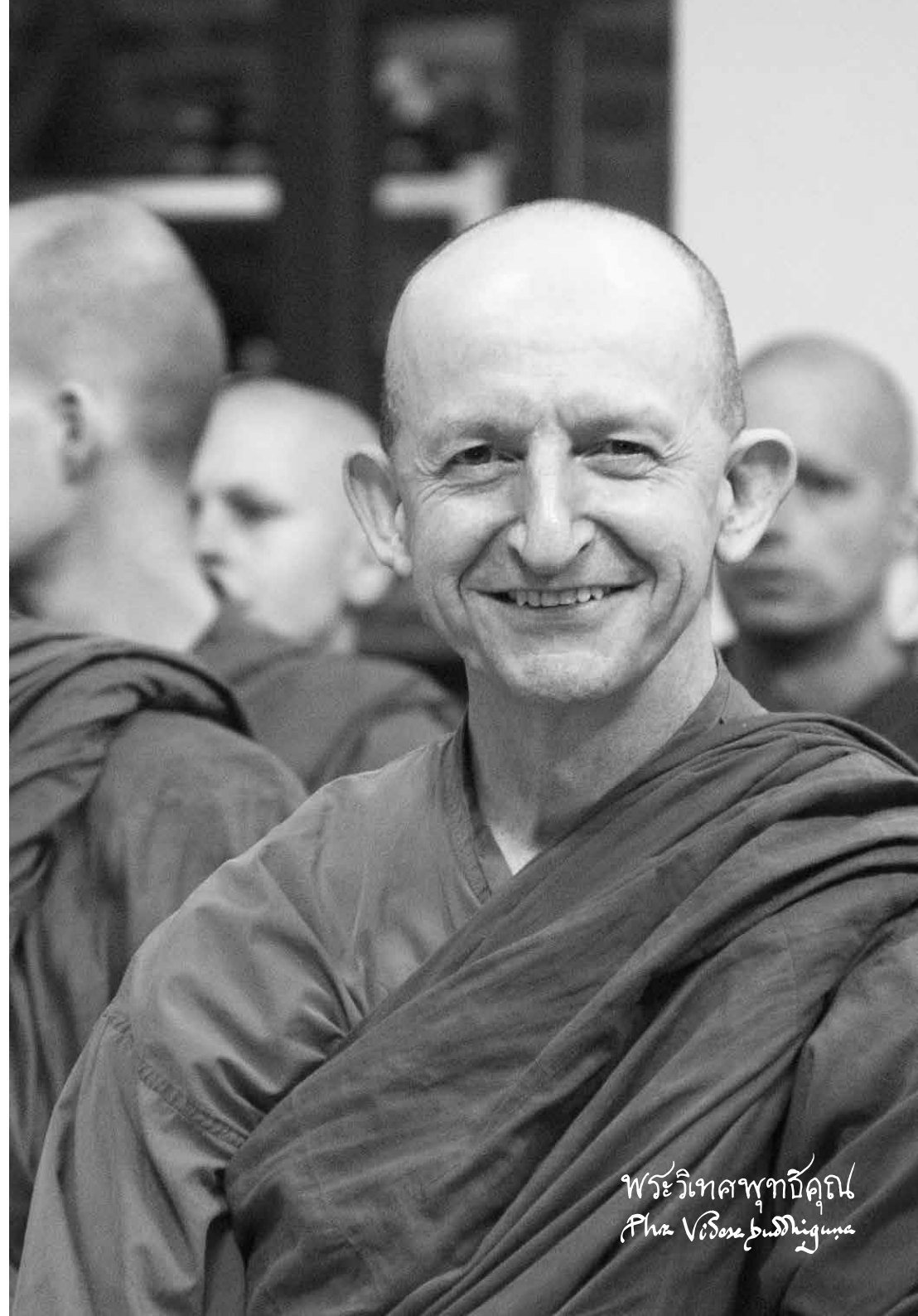


พระวิเทศพุทธปัญญา
Phra Videse Buddhiguna





พระวิเทศพุทฺธิคุณ
Phra Vibose Buddhiguna

Phra Videsabuddhigūṇa

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Preface

This small book is an expression of the good wishes of many sincere and devoted people. It is a gesture of their faith in the Triple Gem and, in particular, in the life and teaching of Venerable Ajahn Chah and the community of his students.

On December the 5th, 2015, Luang Por Pasanno, of Abhayagiri Monastery in California, and myself were given the honorary titles of Jao Khun by H.M. the King of Thailand, in a ceremony at the Temple of the Emerald Buddha. Luang Por Pasanno received the new name Bodhiñāṇavides, resonating Luang Por Chah's honorific name of Bodhiñāṇathera, whilst I received the name Videsabuddhigūṇa. This book you are holding has been produced as a result of our having been offered these titles and in celebration of the wholesome qualities that such public recognition is designed to encourage.

