

# FEARLESS MOUNTAIN

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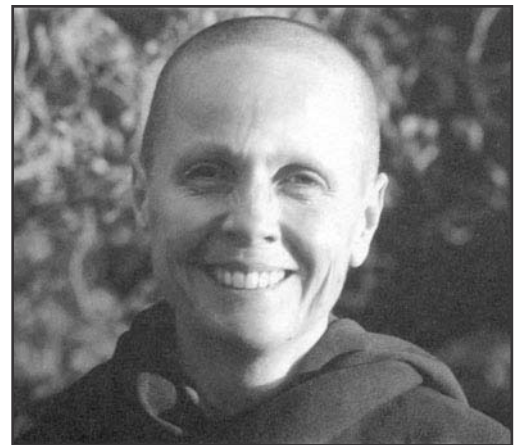
## On the Road to True Freedom

by Ajahn Jitindriya

*Adapted from a talk given at Abhayagiri Monastery in October 2002.*

Buddhist monastics and committed lay practitioners often aspire to go on pilgrimage to the Buddhist holy sites at least once in their lives. In the scriptures the Buddha advised that it was good for those with faith to visit these places of great importance, that in doing so, wholesome states would arise and support one's path. There are four primary places: the place where the Buddha was born as Siddhartha Gotama; the place where he was enlightened; the place where he gave his first teaching to a group of five disciples and set the wheel of Dhamma rolling; and the place where he passed away some 45 years after his enlightenment.

Visiting these sites can provide good opportunities for practice and for reflecting on one's path and intention in life. An important aspect of our path is to create space for reflection and to consider such questions as: What am I doing with my life? What kind of direction does it have? What kind of aspiration do I have? What kind of behavior do I get caught in? What's difficult? What's wholesome? What's good to aspire to? How can I find true peace and happiness? Every human being at some



stage of life contemplates these things, but oftentimes we don't give ourselves the time or the space to really take the questions deeply.

The Bodhi tree at Bodhgaya is said to be the actual place of the Buddha's enlightenment. You can sit there yourself. Millions of pilgrims visit the large stupa and bodhi tree in Bodhgaya to circumambulate, chant and practice. The grounds also contain other shrines and stupas. The spots are marked: This is the place where the Buddha sat for a week after his enlightenment and contemplated the bliss of nibbana. Here is where he walked up and down in meditation during the second week. This is where he sat and contemplated the law of dependent origination. Here he sat and looked upon the Bodhi tree, unblinking, with delight and gratitude. For seven weeks, the scriptures say, the Buddha remained in the area and contemplated his

*(continued on page 4)*

# FROM THE MONASTERY



The community for the winter retreat

## COMMUNITY

In the forest as winter slowly approaches, there is a natural shift as the inessential falls away, conditions change quickly in preparation, and most outgoing exuberance is directed inwards. Since the Abhayagiri community spends its winter in retreat, these patterns play out amongst the people as well.

On the 6th of November, in a picturesque ceremony under the autumn colors of our ordination clearing, Tan Obhaso received his full ordination as a bhikkhu, with Ajahn Pasanno as preceptor. The ceremony was attended by his family from Kansas, who were there to offer him the basic requisites as well as the support he will need for the monk's life.

Ajahn Thanasanti, one of the senior members of the nuns' community, joined us at the end of November. She has spent the last several years on retreat in Wat Buddha Dhamma in Australia and has rejoined community life with us before moving on to England in May.

Also joining us in early December was Tan Hasapañño from New Zealand, who has come under the wing of his preceptor to help with his early training.

Ajahn Pasanno made his yearly trip to Thailand in December, where he was very busy with teaching engagements and also with working to save Dtao Dtum, a severely threatened virgin forest on the Burmese border, where he has helped establish a forest monastery—the only thing protecting the forest left in that area. He returned in good spirits but with definite sighs of relief into the quietude our own forest so agreeably allows.

Just after Christmas we had a visit from Ajahn Vajiro, passing through after a period at Amaravati monastery in England, and on his way to monasteries in New Zealand and Australia. We enjoyed his short stay, and in a talk to the community one evening, he shared uncommon reflections on common themes of the renunciant life.

And in another uncommon reflection, Samanera Naniko announced his wish to take higher ordination as a bhikkhu, to the pleasure and agreement of the community. The ceremony will probably take place on Asalha Puja, July 13.

In the week or so remaining in 2002, Brian Bauman, Nancy Lonnergan, Kristin Ohlson, Ginger Vathanasombat and Adam Kane joined us to stay for the duration of the retreat and to support the community by assuming the functional duties of the monastery. With Brian's eye on maintenance, Nancy and Kristin looking after the various forms of correspondence and mailings, Ginger keeping the offices running smoothly, and Adam managing the kitchen, the rest of the community have had the opportunity to devote themselves completely to their own cultivation and development, from which the best of Buddhism springs. If it is true that beings come together because of elements, it is a good reflection on the community here that such good people, who are all new to each other and also to us, have fit in so well and have been extraordinarily helpful and diligent in their own practice.

Throughout the retreat the ajahns have given daily readings and a wealth of commentary around the set of dhammas known as the "Wings to Awakening." This has provided the contemplative structure of the retreat, while the ajahns have also employed a changing use of routine to best serve everyone in developing these themes for themselves.



Photo by Ginger Vathanasombat

Neighbors join in the candlelight vigil for peace



Tan Naniko helps install the new Dhamma Hall floor

## DEVELOPMENT

Recent visitors to the monastery have noticed that the Dhamma Hall has been refurbished with a “squeakless” floor and quiet under-floor heating. This was made possible by a generous donation from Ruth Denison, who was moved to provide a fitting home for a very special carpet she has also donated and which now graces the center of the floor in front of our shrine. Some clever planning and ingenuity by Tan Sudanto saw that all the elements of the project clicked into place, finishing the hall as an elegant and unobtrusive setting for teaching and meditation.

## TEACHINGS AND EVENTS

Ajahn Amaro and Ajahn Sundara taught the annual Thanksgiving retreat at the end of November, held this year at the Angela Center in Santa Rosa. It was a rich and potent opportunity for many people to practice—particularly so as there were a couple of retreatants who suffered from unexpected and severe illnesses during the retreat. There was a great sense of camaraderie generated by the need for mutual support among the retreatants and great gratitude is particularly due to Anna Moore, who was the manager and who handled the rolling seas of sickness and the unexpected with immense skill.

Ajahn Thanasanti joined Ajahn Amaro in teaching a day-long retreat on the theme of “The Return of the Light” at Spirit Rock on the winter solstice.

The Saturday evening public talks and the observance night talks and vigils have continued in the monastery as usual throughout the winter, while other teaching invitations have been declined for the duration of the retreat. The alm-

round practice in Ukiah on observance days has been growing, with the addition of regular *pindapat* offerings from the Bangkok Café.

This January, participants in the CALM program gathered next door at Dennis Crean’s to share reflections and feedback on the program with each other. In the recent weeks, Abhayagiri has hosted a number of vigils in connection with the recent peace protests across the globe. Along with nearly 20 others from the local community, the Abhayagiri sangha gathered around the bell tower to take part in the Global Candlelight Vigil for Peace. The full moon provided a beautiful backdrop as Ajahn Pasanno rang our Vietnam-era bomb-turned-temple bell in commemoration of peace and non-violence.

The first stupa on the property was created April 12–13, enshrining the ashes of our dear friends and neighbors Peter and Mary in the garden of their former home, Casa Serena. A team of friends and residents joyfully gathered materials and built the stupa amidst the torrential rain. True to the spirit of Peter and Mary, the consecration ceremony included readings and prayers from Rumi and Jung as well as from the Shamanic, Catholic and Buddhist traditions.

Word was recently received that Ajahn Amaro’s mother is severely ill, and he returned to England in early April to be with her and his sisters. Due to the uncertain nature of his mother’s illness, his return date is unclear, and previously scheduled teaching engagements will be rearranged as needed.

