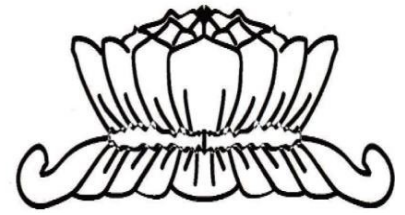


LOTUS



JOURNAL OF THE BIRMINGHAM BUDDHIST VIHARA

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KATHINA ROBE OFFERING CEREMONY

*Due to COVID-19 restrictions, Kathina ceremony was held on Zoom (online video conferencing).
It was a "Bon Kathein" ceremony donated by all devotees of Birmingham Buddhist Vihara*

Sunday 24th October 2021



How Long Do Monk's Robes Last?

By Bhante Subhuti

<https://americanmonk.org/how-long-do-monks-robles-last/>

It is quite common in Myanmar to offer robes at the end of the Rainy Season (vassa) in a ceremony called Kaṭhina. How long do monk's robes last?

A monk normally has a set of three robes; a lower robe, an upper robe and a double robe sometimes referred to as the outer robe. During Kaṭhina, a set of robes are offered, but usually just the lower and upper robes since the double robe or outer robe lasts a long time. I'm not sure how old my double robe is, but I think it may be seven years old. It is faded, but still quite strong. During this Kaṭhina, 2021, the monks at Pa-Auk got a whopping eight sets of robes and one set robes were offered at the end of vassa a week ago, totaling nine sets of robes! Various other items were offered too, like slippers, a blanket, a pair of socks, tissues, soap, sponges, a bowl bag, rope, etc. I was also offered various requisite slips. This year someone was collecting the slips for a Myanmar Tipitaka (set of Buddhist Scriptures). Now my 60,000 myk office requisite slips are gone. Easy come, easy go. Last year, I collected 27-28 slips (1,250,000 myk) to sponsor a meal arranged by the office. These days, I'm more joyful to give my slips for the set of scripture books rather than a meal arranged by the office.

The robes will last various lengths of time and it depends on the quality of the cloth. When I first became a monk in 2001, it was difficult to find natural fiber robes. During those times, most robes were called "CYC" in Myanmar Lanugage, which translates to "nylon" or "polyester" (I'm not sure which). Na-Uyana does not accept this material as "robe cloth" according to the ancient rules which specify a small list of woven materials that can be used for robes. According to modern standards, it is considered "okay", just like rubber slippers and stainless steel bowls which are also used by Na-Uyana. To get natural fiber robes in Pa-Auk in the olden days, monks would put the word out to various monks who would tell other various monks (Social networking by actually speaking) that such and such monk was looking for natural fiber robes. Eventually the robes would appear within a day or two. During these times (2001-2003) the only natural fiber robes were often made by the government and the cloth was very thin to the point that you could see through them if your skin color was white. However, we usually wore both the upper and lower robes together (2 layers) when we walked in public. The thin cloth was good for the hot climate, but not very durable. These robes might last 4-6 months if worn daily. The hotter the climate, the less time the robes will last. This is because the body sweat wears away the robe cloth. In the cooler climates of Pyin Oo Lwin, the robes will last longer.

As time has gone by and Pa-Auk has grown in popularity in size, robe manufacturing companies have arisen to meet Pa-Auk vinaya standards. The cloth used from Myanmar can be very good quality and impressed the ladies at the USA fabric stores when I showed them. I think it is the same type of cloth that cotton button-down dress shirts are made from. The first company was good, but some other companies seem to cut corners in the manufacturing process and fold the cloth over to make the 5" borders on the edges instead of cutting the cloth and sewing a separate strip of cloth on top. This separate piece is required for the monk rules. One company cuts all stitching lines and there is no doubt about anything with this extreme practice. Taking a robe out of the package to see the size and vinaya standards is like unfolding a map and then trying to fold it back again (remember those days?). So with so many robes to choose from, I stick with a company I know and trust, or I stitch the robes myself.

The robes we get today can last several years if one stays in Pyin Oo Lwin with a meditation center lifestyle. When I was in Hawai'i, I would need to go out in the hot sun everyday to collect my food. You could literally see that my robes were sun-bleached. The color of the robes were different shades according to the sunlight they received. The outside of the robes were a lighter color than the inner part of the robes. To bring life back to the robes without the need for new robes, one can dye the robes.

