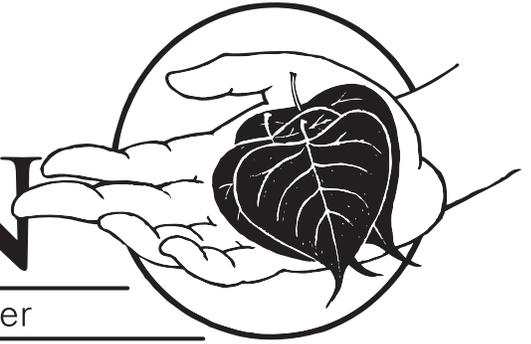


FEARLESS MOUNTAIN

The Abhayagiri Buddhist Monastery Newsletter



Summer 2008•2551/2552

Volume 13, Number 2



Nathan, Steven, Sunny, Faith and Brandon, and Bennett

Friendship

By Ajahn Pasanno.

A Saturday night talk, Abhayagiri Monastery, April 26, 2008

Today we have had a very special ceremony for Todd Tansuhaj, a young boy who died about two years ago and who was a novice here just prior to his hospitalization for an illness. His parents and friends have come for a memorial service. Some of them came last year. A couple more have come this year as well. So that all together, we have Todd's parents, a cousin and several friends. During the day we had a couple of little ceremonies to commemorate Todd's passing.

I was thinking about a theme of friendship, because Todd's friends have made the effort to be here and Todd's parents have made the effort to bring them. His friends were keen to come here and to do some kind of memorial commemoration for their friend, Todd. The theme of friendship is an important one to be considering as we live in the world. We were born into this world. We have a shorter or longer lifespan in this world. We don't live separately from other people. We have the association with others as human beings. And, the friendships that we make are the ones that sustain us, support us, give us a sense of connection to each other.

During the ceremony out at the Cool Oaks today, Bennett who, in recollecting Todd, was certainly missing his friend, was also remembering the good qualities of his generosity, curiosity, and humor. It is the qualities that we remember of each other as we think about our friends. It's the qualities that are important, and those are the things that are actually carried on—various qualities. So, for ourselves as well, trying to recollect what kind of qualities to bring into our own lives. How do we want to associate with others? And how are we able to relate to each other in ways of friendship? In particular, in Buddhist teachings, the Buddha places a great importance on spiritual friendship or admirable friendship, Kalyāṇamitta. When we have noble friends or have good friends, those are the things that help support us in our own life and in our own aspiration for living skillfully.

There is a very famous discourse or teaching where the Buddha was approached by his attendant, śnanda. śnanda had spent the day in solitude. When he was meditating during that day, he had an insight and was really

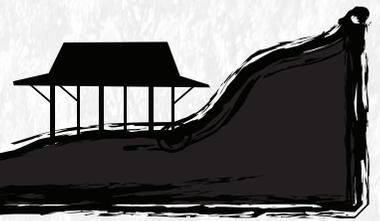
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Contributors: The Sangha, Ajahn Pasanno, Ajahn Amaro, Mettika, and Paul Breiter

From the Monastery



Life at Abhayagiri Monastery alternates between periods of stillness and activity. The last installment of “From the Monastery” concluded with the Abhayagiri residents in the heart of the winter retreat, listening to teachings from The Island, Ajahn Pasanno and Ajahn Amaro’s upcoming compilation of the Buddha’s teachings on Nibbāna. By mid-March, the winter rains had ceased, the weather was warming, and spring was in full bloom. In response to the rising energy and approaching work year, the abbots reinstated all-day community meditation practice and began to read *The Stillness of Being*, a short compilation of talks by Ajahn Viradhammo which emphasizes the application of the teachings in activity.

COMMUNITY

When the winter retreat officially ended on March 31, the Abhayagiri community consisted of the two abbots, eight other bhikkhus, two sēmaneras, two anagērikas, the five retreat helpers, and Debbie Stamp. After receiving heartfelt thanks from the Abhayagiri residents for their dedicated service, the retreat helpers Nancy, Dukata, Ian, Josh, and Ben departed a few days after the retreat ended. Ian expressed the intention to return in May for an extended stay and possible anagērika training. On April 7, Ajahn Sudanto returned from Vimutti Monastery in New Zealand, where he had spent the winter. During his time there, Ajahn Sudanto helped the abbot, Ajahn Chandako, finalize the design and begin construction of an octagonal yurt and contributed to the Vimutti Monastery website. Because he had little opportunity for retreat in New Zealand, Ajahn Sudanto chose to spend the next month practicing on his own rather than immediately rejoining the Abhayagiri work scene. During the

winter retreat, Anagērika Michael came to the decision to leave Abhayagiri Monastery; he departed on April 6. The community extends its appreciation for Anagērika Michael’s many contributions including cooking, driving, managing finances, and communicating with guests in Thai. Last we heard he was cooking for over 200 people as the assistant kitchen manager at Tassajara Zen Center.

Michael’s departure left Anagērika Nic as the kitchen manager and only resident male driver during the month of April. The rest of the community did their best to ease Nic’s workload during this time. Ian returned as planned in early May, and Louis Gegenhuber and Carl Braun joined the Abhayagiri community as long-term lay guests shortly thereafter. Abhayagiri gained two more long-term lay guests in early June when Janejira Sutanonpaiboon accepted the position of Casa Serena caretaker and Christine Lem replaced Anagērika Nic as kitchen manager. Both women plan to stay at Abhayagiri through August.

Tan Ñēniko completed his fifth rains retreat last October, thereby becoming a majjhima (middle) bhikkhu. The majjhima years of bhikkhu life are often spent training on one’s own, and Tan Ñēniko decided to return to Thailand, where he had spent his third rains retreat, to deepen his meditation practice and walk tudong. He plans to spend at least two years in Thailand. We miss Tan Ñēniko’s cheerful presence and immense help with Abhayagiri building projects and send him our best wishes for fruitful practice.

Two ordinations took place at Abhayagiri on July 8: Anagērika Nic became Sēmanera Thitapañño and Ian went forth from the home life as an anagērika. Sēmanera Thitapañño’s parents traveled here from Maryland to attend the ceremony, and after the ceremony his long-time mentor Bhante Gunaratana gave an inspiring talk centered on the Ten Subjects for Frequent Recollection by One Who Has Gone Forth—a teaching given by the Buddha for monks and nuns to recollect daily (see page 40 of the



Ajahn Maha Prasert, Ajahn Pasanno, and the Bhikkhu Sangha during Ven. Cunda’s ordination



The monks and nuns at this year's Western Buddhist Monastic Gathering held at Shasta Abbey

Abhayagiri Chanting Book available at www.abhayagiri.org/pdf/books/ChantingBook.pdf). More information about Bhante G's visit will appear in the next issue of Fearless Mountain.