Spring comes early here in northern California. As the winter retreat comes to an end at Abhayagiri, molting lizards are writhing and wriggling out of their skin, oak trees are coming back into leaf, the daffodils leaning out for light are already dying, and the country is at war. Outgoing exuberance returns, in all of its sad splendor and terror.

—The Sangha



Photo by Ginger Vathanasombat

The new stupa at Casa Serena at the dedication ceremony

## On the Road to True Freedom

(continued from page 1)

enlightenment; contemplated what he'd understood, the implications and the depths of it and how to communicate it. And he delighted in the freedom that he'd discovered. Or perhaps it wasn't so much a case of discovering it as resting into it—resting into the complete freedom and liberation of the heart, *cittavimutti*, the heart's release.

So when you go to this place you have an opportunity to sit and contemplate those very same things. It's nice to have some teachings from the scriptures with you that can remind you, in the Buddha's own words, of what happened that night. These would variously include teachings on compassion and letting go, or on separating wholesome thoughts and feelings from unwholesome thoughts and feelings; teachings on the four noble truths and on dependent origination, and also on the development of the imperturbable mind in meditation, that is, the stabilizing of concentration and equanimity, enabling deep insight to arise.

In the Thai Forest Tradition there's a walking practice similar to pilgrimage. It's called *tudong*, in which a monk or nun, or a small group of them, leave the monastery and take to the road, bringing just the few things they'll need. Perhaps they have a destination or perhaps not, but they do have the

A pilgrimage strips away defilements. It exposes you. No longer can you take your "comfort zones" with you.

intention to let go of attachments, to rely on what's freely given, and to live simply. This kind of practice can be called *dhutanga* (from which "tudong" is derived)—meaning "the stripping away of defilements." Having done a couple of tudong walks myself, in England and in Ireland, I now understand what that means. To me, the way a pilgrimage strips away defilements is that it exposes you. No longer can you take your "comfort zones" with you.

Even in the monastic life it's easy to create little places where it feels okay to relax and hide out from difficulties. You can recognize such places and devices in your own home, too. Going to the refrigerator is one of them. So is going to bed. And turning on the television. We don't have those opportunities as much in the monastic life, but we have other little ways of doing it; sometimes it's psychological or emotional, and sometimes it's physical. I've found that getting out on the road for a period of time leads me to see that there's no escape. People have said to me, "How lovely! You're going on pilgrimage! Six months! You're going to have a wonderful time!" I usually just grin and reply, "Well, I'm not so sure about that." There might be some wonderful moments, but there are going to be some very hellish

moments, too, and some very challenging ones. Despairing moments. Highs and lows. There's no way to hide from any of it.

For most of us, traveling in India can be a challenge even in the best of circumstances. On the material level, it's a pretty desperate country: so many people, so much sickness and starvation, poverty and disaster. In India there's no illusion about finding lasting security and comfort in the material world. Our typical ways of hiding out just don't exist there for most people. Certainly there are wealthy Indians, but when you go there fresh, at least from a Western country, you encounter a pretty stark reality. You see that there is no refuge, nothing that you can really rely on in the material realm. So it's much easier for one's focus to turn to the spiritual, to turn to something that is beyond dependency on the material—which is ephemeral, changing and unreliable.

No matter how well you plan, that is an important lesson when you're walking on tudong. You haven't got a lot of control over your food, or where you might find a place to sleep, or many of the usual things that you normally have control over. Even in the monastery you're pretty sure that you're going to get a meal. But when you're out on tudong, you're just not sure of that. You don't even know where you're going to end up at night, or whether you are going to sleep safely or warmly.

So the lesson is about expectations. You can see the mind so clearly wanting to fill in the next moment, or wanting to define what is going to happen, wanting to make it happen in a certain way that's going to be comfortable, safe and secure. There can be some delightful moments, of feeling very connected and moving in faith, but there can also be some horrendous moments when everyone is influenced by this lurking fear and anxiety about not knowing what's going to happen next. Maybe we've lost our way; so-and-so hasn't been able to read the map properly and we don't know where we are. Maybe we'll come to a town where we can go for alms-round in time or maybe not. Or maybe it's the end of the day, and it's getting dark, and we haven't found a place that would be suitable for resting. So we walk on, and keep walking and walking, and the level of emotion builds, and the group interaction can quickly become fraught. You're stuck with each other 24 hours a day—literally side by side!—walking, eating, sleeping. This aspect of tudong can be quite a challenge.

Now we also find these challenges in our daily lives. But tudong or pilgrimage can concentrate the potency of the experience. So the challenge, the invitation—the only possibility left, actually, when you're meeting that edge—is to let go. There's nothing to hang on to, there's no security, it's just not there. That's the reality. There's only the inner refuge. The result of letting go is to realize that there is a safe place. It's in nonattachment. It's in letting go. No longer relying on

the material, ephemeral world to provide something it cannot. This can be a difficult realization to reach in our ordinary lives. We spend a lot of time just holding things together, trying to make it go right.

Now this makes a lot of sense—we have to direct our lives to some degree—but the problem is getting stuck in patterns and habits. We get attached, we get embroiled, we get stuck, and we suffer in various ways. So moving out of one's comfort zones is very helpful. I would encourage people in whatever way they can in their daily lives to find ways to move out of those habitual patterns. Give yourself an opportunity to experience something different. Put yourself into an unfamiliar situation and see what comes up. Often we don't realize the attachment that's present until the object of the attachment is taken away and in response we experience longing, fear or grief. The object of attachment could be anything: a material object or a mental, emotional or psychological object.

Of course, pilgrimage is also about devotion and recollecting the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha, reflecting on and experiencing what the refuges really mean. It's about gratitude, faith and patient endurance—a kind of opening of the heart to those qualities. Pilgrimage is an opportunity to appreciate the teaching and truth and refuge that we've found and to express that through devotions: chanting, circumambulation, meditation. These things all help to purify, focus and direct the mind, all help in the further cultivation of the path to enlightenment.

In many ways, our whole way of practice in the monastery is aimed at embodying the very things we experience when walking tudong or going on pilgrimage. I find this a very useful concept: to try to bring that back into the everyday life of the monastery. I'd like to suggest that you bring it into your everyday life as lay practitioners. Learn to live with uncertainty. Get to know the feeling of uncertainty, doubt, not-knowing, and come to appreciate how being very conscious of those things can actually help open our minds and lead us out into new areas, out of the old conditioned ways of responding to the world, out into free open spaces of awareness and clarity.

I love the Buddha's teaching in which he describes what a true wanderer is. He compares wanderers to swans that leave a lake: "Just as swans leave a lake, so true wanderers leave home after home behind." We can make a home, a nest for ourselves with a thought, with a mind state, with a material object, with a person, with a place. This is what attachment is about—holding on to something. It's not that it's very dramatic or obvious; we just ease into something and somehow believe that it's permanent, it's real, it's safe. But then when things shift and we lose what we want or don't get what we want, we can, because of attachment, experience

struggle, fear or grief. So to leave behind one home after another is an invitation to wander, from moment to moment, without attachment, as easefully, gracefully and naturally as the swans leave the lake.

That's the aspiration; it's not always something that's immediately possible. But it is what the Buddha is pointing to as the place of nibbana. Being completely present without any clinging; being able to move and to be still at the same time; having a boundless heart and yet being completely present and compassionate with those who are around you: these are the qualities of a true wanderer. And it doesn't matter whether we're wandering literally or living in one place, whether we're working a 40-hour week in a grocery store or a 140-hour week in a monastery.

All the Buddha's teachings contain the essence, or the taste, of freedom, the taste of nibbana. That's what we pick up on; that's what we're attracted to, because intuitively we know that taste. We get caught in samsara, but nibbana is right there as well. We just have to turn and see it. We have to let go of what's blocking our vision. There are many ways to do this, but it can be instantaneous once we've found that key, or once those words have pointed our minds back to that place that reminds us, "Let go and taste freedom!"

