



ABHAYAGIRI BUDDHIST MONASTERY

วัดป่าอภัยคีรี

2018







New Beginnings

In October 2017, Abhayagiri narrowly escaped major damage from wildfires that encroached upon the property on three sides. In Spring 2018, the community celebrated the completion of the new reception hall with the largest ceremony in the monastery's history. Most significantly, the community honored decades of service by its abbot, Luang Por Pasanno, who left for a year-long retreat overseas. He will return as the community's Guiding Elder in 2019, leaving the monastery under the active leadership of co-abbots Ajahn Karuṇadhammo and Ajahn Ñāṇiko.



After the Fire

Following the October 2017 fires that almost destroyed the monastery, friends of Abhayagiri, both at home and in Thailand, helped set up a fund for fire clearance and maintenance.

The community worked to expand on existing fire safety measures in and around the property. In addition to hiring the Student Conservation Association and others to help, the monastic community itself spent many months working in the forest to cut and haul dead wood from near monks' huts and to enlarge the defensible space around monastery buildings.

While more remains to be done, the generosity and work of the community and its supporters has helped to make the monastery safer than ever before.









Winter Retreat

The community entered its annual winter retreat with a New Year's Day celebration. For three months, the monks deepened their formal meditation practice by putting aside all work and entering into noble silence.







Celebrations and Farewells

(Opposite) The community interrupted the silence of Winter Retreat to celebrate Songkran, Thai New Year, and Māgha Pūjā, the Buddhist holy day honoring the Sangha.

(Above) After over five years of living with and serving at Abhayagiri, Beth Steff left the monastery to return to her native New Zealand.



To Thailand

Led by Luang Por Pasanno, a group from Abhayagiri attended the hundredth anniversary celebration of Luang Por Chah's birth in Thailand. During the January trip, they paid respects to Thailand's Supreme Patriarch (*opposite*), gave a talk at the Buddhadasa Indapanyo Archive (BIA) in Bangkok (*middle-right*), and visited Ajahn Siripaño at Dtao Dtum, the monastery Luang Por Pasanno founded on the Thai-Burmese border (*lower-right*).





Under the Bodhi Tree

Ajahn Ñāṇiko traveled to India to meditate ten hours each day with Ajahn Achalo under the tree of the Buddha's enlightenment in Bodh Gaya. When he returned to Abhayagiri in late March, he had sat a total of 1080 hours under the Bodhi tree, completing his offering of faith as Ajahn Achalo finished sitting his 3000th hour.







The Practice of Service

From building meditation walking paths to assembling bookshelves for the new library, the Abhayagiri community -- both lay and monastic -- works every day to maintain the monastery as a free refuge of practice and teaching for all who have interest to come.



The Reception Hall

In 2018, Abhayagiri celebrated the completion of its new hall. The result of six years of work and immense generosity, the building features a kitchen, library, new meditation sala, and other facilities. It will serve as a center for monastic and lay activities in years to come.



2013



2014

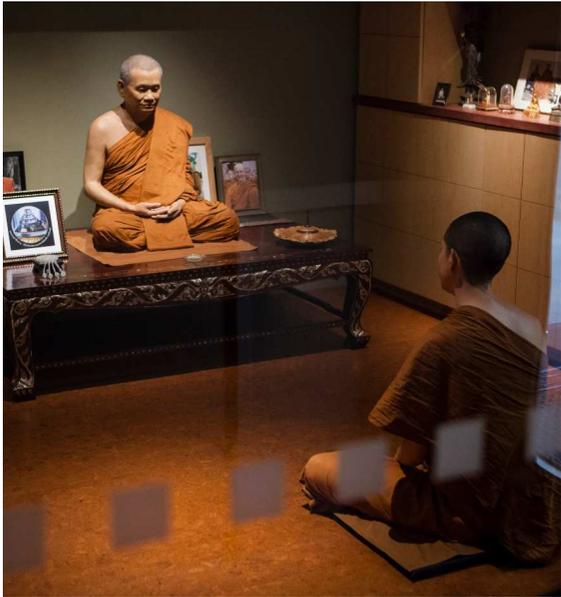


2015



2018









Cloister Progress

The years 2017 and 2018 also involved landscaping and developing the monastery's main cloister area. From tearing down the old house to paving the road, the monastery's work represented the culmination of years of effort and generosity from the wider Abhayagiri community.





