



Venerable Dr. Khammai Dhammasami

MA, AM, MPhil (BPU & Kelanaiya), DPhil (Oxford)

Venerable Dr. Khammai Dhammasami is a Theravada Buddhist monk-scholar from Oxford, Great Britain. He is now involved in teaching and research in Buddhist Studies at University of Oxford where he received his doctor of philosophy in Buddhist Studies. From 2009, he starts teaching some tutorials and giving weekly lectures. He also teaches Pali and meditation at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London where he is a research associate. Outside Britain, he holds professorship at International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University, Yangon, Myanmar and is Distinguished Professor at the Postgraduate Institute for Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. He is also a visiting lecturer in Indonesia, India and Thailand.

Apart from his university teaching, he offers Buddhist teaching and vipassana meditation regularly to the public since 1993 in Sri Lanka, Britain, Canada, USA, Singapore, Malaysia, Myanmar, Korea, Hungary, Spain and Thailand. He has set up two temples, one in Oxford and the other in Singapore. He also helps develop a temple set up by the

famous forest meditation master, the Venerable Phra Khruva Boonchum Nyanasamvaro in Buddhagaya, India.

Since 2005, at the invitation of the Most Ven. Professor Dr.PhraDharmakosajarn, Rector of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, he has also been very active in international Buddhist organisations. He has served as assistant secretary, general secretary and vice chairman of the International Council for the United Nations Day of Vesak. He has been the main thinker and coordinator of the two Buddhist universities groupings: the International Association of Buddhist Universities (IABU) and the Association of Theravada Buddhist Universities (ATBU). He serves as the Executive Secretary in both associations.

Born into a Tai-yai (Shan) family in Shan State, the union of Myanmar, he has learned from and has close connection with the senior members of the Sangha in Shan State, Mon State and other parts of the country in the Union of Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Below is his brief biography.

Positions

- Fellow & trustee, Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies, University of Oxford, UK. (2009 Sept-present)
- Research Member of Common Room, Wolfson College, University of Oxford. (2009-present)
- Associate Faculty Member, Theology Faculty, University of Oxford. (2009- present)
- Research Associate, Centre for Buddhist Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. (2008 - 2010)
- Visiting lecturer, Mahachulalongkorn Buddhist University, Bangkok. (2007 – present)
- Visiting professor and Director of Postgraduate Programme for Buddhist Studies, MahaPragna Buddhist College, Indonesia. (2007 – present)

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- Member, The Oxfordshire Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education, SACRE. (2006 - present)
- Professor, International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University, Yangon, Myanmar. (2006 – present)
- Trustee, Oxford Mindfulness Centre, OMC, Department of Psychiatry, University of Oxford, UK. (2008 - present) (OMC runs a research on Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy, MBCT, using Buddhist meditation to cure patients of depression with relapses history.)
- Founder - Abbot, the Oxford Buddha Vihara, Nos. 356-358, Abingdon Road, Oxford OX1 4TQ, UK. (2003 – present)
- Founder/Executive Secretary, The International Association of Buddhist Universities (2007 - present) (www.iabu.org).
- Founder/Executive Secretary, The Association of Theravada Buddhist Universities (2007- present) (www.atbu.org).
- Executive Member, International Council for United Nations Day of Vesak. (2009-2010); involving in academic matters, compilation of a common Buddhist text for hotels worldwide and general coordination.

Education

- **2004 – DPhil:** St. Anne's College, University of Oxford, UK. Thesis: *Idealism and Pragmatism: A Study of Monastic Education in Burma and Thailand from the 17th Century to the Present* under the supervision of Prof. Richard Gombrich, then Boden Professor of Sanskrit.
- **1996 – MPhil:** Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. Thesis: *Critical Edition of the Aheggusara-dipani-tika* under the supervision by Prof. GalmangodaSumanapala, now Director at the institute. Examiners: Ven. Prof. Kuala Lumpur Dhammajoti and Dr. Aloysius Pieries.
- **1993 – MA:** Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. Thesis: *Is Sunyata Middle Path?* under the supervision of Prof. S.G.M Weerasinghe.
- **1992 – MA:** Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka, Colombo.

- **1985 - Dhammacariya** (BA in Buddhist scriptures) SasanaMandaingPali University, Pegu (Hamsavati), Burma.
- **1985 – Dhammacariya** (BA in Buddhist scriptures) in Tai-yai medium, The Shan State PariyattiSaddhammapala Examination Board, Panglong, Shan State, the Union of Myanmar.