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The funny thing about tudong is that no matter where you walk or how many miles you cover or where you go, you're still there. There's still the mind. This can be taken in a negative way, but it also can point to something more profound: Where is the world? Everywhere we go our world comes with us.

I remember a teaching Ajahn Sumedho gave once before going off traveling. He said, "No one really goes anywhere; we only experience changing conditions of the mind." This is an experience that can become heightened when you are just walking. The scenery just changes around you. To live each moment—and to die each moment, not knowing what's ahead—is a constant challenge: a wonderful moment is followed by a painful moment, which is followed by a distressing moment, which is followed by an infuriating moment; which is followed by a moment of relief; and they're all just moments, no matter what quality each one has. This is what we have to see in order to let go. This is the way to true freedom. ♥

*Ajahn Jitindriya departed Abhayagiri in November 2002.*

# Greetings from the Pilgrim Sisters

Mid-December 2002

Two and a half weeks here in India and all is well. Very well. We've been amazingly looked after by seen and unseen forces. We spent a week in Mumbai and visited some wonderful Buddhist caves about two hours out of the city. Kanhera Caves were ancient dwellings of Theravadin monastics (and later on, Mahayana) dated from the first century B.C. till the ninth century A.D. There are over a hundred caves carved out of huge rocks with just hammer and chisel. The bigger caves for meetings were remarkable (great acoustics, too), and the large, sculptured forms of Gotama Buddha which accompanied them were most beautiful and graceful and have maintained a powerful presence.

We then traveled south to Northern Kerala, where we stayed in a Hindu ashram, Anandashram, for five days. Here the teachers and residents are very sincere practitioners, and the daily schedule is a full one of various pujas chanting the name of God, Hindu style: "Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram." The teachings were also very compatible with our own Buddhist way and very close to the Tibetan forms and concepts of practice; one can see how Tibetan forms of Buddhism developed from these early Indian influences. The sound of the "Ram Nam" chant followed us for days, heard in every sound and permeating consciousness. Such is the power of such practices.

January 12, 2003

Greetings again from Arunachala, the "Immoveable Light." We are staying at the ashram of the great Indian saint Sri Ramana Maharshi, who lived from the late 1800s till 1950. He was a great renunciate and lived in silence for many years on Arunachala, where he came at the age of 16 after a spontaneous and deep spiritual realization that destroyed his identification with the body as self. His teachings and realizations resemble the Buddhist teachings very closely. Ramanasramam attracts hundreds, perhaps thousands of people through her gates daily; it's been a place of pilgrimage and spiritual practice for a very long time.

Next week we will be heading north to start our Buddhist pilgrimage "proper," which is centered around the northeastern states of Bihar and Himachal Pradesh. But first we will go briefly to the ancient city of Amaravati, once a thriving Buddhist city but now mere ruins (much of it now displayed in the British Museum), from which our own Amaravati monastery in England has taken its name.

Mid-February

Greetings from Varanasi, holy city of the Hindus. This is a city full of amazing life. On our first night here there were four funerals and a wedding all parading down the street where we were staying. We've been here nearly two weeks already. Somehow, "fascinating" Varanasi holds you, or traps you. There is a magic about the place, and spirituality is its central component. Altogether, the city has a radiant spirit and an atmosphere somewhat similar to a huge *carnivale*.

Varanasi is the Holy City of Shiva (again), and where many Hindus come (or wish to come) to die and be burned along the ghats and have their remains thrown into the Holy Ganges River. The Holy Ganges is the main artery of life here, afloat with boats and lined with people pursuing all kinds of activities, all day, every day. Two main ghats for burning corpses are about a mile apart, and strewn in between are many other ghats where thousands are washing their bodies; doing their pujas and holy ablutions; washing their clothes; doing their "business"; and running their various businesses: boats, chai, food, cards, beads, silks, carvings, pujas, acrobatics, and the biggest business of all, begging.

Stepping into the dizzy, narrow, cobbled, muddy maze of lanes that lace the banks of the Ganga, shopkeepers constantly call for your attention and there is very little room for all the dogs and cows and people and motorbikes and cycles. The second day we were here we bumped into Luang Por Sumedho, Tan Jayanto and Daniel walking along the ghats. We all went to the house of Kabir, the much-loved Hindu/Sufi saint of the thirteenth century. What a great saint he was: a reformist and socialist for his time, too. The Swamiji was quick to tell us that Kabir was teaching the Buddha's teachings, easily seen in his poems on the deathless realization and emptiness.

We also visited nearby Sarnath, where the Buddha taught the first sermon after his enlightenment, the *Dhammacakka Sutta*, and set rolling the wheel of the Dhamma. Upon his disciples' realizing the same truth here, the Sangha of "Gone Forth Ones" was created. It is an important place to revisit and to recollect those formative events. Being a small town, Sarnath was a very pleasant relief for the senses (excluding the hairy rickshaw ride there). Our first stop was the Tibetan monastery, where we drank in the quiet peace of the Gompas atmosphere—dropping into meditation and enjoying the rippling rumbles of "Om Mani Padme Hum" in the background, massaging the nervous system and lubricating the psyche with the sweet remembrance of *amrita*, the deathless Dhamma.

March 16

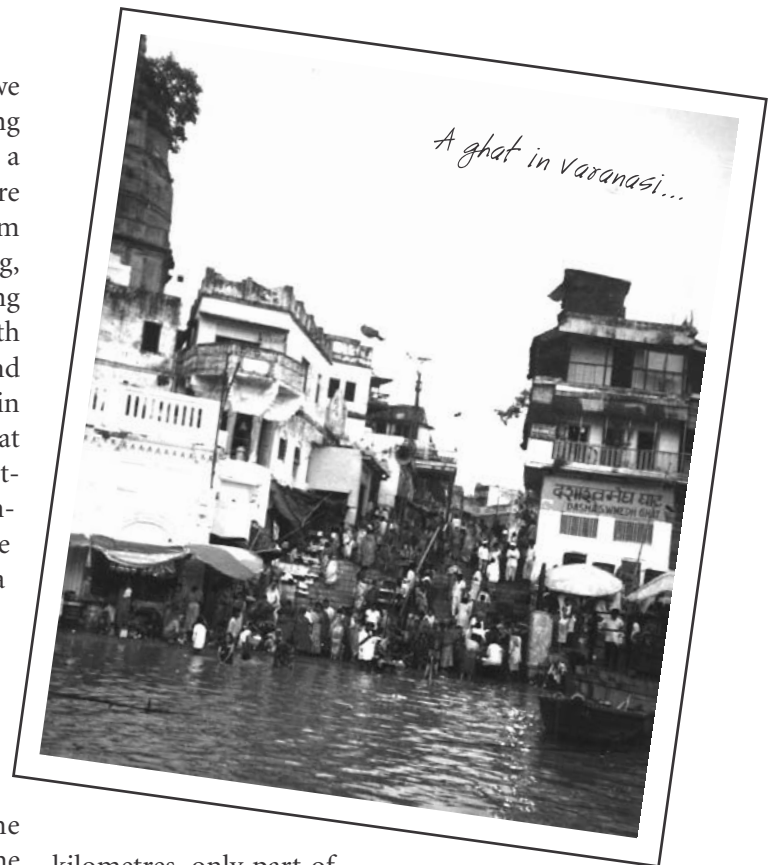
I'm writing now from the small village of Vaishali, where we are staying at the Japanese temple and peace pagoda, being beautifully hosted and taken care of. This place was once a great and prosperous city in the Buddha's time, and it was here that the Nun's Order began, with Mahapajapati walking from Kapilavattu to Vaishali, where the Buddha was staying, together with a group of women bent on asking for the Going Forth from him. It was also here that the Buddha spent his fifth rains retreat, paying several other visits during his lifetime and coming back for his last rains before the Parinibbana in Kusinara. It's amazing to read descriptions of the once great city and then to walk on its buried ruins where just a poor little village exists today, oblivious to its great past. This is a wonderful reflection on *anicca*, and how very soon we will also be crumbled and buried underfoot, the stories of our lives just a flicker in history.

