



Extracts from an 8 a.m. Desana given
by Ajahn Jayasaro:

... It's been 17 years now since Luang Por left us, although actually that is not quite true. Luang Por never left us – we are the ones who leave him behind. Every time we think, say, or do something that he pointed out the danger in we leave him behind. There are so many of his teachings around, books, tapes etc. His Dhamma is still with us. But we frequently leave his teachings behind, sometimes turning our backs on the Dhamma entirely. Luang Por Chah is not with us today, but the question is, are we still with Luang Por Chah?

... Not having Right Understanding (samma ditthi) is what will prevent true happiness from arising. We won't see the true nature of the world: the fact that dukkha is everywhere. The good news is that true happiness can also be found. It is not about suppressing the happiness that we can experience through the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind, but rather asking ourselves if that is true happiness. Is that what we need ultimately? Sensory happiness makes us waste our time, and diverts our interest away from developing ourselves to find that true happiness.

Say you had enough money to go abroad and you flew to some other country. Then from the airport you went straight to a hotel, checked in and went to your room, closed the windows and stayed there for two weeks. You then went back to the airport and flew home. Would that be unwholesome? No. But it would be a pity, a wasted opportunity. Being born as a human being, but only being interested in the pleasure of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touch and thoughts, is a similar waste. It's really like living in a dark room.

... Luang Por Chah taught us that our real task in life is to cultivate a healthy shame and fear of losing our mindfulness (sati). We must always strive to maintain sati. If we have sati, it's like we have an Ajahn with us. We feel warm and safe: whenever we make our mind steady, wisdom is ready to arise. Without sati we will always be slaves of our environment and simply follow whatever thoughts and moods arise....



uplifted, buoyed by the company of so many people sharing the space and practising in the same way. Surely that's what it is ... though maybe it's something else....

16 January: the big day arrives. As if to acknowledge one of the most unique aspects of Luang Por's legacy, the international Sangha, the morning Dhamma Talk will be given by Ajahn Jayasaro, who is English. The evening programme will feature Dhamma Talks to be given right throughout the night, but the first one – the prime-time slot – will be from Luang Por Sumedho.

17 years to the day have passed since Luang Por passed away. He was cremated on the same day one year later. The main event of the day is a mass circumambulation of the Chedi by the whole assembly. The numbers will swell to many hundreds more, boosted by people who have come just for this event. With the whole Sangha and all the laypeople gathered together like a sea of brown robes followed by a white foamy wake, the effect is quite magical. Beginning in the main sala, the assembly walks in complete silence, everyone holding a small set of candles, flowers and incense, for the few hundred metres until reaching the Chedi which the procession then circumambulates. As everyone gathers round the Chedi, a senior monk reads out a dedication to Luang Por and everyone

follows, reciting line by line. The Sangha leads the way up the steps and into the Chedi. Each person places their little offering, then bows and makes way for another.

In the evening, Luang Por Sumedho begins his Desana. Before moving to loftier dhammas, he too entertains the crowd with some warm old memories. He recalls how Luang Por used to teach the Dhamma for hours on end, cracking jokes and telling stories which would have everyone in stitches – except for one person: Venerable Sumedho, this newly arrived American monk squirming in pain on the cement floor unable to understand a word. They've heard it before, but again it brings smiles. These stories though, are not told just to get a few laughs. They capture the spirit of a bygone era for those of us who never heard Luang Por Chah teach, and they prepare the minds of the listeners to hear and be more likely to truly receive the essence of the Dhamma: that all is uncertain, unstable, and that happiness comes from letting go.

Which is just the insight you need in order to last through a whole night of Dhamma Talks. This all-night talks