Various chemical dyes exist. Rit dyes are quite famous in the USA, but I have not had great success with them or other companies as well. Natural dyes for monks are often made from tree bark or tree hardwood, and a large pot is needed to cook these natural dyes. However, I suspect the Pa-Auk and Na-Uyana have missed a few steps in making these dyes since the majority of the dye gets washed out the moment you use modern washing detergent How do we wash the robes if we have natural

dye? In Sri Lanka, we use boiling water with certain types of leaves to help bring out the oils out from the robes which came from the body. We have special elongated monk-robe-washing-sinks to do this too.



A monk is encouraged to sew his robes if they become damaged. We have rules that a monk must repair his robe immediately that day to avoid minor penalties. A monk is required to carry a needle and thread if he travels more than 4 miles. If 10 dawns pass, then we need to forfeit our robes to a fellow monk, tell him that we were lazy to fix our robes, confess, and then the monk will give the robes back to us. Because of this tedious process, it can be tiresome to make a robe last for years through repeated repair. When I get a hole in one of my robes, I test the cloth by stretching it lightly, if it tears in a new spot, I usually opt for a new robe from the storeroom or start thinking about making new ones. If the cloth looks like it is in good condition, then I will repair it. Below is a robe that I made last for 4 years as a little experiment. The center section has gone through two generations of patches while the outer sections are the original. Because this was covered by my upper robe, this experiment was not obvious to others. After some time, I gave up. It was just too tiresome to keep repairing while there was an abundance of robes available for donation.



In summary, the Vinaya robes we get from Pa-Auk last about one to three years depending on the conditions we live in. The robes we make in Sri Lanka last about 1 year without repairing because of the different type of cloth and climate. All of the robes I have received in the past week will end up in the sangha storeroom. When I need some robes, I can always ask for some there or by asking a donor outside. Despite an abundance of robes, the robes get distributed and used.

Vihara Repair and Renovation Projects

Renovation and repair of ornate wood carvings and entrances.

1. Repair and renovation of the ornate wood carvings above the three entrances to the pagoda together with redesigning the gutter systems of the roof was started late November 2020. With COVID-19 Lockdown, intricate work involved and inclement weather conditions the work took till late spring of 2021. It involved taking all the ornate wood carvings, which had been painted with black paint, down to treat with teak oil. This will preserve the teak wood carvings and prevent further damage from the inclement weather. A new gutter system had to be formed and incorporated into the fibre-glass roofing system to make the gutters wider and easier to clean as well as prevent more water damage to the fascia that supports the wood carvings. The support fascia board system was fastened onto galvanised brackets to give the carvings stronger support and prevent future water damage. This procedure was repeated on all three entrances. A new glass-fibre membrane was covered over the East entrance roof. The damaged ceiling area of the East entrance was renovated and redecorated. The patio stones along the path were pressure washed and cleaned.
2. In October 2021, window and gutter cleaning services were contracted out to Jason Parr, Top Dog Window Cleaning Ltd., of Court Lane, Birmingham.
3. On 14th October 2021, emergency roof repairs had to be made to the Sangharama Vihara, as there was a leak into one of the visitors' rooms. Only one roofing company, Empire Roofing & Guttering of Solihull, responded to the emergency request and repaired the roof before more damage was done.
4. On 3rd October 2021, Firecheck Services (UK) Ltd., of Great Barr, Birmingham upgraded all the fire extinguishers in all three buildings and issued a fire safety certificate.
5. Fire alarms were checked by an electrician in October 2021, and lights in the kitchen changed. All sensor lights on the Shnagrama Vihara building changed to more efficient economical ones. Electrical safety certificate to be renewed in January 2022.
6. The damaged shower tray in one of the visitors' en-suite to be replaced in the near future.

Future repair and maintenance work.

There is a need to do survey work on the dome and the Pagoda structure itself as there is a fair sized moisture patch showing on the dome.

As there was evidence of water pooling inside the pagoda structure in 2005, correspondence is in progress with a couple of structural engineering companies and we are in the process of seeking advice at the moment.

Birmingham Buddhist Vihara and the Birmingham Buddhist Vihara Trust are grateful for the generous donations made by the devotees.