There's so much to fill you in on. After Varanasi, we travelled to Bodhgaya in the state of Bihar, wanting to be settled there in time to observe the full moon, Magha Puja, under the Bodhi tree. We spent three weeks in Bodhgaya. We arrived just at the end of "the season," when the last of the Tibetan prayer festival was still happening around the Mahabodhi temple, the main place of worship where the Buddha was enlightened under the Bodhi tree. A descendent of the original Bodhi tree now stands just behind the temple, and day and night from 3:30 a.m. till 9 p.m. it is circumambulated and worshiped by innumerable pilgrims of various nationalities. It's a cacophony of chanting sounds much of the time, and a place of much coming and going. At times it's very hard to imagine the Buddha meditating here (knowing how much he enjoyed silence and solitude); but the beauty of the devotion and magnetism of the place has its own magic, and one finds oneself enjoying just being around, whatever's happening.

It was a delight when we were given permission to spend the night of the full moon of Magha in the precinct of the temple, and when 9 p.m. came to stay on and enjoy the voidness of people and the voidness of sounds. It was then that I could more easily contemplate the Buddha and his own quest and realization. It was then that it was truly magical to explore the quiet empty spaces of the temple grounds with its ancient stupas and romantic lighting: to find an empty shrine to serve as a roofless kuti for the evening, overlooking the Bodhi tree; to gaze at the full moon and stars in the dark night sky and feel so privileged to be there. I wouldn't have missed that evening for the world.

April 8

From Bodhgaya, where internet access was as easily available as mala-beads, we travelled along the worst road in the world (seriously!) to Rajgir and Nalanda. We first stopped at the ruins of Nalanda, an ancient Buddhist University-cum-monastery. It pre-dated the first Western university by hundreds of years apparently. It was huge, covering many square



kilometres, only part of it being excavated at this point in time. Eleven monasteries and several temples, as well as a huge stupa in honor of the Venerable Sariputta (whose place of birth is believed to be Nalanda), are unearthed for us to see. It was quite something to imagine—such a huge community of about 8,500 students and 1,500 teachers all living and studying here in what looks to be quite a sophisticated society. Nalanda flourished for over 700 years, producing such great scholars and practitioners as Nagarjuna, Padmasambhava and Shantideva, all of primary significance to the Tibetan lineage.

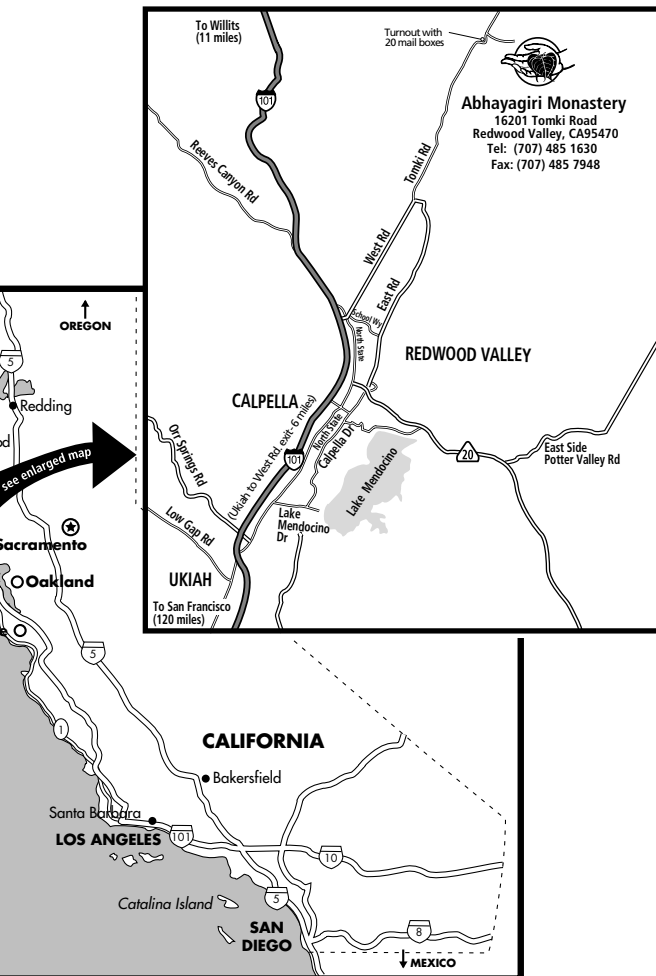
We drove on into Rajgir and settled into the Bangladesh Buddhist Vihara on excellent advice from a monk in Bodhgaya. We spent five days there, first visiting the "Veluvana," the park that King Bimbisara offered the Buddha in the first year after his enlightenment. (Gotama the wanderer had promised to go back to Rajgir to teach the king after he had found the Truth.) It's also the place where Anathapindaka first met the Buddha and realized stream entry (which was a delightful story to read whilst there!). This place was the site of the first-ever Buddhist monastery and the venue for many wonderful discourses. It is always introduced in the suttas as "the Bamboo Grove, the Squirrels Sanctuary," but now there's only a few stands of bamboo, and we didn't see any squirrels either!

This park is at the foot of Vebhara Hill, significant because of the Sattapanni cave up there, where the first Buddhist council was held with about 500 arahants after the Buddha passed away, in order to standardize the teachings on the Dhamma and discipline. We climbed up to that cave overlooking the

(continued on page 10)

WED	THU	SAT	SUN	TUE	WED
16	15	14	13	12	10
THU	FRI	SUN	MON	WED	THU
24	23	22	21	20	18
VED	FRI	SAT	MON	TUE	THU
30	30	28	28	26	25

## Directions to Abhayagiri



Take the WEST ROAD exit from 101  
 Turn right over NORTH STATE ST. and then SCHOOL WAY  
 Turn left on WEST ROAD till it reaches a T-junction. (3 miles from the exit).  
 Turn left at the "T" onto TOMKI RD. Continue for 4 miles. There will be a  
 Turn-out with 20 mailboxes on your right. The monastery entrance is  
 there.

## FEARLESS MOUNTAIN

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Mountain is the thrice-yearly newsletter of Abhayagiri Monastery, a Buddhist community in the tradition of Ajahn Chah, Ajahn Sumedho and

### May

- 2-5 Retreat with Ajahn Amaro at Bodhi Tree Dharma Center  
*Contact: Bodhi Tree, 727-392-7698, jcamero43@earthlink.net*
- 6 Monthly gathering with Ajahn Pasanno in Berkeley, CA
- 6-6/1 Ajahn Amaro traveling in Europe.
- 14 Monthly gathering in Ukiah, CA (see below).
- 15 Full Moon Day (Visakha Puja) at Abhayagiri.

### June

- 3 Monthly gathering with Ajahn Amaro in Berkeley, CA (see below)
- 8 Upasika Day at Abhayagiri.
- 11 Monthly gathering in Ukiah, CA (see below).
- 21 Daylong Retreat on Loving-kindness ("Maximum Brightness")  
 Ajahn Amaro at Spirit Rock Center, Woodacre, CA. *Contact: 415-488-0164, ext. 318, www.spiritrock.org.*
- 27-7/4 Retreat with Ajahn Pasanno in Albuquerque, NM. *Contact: 505-833-1111, www.lifetransition.com.*

### July

- 1 Monthly gathering with Ajahn Amaro in Berkeley, CA (see below)
- 9 Monthly gathering in Ukiah, CA (see below).
- 13 Full Moon Day (Asalha Puja) at Abhayagiri, Ordination
- 14 Beginning of Rains Retreat.
- 30-8/3 Family Retreat with Ajahn Amaro and others at Spirit Rock Center, Woodacre, CA. *Contact: 415-488-0164, ext. 380, www.spiritrock.org.*

### Aug

- 5 Monthly gathering with Ajahn Amaro in Berkeley, CA (see below)
- 10 Upasika Day at Abhayagiri.
- 13 Monthly gathering in Ukiah, CA (see below).
- 29-31 Spirit Rock teen weekend at Abhayagiri. *Contact: (415) 488-0164, www.spiritrock.org.*

### Sept

- 6 Daylong retreat with Ajahn Amaro at Spirit Rock Center, Woodacre, CA.