EVENTS

On April 25, Patriya and Chusak Tansuhaj, the parents of Todd (Piyasilo) Tansuhaj, arrived at Abhayagiri along

shared memories of him, and the community of monks recited blessing chants. That evening, the children listened attentively to Ajahn Pasanno's reflections about the value of friendship (the featured talk in this issue).

May 22 saw what we believe to be the largest gathering of bhikkhus yet at Abhayagiri. They came to participate in the ordination of Abhayagiri's newest bhikkhu, Tan Cunda. Three senior monks in the Ajahn Chah tradition arrived days before the event: Ajahn Jayanto from Amaravati Monastery, Ajahn Kusalo, the second monk at Tisarana Monastery in Ottawa, and Ajahn Sona from Birken Monastery. The most senior monk in attendance was Ajahn Maha Prasert from Wat Buddhansorn, the Thai temple in Fremont. Rev. Heng Sure from the Berkeley

Buddhist Monastery and Rev. Jin Yong from the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas represented the Chinese Buddhist tradition. Including the eleven resident bhikkhus and Ajahn Maha Prasert's attendant, a total of eighteen fully-ordained monks participated in Tan Cunda's upasampada. Many of Tan Cunda's family and friends attended, including his parents, stepmother,

and five siblings. After the ordination, Ajahn Sona gave a discourse which likened developing the mind to cultivating and protecting a garden.

TRAVELS

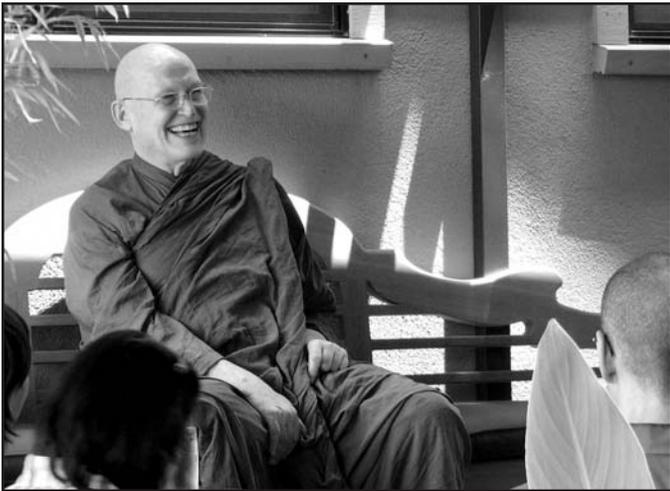
On April 7, Ajahn Amaro departed Abhayagiri to begin a six-week excursion to Europe. His trip began with four days of meetings at Amaravati Monastery. After spending time with family in England, he travelled to Santacittarama Monastery in Rieti, Italy. While in Italy, he visited Rome and Padua and led a five-day silent retreat. He then returned to England to begin an eighteen-day tudong (walking pilgrimage) with Nick Scott to honor the 25th anniversary of their walk from Chithurst to Harnham in 1983. They retraced several portions of the 1983 route and re-connected with many people who had aided their original journey, some of whom recollected how the initial pilgrimage had spurred their interest in Buddhadhamma (see article beginning on page 10). On the last day of the pilgrimage, Ajahn Amaro's left foot gave out from overuse. Upon his return to Abhayagiri Monastery, the significantly less mobile Ajahn reflected on the changes he observed and the unreliable nature of memory, perception and the body.

(Continued on next page)



New monk's cabin under construction

with a group of six of Todd's friends and one of the friends' parents to observe the second anniversary of Todd's death. (Todd ordained as a novice for a week in May 2005 in preparation for upcoming medical treatment.) The next day, they enthusiastically swept the Abhayagiri trails, and then gathered that afternoon at Cool Oaks where Todd's ashes are interred. Todd's family and friends



Luang Por Sumedho receiving guests at Abhayagiri during his recent visit

Shortly after Tan Cunda's ordination, Ajahn Pasanno spent two weeks camping in the Alaska wilderness with five lay people from Portland Friends of the Dhamma. He appreciated the opportunity to travel and meditate with a group of Buddhist practitioners. The spaciousness and grandeur of the rugged environment reminded him of the smallness and insignificance of human beings.

Ajahn Viradhammo invited a senior monk from Abhayagiri to come to Tisarana Monastery to help run the monastery while Ajahn Kusalo was away in June. Ajahn Karunadhammo gratefully accepted this opportunity for a three-week break from his responsibilities as guestmonk and health-care coordinator at Abhayagiri. He appreciated the good-hearted lay supporters and quiet, low-key environment at Tisarana.

TEACHINGS

On May 7, Ajahn Pasanno, Tan C€g€nado, Tan Sampaj€no, S€manera Cunda, S€manera Kacc€na, and Debbie Stamp paid their respects to the elder meditation teacher Luang Ta Chi at Wat Buddhanusorn. He gave a Dhamma talk emphasizing the four foundations of mindfulness.

Ajahn Amaro gave a series of three talks beginning May 21 titled "Violence and Non-Violence: Working with

Conflict" at Yoga Mendocino in Ukiah. On May 26, Ajahn Amaro gave Dhamma reflections to about 1,000 people as a guest speaker at the annual Olema Vedanta interfaith celebration. Ajahn Sona, Ajahn Yatiko, Ajahn Sudanto, and Tan Cunda accompanied Ajahn Amaro to the event, where they had the opportunity to converse with Rev. Heng

Sure and Houston Smith. After the interfaith celebration, Ajahn Sudanto flew to Kentucky to attend the third Buddhist-Catholic Monastic Gathering at Gethsemane Abbey. The theme of this four-day event was Monasticism and the Environment, and Ajahn Sudanto enjoyed learning what other communities are doing to reduce their environmental impact.

From June 23 to June 27, Ajahn Pasanno, Ajahn Amaro, and Tan Sampaj€no along with Ajahn Candasiri and Ajahn šnandabodhi (senior nuns from Amaravati visiting Abhayagiri along with Luang Por Sumedho)

attended the Western Buddhist Monastic Gathering held at Shasta Abbey. The gathering's formal sessions focused on the education and training of newcomers to monastic culture, but the Abhayagiri attendees also found informal discussions with fellow monastics to be of great value. They were impressed by the sincerity and dedication of monastics from other Buddhist traditions.

LUANG POR SUMEDHO'S VISIT

The highlight of the summer was Luang Por Sumedho's visit to Abhayagiri in June. Luang Por arrived in San Diego in late May where he visited his parents' graves and Metta Forest Monastery. He flew to San Francisco on June 5 and began teaching a ten-day retreat at Spirit Rock retreat with Ajahn Amaro and the Amaravati siladhar s Ajahn Candasiri and Ajahn šnandabodhi the next day. Ajahn Sudanto, Tan Ahimsako, Tan Kassapo, Anag€rika Nic, and Debbie Stamp also attended the retreat. Luang Por's retreat teachings repeatedly highlighted insight into the first three fetters (personality view, attachment to social conventions and language, and doubt) which bind us to suffering. The retreatants returned to Abhayagiri on June 15. Ajahn Pasanno



Ven. Cunda receiving his alms bowl from his mother Ila



Bhante Gunaratana with Sāmanera Thitapañño

happily offered his kuti to Luang Por, who considered his accommodations “as good as it gets in the human realm.”