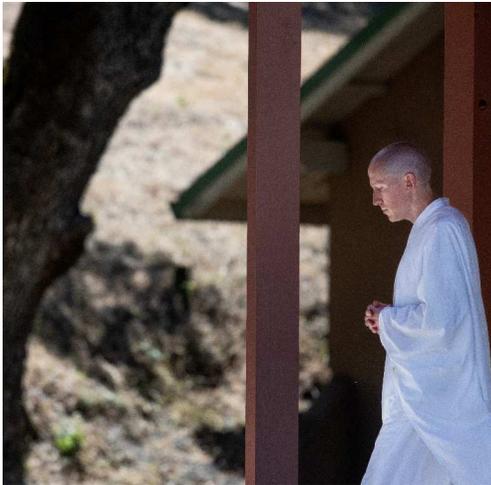




Leaving One Home to Find Another

Limited dwelling space meant that Abhayagiri could only take on a fraction of the unprecedented number of young men who visited the monastery this year with hopes to ordain. The community's four newest members include Anagārikas Jordan, Matt, Danskey, and Nicholas.







Anagārikas Go Forth

(Adjacent) After serving the community for over a year, Anagārikas Gary and Ryan went forth as Sāmaṇeras Rakkhito and Cittapālo in November of 2017.



Welcoming New Bhikkhus

(Opposite) The community gathered to celebrate the full ordination of Tan Guṇavīro and Tan Tissaro. Luang Por Pasanno handed them the robes they sewed as their families look on.





Reception Hall Inauguration

After weeks of preparation, the Abhayagiri community inaugurated the monastery's new Reception Hall and Cloister. Numerous visiting monks and over four-hundred lay people gathered in late June and early July to listen to teachings, meditate, and rejoice at a landmark moment in Abhayagiri's history.



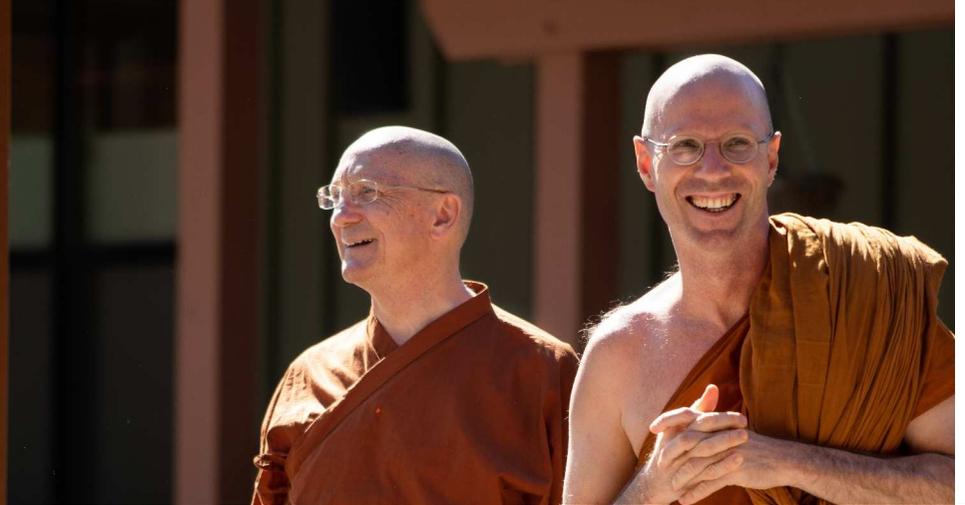


Honoring Our Elders

Luang Por Liem, abbot of Wat Nong Pah Pong and successor to Luang Por Chah traveled from Thailand to join the festivities.