### Oct

- 5 Upasika Day (Community Work Day) at Abhayagiri.
- 10 Full Moon Day (Pavarana) at Abhayagiri. End of Rains Festival
- 19 Kathina festival at Abhayagiri.
- 24-11/2 Ten-day Retreat with Ajahn Amaro and others at Spirit Rock Center, Woodacre, CA. *Contact: 415-488-0164, ext. 366 (after 6/1), www.spiritrock.org.*

### Nov

- 7-9 Dhamma teachings with Ajahn Amaro at Friends of the Dharma, Portland, OR. *Contact: Sakula (Mary Reinard), (503) 230-1111, sakula@notjustus.com*
- 10-16 Retreat with Ajahn Amaro at Great Vow Monastery, Clatskanie, OR. *Contact: (503) 728-0654, www.greatvow.org.*

### Dec

- 7 Upasika Day at Abhayagiri.
- 21 Daylong retreat ("Nada Yoga: Entering the Silence") with Ajahn Amaro at Spirit Rock Center, Woodacre, CA. *Contact: 415-488-0164, www.spiritrock.org*

#### Every Saturday evening at Abhayagiri

Chanting, meditation & Dhamma talk, 7:30 pm.

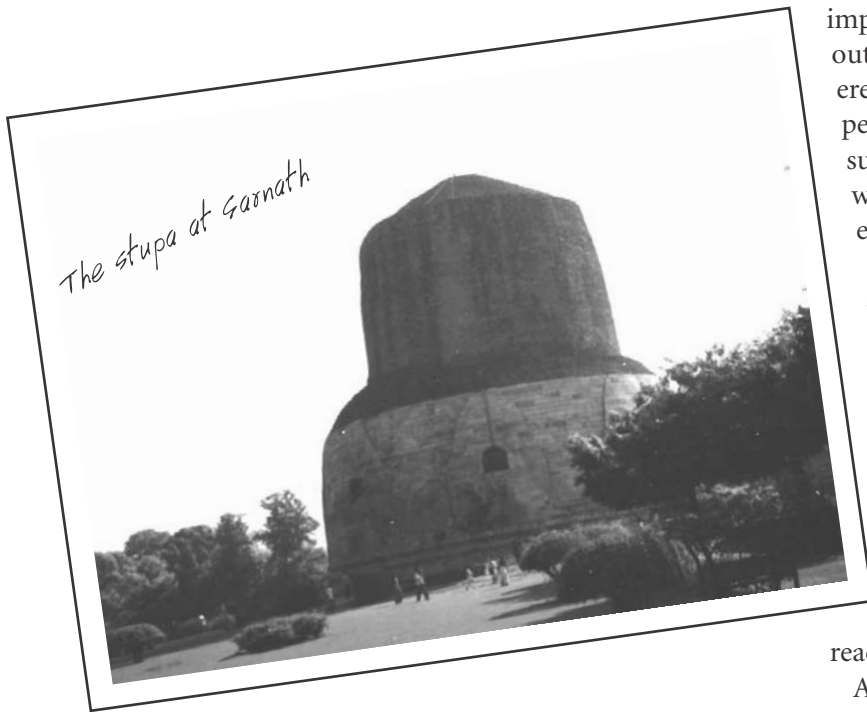
#### Every Lunar Quarter at Abhayagiri

Chanting, meditation, precepts, Dhamma talk & late night

#### First Tuesday of the month in Berkeley, CA

5:00-6:00 pm, Informal tea gathering. 7:30-9:30 pm, Meditation & Dhamma talk by monastic at the Berkeley Buddhist Monastery, 2304 McKinley.





*The Pilgrim Sisters (continued from page 7)*

expanse of Rajgir below and recollected those events that took place, again reading from the suttas to help conjure the scene in our imaginations. It was easy to imagine the Buddha surveying the countryside from up there.

Even more beautiful, however, was the scene from Gijjhakuta, the place known to us from the scriptures as Vulture's Peak, where the Buddha loved to retreat and where he gave some incredibly important teachings. This is a place of great significance to all of the Buddhist traditions. It is here that the Buddha is reputed to have taught the *Lotus Sutra*, (primary to the Japanese Sangha); the *Prajñāparamitta Sutra* (*Heart Sutra*, primary to the Tibetans and Mahayana Sangha); and also the *Surangama Sutra*. Here is also the cave where the Venerable Sariputta was enlightened whilst listening to the Buddha teaching the wanderer Dighanakha. It was certainly a delight to sit meditation here, and spend time on the mountain just looking around and contemplating.

Rising above the ruins here, on a higher peak called Ratanagiri, is the glorious peace pagoda of the Nipponzan Myohoji Order. It was also a pertinent time to be drumming and chanting for world peace, as is this order's practice: "NAMU MYO HO REN GE KYO," the essence of the *Lotus Sutra*.

From Rajgir we drove onto Vaishali (from where I last wrote), after which we moved on by car, by train and then jeep, to Kushinagar (Kusinara), the place of the Buddha's final passing, the Parinibbana. Here again was a very small and rural place, expanded only by the presence of many Buddhist viharas representing the different Buddhist countries and traditions. Surrounded by ruins of old monasteries, the main focuses are the ancient stupa and Parinibbana temple, both of which were remodelled in the 1950s (and, to our eyes at least, look incredibly ugly). The saving grace was the beautiful, large and

impressive reclining Buddha statue in the temple, carved out of a single block of ancient red sandstone (now covered in gold leaf), which emanated a most serene and peaceful presence. The creator was a true artist, to get such fine features and proportions on such a scale, and with a heart bent on Dhamma to be able to convey the essence of the scene.

After a few days in Kusinara, we went on our way and arrived, at length, in Sravasti (Savatthi). We moved into the Thai temple, which was near to the ruins of the Jetavana, "Jeta's Grove, Anathapindika's Park," which the Buddha made his base in the twentieth year of his enlightenment, spending all but one of his last 25 rains retreats here. These ruins and gardens are popular because of the remains of the Buddha's kuti, the "Ghanda kuti," which one can practice around—quite special really. So many teachings were given in this place, and again we read a few amongst us to contemplate and practice with.

After a few days we headed on for Lumbini, the last of our stops on this part of the journey to complete the traditional pilgrimage of the holy sites. On the first morning, we were invited to go drumming around Lumbini and it's surrounding villages with Sato Shoni, the abbot of the Japanese Peace Pagoda. All very keen, we set off before dawn at five, and didn't get back till nearly nine o'clock, rather exhausted and stiff after a marathon walk at a very fast pace! Drumming and chanting all the way, it felt just like almsround—instead of the bowl we held the drum, and instead of the giving and receiving of food there was the giving and receiving of blessings.

It was a pleasant and quiet environment here, with a lovely big "Bodhisattva Tree" to circumambulate, strewn with hundreds of Tibetan prayer flags and visited by many happy birds and other creatures. Just next to it is a large bathing tank where Mahamaya is said to have taken a "holy dip" after the birth of her son, the Buddha-to-be. The rest of Lumbini Garden (covering several kilometres) is home to many, many Buddhist monasteries and viharas. It has the strange air of a "created" place, not really a natural development of a village or society.