Luang Por emerged from the solitude of the forest to give teachings on numerous occasions. On the full-moon observance night of June 18, Luang Por described inclusive, awakened awareness in a Dhamma hall filled with people including Ayya Tath loka, Bhikkhuni Suddhamma, Bhikkhuni Sudinna, and Bhikkhuni Sobhana. On June 22, Luang Por described the meaning of the Three Refuges at a public talk at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas translated into Chinese by Rev. Heng Sure. In his June 28 Dhamma talk, Luang Por reminded us that attachment to the conditioned world is attachment to death. In addition to these formal talks, Luang Por also hosted several long Dhamma question and answer sessions after the meal.

Ten Spirit Rock teachers visited Abhayagiri to receive teachings from Luang Por from June 18 to June 20, and Board members of Saranaloka (the foundation supporting siladhar s in the United States) met with him June 21.

DEVELOPMENT

The long-awaited Dhamma Hall renovation project began in mid-April with the removal of the water-damaged floor. Drywall was replaced and insulation added on two walls. Tan Cēgēnando designed and implemented an energy-efficient

(Continued on page 13)

Tales from Varapañño

Ajahn Sumedho and Ven. Varapañño Visit Forest Ajahns

By Paul Breiter

February, 1976. It was that ominous time of year when hot season could begin at any moment. I was lolling around the kuti, trying to shake off early-afternoon lethargy, when someone came to tell me to pack up my alms bowl (the bhikkhu’s suitcase)—Ajahn Sumedho was inviting me to accompany him on a trip around the Northeast.

Every year Ajahn Sumedho would go to pay respects to his preceptor in Nong Khai province. In the past he always went on foot, but now he was abbot of the newly established Bung Wai International Forest Monastery, and a lay supporter from town had offered to take him by car this time.

We did the afternoon chores as usual. There was a high-spirited send-off, as the junior monks made coffee, then we went to bathe and came back to wait for the car.

The “car” was actually a pickup truck; Ajahn Sumedho sat in front with the driver, Dong, a young Chinese man from Ubon city, and Ven. Jagaro and I sat in back with Dong’s friend. By the time we left the monastery, evening was upon us.

an open air sala set into a huge cave. We were greeted and taken to meet Ajahn Juen.

The sala was made of a gorgeous hardwood. Ajahn Juen greeted us cordially and asked about the climb. We told him it was a workout, and he said, “If you’re not used to it, you can’t make it without stopping.” We remarked on the sala, and he told us it was a rare wood—no doubt one of Southeast Asia’s vanishing hardwoods—for which special permits are needed, and that a lay supporter in government had arranged it for the monastery. Ajahn Juen also told us that some foreign engineers had been consulted on building the monastery, and their professional judgment was that it couldn’t be done in that location. He then invited us to go bathe and get set up in some of the nearby kutis. Ven. Jagaro and I shared one, and Ajahn Sumedho was given another.

It was Wan Phra (the lunar observance day). No one had invited us to join the Uposatha ceremony for the recitation of the Patimokkha (monks’ discipline), so we did our own three-monk ritual in the evening. Later on a

We were in hill country now, and this monastery was built high up on one large hill, what passes for a mountain in Thailand.

One of our stops was in Beung Gan district, at the monastery of Ajahn Juen, Wat Phu Tok. We were in hill country now, and this monastery was built high up on one large hill, what passes for a mountain in Thailand. Our laymen dropped us off and pointed out the way up to the monastery. It was a killer trek, straight up. We had to stop to catch our breath along the way. When we got near the top, there was a clearing with some small kutis and

bell rang and we went to the sala.

After the chanting, similar everywhere in Thailand, Ajahn Juen gave a Dhamma talk. He began by speaking about the snare of the hunter. It was heady, penetrating stuff to hear, sitting there in the dim light and the stillness of the evening. The next morning, Ven. Jagaro and I went to the sala to find out where and when to go on pindapat (alms round), and Ajahn Juen was

(Continued on next page)

sitting there alone. He seemed deep in the recesses of his own being, chewing betel nut, sitting calmly. We got the required info from him, and as we left, Ven. Jagaro asked me, "Don't you feel he's like Luang Por?" There was that same sense one often got from Ajahn Chah that he was presenting a persona, doing an act, while an unfathomable presence shone through from beneath the mask.

We took our leave after the meal and headed off to see Ajahn Fun. There was a nice easy feeling about Ajahn Fun's monastery. It seemed like it existed mostly to make his wonderful presence available to the faithful, and that his strength and grace waves carried everyone and everything along. He received visitors in the daytime and spoke every night without fail, after chanting service and meditation.

Dong had told us, in the somewhat touching, wide-eyed fashion of non-practicing lay devotees, that in Ajahn Mun's monastery, Ajahn Tate and Ajahn Fun were the senior disciples. When Ajahn Mun gave a talk, those two would sit by him and examine the minds of the monks and novices as they listened. If anyone wandered off, they would catch them and call them back. As we sat and meditated in the raised wooden s l (a humble affair considering the exalted status of the abbot), I was uneasy about the glowing, mountainous Ajahn possibly reading my thoughts.

After the meditation, Ajahn Fun took notice of us and engaged Ajahn Sumedho in a brief conversation. He asked him if his meditation had been peaceful. Ajahn Sumedho replied that

it was, and then Ajahn Fun went on to ask Ven. Jagaro and me. Peaceful some, not peaceful some, we replied.

"Nae!" exclaimed Ajahn Fun. "Why only partly peaceful?" And then he launched into the evening desan€ (Dhamma talk), which worked its way into his trademark theme, the repetition of "Buddho."

Buddho, the One Who Knows, is a standard meditation in Thailand, but no one was more renowned for teaching it than Ajahn Fun. I think his one Western disciple, simply known as Tahn Don, had told me that Ajahn Fun taught on Buddho every night, and as I sat there, I could well imagine that he did just that, presenting Buddho in a different way each time. Yet there was nothing contrived about it; his words had the authentic ring of someone who speaks from direct experience and has strong confidence in what he is expounding. Ajahn Fun was certainly one of the most charismatic and widely loved of Ajahn Mun's disciples.