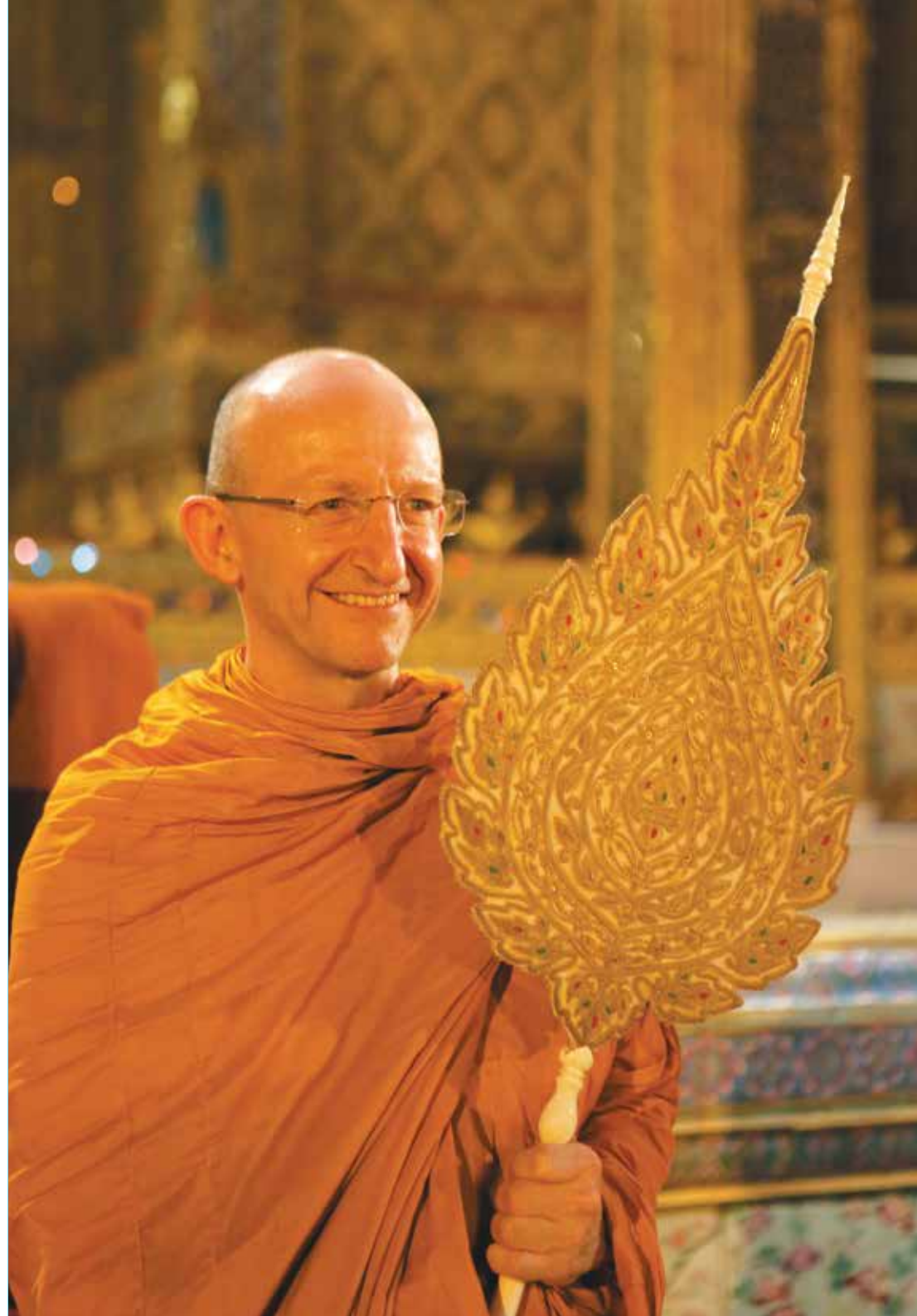
I have known Luang Por Pasanno since the very first week I arrived at Wat Pah Nanachat, in January of 1978. He was a bhikkhu of four Rains at that time and he immediately impressed me as a Dhamma practitioner

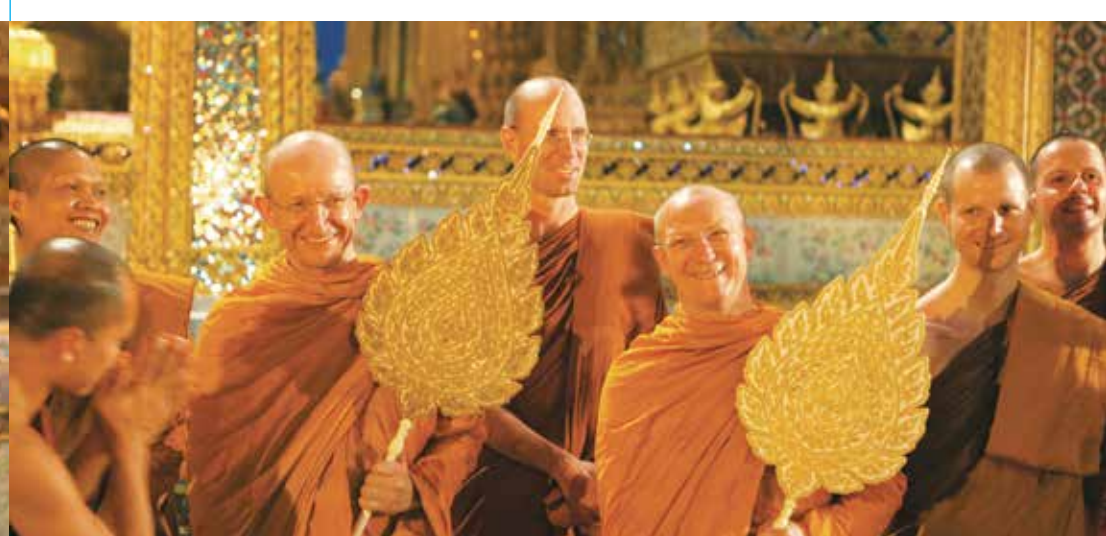
of inspiring demeanour. I was delighted when, in 1994, he offered to come and help me establish the branch monastery in California. Abhayagiri Monastery eventually opened there in 1996 and the two of us led the place together, as co-abbots, for more than thirteen years. We parted in 2010, when I was invited to come back to England to be abbot of Amaravati Monastery, but it seemed strangely appropriate that we were both invited to receive the honorific titles at the same time, in December 2015. We were together once more, conjoined in this Dhamma event, and glad to have the opportunity to be part of the occasion in each other's company. Both Luang Por Pasanno and I felt very honoured and humbled by the offering of these titles; significantly, both of us independently recognizing that we were receiving them on behalf of the whole community of Luang Por Chah's disciples.