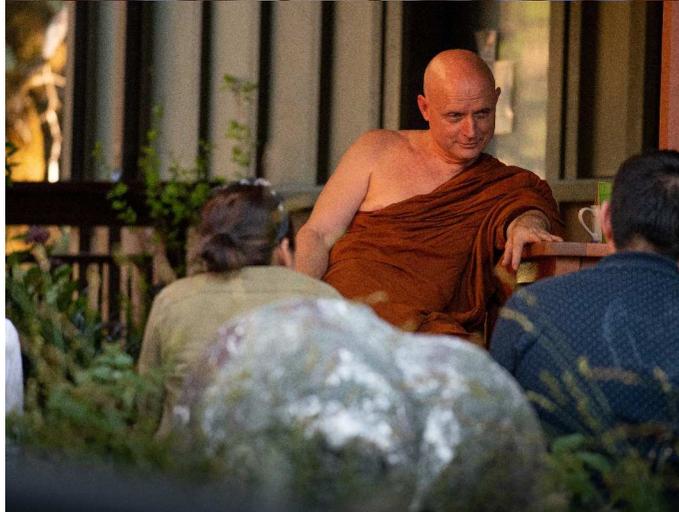
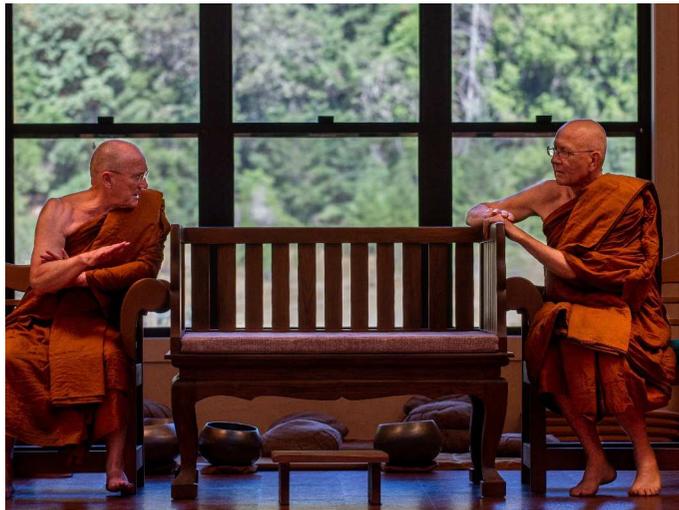
To many present, the celebration also represented an expression of gratitude for Luang Por Pasanno's over twenty years of leadership as he stepped down from his position as the community's acting abbot for a year-long sabbatical overseas.





Gathering with Old Friends

Gathering for celebration were over twenty visiting monastics and senior teachers, including Luang Por Viradhammo, abbot of Tisarana Monastery; Luang Por Jundee, Abbot of Wat Ampawan; Luang Por Sucitto, former abbot of Cittaviveka Monastery; Luang Por Jayasaro, former abbot of Wat Pah Nanachat, Ajahn Sona, abbot of Birken Monastery; Ajahn Kevali, abbot of Wat Pah Nanachat; Ajahn Jayanto, abbot of Temple Monastery; Ajahn Achalo, abbot of Anandagiri Monastery, and others.









Yosemite

Every year at the beginning of September, several members of the Abhayagiri community travel to Yosemite National Park to camp and practice in the wilderness. The cold air serves as a wake-up call to meditate and the mountains as an invitation to walk. Led by Ajahn Ñāṇiko, the group enshrined a small stone chedi of holy objects at the top of Mount Dana.





Luang Por Amaro

Luang Por Amaro came from England to visit the monastery he helped found over twenty years earlier. During his two-week stay, he helped celebrate Abhayagiri's Kathina, gave teachings at City of Ten Thousand Buddhas Monastery and Stanford, and advised the younger monks on how to grow as a community.





Kaṭhina

Following a 2,500-year-old tradition, the laity and monastics gathered at the end of the annual Rains Retreat to offer gifts and celebrate a harmonious community. Luang Por Amaro and Ajahn Jayanto offered teachings while Abhayagiri monks kept the tradition of working together to cut, sew, and dye offered cloth. Before the next dawn, they had made a robe for one honored monk within the monastery.





Looking to Spring

With Luang Por Pasanno still abroad, Ajahn Karuṇadhammo and Ajahn Ñāṇiko guide the community toward the stillness of the 2019 winter retreat.



Even in the midst of California's autumn, new growth can be seen rising up through the previous year's burns, bright shoots vital amongst the old madrone.