We were on the road again, off to meet Ajahn Sumedho's upajjhaya (preceptor), Chao Khun Dhammapariyattimuni, in Nong Khai city. It was evening when we arrived. The Chao Khun was a lovely man, and it was touching to see Ajahn Sumedho's ongoing devotion to and gratitude for him. We had a relaxed conversation and went to sleep soon afterwards, as we were getting up in a few hours so that we could travel early the next morning.



One other memorable visit we made on a different occasion was at Kilometer 29 on the road from Ubon to Amnatcharoen. Ajahn Sumedho, Ven. Santacitto, and I were on a day trip with some Bung Wai laypeople to visit some of the branch monasteries, and they

there was a brief interval of silence. Por Yoo, the Bung Wai village headman, turned to the laywomen and said, "Do you women have anything to ask the Ajahn?"

"What's the matter, you men don't have mouths?" came the response.

There was some laughter, I suspect as much at the Poo Yai Bahn being shown up as at the humor of the response, and then Ajahn Pyrote began an informal, rambling discourse, much in the way that Luang Por Chah would.

He urged the lay folk to practice correct speech. "The mouth is a weapon," he said. "Even though it's only sound, our speech can bring people happiness or pain. It can make us loved or hated." He covered a few other things. He talked about perception: "A flower for a child is an object of play. An adolescent will want to offer it to his sweetheart. For a grownup, it's something to sell. And an elderly person thinks of offering it in p™j . One flower, different meanings."

Thirty years later, those simple words still stay with me. It's a beautiful example of the Forest Lineage way of teaching Dhamma, using the objects and vocabulary of everyday life to transmit the timeless truths that the Buddha taught. Luang Por Chah once told me not to think in terms of profound or shallow, and indeed it would be hard to pigeonhole such a teaching as Ajahn Pyrote gave as simple or profound, deep or common. There's not much to the words, but they get right to the heart of all our experience.



And that brief stop on the way to somewhere else was yet another reminder of just how many fine practitioners and teachers there were throughout Thailand, a lot of them beyond the spotlight of renown. I suspect that even in these times of rapid change, there are still many such beings to be found in the Kingdom of Siam. 🙏

"A flower for a child is an object of play.
An adolescent will want to offer it to his sweetheart.
For a grownup, it's something to sell.
And an elderly person thinks of offering it in p™j .
One flower, different meanings."

suggested we visit an Ajahn Pyrote who had a forest monastery not too far from the main road.

He was an outgoing fellow, maybe about forty years old, obviously comfortable speaking to groups of people on the spur of the moment. Pleasantries were exchanged, and then

excited to share the insight with the Buddha. So, in late afternoon he came and told the Buddha that he had been meditating through the day and had this great insight that half of the holy life, half of the spiritual life was having good friends, having noble friendship. The Buddha said, "Oh. Don't say that, śnanda. It's not just half of the holy life. It's all of the holy life, to have good friends, to have spiritual friendship, admirable friendship." That sense of the importance that the Buddha placed on having good friends, of cultivating good friendship, being a good friend of other people—these are really important qualities.

Also if we consider that the Buddha never referred to himself in an inflated way, "I am omniscient. I am omnipresent. I am the greatest. Look at me!" What he said was, "I am a Kalyānamitta for the world. I am a good friend for the world." Again, this highlights his own sense of the importance of good friendship. The Buddha, being fully enlightened, a fully awakened being, thought the best thing that he could do was to provide spiritual friendship for others, spiritual guidance. So this quality of friendship is important.

There's a lovely Jētaka story that I remember. (Jētakas are tales or fables of the Buddha's previous existence). It begins with a scene in the Buddha's time when a young man and a young woman are interested in getting married. Her question to him was, "How many friends do you have?" It wasn't—how much money do you have? Or, how much fame do you have? But, how many friends do you have? He was taken aback by that. He realized that even if one has all sorts of material well-being or has any power or influence because of birth, even if one was born in the ruling class or

the warrior caste of those days; if you don't have friends, you are really on your own. You need to have friends in time of need, in times when lacking support, or in times of problems and difficulties. When you need advice, you have to rely on friends. It really struck this young man that this young woman he was interested in and wanted to marry had real wisdom. It made him even more interested in her. He made

"The theme of friendship is an important one to be considering as we live in the world the friendships that we make are the ones that sustain us, support us, give us a sense of connection to each other."

an effort to cultivate friendship with many different people, including royal families and the monastics of the time, including being introduced to the Buddha. And, in time, they got married in a very large ceremony as he had many friends now. It was commented on by many people how many friends seemed to be there. The Buddha said, "This isn't the first time that they have cultivated friends."

In a past life, the couple was born in the animal realm as hawks, male and female. The same question was asked of the male hawk who was trying to

seek for a mate and found this young female hawk, and her question to him was, "Who are your friends? How many friends do you have?" And he said, "Well, who would be appropriate friends for us?" She said, "In this area around here, we have a big pond over there and a tall tree. There's a very big gull, a very large turtle and then there's also a lion." They cultivated friendship with these animals. They started a family. They built their nest in the big tree. One day there were hunters from the neighboring village out hunting. They weren't very successful in finding anything that day and they stopped by this pond. There were mosqui-

toes out so they lit a fire to chase them away. The smoke went up high and the little hawk chicks in the nest weren't used to smoke at all. They started to make noises, crying out and making a fuss. The hunters said, "Well, we didn't get anything else. We could have bird meat." So, they built up the fire and of course, put a lot of stress on the chicks. The parents were worried and concerned what to do, how to deal with it. They said, "This is the time we could ask for help from our friends." So the male hawk went and asked the large gull who was living nearby to help out.

The gull said, "Certainly." The gull went swooping down to the water, filled his beak and made sure his wings were dripping wet. Just as the hunter was trying to come up with a torch to burn the nest down and drive out the little birds with their parents, the gull came, swooped down, beat its wings, let loose its mouthful of water, then went back and forth until he put the torch out. Of course, the hunters got more frustrated and tried to be more persistent. The gull's effort was successful to a certain degree but it looked like the hunters



Shrine in memory of Todd at the Cool Oaks

(Continued on page 14)

Lunar Observance Days

2551/2	Aug '08	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan '09	Feb
	FRI 1						
	SAT 9	SUN 7	TUE 7	WED 5	FRI 5	SAT 3	MON 2
	SAT 16	SUN 14	TUE 14 ¹	WED 12 ²	FRI 12	SAT 10	MON 9 ³
	SUN 24	MON 22	WED 22	THU 20	SAT 20	SUN 18	TUE 17
	SAT 30	MON 29	TUE 28	THU 27	FRI 26	SUN 25	MON 23

1. Pavāranā day. 2. Buddhist year 2552 begins on the 13th. 3. Magha Pūjā.

Directions to Abhayagiri

1. Take WEST ROAD exit from HWY 101.
2. Go straight over NORTH STATE ST. and SCHOOL WAY.
3. Follow WEST ROAD 3 miles until you reach a T-Junction.
4. Turn left at the T-Junction onto TOMKI ROAD. Continue for 4 miles until you reach a turn-out with 20 mailboxes. The monastery entrance is on the right.