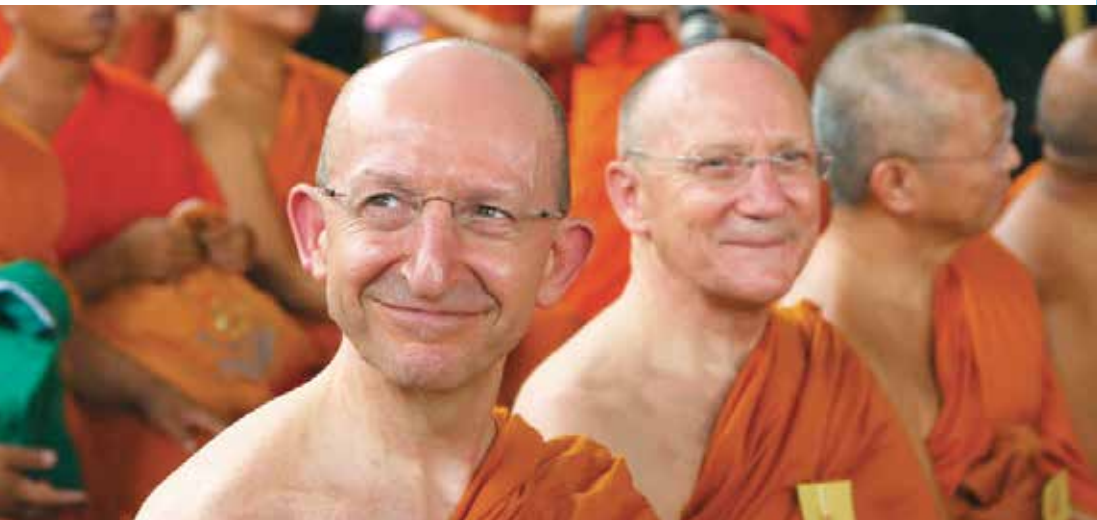
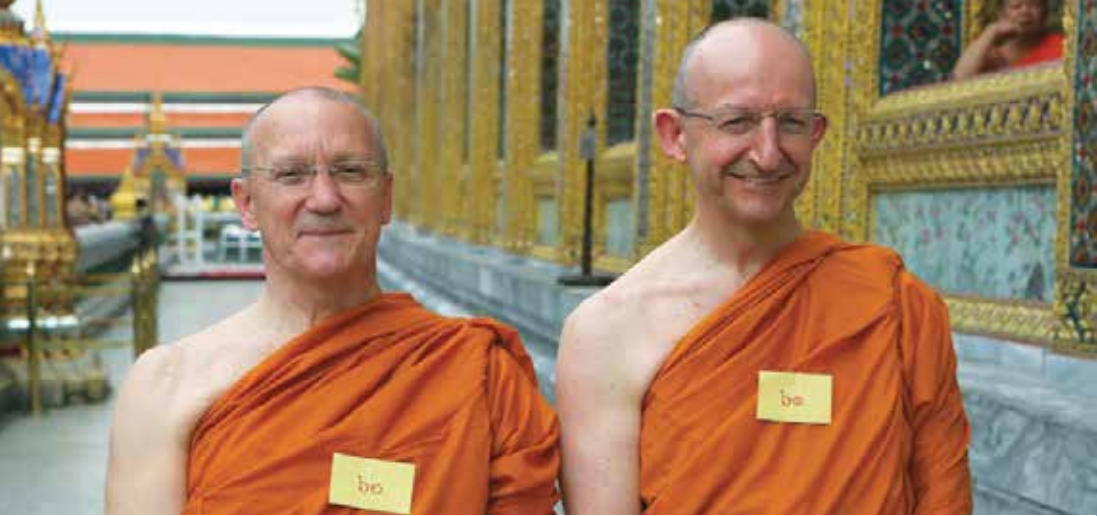
May the words and pictures in this book, gathered by many kalyānamittā, be an encouragement for us all to practice with sincerity, and in a way that would please Luang Por Chah and all the great disciples of the Buddha.

Amaro Bhikkhu, Phra Videsabuddhigūṇa
Amaravati Buddhist Monastery
May 11, 2016









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With Gratitude

On 5 December 2015, two western monks from the Ajahn Chah tradition came sharply into public focus in Thailand, through being honoured with royally bestowed ecclesiastical titles. Ajahn Pasanno, already well-known since the 1980's from having been abbot of Wat Pah Nanachat for over fifteen years, was given the name Phra Bodhiñāṇavides. The other monk, Venerable Ajahn Amaro, still relatively unknown to many in Thailand was styled Phra Videsabuddhiguṇa.

Born in England in 1956, Jeremy Horner, had excelled academically. Finishing his A- levels aged only sixteen, he went on to earn a BSc in Psychology and Physiology from London University, unaware that as Amaro Bhikkhu he would one day renounce worldly life and put his skills to use in monastic administration and development.

Arriving in Thailand as a traveller in the late seventies, Ajahn Amaro initially had no plans to ordain. But a chance introduction to Wat Pah Nanachat, coupled with his interest in the nature of the human mind led him to consider the Holy Life, and in 1978 he decided to become

a novice. This was followed by full ordination as a monk in 1979, with Ajahn Chah as his preceptor.

Soon after that, however, he returned to the UK, to assist Luang Por Sumedho with the establishment of Chithurst Forest Monastery (Wat Pah Cittaviveka), the first branch of Wat Pah Pong in the West. From that period onwards, Ajahn Amaro has tirelessly supported the international growth of Theravadan Buddhist monasticism and Dhamma practice, as well as nurturing his own spiritual life.

He went on to be the assistant abbot of Amaravati Buddhist Monastery for many years, before co-founding Abhayagiri Buddhist Monastery, in California, with Ajahn Pasanno in 1996. Together they led the community for 14 years before Ajahn Amaro was invited back to England to take over as abbot of Amaravati in his own right in 2010.

Ajahn Amaro's reputation as a skilled teacher of Buddhist meditation, coupled with the gift of clear and insightful communication has seen him develop the reputation as one of Theravadan Buddhism's foremost Dhamma speakers, and become a valuable participant in both international gatherings of Buddhist leaders and various forums of inter-religious dialogue.