All the above would not have been possible without your donations.

Sadhu, sadhu, sadhu for your generous donations towards the renovations.

Dr Ottarana Nyana's Activities

Metta Retreat (28th July to 6th Aug 2021)

Dr Ottara Nyana led online Metta retreat in Dhammaramsi, Belgium and taught Metta Sutta & Káyagatásati Sutta during the retreat.

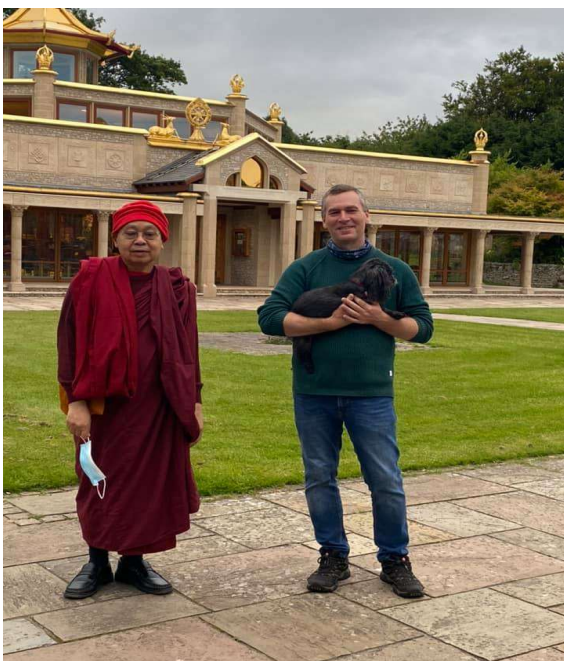
Vipasana Retreat (4th to 13th November 2021)

Dr Ottara Nyana led ten days online Vipasana retreat at Dhammaramsi in Belgium. Abhidhamma (7 Visddhi) and Ánapánasati Sutta were taught from practical point of view during the meditation retreat.



Visit to Buddhist Temple for World Peace at Ulverston, Cumbria. (August 2021)

Ven. Dr Ottara Nyana visited the World Peace Pagoda at Ulverston, Cumbria near Lake District in August 2021 on his way to a house-warming ceremony at Dr Myat Soe Aung and Dr Thi Thi Oo's home.



Birmingham Buddhist Academy Course

Dr Ottaranyana is a director and principal of Birmingham Buddhist Academy. He is leading the Master Buddhist Study course which started on 17th September 2021. Classes are running weekly on Friday and Saturday from 7pm to 9pm on Skype. Students are learning Pali Gramma, Abhidhamma, Meditation (both Samatha & Vipassana). Student will complete their assessment in May, 2023. Certificate award ceremony usually held during summer (Peace Pagoda Anniversary). Further information about the course can be found at:

<http://www.birminghambuddhistvihara.org/about/>

Dr Nagaseana's Activities

Bhante Nagasena has been working on Lotus Education Children Education Project inside and outside the UK for many years. He went to work in the field, a remote hilly mountainous region of Chittagong Hill Tracts during the summer months. He generally visits the fieldwork area once in a year to manage the project physically and academically. He trains teachers and novices there with the principle of wisdom and compassion.

He also went to participate at a few Kathina ceremonies in Paris, France in November 2021. He was a chief guest speakers at Moitry Buddhist Association and Buddhagaya Pragya meditation centre where he also managed to raise funds for the Lotus Children Education Trust.



At the Vihara, he runs Zoom meditation class on every Monday at 7pm-8:30pm apart from looking after regular visitors to the vihara and assist Dr Ottaranyana to run the Buddhist academy classes during the weekend. As school classes have recently started again in the UK, Nagasena Bhante and Dr Maung Maung Kyi (Max) are routinely looking after the school visits to the Vihara regularly!

