



# The Buddhist Chaplaincy Support Group

*Kalyāna Mitra*



*“Ananda, loving friendliness is not a half of the holy life but the whole of the holy life” N5 magga*

## BUDDHIST CHAPLAINCY TRAINING COURSE HANDBOOK



The Buddhist Chaplaincy Support Group (BCSG)  
Wellington Barracks, Birdcage Walk, London SW1E 6HQ  
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### **What is Chaplaincy?**

A chaplain, working within a public body or institution, offers pastoral, spiritual or religious care to others who are suffering or struggling with life. In Europe and America support for those in need has, until recently, been provided by Christian chaplains; in a changing world places like hospitals, places of education and emergency services now call on all major world faith communities to be available for those with pastoral, spiritual or religious needs.

### **Chaplaincy Training**

Chaplaincy training sets out to explore what the work of a chaplain involves, looked at from the point of view of Buddhist teachings and practices. Support and supervision is welcomed by those setting out to develop the skills and competencies that a chaplain can draw upon. Compassion underpins much of the work of caring for others and is central to awakening the wish to end suffering in all beings. There are times when a chaplain's inner strength and courage are required to reach out and offer kindness to others in dark and difficult places. Training give you a taste of and prepares for this challenge.

### **Generosity**

The majority of Buddhist Chaplains see offering their services, to those of all faith or none, as part of their Buddhist practice – developing the generosity in their hearts as they work as volunteers. From his actions, Buddha showed how generosity is the foundation of a true spiritual friendship (Kalyāna Mitra); emphasis on the value and merit of giving (dāna) is made throughout the teachings.

### **Chaplaincy Training Course costs**

Training, support and supervision are provided through the Buddhist Chaplaincy Support Group (BCSG), who manage the programme offered to the Buddhist community. Inevitably BCSG incurs costs for administration, publicity, room hire and staffing. For this reason there is a basic charge for attending training courses of £300 for 7 sessions.

### **Donations**

BCSG welcomes donations, however large or small, and standing order arrangements exist (including Gift Aiding). A form for donors is included on the back page of this handbook.

### **Sponsorship**

Every attempt is made to keep costs down for those attending chaplaincy training or support sessions and the real running costs are currently met through additional sponsorship from the Buddhist Society, who provide seed funding to enable these training programmes to run.

We are now asking all of the Buddhist community – temples, groups and individuals – to consider providing sponsorship to help further establish this real and valuable service to the community.

You can sponsor an individual student or offer sponsorship for the whole project. Please contact [hogetsu@baerndal.eu](mailto:hogetsu@baerndal.eu) for further information.



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### INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHIST CHAPLAINCY TRAINING COURSE

#### Summary of Course Aims

- The course is open to any person interesting practising Buddhist Chaplaincy in any of a number of public contexts (Hospitals, Hospices, Armed Forces, Schools, and Colleges etc.)
- Members of the training group do not have to be serving chaplains, an interest in working for the benefit of others is sufficient.
- You will be encouraged, where possible, to seek opportunities to work as a volunteer.
- The practice of Buddhist Chaplaincy included in the course is, where possible, underpinned by a faith-informed approach to the work.
- A broad-based approach to Buddhism is intended in order to include individuals from the wide diversity of Buddhist schools and groups available in the UK.
- Attendance at this programme does not guarantee endorsement as a chaplain, but the training may be used as part of an application for endorsement.
- Bursaries are available for people who are already involved in chaplaincy related work and are on low income

### COURSE CONTENT

The themes for the meetings are drawn from the document ‘Developing a Healthcare Chaplains’ Capabilities and Competencies’ (produced by South East Strategic Health Authority) and are intended to be equally relevant to all areas of chaplaincy.

#### Session 1 – Spiritual assessment and intervention (9.2.1)

- He gives what is difficult to give (duddadam dadāti)

The chaplain, in partnership with the individual and the healthcare team, assesses the spiritual needs and resources of the individual and their family/carers and responds with interventions which can include referral to other internal and external care providers.