Amaravati has grown into a large monastery, and one which plays an important role in spreading Buddhism

in the West. It is home to monastics and male and female practitioners from all over the world and feels like a large and diverse family. Helped along by Ajahn Amaro's extensive experience, wisdom, patience and ever-present humour, visitors find a sanctuary of peace, and a refuge within which to deepen their practice.

One could describe at length the extent to which Ajahn Amaro's journey as a monk, and his personal qualities have been touching countless lives for almost forty years directly or by way of his writing. Many would testify to how even the briefest meeting has been inspiring, even life-changing. However, we feel that the teachings in this volume should speak for themselves, and give the readers their own taste of Ajahn Amaro's dhamma.

Whatever merit that may arise from the publication of this book, we would like to humbly share with Ajahn Amaro in recognition of the great debt that we have for all that he has given us over the years. As well as joy for him on the very special occasion of being given the name Videsabuddhiguna, (or 'International Wise-Guy', as he renders it in English, amply proving the point), we all wish our dear Ajahn Amaro a very happy sixtieth birthday.

With deep bows of gratitude and respect from all the lay supporters involved in this project.



Like and Dislike are of Equal Value

I would like to express my appreciation for this opportunity to visit to Wat Ambhawan, the monastery of Luang Por Jandee. When Luang Por Pasanno and I heard that we would be given ecclesiastical titles on this day, we considered where the monastics and lay supporters of Wat Pah Pong, who live in the Bangkok area and in the central region of Thailand, could conveniently gather to hold a ceremony to express the sympathetic joy at these events. Ajahn Kevali kindly contacted Luang Por Jandee and then told us that Luang Por Jandee was delighted to host the ceremony at his monastery. In his own words, Ajahn Kevali told me that Ajahn Jandee was ‘super happy’ at the idea.

Luang Por Jandee has had many long years of friendship with both Luang Por Pasanno and myself . When I was ordained as a novice, in 2521 (1978), Luang Por Jandee came to spend the pansah at Wat Pah Nanachat. That year was the fifth pansah of Luang Por Pasanno... oh, I should

have referred to him as ‘Tan Jao Khun Bodhiñāṇavides’ ...how forgetful I am!... I believe it was the third pansah for Luang Por Jandee. He was a superb role model, full of self-restraint, quiet and constantly mindful. At that time I was still young, was confused and lacked mindfulness. Luang Por Jandee has provided a good example for me in my monastic life from that time until the present, 37 years later. Therefore, I feel very glad indeed to come to this monastery where Luang Por Jandee is the Abbot and I look forward to participating in the Dhamma events both tonight and tomorrow.

Today is the fifth of December, the birthday of His Majesty the King of Thailand. It is Father’s Day. But 22 years ago this was also the day my father passed away, the fifth of December, 2536 (1993). So it is both an auspicious day, and not so good a day: a day I like and a day I don’t like so much. This coming-together of these two occasions reminds me of a particular teaching by Luang Por Chah. He used to say to us that: ‘Like and dislike are of equal value.’ Do you understand that? Like equals dislike.

Being given this ecclesiastical title is like a special thing that people might admire. ‘Oh, I am very glad... Today is a really good day, the birthday of the King. ...Today is a great day because I have been appointed a Jao Khun.’ But if we cling on to this high honour, ‘...Oh, I am now a Jao Khun. ...Very smart! ...I am so special!’ One may think it’s the highest thing, however, if we have a strong attachment to such a view, we could well end up in the hell realms. If we are attached to goodness, that goodness in turn will change into dukkha or suffering.

When we experience dukkha and we are attached to it, we will continually suffer. When we experience dukkha, or encounter something which we do not like, just as in the case of death of my father, we feel unhappy. But if we have wisdom, we can reflect that: ‘My father was born 102 years ago...He passed away when he was 80 years old...He had had a good life...Once you are born, you are sure to die...Everybody is the same... Everybody gathered here, women, men, monks or lay people, we all will die one day..’

If we fail to reflect in this way, we might want to negotiate instead. But it's not something that we can negotiate. This is a non-negotiable deal. The "Lord of Death" would not pay attention.

If we reflect on death with wisdom, however, we realize that all beings that are born must die. This is the way things are. It is natural. Therefore, when there is a death, we may be sad, but if we do not hold on to it so tightly, we will not suffer as a result. There may be physical pain but there is no dukkha. The mind remains peaceful. In the case of material possessions, if we are not attached to them, we see them simply as constituents of the world and they cannot bring suffering to us, the owners. When our parents pass away, we are bound to be sorry. But we can see as well that nature is giving a Dhamma lesson to us! If we understood it this way, that nature is teaching us an important truth, then we will be relieved and happy.

In this way we can see how liking and disliking are of equal value - if both are handled unwisely, they lead to suffering; if both are handled skillfully, they lead to liberation.

I believe I have talked for a suitable length of time tonight. Please excuse my Thai which is not fluent. Tan Jao Khun Bodhiñāṇavides spoke Thai very beautifully. I myself can only say a few words, therefore I would like to stop now so that we may have time to get ready for the events of tomorrow morning.