Vihara News

Spiritual Director Dr Ottaranyana

Events and Donations

Birmingham Buddhist Vihara and the Birmingham Buddhist Vihara Trust are grateful for the generous donations made by the devotees. **Sadhu, Sadhu, Sadhu Donors**

- Our Patron and a regular donor of many Buddhist Viharas and organisations in the UK, and who wholly with the Intention of Propagation, Long Sustainability and Promotion of the teaching of Buddha's Dhamma, Dr Kyaw Oo and Daw Ywe Ywe's family donated **£3000** to Birmingham Buddhist Vihara, £2000 to Lotus Children Education's Trust and many other organisations, to mark 41st anniversary of passing away of Daw Hninsi, the mother of Daw Ywe Ywe and the second mother of Dr Kyaw Oo on 15th October 2021
- 17/12/2020 Drs Swe Lin & Thin Zar Min Kenwood Dishwasher
- 24/07/2021 Ko Billy and Friends 55inch TV Screen, Hot water dispenser, Gordon Paget, Wooden Chair
- 10/9/2021 Omar Zaw - Wooden Chair
- Drs Aung Min & Theingi Min - Battery operated hedge cutter

Pagoda Anniversary & Degree Congregations (25th July 2021)

Birmingham Buddhist Vihara Pagoda Anniversary, Waso Robe Offering and Birmingham Buddhist Academy Degree Congregations was held successfully at Birmingham Buddhist Vihara on Sunday 25th July 2021. Congratulations to all Graduates. We are grateful to all Dhamma friends who offered food dana and Waso Robes. Credit is also due to all who participated on the day of the event and last but not the least, a big thank you to everyone for your help making this day happen.



Abhidhamma & Pavarana (20th October 2021)

This is the Day Buddhist monks end their three months retreat. Retreat starts on Dhamma Day, which is the full moon day of July and ends on Abhidhamma day, the full moon day of October every year. Devotees and Sangha lit candle lights around the Pagoda and chanted Pathana for World Peace and those who are affected by the pandemic! We dedicated the recitation to all beings. May all beings be happy and peaceful!



KATHINA ROBE OFFERING CEREMONY

On 24th October 2021, the Kathina ceremony was held on Zoom, the video conferencing platform. As the COVID-19 infection rates were still very high it was the only prudent way to perform the ceremony. Kathina robe donations were acknowledged on social media. Thank you all for your participation. Kathina Ceremony in 2022 should hopefully return to the usual format with our devotees joining the ceremony in person.

Footsteps Interfaith Spring Walk on the 24th May.

The walk that started from Birmingham Buddhist Vihara to Edgbaston Reservoir and back was arranged by Ruth Tetlow (Footsteps) and led by Tahir Pavaz of Active Wellbeing Society. Ven. Ottara Nyana gave a short talk to the group afterwards.

Vihara Garden Maintenance

The wedding party from London stayed overnight in Birmingham to do garden work by trimming the fence around the Dhamma Talaka Pagoda on 24th Oct 2021. They have volunteered their services every year. Birmingham Buddhist Vihara Trust would like to thank them all for their commitment and contribution. Their hard work is very much appreciated. The Zen Group also carried on with garden maintenance in the summer.



Wedding Ceremony

On 23rd October 2021, Ko The Hun Myo Min and Ma Su Lei Thi offered lunch dana, robe and Nava Khamma to Birmingham Sangha in celebration of their wedding. The wedding ceremony was blessed by Ashin Rahtapala.



Birmingham Buddhist Vihara - Birmingham Heritage Week

9th September 2021 - 19th September 2021

<https://birminghamheritageweek.co.uk/10-sept/birmingham-buddhist-vihara/>

Birmingham Heritage Week 2021 opened from 9th to 19th September with varied events, from exhibitions and displays to talks, walks and open days to heritage sites all over the city of Birmingham. It was organised and funded by Birmingham City Council and supported by Birmingham Museums Trust.

Birmingham Buddhist Vihara took part in the event, as we did last year. But we were only open to the public from 12 noon till 5 pm from 11th - 19th September 2021.

We had a good nine days of Birmingham Heritage Week with Ven.Nagasena, Dr.Mar Mar Lwin and

Dr Kyi looked after approx 30-40 visitors per day. The first Sunday 12th September saw 60 visitors. We received very positive comments and emails regarding the open days.

We also received, in time with Ven.Uttaranayan's help, 2000 copies of information leaflets on the Pagoda printed by the Arts Council and Birmingham City Council meant for school visits.

Yann Lovelock's very concise guide to the Dhamma Talaka Peace Pagoda (2006) was also reprinted as an information leaflet. Yann has since revised and re-edited the document.