At the site of the Buddha's birth is a newly built temple, which covers the relatively newly exposed ruins, and an ancient Ashokan pillar, which was only discovered in the late 1890s, hidden by the jungle, and is what confirmed this place as the true site of the Buddha's birth. King Ashoka (ca. 2nd or 3rd centuries B.C.) played a very important part in bringing this Buddhist history to us Moderns by erecting these pillars and building many stupas to mark the places of Buddhist significance. It's quite likely they might not have been rediscovered and excavated without these testimonies to his faith.

For now, I must sign out. We send our love and shared blessings of this journey's experience.

*Ajahn Jitindriya and Sister Anandabodhi*

*(Excerpted from email updates sent from the nuns.)*

# On Pilgrimage in Thailand

## Reflections from the Journey



Photo by Thavorn

Being born and raised in Thailand, I am proud of my Thai and Buddhist cultures. That is why I wanted to show my country to my Buddhist friends in Michigan.

One day, at our regular Monday night meditation group, someone mentioned that we should take a pilgrimage trip to Thailand. My heart swelled, and I said, “Let’s go!” A group of six was formed, and we began our pilgrimage in Bangkok on New Year’s Eve 2001. We went first south, flying to Songkhla. The next day, we took a van ride to Nakorn Srithammarat, where Buddhism reached Siam (now Thailand) in the sixth century A.D. Siam then was called the Srivichai Kingdom, whose capital was at Sumatra Island (today’s Indonesia). A tablet engraved in Sanskrit has been discovered, showing that Mahayana Buddhism flourished in the kingdom for 500 years. Stupas housing the Buddha’s relics were built in both Nakorn Srithammarat and Chaiya. Our next destination was Suanmohk and Ajahn Buddhadasa’s monastery.

In the northeast, we went to Ubon, visiting Wat Pa Pong and Wat Pah Nanachat. Then we traveled further north to Nakorn Panom, paying homage to Chao Khun Dhammapariyattimuni, Ajahn Sumedho’s preceptor. We were very fortunate to be able to see him, since he passed away just a few months later. In Sakon Nakorn, at Wat Udomsomporn (Ajahn Fun’s monastery), there are about 28 nuns living and practicing. Inspired by their practice and dedication, our group decided to set up a fund to help support the nuns and their immediate needs.

After visiting many, many monasteries and Buddhist shrines and temples, we returned to Bangkok, where we paid homage to Venerable P. A. Payutto. As many will know, Ajahn Payutto has written numerous books on the modern aspects of Buddhism, many of which have been translated into English and published for free distribution.

We also visited Nakorn Pathom and the giant *chedi* erected to house the Buddha’s relics. From here, Buddhism spread to Suwannabhumi (“Golden Land”; now Myanmar) in the third century B.C.

This is a far from complete list of the places visited and the people seen. While previous trips home to Thailand were for the purpose of visiting relatives, on this trip it felt like I was visiting my relatives and teachers from past lives.

—Suliporn Surakomol

Martin Piszczalski, Linda Knudsen, Linda Longo, Suliporn Surakomol, Jane Rosebrough and Richard Smith at a large roadside Buddha-rupa

## Wat Mab Chan

I arrived at Wat Mab Chan with only a small daypack. I didn’t know what to expect. An English-speaking layman directed me to my room. The space was empty save for a raised wooden platform—my bed. For the next three days I would follow in the footsteps of the 24 monks and six pakaus (“white-robed,” non-monastics) who make up the resident community at the monastery.

All the temple’s food for the daily meal was gathered from villagers. *Pindabat*, as the almsround is called, began in the darkness far before dawn. On the steps of the temple, I sat among shadowy figures as they adjusted their ochre robes and brass bowl straps. When a villager drove up in a van, the monks quietly filed in to the vehicle.

The van dropped us off in the nearby town of Ban Phe in Rayong Province. In groups of two to four, we walked single file through the streets. Dressed in white, I fell in behind two monks, serving as the porter for “overflow” food. Lining the curb, villagers awaited. Most had large bowls of rice or small plastic bags filled with cubes of meat and vegetables. As the monks moved down the street, each participating villager stooped reverentially and humbly bowed. The monk extended his bowl, and the villager ladled the food. The same ritual repeated over and over again. No eye contact was made; no words or greetings were spoken.

The humility of the exchange brought tears to my eyes. The monks were utterly at the mercy of these villagers, who alone decided if the monks would eat that day. Still, every day, regardless of whether they felt generous or particularly pious, the villagers lined the street with their offerings. In doing so, respect was paid to the ideals embodied by the monks.

The monks, on the other hand, had no say over what was offered to them. They made no gestures indicating that one



Reminder on a tree at Wat Pah Nanachat

kind of food was more appreciated than another. They accepted what was offered with equanimity. No explicit gestures of thankfulness or gratitude were made. Still, it is common knowledge that the monastics are entirely dependent on the generosity of the lay community.

Sweeping is another major monastery activity. For hours

every day, monks armed with brooms made of brush-like branches would sweep the paved areas of the monastery. On some days, it appeared to be a futile effort. As soon as the leaves were collected into a small pile, a gust of wind would scatter them about again. The monks kept sweeping.

My mind raced to find better or more high-tech ways of doing the sweeping. Why not use a leaf blower? It would be faster and more efficient. I'm sure I wasn't alone in such thoughts. Ajahn Neng, the Wat's second-highest ranking monk, has an electrical engineering degree. Another monk has a freshly minted MBA from England. But the thought of a jet-engine roar in the gentle green hills of the monastery made me drop the idea of a modern alternative to a centuries-old custom. Without a trace of frustration, the monks talked lightly and humorously among themselves and continued sweeping.

A third temple activity etched in my mind is the evening meditation and chanting. I would watch as the monks drifted in to the large, dark meditation hall. Almost invisibly, they took their place in neat rows without saying a word. I was struck by the clarity, steadiness and total lack of chattering energy in the room. Meditating with these monks engendered a feeling of calm far greater than I'd ever experienced on any of the dozens of retreats, evening satsangs and so forth I have attended with leading rinpoches and meditation teachers in the West. —*Martin Piszczalski*

## Zero Degrees of Separation

I had been to Thailand several times before and had always felt very much “at home.” There was never a feeling of strangeness or of being in an exotic place. Everything had always felt extremely “normal”: the heat in the northeast; wading across a Bangkok street, up to my knees in flood water; watching thousands of tiny ants endlessly marching in formation around a hotel bathroom; going to the street market at six every morning to buy food to offer the monks when they came by on almsround; watching a four-and-a-half foot monitor

lizard easing across a rural road. It all felt exactly as it should. Not too “this,” not too “that”—but perfectly acceptable and almost ordinary, just the way it was.

And yet the journey I made in Thailand last year was more than just a journey. I had not thought of it as a pilgrimage (indeed, I doubt I could have defined the word adequately), but in some deep, unspoken sense, that is what it became.

I had flown to Bangkok to meet with a printer about a Dhamma book that was about to go on press. After a week in Bangkok and some days in Chiang Mai, I met up with five friends from our meditation group in Michigan upon their arrival in Bangkok. And on New Year's Day, thanks to the planning of our dear friend Suliporn Surakomol, a long-talked-about odyssey throughout Thailand began.

When I sent Ajahn Pasanno a list of the temples visited, the monastics seen, the events happened upon, he responded that I had seen more in six-and-a-half weeks than he had seen in 20 years. He said that I must be glowing from the experience. I was. And I am.

The glow comes not from the accumulation of some sort of checklist of temples and monastics visited—Suan Mokh, check; Ajahn Maha Boowa, check; Wat Pah Pong, check; Venerable P. A. Payutto, check—or even from seeing old friends. It came, and comes, from a feeling I can only describe as “connectedness,” as “zero degrees of separation.”

Of meeting the eyes of Luang Por Khampun, a disciple of Ajahn Mun, and of feeling something that I have no words to describe—but was and is so palpable that I can feel it now as I type. He spoke no English. I speak no Thai. Words were unnecessary. My heart, my existence, changed.