Contact Information

<p>UNITED STATES</p> <p>Berkeley Buddhist Monastery Institute for World Religions 2304 McKinley Ave. Berkeley, CA 94703 Tel. (510) 848 3440 Fax. (510) 548 4551 www.drba.org</p> <p>Portland Friends of the Dhamma 1422 SE Tacoma St., 2nd Floor Portland, OR 97202 sakula@notjustus.com</p> <p>Spirit Rock Meditation Center 5000 Sir Francis Drake Blvd. Woodacre, CA Tel. (415) 488 0164 Fax. (415) 488 1025 www.spiritrock.org</p> <p>Yoga Mendocino 206 Mason St. Ukiah, CA 95482 Tel. (707) 462 2580 www.yogamendocino.org</p>	<p>UNITED KINGDOM</p> <p>Amaravati Buddhist Monastery Great Gaddesden, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire HP1 3BZ. Tel. +44 (0) 144 284 2455 Fax: +44 (0) 144 284 3721 www.amaravati.org</p> <p>Cittaviveka Chithurst Buddhist Monastery Chithurst, Petersfield, Hampshire GU31 5EU. Tel. +44 (0) 1730 814 986 Fax. +44 (0) 1730 817 334 www.cittaviveka.org</p> <p>AUSTRALIA</p> <p>Bodhinyana Monastery 216 Kingsbury Drive, Serpentine, WA 6125. Tel. +61 (0) 8 9525 2420 Fax. +61 (0) 8 9525 3420 www.bswa.org</p>	<p>Bodhivana Monastery 780 Woods Point Road, East Warburton, Victoria 3799. Tel. +61 (0) 3 5966 5999 Fax. +61 (0) 3 5966 5998</p> <p>NEW ZEALAND</p> <p>Bodhinyanarama Monastery 17 Rakau Grove Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt 5019 Tel. +64 (0) 4 5637 193 www.bodhinyanarama.net.nz</p> <p>Vimutti Monastery PO Box 7 Bombay, 2343 Tel. +64 (0) 9 236 6816 www.vimutti.org.nz</p> <p>THAILAND</p> <p>Wat Pah Nanachat Bahn Bung Wai, Amper Warin, Ubon 34310</p>
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For a more comprehensive directory of branch monasteries please visit www.forestsangha.org

Also visit our online calendar at www.abhayagiri.org/index.php/main/days for the most up-to-date information.

Aug

- 5 Monthly gathering at Berkeley Buddhist Monastery.
- 9 Upasika Day at Abhayagiri—Meditation: The “Other Brahma-viharas” and Recollection Meditation.
- 10 Community Work Day at Abhayagiri.
- 13 Monthly gathering at Yoga Mendocino, Ukiah, CA
- 22-24 Spirit Rock Teen Weekend at Abhayagiri.

Sept

- 2 Monthly gathering at Berkeley Buddhist Monastery.
- 8-14 Ajahn Pasanno leads week long Mettā retreat in Cazadero, CA. For information contact: Karen Philips, 20260 Alder Road, Monte Rio, CA 95462, or Paul Friedlander, at metta08@juno.com. FULLY BOOKED – WAITING LIST IN OPERATION.
- 10 Monthly gathering at Yoga Mendocino, Ukiah, CA
- 14 Community Work Day at Abhayagiri.
- 20 Benefit for Spirit Rock Family Program (to be held at a private home in the Richmond hills). “Time for Play and Mindfulness: A Community Day for Families” with Ajahn Amaro, Heather Sundberg, Kevin Griffin, and others. For more information please go to www.spiritrock.org.
- 21 Ajahn Amaro leads daylong retreat at Spirit Rock “The Middle Way - Balancing Light & Dark, Being & Non-Being.”
- 27-28 Buddhist bicycle pilgrimage, www.dharmawheels.org.

Oct

- 7 Monthly gathering at Berkeley Buddhist Monastery.
- 8 Monthly gathering at Yoga Mendocino, Ukiah, CA.
- 11 Upasika day—Practice in a Global Context: The Buddha’s Advice to Political Leaders and Political Activists
- 12 Community work day at Abhayagiri.
- 14 Pavāranā day. This marks the end of the vassa (rains retreat) period.
- 19 Kathina Day.
- 26 Bhikkhu Ordination of Sāmanera Kaccāna.

Nov

- 4 Monthly gathering at Berkeley Buddhist Monastery.
- 9 Community Work Day at Abhayagiri.
- 12 Monthly gathering at Yoga Mendocino, Ukiah, CA.
- 13 Buddhist year 2552 begins.
- 21 Thanksgiving Retreat Nov 21–30, led by Ajahn Amaro and others. Angela Center, Santa Rosa, CA

Dec

- 2 Monthly gathering at Berkeley Buddhist Monastery.
- 7 Upasika Day—Practice in a Personal Context: Generosity
- 10 Monthly gathering at Yoga Mendocino, Ukiah, CA.
- 13 Daylong at Yoga Mendocino, Ukiah, CA.
- 14 Community work day at Abhayagiri.
- 21 Ajahn Amaro leads daylong retreat at Spirit Rock: “Maximum Darkness.” - an investigation of death, sadness and loss.

Jan

- 1 Abhayagiri monastic community on retreat for months of Jan, Feb, Mar.

Every Saturday evening at Abhayagiri

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

Every Lunar Quarter at Abhayagiri

Chanting, meditation, precepts, Dhamma talk, and late night vigil, beginning at 7:30 pm.

Second Sunday of each month at Abhayagiri

Community work day, 8:00 am–4:00 pm.

First Tuesday of the month in Berkeley, CA

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

Second Wednesday of each month at Yoga Mendocino

7:30 pm–9:00 pm: Meditation and Dhamma talk by Theravāda monastic. During the months of Jan, Feb, Mar, the evening will be led by an Upāsikā.

Every Tuesday and Friday at Portland Friends of the Dhamma

7:00 pm–9:00 pm: Meditation and Dhamma discussion with lay practitioners.

Abhayagiri Buddhist Monastery Community List

Vassa (Rains Retreats/years as a monk)

Pasanno Bhikkhu	34	Ahimsako Bhikkhu	4	Cunda Bhikkhu	0
Amaro Bhikkhu	29	Cāgānando Bhikkhu	3	Sāmanera Kaccāna	1
Yatiko Bhikkhu	15	Sampajāno Bhikkhu	2	Sāmanera Thitapañño	0
Sudanto Bhikkhu	13	Thitābho Bhikkhu	1	Anagārika Ian	0
Karunadhammo Bhikkhu	10	Kassapo Bhikkhu	1	Anagārika Louis	0
				Anagārika Carl	0

❁ FEARLESS MOUNTAIN ❁

Fearless Mountain is the periodic newsletter of Abhayagiri Buddhist Monastery, a Buddhist community in the Thai forest tradition of Ajahn Chah and Ajahn Sumedho. It is composed of materials submitted to or written at Abhayagiri and distributed free of charge to friends of the Abhayagiri community. Comment within is personal reflection only. Your input is welcome and appreciated. If you have comments, suggestions, or wish to reprint any of the material contained in this newsletter, please send an email to abm.newsletter@gmail.com. Please keep us informed of your current address.