Both these documents are available on Birmingham Buddhist Vihara's website. The website <http://www.birminghambuddhistvihara.org/> has recently been updated by Ko Wunna into a newer format. We are grateful to Ko Wunna for his efforts.

Last but not the least The Rock of the Vihara!

Ashin Rahtapala acknowledged all dana towards the Birmingham Buddhist Vihara Trust on social media with beautiful pictures to inform all devotees with the latest activities at the Vihara. Bhante kept a social media diary of the donors together with his best wishes and blessings. We are all thankful for his IT skills. Ashin Rahtapala still looks after the grounds, both the security and the garden. This year he planted special vegetables. Sangha and devotees enjoyed fresh vegetables from the garden.



And Bhante often broadcast Vihara special events through social media. Covid-19 changed the world. Everything is online now a day. Devotees are up to date with daily activities of Vihara on social media. Thanks for your time and effort Bhante. Please continue to update us.

2565 BE/2022 EVENTS CALENDAR

BIRMINGHAM BUDDHIST VIHARA - DHAMMATALAKA PEACE PAGODA- BIRMINGHAM BUDDHIST ACADEMY

FESTIVALS

Buddha Day (Visaka)
Sunday 15th May 10:30am

Dhammacakka Day & Pagoda Anniversary
Sunday, 10th July 10:30am

Abhidhamma & Pavarana Day
Wednesday 9th Oct. 7:00pm

Kathina
Sunday, 16th October 10:30am

FULL MOON

Chanting in the Pagoda at 7:30pm except on festival days.

16th Jan, 15th Feb, 16th March, 15th April,
14th May, 13th June, 12th July, 11th Aug, 6th
Sep, 9th Oct, 7th Nov, 7th Dec

RETREATS

Easter Retreat
Friday 15th April – Monday 18th April 2022
Led by Dr Ottara Nyana

10-DAY Insight Retreat
Friday 19th Aug – Sunday 28th Aug
(experienced)
Led by Dr Ottara Nyana
Designed to enable meditators to experience the characteristic of impermanence and nature of non-selfhood as part of the process of insight meditation.

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR RETREAT SCHOOL VISITS

25th – 31st Dec (suitable for all)
New year patthana chanting every year 6pm – 8pm new year day.
Contact : Dr Nagasana
Email : uk.suriya@gmail.com

SCHOOL VISIT FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The number of school visits to the Pagoda is rising year on year and continues to provide students with invaluable experience to hear about the Buddha and his teachings and to meet Buddhist monks. For a school visit please contact:

Contact : Dr Nagasana
Email : uk.suriya@gmail.com;
Maxkyi@gmail.com

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY CLASSES

from 1pm - 3pm
Every Sunday except when it falls on Christmas Day and New Year's Day.
Suitable for 5 + years, but all welcome with or without children.

SUMMER COURSE FOR CHILDREN (10th to 14th Aug 2022)

Please bring your children to the Vihara to stay here and learn about Buddhism. This five day course will include a Buddhist film as well as enjoyable teachings. Accommodation will be available in our Vihara and we look forward to our children's course. If you want to train your children with novice ordination, you are welcome to book with us during these children days.

For details please contact Dr Nagasana:
uk.suriya@gmail.com

MEDITATION CLASSES

Beginners: Thurs. 7:30pm
Advanced: Mon. 7:30pm

Weekly public meditation on every Monday at 7pm -8:30pm by Zoom

You are welcome to join us Zoom mindfulness meditation, a guided meditation, on every Monday at 7pm, that started from Monday 4th January! Meditation itself will last about one hour. After the meditation there will be a brief discussion session on meditation techniques, sharing experiences, questions and answers!

But you don't need to stay for discussion if you are not free! Discussion will depend on the interest of the attendees. Or it may be just a brief talk of about 15 minutes!

The class will run by *Venerable Nagasena Bhikkhu*
Meeting ID: 889 2649 2110
Passcode: 318805
Medium : - English suitable for everyone:

PAGODA OPENING

Summer 9am – 6pm
Winter 9am – 5pm

The Pagoda is open most days but to avoid disappointment **please call or e-mail first** to ensure there will be someone available to welcome you and show you around.

Phone: 0121 454 6591 or
email: venuttaranyana@gmail.com
For school visit contact: uk.suriya@gmail.com