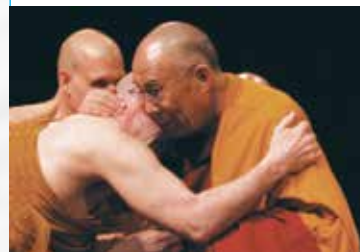
Like and Dislike are of Equal Value

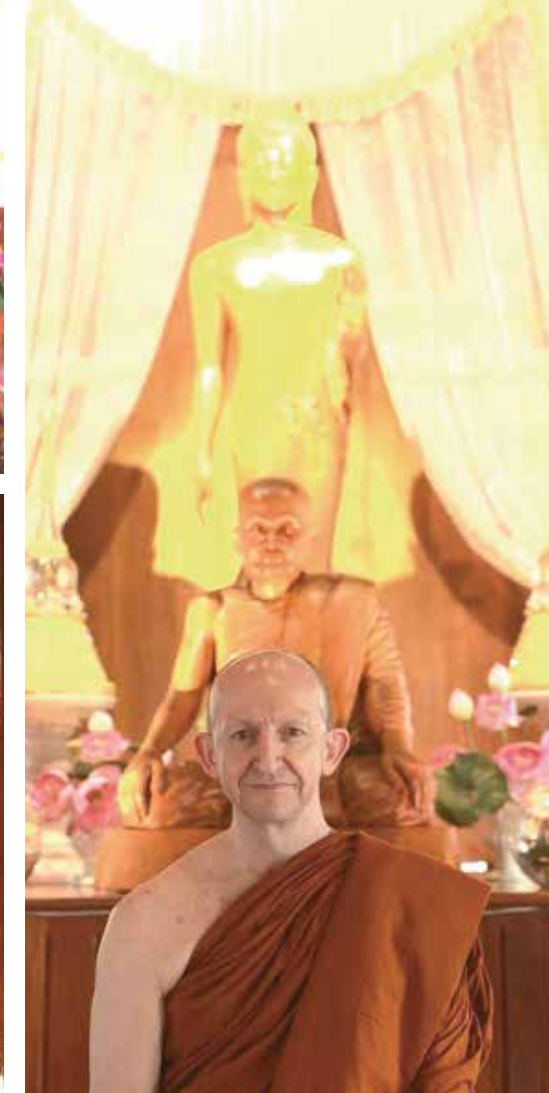
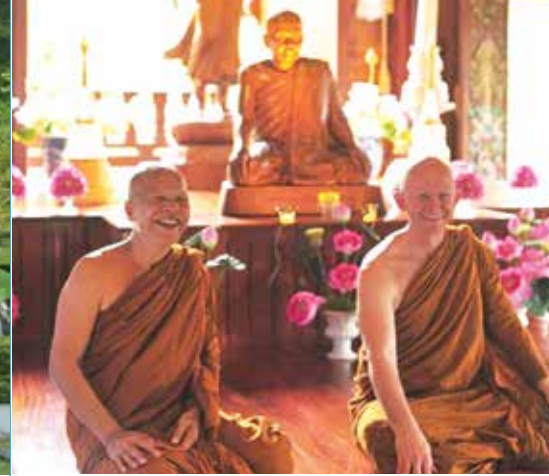
*Celebratory Exhortation by Phra Videsabuddhigūṇa, Wat Ambhawan,
December 5, 2015 (Translated by Witit Rachatanun)*

Of Pioneering Sage

*From Nong Pa Pong to Amaravati,
Flowers rain down from the sky,
Over centuries and worldly continents,
To the way of Dhamma you live and represent.
With purity of heart, of goodness, and wisdom,
So honoured, so revered, so respected,
A sophisticated sage and a pioneer,
Your words of wisdom heal lives and minds.
Your loving kindness and compassion,
Through 36 years of mindful devotion;
Wise words and warm smile, we follow,
Wholeheartedly bow with peaceful gratitude,
To vulnerable Jao Khun Videsabuddhiguna.*

Thanyathorn Chatlaong





วัดอัมพวัน
Wat Ambhawan



Jao Khun

I feel very glad and honoured to be present for this occasion and I am extremely happy to be back at Wat Pah Nanachat, in Ubon Province. I always feel this is like coming home. When people ask me, “Where are you from?” I say, “I was born in Ubon.” They look at me like, “What !?” Then I say, “I was born as a monk in Ubon.” Since this is where my life as bhikkhu began, this is genuinely my home country, in Dhamma terms.

We gather at this time to celebrate the appointments of Luang Por Pasanno, Phra Bodhiñānavides and myself having been offered the Jao Khun title by his Majesty the King and by the Sangha. One of the things that Luang Por Pasanno was saying (that the Thai-speaking people would understand but the non-Thai-speaking would have missed), which I feel the same about, is that: **“We are not receiving these titles just as individuals, or as a kind of recognition of our personal achievements or qualities, but rather as representatives of this whole community. We are receiving these recognitions as a way of acknowledging**

the value, the beauty and the importance of the whole community of Luang Por Chah’s disciples.”

I feel this is very appropriate because, at this time, I feel immense gratitude for the Buddha as our great teacher and the founder of the religion, so many hundreds of years ago, but more immediately gratitude for Luang Por Chah, who is the teacher and guide for us in this time, and the Kruba Ajahns, the elders of this community, those who are gathered here this evening as Luang Por Pasanno mentioned: Luang Por Liam, Luang Por Khoon from Wat Na Bodhi, Luang Por Sumedho and other Elders gathered together this evening. I often say that any good qualities that I have developed in my life are only there because of the influence of these great beings, these Mahāpurisā. It is only through their blessing that I have had any kind of peace, any kind of understanding, and any kind of good qualities have arisen. So I put my hands together and say “Sādhu!” – thank you very much. I express my gratitude and my thanks to these great beings because I would not be here were it not for the blessings and the wisdom, the kindness of all of them.

At the end of the Buddha’s life, when he was at Kusinara and he was about to realize Parinibbāna, at that time many Devata and Brahma gods gathered together. The sal trees in the forest came out into bloom; they flowered even though it was not the season for their blossoming. The heavenly musicians, the gandhabbas were playing their divine music, filling the air with sublime sounds. Celestial flowers, the mandarava blossoms, rained down from the sky. Venerable Ananda said, “It is amazing, it is incredible. The celestial musicians, the gandabbhas are playing their music. The Devas and the Brahmas have gathered together. Manadarava flowers are raining down from the sky. The sal trees have burst into bloom. Never before has the Buddha been so honoured, so revered, so respected. Never before have there been such gestures of reverence and veneration shown to the Tathagata. This is unique. This is incredible.” The Buddha replied, “Yes indeed, Ananda. Never before has the Tathagata been so honoured, so venerated as in this way. But if one really wants to venerate, honour and express respect for the Tathagata, then what one will do is to practise the Dhamma. One will follow the Dhamma way. That’s how one most fully and completely expresses one’s respect, honour and reverence for the Tathagata.”

