



The Swedish Buddhist Community
www.sverigesbuddhister.se

5 February 2020

Communiqué to all Buddhist groups

We hope you decide to communicate this to your own members and any other interested people and organisations, in your own language and in whatever way seems best to you. Also, we suggest that if you are approached by any journalists about this matter, you should ask them to speak to the chair of the Swedish Buddhist Community (SBG), Trudy Fredriksson.

Over the last few years, the Swedish tax authority has chosen to make a new kind of tax demand on a number of Buddhist temples. These demands make no sense when we look at what the tax authority has said to us in the past or when we look at how Christian monasteries are treated. The situation represents a threat to the entire Buddhist community here in Sweden. In the case which is currently before the court, the tax authority is seeking to tax Wat Pha Sokjai in Östersund. The tax authority has painted a picture of the temple's activities which does not correspond to reality. It is using that mistaken picture to claim payroll tax from the small community of lay people who worked so hard to make this temple a reality. The temple is under such severe stress from this case that most of the monks have moved out so as not to be a financial burden on the lay community.

We have been helping the temple with the case and we have done our best in the court process so far to make it clear that the tax is not justified. We hoped that the tax authority would have a change of heart once it realised its mistake. But their answer makes it clear that they intend to proceed with their claim.

We now have very little time to act. If we lose, then all Buddhist temples in Sweden are likely to be in the same danger. Some temples would have to close their doors and there would be a general chilling effect on Buddhism in Sweden. This would be a great loss for the society, because the temples are such a stabilising influence for so many people. Other faiths with similar situations and monasteries will also be at risk.

Everything so far in this court battle has been done by Buddhist volunteers, because there was no money to pay for a Swedish lawyer. But when we got the tax agency's answer (on 13 January) we realised that we will probably lose unless we get help from a very good Swedish tax lawyer.

Given the extreme urgency, the volunteers involved in the case, together with Wat Pha Gothenburg and Phra Somsack, the abbot of Wat Pha Denmark, met with a very talented tax lawyer called Johan Myrén on 29 January at Wat Pha Gothenburg. Before the meeting, Mr Myrén witnessed the monks' meal ceremony at the temple in Gothenburg and saw for himself the deep devotion of both the monks and the lay people.

Mr Myrén has decided to accept our case because he believes that we deserve to win and that our best chance of winning is with his help. He has kindly agreed to put a cap on his fees of 350.000kr, including tax. We have already collected promises totalling 130.000kr from a number of temples and we urgently need help with the rest.

What can I do?

All Buddhists and other interested people in Sweden can help!

Please donate today!

Swish or transfer a donation to your own temple. Use "tax case" as the reference. Your temple will forward all donations to SBG, which is acting as the liaison with Mr Myrén.

OR Swish or transfer to SBG direct (Swish number 1233 730 884, plusgiro number 963252-2). Use "tax case" as the reference.

For **international payments** from abroad **to** SBG in Sweden:

IBAN SE04 9500 0099 6018 0963 2522

BIC NDEASESS

To: Sveriges buddhistiska gemenskap

Address: Höglandstorget 10

167 71 Bromma

SWEDEN

If there is any money left after the problem is finally solved, it will be shared out among all the charitable associations who contributed.

We are very grateful for your consideration and help with our action!