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A Shorter Long Road North

Ajahn Amaro offers some reflections on his recent walk in England with Nick Scott, which celebrated, and roughly followed the route of a previous and longer walk undertaken in 1983, also with Nick.

One year after that first walk a book was published journaling their experiences entitled *Tudong: The Long Road North*, with illustrations by Nancy Sloane Stanley; parts of this book were included in the later anthology *Silent Rain*.



Arrival at Harnham - End of the 1983 walk

In the spring of 1983 I set out to walk the length of England (via a rambling, roundabout route) with a lay companion, Nick Scott. I had been inspired by the heritage of wandering monks of the Thai forest tradition and, more pertinently, by the recent short journeys undertaken in England by two Western monks of our lineage. The custom of tudong-journeying on foot by ascetic monastics—had begun in Britain and I was keen to try my hand, or perhaps that should be my feet...

This original walk took three months and brought with it many vivid experiences. A few people we met we had already known for some time and were staunch supporters of the monastery, familiar friends such as Noy Thomson, Carol Winter and Sister Nanda. For some of those we came across it had been their first ever meeting with Buddhist monastics and it was a contact that brought Dhamma irrevocably into their lives. Most in this group, like Dan Jones whom we met in Cambridge, subsequently chose a householder's path. Others, like the former Ajahn Siripaṇṇa, were inspired by this initial contact to enter into monastic life.



Decades passed: people we had met on the walk kept in touch with Nick, came to visit our monasteries, or occasionally we saw each other when I was visiting Buddhist groups throughout England. A few received ordination, like Ajahn Vimalo, Ajahn Siripaṇṇa, Tan Suviro and Adrian Gibson; others vanished without a murmur.

Through this trickle of sustained contacts the afterglow of that original walk was kept alive. Then in 2005, perhaps due to the reflectiveness that can arrive when near the 50-year mark, Nick suggested that he and I revisit some of the places and people we had met all those years ago.



Day 2 - Camp at The Land of Nod

I had just finished a year's sabbatical in June of '05 and I didn't think it would be met with much favor if I suggested taking a few weeks off again, to go on a jaunt through the byways of England's green and pleasant. Then inspiration alighted: "You know, 2008 will be the 25th anniversary of the first walk; if we left it for a couple of years the Abhayagiri community will be likely to approve of a second walk—especially since it'll be a way of celebrating the anniversary"

This seemed to be an excellent fit all round so thus it was. As 2008 approached e-mails began to flow back and forth between Abhayagiri Monastery in California and the Galway Peninsular, where Nick now resided.

Along with the grizzling of beards, the years had also brought us more densely packed schedules so we only had an 18-day period to play with. This was about 20% of the time of the original walk so we carefully pegged out a possible route that covered roughly 165 miles on paper. In January of '08 Nick placed a modest notice in the *Forest Sangha*

(Continued on page 12)



Day 2 - With Noy Thomson at Squires Hill



Day 3 - Breakfast at Greyfriars



Day 8 - Meeting Ajahn Vimalo & Ven. Vinita at RAF Lakenheath Warren



Day 11 - In the valley below Arncliffe.

A Shorter Long Road North (continued from page 10)

Newsletter to let folks know of our intention to visit some of the route we had followed in 1983. It also invited any of those whom we had met then, or those who would like to meet up with us now, to get in touch.

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Late April of 2008 brought Nick and I to Chithurst Monastery, he arriving at the last minute from a back-packing retreat he had been leading in Crete. A thick blanket of rain-laden skies also appeared, taunting our powers of resolution. The storeroom of Chithurst House had rendered up not only a fine tent, a water bottle and a sleeping bag and mat for me to travel with, it had also (to my amazement) supplied the self-same pack that I had used 25 years before. My astonishment was doubled when it turned out that Nick also had the pack that he had used back in '83. This small physical connection with the venture our two younger selves had set out on brought a bright glow to the heart and that strange tingle that accompanies such miraculous trivia.

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Unlike 1983, wherein our meetings and eating-stops had mostly evolved en route, Nick had this time organized a thoroughly worked-out array of meal-offerings. Personally I had hoped for it to be more in the spirit of monk-who-travels-like-clouds-and-water, with more open days and less preparations. This was not the way this particular undertaking was shaped, however, and I reflected that to harmonize with the wholesome attitudes of your travelling companions is the first rule of a fruitful life on the road.

The route was formed of four chunks, these were: Chithurst to my sister's house in south-west London; Cambridge to Swaffham, where Sister Nanda used to live; Ilkley to Kendal, through the Yorkshire Dales; and lastly from Hadrian's Wall to Aruna Ratanagiri Monastery, at Harnham.

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Memories can be tricky, conniving with each other to create convincing stories, yet again and again it is discovered that things didn't happen quite that way and—yes—we recall places shaped differently from the way our eyes now reveal them to be. Have the memories been modified by the illustrations that Nancy Sloane Stanley invented for the book? Or perhaps it's because through endless retelling, the tales have become the reality... So much of what I met along the way this year did not match the memory: St Martha's church was in the wrong place on her hill; Lakenheath Warren was nothing like that and Barbon had reconfigured itself completely. Saññānicca, sankhara nicca perceptions and memories are unreliable, uncertain.

If there is wisdom, however, we actively develop this "anicca-sañña," recognizing unreliability in things and, mysteriously, the mind that knows "All is uncertain" provides a genuine refuge. Furthermore, not only does this refuge operate on an internal level but we find we receive great blessings even when things don't go "right." When my foot gave out on the last day of the walk, a sequence of encounters with compassionate strangers resulted in rides all the way to Harnham. We arrived three hours before our planned welcome was ready.

So it goes. 🙏



Day 11 - Setting out into the Yorkshire Dales, north of Ilkley



Day 13 - Finding precious shade on top of Ingleborough Hill



Day 15 -
At Hadrian's Wall,
near the Scottish
border



Day 18 -
Arrival at Harnham -
note walking staff...

From the Monastery (continued from page 5)

remote controlled fluorescent lighting system, and a team of Abhayagiri residents undertook the painting, using a newly donated paint sprayer, which greatly reduced the painting time and improved the quality of the work. The Abhayagiri residents held evening puja at Casa Serena for the duration of this project, which was completed in time for Ajahn Amaro's return on May 17.