So, on occasions like we have today at Wat Pah Nanachat, where there are many offerings of flowers and much reverence, I often think of this teaching, this exchange of words between Venerable Ananda and the Lord Buddha. Because we are inspired we wish to express our devotion, our gratitude and our positive feelings; so we bow, we pay our respects, we offer flowers, we say words that convey that devotion. But that's a loka-dhamma, a worldly dhamma, a worldly expression of devotion. It is more difficult but more useful to express our devotion through the actual practice of Dhamma through following the Dhamma way. As the Buddha pointed out to Venerable Ananda, **how we express our reverence, how we express our gratitude most completely is to actually follow the teacher's instructions.** Those of you who are school teachers or who have been instructors of various kinds, you know that nothing is more pleasing to a teacher than when the students actually do what the teacher is asking them to do.

Therefore, considering this teaching of the Lord Buddha and these appointments, these honours that Tan Jao Khun Bodhiñānavides and myself have received, we should understand that receiving the title 'Jao Khun' is

a gesture of respect on a worldly level, but we should also consider: "What is the real '**Jao Khun**'?"

The Thai word '**Khun**', as I understand it, has the same root as 'guṇa-dhamma', meaning 'spiritual qualities' and '**Jao**' means 'the top, the best, highest or superior'. So, to be given the title is like being given the offerings of flowers but to actually be embodying the qualities, to really be practising in a way that is perfecting the guṇa-dhamma, the spiritual qualities of our own hearts, that is the way that the Triple Gem is most fully venerated. To perfect the guṇa-dhamma is more difficult to do than just writing 'Jao Khun'. It's easy to write 'Jao Khun' but **to really practise those qualities and to bring purity of heart, wisdom and goodness into being, and to sustain them moment by moment, is more difficult but more useful.**

I think I have spoken enough for this evening. I don't wish to torture or contribute to the discomfort of everyone by keeping you sitting here much longer. However, I would just like once more to express my delight in being here at Wat Pah Nanachat. Luang Por Pasanno, Tan Jao Khun Bodhiñānavides, and I met the very first week I arrived here at Wat Pah Nanachat, when I was a hairy hippy just

off the beach. We lived here together at Wat Pah Nanachat, then we collaborated in the USA as what they called “the two-headed Jao-avasa” – we were co-abbots of Wat Pah Abhayagiri in California and now we have been offered these honours together. We find ourselves hand-cuffed, tied together, and I feel very very happy on account of this. When I saw the announcement of our names in the newspaper, I thought, “Oh... I’m together with Luang Por Pasanno again – สบายใจมาก – that feels great.”

Jao Khun

*Celebratory Exhortation by Phra Videsabuddhiguna, Wat Pah Nanachat,
December 12, 2015*



Tribute to Venerable Phra Videsabuddhigūṇa

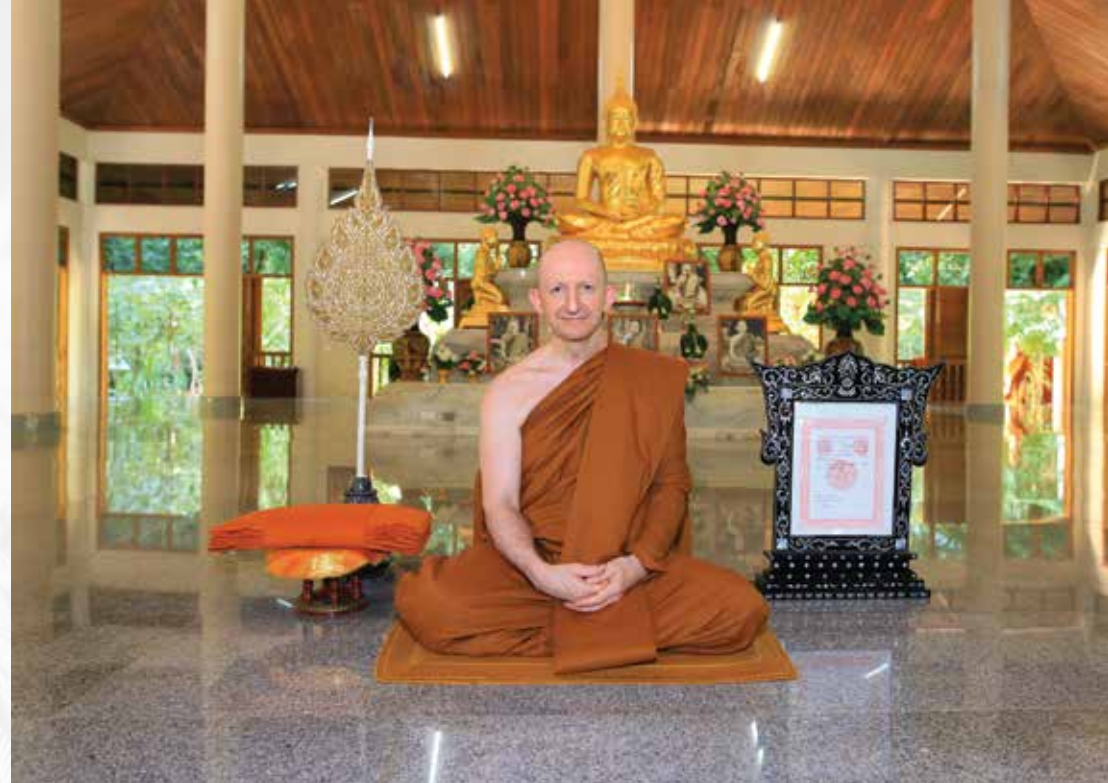
(Amaro Bhikkhu)