Experience

- **2010- present:** co-supervisor for Ven. K. Dhammadina for his MPhil thesis on Survanabhumi and Buddhism in Malaysia at the Postgraduate of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka.
- **2009 Oct:** Co-organizer (with Ven. Dr. Anil Sugandho) of a Pali conference to mark the 96th Birthday of the Thai Sangharaja. All the 34 papers were delivered in Pali. Scholars from six nations gave papers.
- **2009 Sep - present:** teaching two courses: Buddhism I & Buddhism II for the Faculty of Theology, University of Oxford.
- **2009 May:** Helped Maha Pragna Buddhist College, Jakarta, Indonesia to gain government approval for its MA course in Buddhist Studies. The rules require a course to be run by three PhD and two MA degree holders in the same subject. Indonesia so far has no PhD holders in Buddhism. Now, serving as Director of Postgraduate Programme in Buddhist Studies there.
- **2009 Mar–Apr:** Chairman, of a plenary session at the Second World Buddhist Forum, Wuxi, China.
- **2009 Mar:** Principal organiser, the conference of the Association of Theravada Buddhist Universities (on *Theravada Buddhism: origin, identity and development*), Sagaing, Myanmar. Proposed and personally organised a panel in which Pali was used as the medium for the first time in an international conference. 16 Pali papers from seven countries were presented and all the proceedings were jointly published by Mahamakut Buddhist University of Bangkok and Sitagu International Buddhist Academy, Sagaing.
- **2008 Jan:** Taught one week course on writing and reading for research students at Mahachulalongkorn Buddhist University, Bangkok.

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- **2008-2009:** Joint supervisor (with Ven. Prof. Dr. Phra Dharmakosajarn, Rector) of two MA theses (a) *the influence of Buddhism on Indonesian culture* by Venerable Upaseno of Indonesia and (b) *Buddhist Mind Philosophy* by Ven. S. Barua of Bangladesh at Mahachulalongkorn University, Bangkok.
- **2008 Sep:** Organized the first Summit and Conference of the International Association of Buddhist Universities, IABU, sponsored by the Royal Government of Thailand at Mahachulalongkorn Buddhist University, Bangkok. Vice Chancellor of Kelaniya University, Prof. Wijeratne, was invited as a keynote speaker.
- **2008 May:** Vice-Chairman, United Nations Day of Vesak celebrations, Hanoi, Vietnam; moderating the academic panel on Buddhist education.
- **2006 – 2008:** Supervisor of two PhD theses on Theravada kathina practice and ordination practice in Myanmar by Ven. Parami and Ven. Acara at International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University, an English medium institution run by the government.
- **2007 Dec:** Co-organiser (with Dr. Kate Crosby, also with MA at University of Kelaniya and DPhil at Oxford) of the first conference in the West on Shan Buddhism and culture at SOAS, University of London. The proceedings have been published by Routledge, London in the *Journal of contemporary Buddhism*, May 2009.
- **2007 Feb:** Taught at Nalanda Mahavihar (Deemed University), Bihar, India a one week course on introduction to research: *efficient reading and effective writing in research*, imparting essential knowledge on efficient reading and effective writing at the doctorate level that the author learnt for two years from specialists Dr. Margaret Charles and Mr Jonathan Higgins of the Department of English at University of Oxford.
- **2007 March:** to mark 2550 Years of Mahaparinibbana, in March 2007, also as Secretary General, the International Council for the United Nations Day of Vesak persuaded the government and two Sangha universities in Myanmar to hold the first ever meeting of 20 Theravada colleges and universities from ten nations. The meeting successfully founded a separate body for Theravada higher institutions, The Association of Theravada Buddhist Universities, ATBU, www.atbu.org.
- **2007 May:** Based on personal research from 2006, and as Secretary General, the International Council for the United Nations Day of Vesak brought together more than seventy Buddhist colleges and

universities, including University of Kelaniya, from around the world for the first symposium of Buddhist higher institutions and then successfully formed The International Association of Buddhist Universities, IABU. www.iabu.org. Senior Prof. GalmangodaSumanapala, Director of Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya became an EXCO member. Since their formation, working as the Executive Secretary to strengthen the networking between higher Buddhist institutions in both Mahayana and Theravada nations as well as with secular universities with Buddhist studies from around the world.