#### Key content:

Literature relating to needs, especially spiritual needs

Knowledge of internal and external sources of spiritual support

Local and national directory of sources of spiritual support (KSF C1, 6; HWB2, 4, 6, 7; IK1, 2)

#### Competencies:

Assess spiritual needs and resources of individuals

Respond to assessment with spiritual care

Respond to assessment in cases of divergent beliefs

Facilitate spiritual care suitable for any belief group

Facilitate referrals to other forms of spiritual care

Protect individuals from unwanted visits  
Record assessments



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### **Session 2 – Religious assessment and intervention (9.2.2)**

- He does what is difficult to do (dukkaram karoti)

The chaplain/spiritual care giver, in partnership with the individual and the healthcare team, assesses the religious needs and resources of the individual and his or her family/carers and responds with interventions which can include referral to a faith community or belief group representative.

#### **Key content:**

National and local manuals for spiritual and religious care

Knowledge of belief groups and faith communities and the different denominations and strains of thought within them

Knowledge of religious rites and practices

Directories of local and national faith community and belief group representatives (KSF C1, 6; HWB2, 3, 4, 6, 7; IK1, 2)

#### **Competencies:**

Assess religious needs of individuals

Respond either through own faith tradition or facilitate through another

Facilitate suitable resources for religious observance of any faith

Protect individuals from unwanted visits Record religious interventions

### **Session 3 – Practicing ethically (9.1.2)**

- He patiently endures what is difficult to endure (dukkhamam khamati)

The chaplain maintains and develops his or her knowledge of culture, diversity, ethical, professional and legal theory and frameworks. This knowledge is used to support interactions with individuals using spiritual care services.

#### **Key content:**

Professional code of conduct

Literature on ethical theory

Literature on ethical issues, e.g. informed consent, decision making, culture and diversity, duty of care, ethics and legalities (KSF C6; HWB4; IK3)

#### **Competencies:**

Understand and apply ethical principles

Differentiate personal beliefs from healthcare ethics

Provide ethical, pastoral and theological resource to individuals and the organisation



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### **Session 4 – Communication skills (9.1.3)**

- He reveals his own secrets (guyha-massa avikaroti)

The chaplain maintains and develops the communication skills necessary for the spiritual and religious care of individuals and groups.

#### **Key content:**

Communication skills theory

Communication skills education and training

Literature on counselling, pastoral care, or listening skills (KSF C1; HWB2, 6)

#### **Competencies:**

Use communication skills to provide pastoral care to individuals

Identify language needs and access interpreting services

Communicate with individuals on complex matters

Contribute to inter professional communication

Maintain confidentiality and obtain informed consent

### **Session 5 – Team working (9.3.1)**

- He keeps one’s secrets (guyha-massa pariguyhati)

The chaplain/ spiritual care giver recognises and works to promote the place of spiritual care within the spiritual care team, local multidisciplinary teams and the wider healthcare team.

#### **Key content:**

Understanding of local spiritual care team, multidisciplinary teams and the wider healthcare team; Knowledge of teams, groups and team building

Understanding of communication within teams and team dynamics (KSF C1, 3, 4, 5)

#### **Competencies:**

Practice with agreed protocols

Contribute to multi-disciplinary working

Understand dynamics within teams

### **Session 6 – Reflective practice (9.4.1)**

- He does not abandon one in misfortune (āpadāsu na-jahati)

As part of the process of continuing professional development the chaplain/ spiritual care giver demonstrates the ability to reflect upon practice in order to develop and inform his or her practice.

#### **Key content:**

Methods and models of reflective practice

Professionalism and therapeutic boundaries

Developing self-awareness and practice (KSF C2; G1, 5, 6)

#### **Competencies:**

Understand different models of reflective practice

Use a structured method of reflective practice for case material



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Use a structured method of reflective practice for therapeutic relationships  
Facilitate reflective practice for others  
Discuss the limits of own capabilities and competencies to develop practice

### **Session 7 – Personal spiritual development (9.4.2)**

- He does not despise one because of one’s loss (khinena na-atimaññati)  
The chaplain/spiritual care giver reflects theologically or philosophically on his or her professional practice.