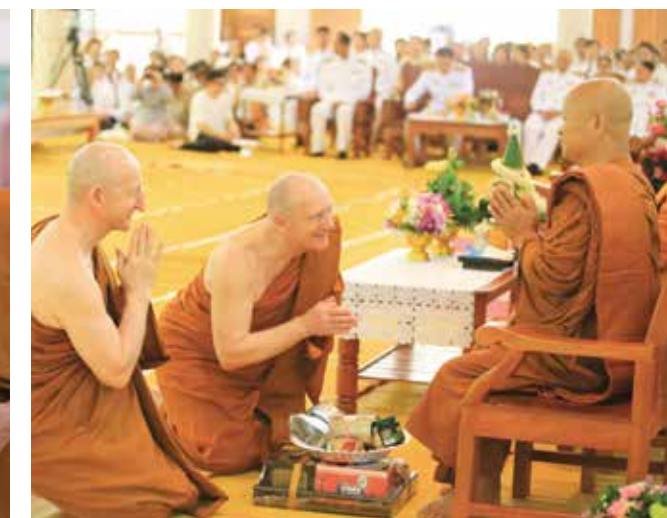
*From London town, he travelled to “Wat Nong Pah Pong”,
 Then before long, he was ordained by Ajahn Chah.
 All the advice his teacher gave he took to heart,
 He took his heart and mind to task, he scrutinized.
 The clues he found he analyzed, with inner eye,
 Unfeared to try, unearthing all, all shapes and size.
 His steps were sure, for they were guided by the wise,
 To realize the highest truth – his guiding goal.
 Thirty-seven years in the Way – shines like a light,
 Reflecting bright from polished gem struck by the sun.
 “Amaro” a deathless name bestowed on one
 Who, since begun, has carried on with boundless grace.
 Named “Venerable Videsabuddhigūṇa”,
 Filled with puñña, warm Dhamma words always well phrased.
 This recognition points to qualities encased,
 Which can be traced to a venerable, very good monk.*

Offered by His Students

Original Composition in Thai by Chamaybhorn Saenggrajahn

Translated by Ajahn Thaniyo





วัดป่ามหาชาติ
Wat Pah Nanachat



Different Angles, Different Views

I'm very happy to be here at Thawsi school to meet all of you. I've been here once or twice before. I'm very glad to see the school is getting bigger. I'm very glad that you are all learning how to live as good human beings in the way of Buddhism, the Buddha's teachings as well as learning how to read and write all the useful things. When I'm asked to give a dhamma talk to people who are as young as you, I have to think what is useful. So I thought I will ask you a question. The question is which way is my finger pointing.... left or right ?

children : Right.

Ok, you say right ?

But from my side I will say, no..no.. it's pointing to the left.

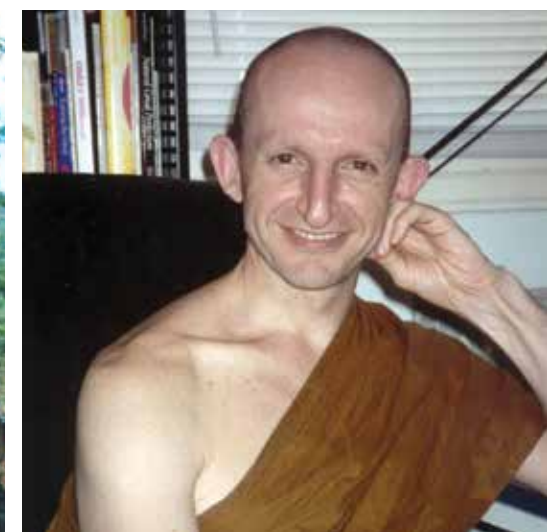


children : No ...right, right !

No.. no.. I can see it. It's pointing to the left. So you say right, I say left. That's because I'm sitting here and you are sitting there. In English this is called having a 'different point of view'. See things from a different side. Understand ?

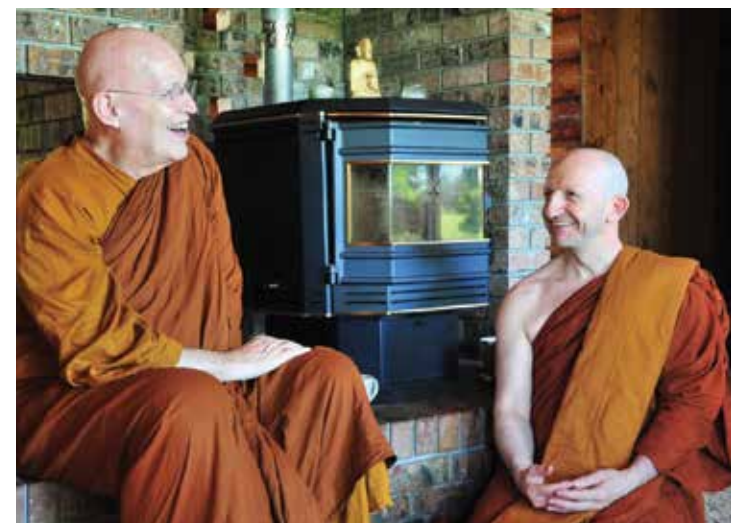
When we don't have wisdom, when we don't have understanding, then we think, no.. no.. it's to the right. it's to the right. How can you be so stupid ? It's pointing to the right. I can see. Why you're saying left? You're stupid. You're wrong. That's bad. You're an idiot. You are a problem.

But then if you think, well.. wait a minute, wait a minute... he's sitting over there, he's seeing the finger from a different side. So then... you think... arhh... his point of view is different... So perhaps from his side, it is to the left and from my point of view, it's to the right. So when we think that way...arhhhh... we are both correct! เข้าใจไหม Do you understand? (the children say... yes.. yes..) Very good.