Of feeling irresistibly drawn to Ajahn Pannavaddho at Wat Pah Ban Taad. Then, several months and 12,000 miles later, discovering several things that he had done many years before that resulted in affecting my life very powerfully. (I did not know this when I met him.)

Of walking into one forest monastery—one among the very many that we visited—and of being overcome, overwhelmed with a feeling of “arriving home”; of being at perfect peace; of being content, at that moment, to stay there for the rest of my life.

I'm not much given to flights of fancy or metaphysical imaginings, as most people who know me would attest. And common sense would say that my journey was only a journey.

And yet . . . and yet . . . —*Richard Smith*

## Three Gifts

More than a year after my return from our Thailand pilgrimage I remember well three beautiful gifts from that experience. The first was the gift of metta, or loving-kindness, which so many Thais, including Suliporn and her relatives and friends, showed us in helping us to experience the Dhamma treasures of their country. This meant many hours making arrangements for our pilgrimage and great efforts to present us to Thailand's most respected Dhamma elders, translating

for us on many occasions and rising long before dawn or staying up nights preparing offerings for us to present at monasteries we visited.

The second unforgettable gift was a visit to Wat Pah Nanachat, where I sat for a few minutes with a fellow Dhamma student I had first met at the Insight Meditation Society during several long retreats. Formerly known as Mark van Vliet, and now as Venerable Satimanto, my friend was here training in the almost 2,600-year-old tradition of the Buddha and his followers. I was overwhelmed with joy and awe for Venerable Satimanto's opportunity and personal choice to follow this path and the support he was receiving from the Thais and the community of benefactors who give so generously to the monastery and the monks.

The last gift that lingers in my memory was the opportunity to visit twice the Sathira-Dhammasathan Center founded by Reverend Sansanee Sthirasuta in Bangkok, an island of tranquility in the chaotic sea of that city. The meditation teachings and hospitality of the nuns and the volunteers were unforgettable. A Hmong nun of six rains generously spent time with myself and another English-speaking Thai visitor. I was so impressed by this beautiful woman's command of English as perhaps a fourth language; her skill in communicating the precious Dhamma to us in a clear and simple way; and the tranquility and kindness emanating from her being. It makes me so happy to know that such good training opportunities exist for women who wish to follow the renunciant way of life in Thailand and for laypeople who need to balance a worldly way of life with meditation and Dhamma teachings.

—Jane Rosebrough

## Contrasts

My January 2002 experience in Thailand was less a retreat than a full-fledged assault on the six sense doors. The reality of modern Thailand, springing from centuries of cross-cultural influences (i.e., Indian, Chinese, and most recently European and U.S.), is difficult to encapsulate.

From the bustle of a crowded street in downtown Bangkok, one can step through open gates into a moonlit temple courtyard whose paving is interspersed with trees and hear the chanting of the Patimokkha drifting through open windows and doors as the heat of a January day cools. All outside street noises seem to disappear. After bouncing in a van on rutted roads cutting through miles of rice stubble pierced by the burned stumps of former jungle giants, one can feel the temperature drop as the remaining forest canopy sheltering a forest monastery filters the harsh light into a sun-dappled carpet on the walking paths below. Wind rustles through tree leaves, and bamboo grown to the heights of three-story buildings knocks together. One hears the sound of twig brooms sweeping the trails after the main meal of the day.

Excavations of a Bronze-age culture predating Mesopotamia, ruins of Khmer structures, the chiming of small suspended bells rung by those circumambulating ancient

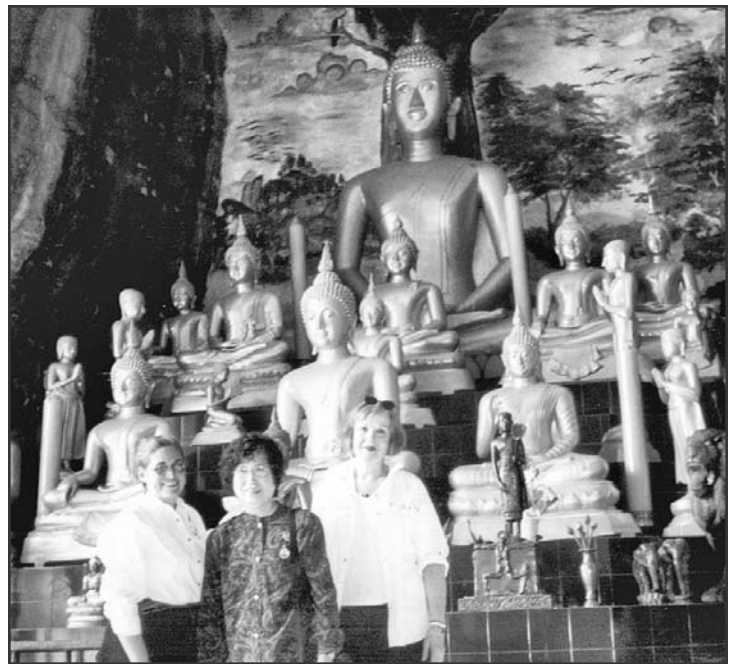


Photo by Richard Smith

Linda K., Suliporn, and Jane; Buddha rupa cave, N.E. Thailand

*chedis* containing Buddha relics, old monasteries falling into ruin, more modern ones abandoned when miracle-performing monks have passed on.

Massive concrete piers rising to support highways and the Skytrain in metropolitan Bangkok; limestone buttes riddled with caves rising from plains of the northeastern province of Isaan. If a location is remote and difficult to get to, it's an ideal site for a monastic meditation community. Peasant lay supporters will come and settle to offer almsfood and other requisites. Roads will be built. After "discovery" by the urban elite, the merit-makers will arrive by the air-conditioned busload on the weekends. Monastic "fanzines"—the spiritual equivalent to those dedicated to well-known entertainment personalities—appear. Well, there goes the jungle.

Blessings on all translators—from Pali to Thai, from Pali to English, from Thai to English—as I felt incredibly constrained by my inability to ask even the simplest question or make the least request in Thai. Smiles were universal. One well-placed *wai*, with hands cupped over the heart in happy salute can set a wave through a crowd rivaling anything seen at a sporting event stateside.

Emailing my work supervisor from an internet café in Bangkok to find that I would be working the midnight shift, still on "Thai time," allowing for the twelve-hour time difference. Back home, months going through Dhamma books received as gifts, lingering over photographs taken, searching the internet for English-language translations of additional *desana* by monastic teachers met, enquiries through Thai friends concerning the mae chis, whose practice won our respect. Practice seems much more solid and real after experiencing a culture which has supported the Sangha protecting the Vinaya-Dhamma for centuries.

Amazed by the great good fortune that friendship gave me.

—Linda Knudsen

## Building a Monastery on Faith and Gratitude

### Sanghapala Foundation Financial Report

“Those who are wise, generous and free from selfishness give at the appropriate times. . . . Those who likewise show appreciation or perform acts of service make no lesser offering. . . . Thus in giving, the heart is unbounded.” —from the *Anumodana* chant

Just think: Only seven years ago, no Abhayagiri Buddhist Monastery stood on Tomki Road in Redwood Valley, California. A small house and garage stood at number 16201, and the shading trees, rolling hills and rushing creeks so many of us have come to know and love. But there was no monastery. No monks, nuns or anagarikas. No Dhamma teachings, winter retreats or all-night sittings.

It’s an uplifting and humbling experience to stand in the middle of what we now call Abhayagiri and look out over this place of powerful and gentle refuge. Moved by faith and gratitude, thousands of people have helped build this fledgling monastery, with offerings of time, energy and money.

There are many ways the lay community’s donations continue to support the monastery. We offer food, meals, goods and supplies, services and money. We provide for publishing, building projects, a nuns’ fund and general support. Every contribution is important. In fact, small donations (with the median being \$100) when added together completely cover the daily operating costs of the monastery.