- **2007 – present:** external supervisor (internal supervisor: Prof. S.G. Somaratne) on a doctoral thesis *History of Shan Buddhism* from 1,300 to 1,500 AD by Ven. SenghurngNarinda at PeradeniyaUnviersity, Peradeniya, Sri Lanka.
- **2007 – present:** co-supervisors (with Dr.WasanthaPriyadarshana) on two doctoral theses *A Historical and Cultural Study of Budhdism on the Inhabitants of Arakan State* by Venerable AshinNyanuttara and *A Study of The History of Theravada Buddhism in Burma from the Pagan Period to the Konbaung Period, 10th – 19th Century AD* by Venerable AshinKaccayana of Postgraduate institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka.
- **2006:** Researching on new Buddhist higher institutions in the world; introduced some new Buddhist higher institutions to other Buddhist universities. They include ten Buddhist colleges from Indonesia; Dharma Gate Buddhist College in Budapest recognised by the government of Hungary in central Europe; Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarnath, India and some Buddhist colleges from China.
- **2006, 2007 & 2009:** Secretary General, the International Council for the United Nations Day of Vesak, Bangkok.
- **2006-present:** Professor responsible for research, publication in Pali, and international affairs, International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University, Yangon, Myanmar.
- **2005-present:** Trustee, Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies, University of Oxford, UK.
- **2005:** Assistant Secretary General, the International Council for the United Nations Day of Vesak, Bangkok. (Responsible for international relations and Buddhist education)
- **1996-2001:** Principal, Sunday School and meditation teacher at Sri Saddhatissa International Buddhist Centre, London, UK.

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- **1992-1996:** Taught the Majjhima-nikaya and the Vinaya-pitaka to a group of mature students at YMBA, Borella, Colombo.
- **1985-86:** Lecturer in Pali&Abhidhamma, SasanaMandaingPali University, Pegu, Myanmar.

Translation

- From Thai to English: PhraSasanasobhon (Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara, Supreme Patriarch of Thailand (2009) *Mind-city: the capital of the world*. Bangkok: Romdhamma Publishing.
- From Pali to Shan: *The Sutta-nipata*. (ongoing) Two suttas have been published in *Ceylon Journey* (2007-8), an annual journal published in Yangon by students studying in Colombo. Yangon: Aye Press.

Editorial Work

- **2000 – present:** Chief-Editor, *Ceylon Journey*, an annual magazine in Buddhist Studies in the Tai-yai language produced by Tai-yai monks educated in Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon).
- **2006-present:** Member, Editorial Committee, *Buddhist Studies Review*, United Kingdom Association of Buddhist Studies, UKABS, Journal, UK.
- **2008-present:** Editor, Journal of The Association of Theravada Buddhist Universities, ATBU, Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, Bangkok.
- **2008-present:** Editor, Journal of The International Association of Buddhist Universities, IABU, Mahchulalongkorn Buddhist University Press, Bangkok.

Selected Academic Papers

- **2009 Sep:** A Pali conference in honour of H.H The Thai Sangharaja at Mahamakut Buddhist University, Bangkok (paper in Pali: *Cittanagaramlokassarajadhani*).

- **2008 Feb:** Somaiya Centre for Buddhist Studies, University of Mumbai, India (a special address: *The uncomfortable relationship between the Sangha and the State in Myanmar in the 17th to 19th centuries*).
- **2007 Dec:** Shan Buddhism and Culture Conference, SOAS, University of London (paper: *Growing but as a sideline: An overview of modern Shan monastic education*.)
- **2007 Jul:** UKABS Annual Conference, St. Anne's College, Oxford (paper: *Opportunities and challenges in Buddhist institutions of higher education in the world*).
- **2007 Apr:** The Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies Conference on Buddhist Biography, Balliol College, Oxford (paper: *Seeing myself as another person: The autobiography of a Burmese monastic thinker of the 20th century*).
- **2005 Jul:** 14th International Association of Buddhist Studies conference, SOAS, University of London (paper: *The Shan Buddhist Literature: A Preliminary Study of its Source*).
- **2004 May:** Conference on Burmese Buddhism and the Spirit Cult Revisited, Stanford University, USA (paper: *Idealism and Pragmatism: A Dilemma in the Current Monastic Education Systems of Burma and Thailand*).
- **2003 Jul:** The UK Association of Buddhist Studies (UKABS) Annual Conference, SOAS, University of London, UK (paper: *Swimming against the Tide: A brief introduction to the life and thought of two leading monastic educationists in Burma and Thailand*).
- **2003 May:** Sanskrit Tradition in the Modern World Conference, Newcastle University, UK (Paper: *Secularising the Monasteries: The Role of Formal Examinations in Ecclesiastical Pedagogy in Burma and Thailand*).
- **2003 Mar:** Association for Asian Studies (USA), NY, USA (paper: *Ecclesiastical Examinations: Their origin and impact on the Sangha in Burma and Thailand*).
- **2002 Dec:** 13th International Association of Buddhist Studies conference, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand (paper: *The Sangha in Burma and Thailand, 1826-1880: A review of factors leading to the emergence of contemporary nikayas*).