#### **Key content:**

Spiritual and religious literature  
Working with a spiritual director  
The use of praxis, or theologically informed practice  
The use of meditation  
Retreat or pilgrimage

Literature related to personal development (KSF C2, 6)

#### **Competencies:**

Keep informed of theological developments relevant to chaplaincy  
Integrate personal beliefs and external experiences  
Maintain the discipline expected within the chaplain’s own faith community  
Acknowledge and work to proper boundaries  
Maintain proper and reasonable personal self-care

## **CHAPLAINCY QUALIFICATIONS**

Attendance at the Introductory Buddhist Chaplaincy Course (through attending at least 6 out of the 7 sessions) will lead to your receiving a certificate of attendance and participation, jointly signed by **The Buddhist Society** and Buddhist Chaplaincy Support Group, both of whom fully endorse the course and its contents. The Introductory course aims to ensure that you become more aware of what is involved in the work and role of a Buddhist Chaplain.

A follow-up to this course is for those who are starting working or taking up a short-term placement practising as a chaplain within one of many possible public bodies. This course is to help you to produce evidence of reflection on your experiences of practicing Buddhist Chaplaincy, through written work, presentations or in other ways.

These courses are not themselves accredited within a National Qualifications framework, but provide evidence of your suitability to apply for a place on various ‘Beginning Chaplaincy’ courses accredited by universities, such as at St Michael’s College (University of Cardiff)

– see page 85 <http://www.stmichaels.ac.uk/handbook/Chaplaincy/MTh/MTh-Handbook.pdf>.



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### **Buddhist Chaplaincy Support Group Mission Statement**

- Offering support to those engaged with Buddhist Chaplaincy
- Promoting good practice in faith-informed Buddhist Chaplaincy
- Providing training and accreditation opportunities for Buddhist Chaplains

### **Buddhist Chaplaincy Support Group – What we do**

The Buddhist Chaplaincy Support Group (BCSG) is a meeting place for individuals involved with the practice and development of Buddhist Chaplaincy across traditions and within a variety of contexts, including hospitals, hospices, schools, colleges, the Armed Forces, prisons etc.

The spirit of Chaplaincy Support is founded upon the Buddhist teaching on Kalyāna Mitra, the ‘good friend’. When Venerable Ananda tells the Buddha that he considers that half of the Noble Life depended upon friendship he is corrected as the Buddha says ‘not half but the whole of the spiritual life should be based upon friendships and association with good friends’.

The areas that the BCSG is currently addressing are to help better support chaplains focussed on working for the benefit of others. Practically, BCSG is providing some training for those new to chaplaincy and routes towards accreditation are being explored and developed.

The ethos of a learning community is evolving with some interest in contributing towards research in the field of chaplaincy. Fundamentally, the key aims of BCSG are in supporting and encouraging the pursuit of chaplaincy and pastoral care inspired or informed by Buddhist teachings and practice and within a multi-faith environment.

*He gives what is beautiful and hard to give, does what is hard to do, he endures painful, ill-spoken words. His secrets he tells you, he keeps your secrets. When misfortunes strike, he doesn't abandon you. When you're down and out, he doesn't look down on you. A person in whom these traits are found is a friend to be cultivated by anyone wanting a friend. (Bhikkhu Thanissaro translation)*

### **THE SPIRITUAL FRIEND**

The Buddha proclaimed that noble friendship is the single most important requirement for the existence and the development of the spiritual life of a person (S V 2/3).

Friendship is regarded to be ‘a distinctively personal relationship that is grounded in a concern on the path of each friend for the welfare of the other, for the other’s sake and that involves some degree of intimacy’. Because human life is not meant to be pleasant all the time, we need somebody to help us, to take care of us and to talk to particularly when we encounter problems physically and psychologically.