During the month of May, monastery residents often noticed heavy machinery rumbling up the Abhayagiri hill. For some of us, this was the only visible sign of Bud Garman & Sons Construction creating two new roads in the forest to enable present and future kuti construction. One road begins at the solar field and goes 300 feet to the new monk's kuti, and the other road creates access for a number of future new kuti sites. Bud Garman & Sons also repaired roads at Casa Serena.

Shortly after the roads were finished, Madlem Construction broke ground on two new kutis, a "visiting elder's" cabin at the end of the road and a monk's kuti just below the ordination platform. The Abhayagiri community has been working in conjunction with Madlem Construction to build these new dwellings, with residents doing a large share of the work on the monk's cabin. The elder's cabin is nearly identical to Ajahn Pasanno and Ajahn Amaro's kutis but has underfloor heating and is wheelchair accessible. The monk's kuti has the same floor plan as those built in 2006. While this is the final elder's cabin that Abhayagiri plans to build, the master plan calls for similar monk's kutis to be built for future use.

- The Sangha 🙏

were not going to quit. So then, the hawks let the turtle know. It was a very large turtle, and as it came, it formulated a plan—it covered itself with a lot of moss and weeds from the pond, along with mud and slime. It came up and went right on to the fire and put it out. That made the hunters really angry. They started to try to catch the turtle and beat this turtle. Of course, it was very large and strong and was able to get away. Still these hunters weren't going to give up. Finally, the hawks had to go to the last friend, the lion. The lion came and roared his lion's roar. The hunters were finally afraid and ran away. After the hunters left, the hawks, the gull, the turtle thanked the lion and thanked each other for their friendship. They all rejoiced in their friendship with each other and determined to remain friends and live as friends in that area, which they did, helping to look after each other. As the Buddha finished this story, he said, "In that lifetime, those two hawks were this young man and this young woman. The gull was S riputta. The turtle was Moggall na. The lion was myself. Even in these former lives, living as animals, we appreciated and saw the value in friendship." So we can see the Buddha placed much importance in the value of friendship.

When we live in the world, even though it might not be as spectacular as the J taka story, in many, many little ways, it always comes up in our lives how important and necessary it is to rely on our friends, and to be able to know how to be a good friend, to give friendship to others. Sometimes being a good friend isn't necessarily always doing what your other friends want. Sometimes a good friend is one who is willing to point out when your other friends may be doing something that might be harmful, or that may not be of benefit to them, or that is going to create disharmony. Being a good friend is also sometimes being willing to criticize if it's necessary, or if you think

it's something that is really right or appropriate. So that being a good friend is always looking out for the benefit or the good, not just in the short term but also in the long term—the benefit and

It's important to know how to be a good friend to yourself, as well as being a good friend to others - that sense of knowing how to encourage yourself, to support yourself in ways that allow one to be peaceful or at ease with oneself

happiness of one's friends. Friendship is perhaps something that we only tend to think of as having a group of friends or helping friends or being in social situations, and of course these are very important. But as the Buddha said, so much of what supports the spiritual life is having good friends—the nurturing of our spiritual aspirations is fulfilled by how we cultivate friendship.

Another aspect that is really important is how we are a good friend to ourselves. Sometimes we are able to be good friends with others, but sometimes we may not be a good friend to ourselves. It may be that a friend makes a mistake or may have done something a bit foolish. We might say something but it would rarely be harsh or overly critical. One would say something but it would be out of care or kindness or compassion. But if we ourselves do something unskillful or foolish, oftentimes we can be really harsh on ourselves. Sometimes we are not a good friend to ourselves. It's important to know how to be a good friend to

yourself, as well as being a good friend to others—that sense of knowing how to encourage yourself, to support yourself in ways that allow you to be peaceful or at ease with yourself. We can create a lot of tension out of worry or fear—and that's not being a good friend to oneself. We wouldn't do that to our other friends. We wouldn't make them worry or make them really anxious. We would want to try to protect them. But oftentimes we don't do that to ourselves. We wouldn't criticize our friends so much that they feel really badly. We would want to help them, maybe by giving encouragement or helping them to do something better, but we wouldn't want to hurt them. We have to learn how to do that to ourselves as well. So learning how to be a good friend—both learning how to be a good friend to others, as well as being a good friend to ourselves.

In the teaching that the Buddha gave, when he was talking to Śnanda and saying that having noble friends is all of the holy life, the Buddha actually ends by asking, "How does one have noble friendship?" And he says, by cultivating or by living this path of practice of having right view, having right intention, having right speech, having right action, having right livelihood, having right effort, having right mindfulness, and having right concentration; that is, the Noble Eightfold Path. The path of skilful living is the way we cultivate noble friendship, so that we both look after ourselves and then also learn how to look after others. Again, learning how to be a good friend to oneself is learning to be a good friend to others.

Another thing that the Buddha pointed out, when we are looking at friendship with others is, how do we decide or how does one gauge who is a good friend? The Buddha said it comes back to qualities—the qualities of having similar or compatible virtue, similar or compatible generosity, similar or compatible faith and similar or compatible discernment. These are all

the wholesome qualities that we build together as friends. This is something that binds us together and provides the basis for friendship to continue over a long period of time.

Today Todd's friends and family come to make offerings and dedicate the blessings and goodness of those offerings for Todd. That's something which is very very beautiful. I wish to express my appreciation to them all for coming and providing an example of friendship for us all. It's something that is noble and beautiful in the human condition. They have come a long way. And, tomorrow they will be returning to Washington State. I wish them all a safe journey. I will close with that for the evening. 🌿

UPCOMING EVENTS

Bhikkhu Ordination

On **Sunday, October 26th**, S manera Kacc na is planning to formally request the Upasampada, or bhikkhu ordination. Please join us for this auspicious event! For more information, please contact the monastery.

Kathina Celebration at Abhayagiri

Please join us for this year's Kathina Celebration, which will be held on **Sunday, October 19th**. For further information visit the Abhayagiri website or phone the monastery.

In the previous issue of Fearless Mountain Newsletter we announced that we would be discontinuing its production. Because of the interest and generosity of supporters of the monastery, we are able to, once again, continue publishing. We would like

to express our heartfelt gratitude to Jebbie Lavoie for design and layout, along with editorial assistance by Kristy Arbon and Elizabeth Matovinovic.



From Māra's Desk

By Cindy Mettika Hoffman

Several years ago I was at Abhayagiri and had the opportunity to see Ruth Denison, my heart teacher, who was visiting for the day. After the meal I sat with Ruth, guests and members of the community. We were relaxed, comfortable and glad to be with each other.

Ruth asked me the meaning of "Mettika." I said that it means, "One with loving kindness," taken from the word "mett ." Then Ajahn Amaro said in his inimitable way, "We couldn't find the P li word for 'grumpy'." Everyone laughed, including moi.