Selected Publications in English

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- **(Forthcoming, 2010):** *Idealism and Pragmatism: A Study of Monastic Education in Burma and Thailand from the 17th Century to the Present*. (Doctoral thesis). Boston: Wisdom Publications.
- **2009** - "Seeing myself as another person. The autobiography of a Burmese monastic thinker of the 20th century" *Lives Lived - Lives Imagined: Biography in the Buddhist Traditions*, ed. Ulrike Roesler, Boston: Wisdom Publications.
- **2009 May:** "Growing but as a sideline: An Overview of modern Shan monastic education" in *Contemporary Buddhism* Vol. 10, No. 1, eds. Andrew Skiltons, Kate Crosby, Jotika Khuryearn and Khammai Dhammasami. London: Routledge.
- **2009 Mar:** "Swimming against the Tide: A glance at the life of two most influential educationist-monks in the 20th century Myanmar and Thailand" in *The Journal of The Association of Theravada Buddhist Universities*, ed. Khammai Dhammasami. Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press.
- **2008:** "The Impact of Political Instability on the Education of the Sangha in 17th Century Siam" in *The Journal of The International Association of Buddhist Universities*, ed. Khammai Dhammasami. Bangkok: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University Press.
- **2007:** "Idealism and Pragmatism: A Dilemma in the Current Monastic Education Systems of Burma and Thailand" in *Buddhism, Power and Political Order*/ ed. Ian Harris. London: Routledge.
- **2007:** "Internationalisation and Revival: Theravada Buddhist Universities in the past twenty-five years" in *The Silver Jubilee Journal of Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka*, Colombo.
- **2005:** "Buddhism in Britain" in *2005 United Nations Day of Vesak International Conference Volume*. Bangkok: Mahachulalongkorn Buddhist University Press.
- **2003:** "Can a Buddhist be a wealthy man" in *Sharp Journal for School Teachers of Religions in the UK*.
- **2000:** *Different Aspects of Mindfulness*. Penang, Inward Path Publication.
- **1999:** *Mindfulness Meditation Made Easy*. Penang, Inward Path Publication. Reprinted four times and translated into Korean and Thai.
- **1999:** *The Dhamma Made Easy*. Penang, Inward Path Publication.

Some of the Meditation Retreats Conducted

- **2009 Nov:** one-week retreat at the Young Buddhist Association of Thailand, No. 54, Phetkasem Road, Bangkok, Thailand.
- **2008 Oct:** one-week retreat, Hungarian Vipassana Association, Budapest, Hungary.
- **2007 Aug:** eight-day retreat, near Lake Balaton, organized by Hungarian Vipassana Association, Budapest, Hungary.
- **2004 Feb:** one-day retreat for students, Trinity College, University of Cambridge and organised by Cambridge University Buddhist Society.
- **2003 Mar:** weekend retreats at the Burmese Viharas in Chicago and Phoenix, USA.
- **2002 Dec:** six-day retreat for university students, Seoul, Korea.
- **2000 Jun-Aug:** ten-weekly meditation classes, Redbridge Buddhist Cultural Centre, East London.
- **1999 May:** six-day retreat, Ottawa, Canada.
- **1999 May:** ten-day retreat, in a Chinese temple, Ava Road, Off Balestier Road, Singapore.
- **1999 Mar:** ten-day vipassana retreat, Cameroon Highlands, Malaysia.
- **1998 Aug:** six-day vipassana retreat at Dr. K. Thinn's residence, Birmingham, UK.
- **1998 May:** eight-day vipassana retreat, Sri Lankaramaya, St. Michael's Road, Singapore.
- **1998 Apr:** five-day retreat, at the Samatha Trust Meditation Centre, Wales, UK.
- **1996-2000:** Tuesday meditation class at the Sri Saddhatissa International Buddhist Centre, Kingsbury Road, London.

Receiving offering from Thai
Ambassador in London. 5/12/2009.