In 2002, Abhayagiri received a very special and unexpected gift—the donation of Casa Serena, the house and property adjoining Abhayagiri—from the community’s good friend Mary Curran, who died in May. Because the property was not yet entirely paid for, the Sanghapala Foundation board of

directors, which serves as fiscal steward for the monastery, found it necessary to use reserves and funds set aside for building projects to pay off the mortgage. We trust the faith and generosity that brought the monastery building projects this far will help to replenish our building fund. Constructing a larger meditation hall and additional facilities have become even more important aspirations given the number of requests the abbots must regularly decline from people who wish to ordain at Abhayagiri.

Since the time of the Buddha, some 2,500 years ago, support for the monastic life has been provided entirely through *dana*, or generosity, in the form of donations from lay supporters. Theravada monastics, because of their vows of renunciation, cannot handle money, cook, drive or do certain other basic things for themselves. If lay people do not provide for them, they will go without. If we do not feed them, they will not eat. If we do not pay the utility bills, they will have no heat. If we value the presence of the monastic community, it is important for us to remember that they need our support.

Of course, the relationship that develops through the lay community’s commitment is one of mutual support. The monastery is a spiritual home not just for the monastics who live at Abhayagiri, but for laypeople as well. The teachings preserved at the monastery—as well as guest accommodations, food, books and retreats—are all offered to us freely. Abhayagiri belongs to all of us.

Abhayagiri does not fundraise or generate income through sales or services. Instead, this monastery is a living, evolving example of what happens when people act from deep in their hearts to support what matters most in this life—the gift of Dhamma. ❖

*For more information about the financial report, contact board members Catherine Direen (cdireen@pacbell.net) or Larry Restel (larryrestel@hotmail.com).*



## Bicycle Pilgrimage ~ Sept. 20-21

The Buddhist Bicycle Pilgrimage rolls again in 2003. Following last year’s success, a handful of enthusiastic participants have joined together to independently organize another inspiring journey. Join fellow riders, volunteers and monastics as we venture from Spirit Rock Center to the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas to Abhayagiri over the span of two days. Don’t miss this opportunity to build community, experience the challenges of pilgrimage, and enjoy the great outdoors all at the same time!

**For more information (and photos!), visit [www.dharmawheels.org](http://www.dharmawheels.org) or email [buddhistbike@yahoo.com](mailto:buddhistbike@yahoo.com).**

Following are Sanghapala Foundation financial statements for the past two years. We are happy to report that the generous support of the lay community continues to allow Abhayagiri Monastery to operate “in the black” and to accumulate some funds for future building projects. We feel it is important to disseminate this information among the lay community, since we are the ones who provide the material and financial resources to sustain and develop the monastery. Thanks go to us all for our invaluable contributions toward creating Abhayagiri!

## Revenue

	2002		2001	
	Amount	%	Amount	%
General Donations	\$233,519	41	\$261,269	66
Sittings & Groups	18,536	3	12,057	3
Berkeley Sittings	2,738	<1	2,393	1
Ukiah Sittings	2,387	<1	374	<1
In-Kind (Casa Serena)	129,727	23	0	0
Kathina	158,085	28	83,596	21
Spirit Rock Daylongs	12,529	2	20,731	5
10-Day Retreat (net)	4,677	1	12,307	3
Bicycle Pilgrimage	1,842	<1	0	0
Interest Revenue	2,391	<1	3,748	1
<b>Total Donations</b>	<b>566,431</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>396,475</b>	<b>100</b>

*Notes to Revenue Amounts:* In 2002, the Sangha began offering monthly teachings in Ukiah. The in-kind donation is the value of Casa Serena less the amount of mortgage due. The annual Kathina ceremony continues to draw generous support from donors in Thailand: \$130,000 in 2002 and \$70,000 in 2001. If you have wondered whether small donations help, please note that donations under \$1,000 fully support our operating budget and the median donation is about \$100.

## Expenditures

	2002		2001	
	Amount	%	Amount	%
Maintenance & Repair	26,086	8	21,936	9
Office	7,163	2	3,753	2
Publishing/Duplication	12,803	4	13,165	5
Medical & Community	13,607	4	19,984	8
Accounting & Legal	525	<1	2,125	1
Taxes & Fees	1,190	<1	936	<1
Telephone/Utilities	11,671	3	11,377	5
Travel	13,964	4	13,367	5
Vehicle	8,302	2	6,544	3
Insurance/Interest	13,058	4	3,660	1
Capital Projects	68,872	20	147,409	60
Casa Serena Loan/Interest	169,216	49	0	0
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>346,458</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>244,257</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Net Revenue</b>	<b>219,973</b>		<b>152,218</b>	

*Notes to Expenditure Amounts:* Spending on building projects was lower in 2002 than in previous years as we gathered funds for our next large building project, the first cloister building, which will allow us to complete Phase I of our development plan. (Once Phase I is complete, we will then be allowed by the county to accommodate more monastics, trainees and lay visitors.) Our intention for 2003 is to build an extensive retaining wall and foundation for the cloister building. Due to the conditions on the mortgage for Casa Serena, we could not assume the loan. The mortgage company allowed us nine months before requiring payment, and then in January 2003 we retired the loan. In order to do this we received a no-interest loan and used reserves set aside for building projects. As of this date we owe \$150,000 to repay the loan and replace the reserves. Casa Serena is a wonderful offering, but it has temporarily shifted our priorities. ♥

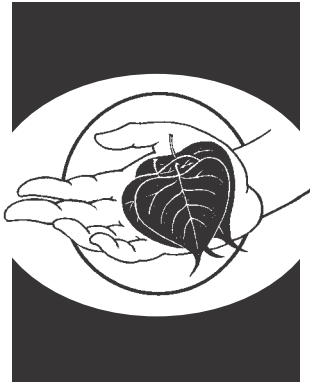
## How Else Can You Help?

Our monastery is supported entirely by voluntary donations. In addition to financial contributions, some people like to support the monastery either by volunteering service or by donation of material goods. If you would like to help out by volunteering labor, please contact Abhayagiri, and the “work monk” will be glad to discuss how you can help. If you would like to contribute material goods, we would be glad to send you a copy of the current “wish list.”

SANGHAPALA FOUNDATION

# ABHAYAGIRI MONASTERY

16201 TOMKI ROAD  
REDWOOD VALLEY CA 95470



**SPRING 2003**

## **FEARLESS MOUNTAIN**

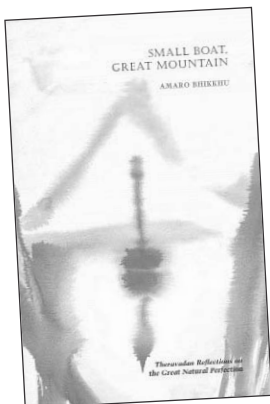
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*Announcing 2003 dates*  
**Upasika Program**  
*(See back cover)*

*A New Dhamma Publication from Abhayagiri*



### **Small Boat, Great Mountain** Theravadan Reflections on the Natural Great Perfection

*by Ajahn Amaro*

This new book springs from talks given by Ajahn Amaro on a retreat he co-led in 2000 with Tibetan Dzogchen master Tsoknyi Rinpoche.

Paperback  
216 pages

*Copies are available at Abhayagiri or can be obtained by mail. Please contact the monastery to request one.*

## 2003 **Upasika** program

**April 20\***  
(Commitment Ceremony)

**June 8**

**August 10**

**October 5**  
(Community Work Day)

**December 7**

Join your fellow community members for a day of practice and study at the monastery.

Schedule:

**10:30 am**  
Daily meal offering  
(bring a dish to share)  
*optional*

**1:00–5:30 pm**  
Chanting, meditation,  
Refuges/Precepts,  
Dhamma teachings  
& Discussion

\*For continuing and new program participants.