Different Angles, Different Views

*Dhamma Talk given to kindergarten students and teachers
Thawasi School, Bangkok December 21, 2015*





Amaro Bhikkhu, Phra Videsabuddhigūṇa Biography

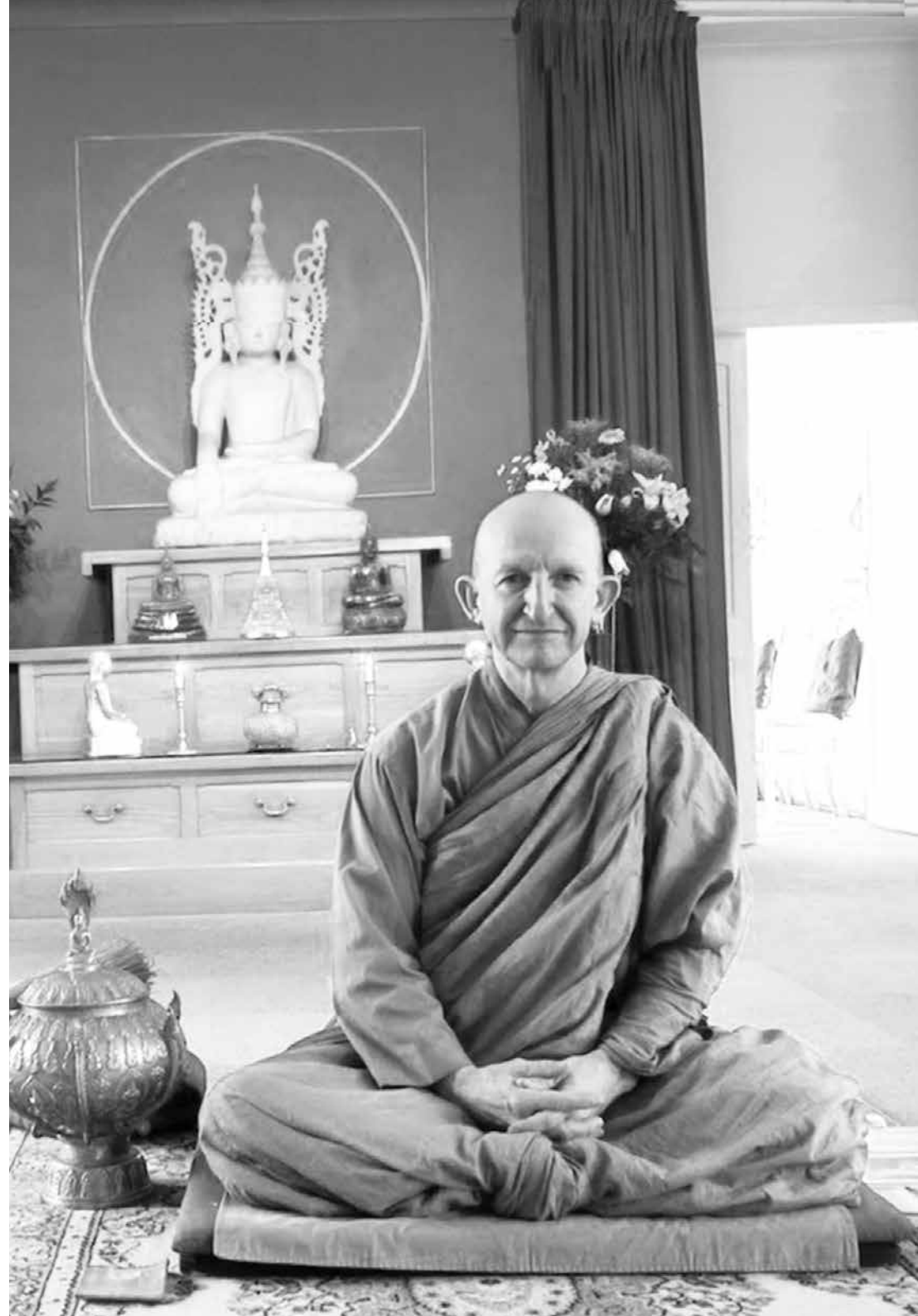
Born in England in 1956, he received a BSc. in Psychology and Physiology from the University of London in 1977. Spiritual searching led him to Thailand, where he went to Wat Pah Nanachat, a Forest Tradition monastery established for Western disciples of Thai meditation master Ajahn Chah, who ordained him as a bhikkhu in 1979. Soon afterwards he returned to England and joined Ajahn Sumedho at the newly established Chithurst Monastery.

In 1983 he made an 830 mile journey on foot to Harnham Monastery in Northumberland and in 1985 he was invited to join the community at the newly opened Amaravati Monastery. He resided for ten years at Amaravati, making trips to California every year during the early 1990s. During that time at Amaravati Ajahn Amaro helped with teaching and administration, serving as vice-abbot for the last two years.

In June 1996 he established Abhayagiri Monastery in Redwood Valley, California, where he was co-abbot with Ajahn Pasanno until 2010. He then returned to Amaravati in July 2010 and was invited to be the successor of Ajahn Sumedho as abbot of this large monastic community. He was granted permission to be an *upajjhāya* (ordination preceptor) in 2011.

In December 2015 he was given the honorary title Jao Khun by HM the King of Thailand, together with the name Videsabuddhigūṇa.

He has authored or co-authored about 20 books, all for free distribution. He is also a cousin of the late Buddhist scholar and President of the Pali Text Society, I.B. Horner.



With profound recognitions to

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Ajahn Thaniyo : *Tribute to Venerable Phra Videsabuddhigūṇa*

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Panyapraterp Foundation

Panyapraterp Foundation, as a non-profit organization, has been set up by the founders, administrators, teachers and friends of Thawasi Buddhist School community since early 2008. It is officially registered by the Ministry of Interior with Registration Number of Kor Thor 1405 since 1st April 2008. Panyapraterp Foundation will be tasked to help with fund-raising activities, and has helped set up Panyapraterp Boarding School since academic year starting in May 2009.

Objectives of Panyapraterp Foundation

- 1) To support the development of Buddhist education based on the Buddhist principle of the Three Fold Training of conduct, emotional intelligence and wisdom (*sīla samādhī and paññā*).
- 2) To propagate Buddhist wisdom and developmental principles through organization of retreat programs, training workshops and through the dissemination of Dhamma media such as books, CDs, DVDs etc.
- 3) To create understanding of humanity's relationship to the natural world, to promote eco-friendly learning activities, and renewable energy for sustainable development, and a way of life based on His Majesty the King's Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy.



ชีวิตขาดศีล คือรถขาดเบรก

*"Life without sila is like
a car without brakes"*



พระวิเทศพุทธปัญญา

Phra Visesa Buddhiguna