adults enjoyed them too. Buddha Bear teaches us to lighten up and tune into playfulness, even in the face of worldwide hardships.*



## In-person and online at the Abbey

*All courses were led by Ven. Thubten Chodron unless otherwise noted.*

### Retreats and Courses

- 2022 New Year's Vajrasattva Retreat
- Medicine Buddha/Vajrasattva Winter Retreat
- Awakening the Kind Heart (Ven. Sangye Khadro)
- Good Karma Memorial Day Weekend Retreat
- Young Adults Explore Buddhism
- Weeklong Manjushri Retreat
- Exploring Monastic Life
- How to Meditate (Ven. Sangye Khadro)
- Perfection of Generosity Retreat



*Ven. Sangye Khadro gave courses at the Abbey and taught for Dharma centers in Europe and the US.*

### Regular Events

- Monthly Sharing the Dharma Day
- Monthly Offering Service Saturdays
- Monthly Medicine Buddha pujas online (with senior nuns)
- Monthly teaching for Sandpoint Sangha (Ven. Sangye Khadro)
- Weekly teaching for Spokane Monday Night Meditation group (with senior nuns)

### Ven. Sangye Khadro's many online courses included:

- Buddha Nature and Karma and the Twelve Links for O Sel Ling, Spain
- Awakening the Kind Heart for Thubten Kunga Ling, Florida
- Working with Emotions for Kalachakra Centre, France
- 70 Topics and Ornament for Clear Realization, Chapter 4 for Thubten Norbu Ling, New Mexico
- Peaceful Living, Peaceful Dying for Togme Sangpo Buddhist Group, Scotland

*Until the Buddha Hall is ready, the dining room does double duty as a teaching space for retreats and streamed events.*



## Publications

### New Releases

#### Wisdom Publications

The Library of Wisdom and Compassion  
His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Thubten Chodron  
*Searching for the Self*, Volume 7  
*Realizing the Profound View*, Volume 8

#### 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha

Tibetan to English translation  
Ven. Thubten Damcho  
“The Eight Auspicious Ones Sutra”  
“The Basket Without Words, the Illuminator’s Matrix”

### Translations

Ediciones Amara  
*Awaken Every Day*, Thubten Chodron, into Spanish

Penerbit Dian Dharma  
*Gavin Discovers the Secret to Happiness*, Al Ramos  
into Bahasa Indonesia

Editions Mahayana  
*Insight into Emptiness*, Khensur Jampa Tegchok,  
ed. Thubten Chodron, into French

Chung Sheng Books  
Volumes 3, 4, and 5 of The Library of Wisdom and  
Compassion into Mandarin

ThubtenChodron.org  
*Seven Tips for a Happy Life*, Thubten Chodron  
*Guided Meditations on the Stages of the Path*,  
Thubten Chodron, both into French

### Articles

Ven. Chodron published articles in *Tricycle Magazine*  
and the peer-reviewed *Mindfulness* journal. Abbey  
articles also appeared in several online publications,  
and Ven. Sangye Khadro and Ven. Chodron were  
guests on several podcasts.



“The Abbey and the monastic community  
are so important! You folks give us the tools  
to help us sort things out in our lives.  
The Dharma is a ‘tool-kit’ for life!”  
—Will Olson, Washington USA

### Stewarding the Land

The Abbey property spans 370 mostly wooded acres,  
and with the help of dozens of volunteers and guests,  
we steward the land with care. In 2022 we focused on  
thinning and limbing forest areas closest to buildings  
to mitigate fire danger and beautified the Bodhisat-  
tva Loop, our forest’s main trail. A master tree feller  
offered training for younger community members to  
develop their sawyer skills. We’re grateful! Volunteers  
also helped tend and harvest our small but productive  
vegetable garden and helped to pick and process a large  
crop of apples and plums.



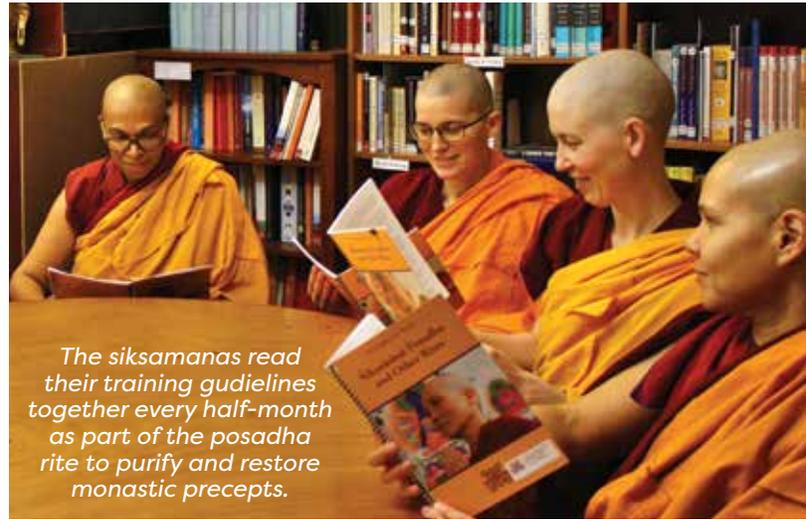
Volunteers give many hours of work and their varied  
skills to help the Abbey maintain the forest, meadows,  
and gardens. We recruited this enthusiastic team from  
the Young Adults Explore Buddhism program.



## Monastic Rites & Education

Sravasti Abbey monastics performed all the prescribed Vinaya rites including the fortnightly posadha ceremony to purify and restore precepts, our ninth annual varsa (rains retreat), and the concluding pravara ceremony, as well as a kathina ceremony for offering the robe of merit.

The Abbey again offered a three-week training for siksamanas—nuns preparing for full ordination—with our own community and five guest nuns. Monastic education also included weekly in-house Vinaya classes. Some residents also received private instruction in Tibetan and Sanskrit calligraphy.



*The siksamanas read their training guidelines together every half-month as part of the posadha rite to purify and restore monastic precepts.*



## Serving Those in Need

The Abbey's prison Dharma program reaches over 1000 incarcerated people via personal correspondence, supplying books and recordings (by request), and publishing a quarterly *Dharma Dispatch* newsletter specifically for prison meditators. Covid halted our prison visits, but we hope they resume in 2023.

Residents continue to serve on the Board of Directors for Youth Emergency Services, which supports local homeless or troubled teens.

## Interfaith Connections

Following the Dalai Lama's guidance, the Abbey welcomes opportunities for interfaith understanding and cooperation. Abbey monastics spoke at local churches, participated in interfaith vigils for the environment, and joined in special services such as the Pride Interfaith Service for the LGBTQ community. We connect regularly with informal interfaith gatherings.

# Building a home for the Buddha

*to share the Dharma with the world*

“Thank you for providing access to the Dharma in an easy to understand format, especially for those of us who grew up in Western society where Buddhism is not as common. My life has changed for the better thanks to your YouTube videos, articles, books and the SAFE courses. Thank you!”

—Elisa Schvaneveldt, Utah USA



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.

# 2022 Benefactors

Your offerings of time, funds, heart, and effort sustain and grow the community as they sustain and spread the Dharma. We rejoice in sharing this spiritual path with you. We are working together to create peace in a chaotic world.



**Srivasthi Abbey**  
A Buddhist Monastery  
*Creating Peace in a Chaotic World*

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