The next week I was back at the monastery and Ajahn Amaro said they had found the P li word for "grumpy." I asked what it was. Ajahn replied, "Dosika." In the far back of my mind I knew the word but didn't want to wait for the definition to arise. Ajahn provided it for me: "One filled with aversion."

Everything went still and quiet. This was the perfect opportunity for M ra to slip in, as quick as a flash, and fill my heart with overwhelming fear, shame, pride and embarrassment. M ra is the great master of doubt, shame, fear, confusion, denial, angst, stress, greed, anger and delusion. "Ajahn really does know all my nasty qualities," I thought.

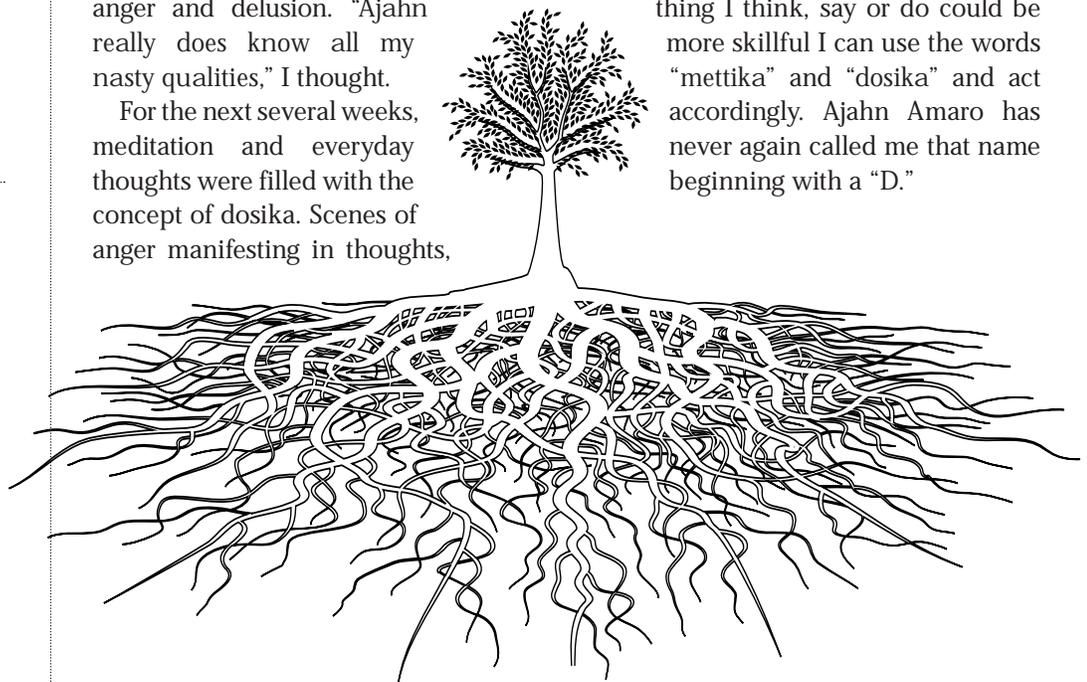
For the next several weeks, meditation and everyday thoughts were filled with the concept of dosika. Scenes of anger manifesting in thoughts,

words and actions arose and passed away rapidly. It was very painful to remember these events.

A few weeks later I was at Spirit Rock Meditation Center in training with 60 other people from all over the country. I walked out of the dark interior of a building into the brilliant sunshine and saw Ajahn Amaro sitting on a bench at a picnic table directly facing me. He greeted me with, "Hello Dosika." ARGHH.

I went home and reflected deeply on dosa/dosika and realized that anger was part of the three poisons and it was everyone's responsibility to deal with these poisons. The Buddha's teachings offer the perfect way to train the mind and heart toward wholesome thoughts, words and deeds. I realized that mett /mettika was the wholesome side of the picture and dosa/dosika was the unwholesome. It could be called the shadow side of personality. It runs on automatic pilot, difficult to see in yourself, but obvious to everyone else.

At that point in time I made the intention to work with the wholesome and unwholesome through the use of my name. So now when I realize that something I think, say or do could be more skillful I can use the words "mettika" and "dosika" and act accordingly. Ajahn Amaro has never again called me that name beginning with a "D."



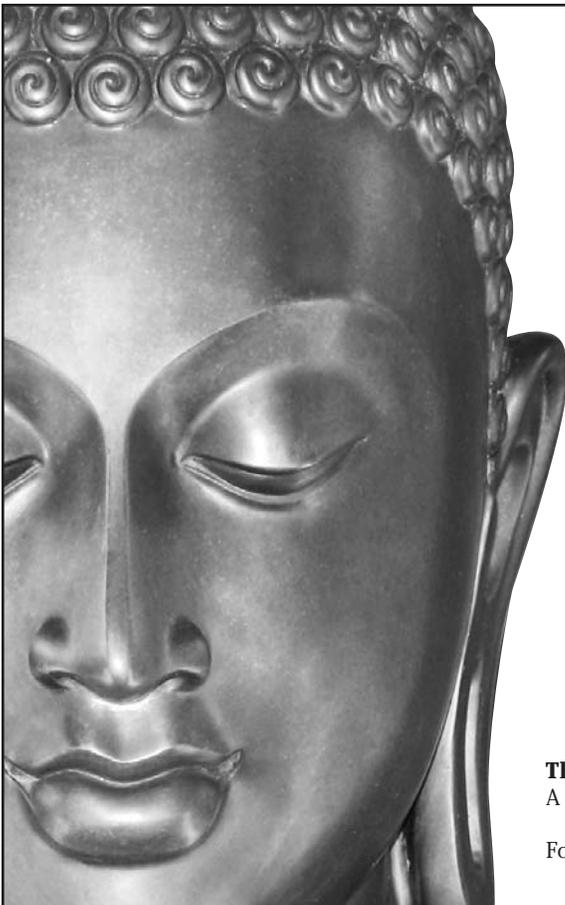
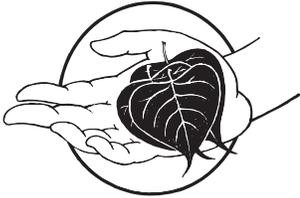
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Contentment & Gratitude

Ajahn Amaro & Friends

Offer a 10-day retreat over Thanksgiving

Abhayagiri Monastery and the Sanghapala Foundation are offering people the opportunity to join Ajahn Amaro and friends for a 10-day retreat over the Thanksgiving holiday.

The retreat will be held from Friday afternoon, Nov 21, through midday Sunday, Nov 30, 2008, at the Angela Center in Santa Rosa, California.

The retreat will be offered solely on dana (freewill donations).
A refundable registration deposit of \$100 is required to register.

For further information, please contact Paul at retreat08@juno.com