In one instance, a noble friend is defined by the Buddha as one who: (i). Gives what is difficult to give (duddadam dadati), (ii). Does what is difficult to do (dukkaram karoti) and (iii). Bears what is difficult to bear (dukkhamam khamati) (A I: 286). In yet another context, four other qualities have been added to the above three when dealing with a monk possessing the noble qualities expected of a friend i.e. (iv). Confide in the friend his personal matters (guyhamassa avikaroti), (v). Protect what is told in confidence by the friend (guyhamassa



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pariguyhati), (vi). Not abandon the friend when he is in adversity (apadāsu na vijahati), (vii). Not look down upon him, making derogatory remarks (khinena na’atimannati) (A IV: 31).

It is very significant that the Buddha enumerated some distinctive qualities, namely, giving, doing and bearing what is not easy in giving, doing and bearing, which are most difficult things in an association with another fellow. Here the needs to keep secrets in confidence and not abandoning a friend in adversity have been stressed as in the case of the Sigalovada Sutta (D III: 187). Equally or perhaps more important is the quality of not looking down upon others, using derogatory remarks particularly when a mistake has been made.

In Anguttara Nikaya, Buddha explains seven qualities of a monk who is considered to be worthy of association. These qualities are: (i).Pleasant disposition (piyo), (ii). Admirability (garu), (iii). Being worthy of veneration (bhavaniyo), (iv). Being able to speak sensibly (vatta), (v). Being patient in listening (vacanakkhamo), (VI). Being able to attend to serious talk (gambhiram ca katham katta), and (vii). Not applying oneself to useless ends and/or importuning others unreasonably (noc’atthane niyojaye) (A IV: 32). Specifically the Buddha presented a distinctive and extensive categorization of friends in the Sigalovada Sutta (D III: 173-184), presumably also based on the concepts of friendship prevalent in the contemporary society, which concepts are extremely useful for the development of harmonious relationships even in the current society.

***Taken from: Value of Friendship in the Buddhist Perspective by Ven. Wetara Mahinda, Washington Buddhist Vihara June 2013***







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### APPEAL LETTER

Buddhist Chaplaincy in the UK is growing and more public institutions (hospitals, hospices, universities, colleges, Armed Forces etc.) are seeking the involvement of those from across the Buddhist Community who wish to serve and support those struggling with life, health, work or relationships.

The Buddhist Chaplaincy Support Group (BCSG) have for a number of years been running ‘training courses’ (in London, and now in Birmingham) for exploring the Buddha’s teaching of Kalyāna Mitra – the spiritual good friend - as a means of describing and developing the practice, for those of all traditions, of being of service for the benefit of others. We are working with all the Buddhist communities in the UK to develop Buddhist chaplaincy to meet their needs.

The numbers attending ‘Kalyāna Mitra’ courses is growing as more practicing Buddhists are taking up the offer to explore what chaplaincy is and consider what personal qualities it may require. Those attending come from wide and diverse backgrounds in Buddhism and do find the work of chaplaincy rewarding in helping develop their Buddhist practice. Those who are supported by Buddhist Chaplains respond warmly to the compassion and wisdom we can offer.

The BCSG is at a key point in its development with some real opportunities ahead:

- Offering courses in more parts of the country.
- Developing the programme into a three year course.
- Offering these opportunities to all Buddhist communities in the UK.

To enable this vision to come about, the work needs funding. We ask that, if you see this as a worthwhile project, you consider making a donation or taking out a standing order – details of how to do this are explained on the attached ‘Donations Form’. Any payments you make can also be ‘Gift Aided’ if you are a UK tax payer, enabling us to increase your donation by 25%. Please contact Sandu on 07447944665 or [sandu@buddhistchaplaincy.co.uk](mailto:sandu@buddhistchaplaincy.co.uk) if you have any questions about donations.

Any offer of support, however large or small, is greatly appreciated.

May all beings be happy, may all beings be free from all troubles and worries!

Mr. Frederick R Hyde-Chambers OBE (Chairman)

Dr. Sunil Kariyakarawana (Director)

