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Refuges on the Path

The following talk was given by Venerable Bhikkhu Bodhi during the days following the Temple Opening at Amaravati.

The topic that I have chosen to talk about this afternoon is a rather basic one, but I think it is always important for us to go back to the beginning and review our first steps as a follower of the Buddhist path. While we should keep our eyes focused on the stages of the path that we have not yet traversed, we should never forget the initial steps that give us a sense of purpose and direction. If we don't keep these basic steps constantly in mind, we are likely to become either too easily discouraged or overly optimistic, and thus lose our bearings along the path.

My topic is the Going for Refuge to the Triple Gem, an act that is taken to define one's status as a Buddhist. When somebody wants to become a Buddhist, they are initiated into the Dhamma by the formula of Going for Refuge, and thereafter they may repeat this formula every day. Moreover, every Buddhist ceremony begins with the act of Going for Refuge. Often, however, this recitation tends to turn into a mechanical and unthinking ritual, the meaning of which is barely understood. To prevent this from happening, to fix our mind firmly on our original resolution to follow the Dhamma, it is useful for us to repeatedly review this act in its diverse aspects.

At the start, what should immediately arrest our attention is the fact that one enters the Buddhist path by seeking refuge. The word 'refuge' means something that gives protection from danger, and this raises the question: 'What are the dangers facing us that make the quest for a refuge necessary?' In the Suttas the Buddha describes the normal human condition as an extremely precarious one. He compares human life to a man being swept down a river towards the ocean. The man tries to rescue himself by grasping the grasses and branches growing along the river bank, but each time the grasses break off and he is finally swept away to his death.

We might consider three basic levels of dangers we face from which we need protection. The first is

the danger that confronts us in everyday life, namely, the danger of continually oscillating between extremes – extremes of clinging to desirable things and of trying to avoid things we regard as undesirable. Thus we seek pleasure, and are averse to pain; we seek success, and are averse to failure; we seek praise, and are averse to blame; we seek fame, and are averse to a bad reputation. If we cannot protect ourselves from being spun around by these pairs of opposites, when we fail to get what we want we reap disappointment. And when we succeed, we become attached to our success and thus prepare the ground for future misery.

Even if we manage to live comfortably through the greater part of our lives, without any major catastrophes, we still have to undergo old age. Occasionally we will be assailed by illness, and even if we manage to preserve good health all our lives, inevitably we have to die. If we don't have any protection for the mind, when we are afflicted with old age, we may become dejected. If we fall ill we will be helpless in dealing with our illness, and when we lie on our deathbeds we will be overwhelmed by fear, terror, and despair. But if our minds have been trained and disciplined, we can face all these calamities without being shaken by them. Thus the first reason for seeking refuge is to tread the path of mental training that will enable us to ride the ups and downs of daily life without being tossed around by the pairs of opposites, without being plunged into misery and despair by the inevitable slide towards old age, illness, and death.

A second type of danger from which we need protection is that associated with rebirth. The Buddha constantly teaches that this present life, which begins with birth and ends with death, is only one single link in a beginningless chain of existences, a series of rebirths. The mode of existence that we take in our next birth is determined by the actions we perform here and

now. These actions are called *kamma*. *Kamma* is volitional action, deeds of body, speech, and mind springing from intention. Below the threshold of awareness, all such volitional deeds leave subtle deposits in the onward flow of our consciousness, in our mental continuum. We can think of these kammic deposits as seeds, seeds that lie dormant until they meet the right conditions. Then they ripen and bring forth results, their fruits.

Of the many seeds that we deposit in our minds through our volitional actions, one that is especially prominent and powerful will take on the role of generating the new existence, that is, it will produce rebirth. When we hear about rebirth, we might imagine that we are to be reborn in celestial realms of bliss or as kings, queens, and millionaires. Such thoughts, however, are usually just wishful fantasies. The Buddha teaches that there are many planes of existence into which rebirth can take place, and most rebirths occur below the human plane. The early texts describe five main spheres of rebirth. Three are realms of misery: the hells, realms of intense suffering; the animal realm; and the sphere of the *pretas* or hungry spirits, beings afflicted with extreme pangs of hunger and thirst which they can never satisfy. Then there are the fortunate realms: the human realm and the celestial planes. These last two are considered fortunate realms because within them happiness is more prevalent than suffering and because they offer the opportunity for spiritual progress in line with the Dhamma. In the realms of misery no such progress is possible.

Now there are distinct courses of *kamma* that lead to rebirth into these different realms. However, if we have to rely on our own resources – on our ordinary, unenlightened minds – we will have no idea what these are. Thus it is imperative for us to rely on a perfectly qualified guide, on someone who can teach us – precisely, exactly, and thoroughly – what courses of action we must abandon if we are to escape the danger of rebirth into a bad realm, and what courses of action we have to cultivate to assure ourselves of a fortunate rebirth. This is the second reason for going for refuge: to find protection from the danger of a bad rebirth and to assure ourselves of a pleasant rebirth congenial to our quest for the noble Dhamma.

However, even if we can secure a happy rebirth for ourselves, we still face a third danger, one rooted in the very nature of sentient existence. The Buddha teaches that existence in every realm, in every mode, is impermanent, bound to come to an end. Because all forms of conditioned existence are impermanent, they are also unsatisfactory, insecure, and vulnerable to suffering. Birth leads to old age and death, death is followed by new birth, and even the most felicitous type of birth must again end in death and in the misery inseparable from conditioned existence. This is the suffering of *samsāra*, the danger of *samsāra*. The ultimate purpose for the appearance of a Buddha is to find the

way out from the suffering of *samsāra* and to make that way known to the world. Therefore the ultimate goal for a follower of the Buddhist path is to break free entirely from this cycle of becoming, to attain that state which is not subject to birth, change, and death, to attain Nibbana, the Unconditioned, the Deathless. Now in order to attain the Deathless, to win deliverance from the round of birth and death, we have to understand what keeps us in bondage and what factors we must cultivate to eliminate the causes of bondage. Thus we have to rely on a fully qualified guide, to take refuge in one who has fully understood all this and can teach it with impeccable precision. The only one who meets this criterion is the Perfectly Enlightened One, and the one body of teachings that provides the necessary security is his Dhamma.

Now when we go for Refuge we look to Three Refuges: we go for Refuge to the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha. These Three Refuges hang together inseparably and indivisibly. Of the three, the Buddha is the Supreme Teacher, the one who points out the path. The Dhamma is the Teaching itself: the map of the path, the way to liberation, and the final goal. And the

Sangha is the community of noble disciples who embody the ideal, the models to emulate, our advisors and helpers in travelling along the path to liberation.

In Going for Refuge with depth of conviction it is important to understand clearly the meaning of these Three Refuges, both individually and collectively. The first is the Buddha.

It is quite significant that structurally the Three Refuges begin with a person rather than with some abstract ideal like the Dhamma. Though the Dhamma is the actual means to salvation, the Buddha comes first, for when we are lost in the jungle of confusion we first look for a person who knows the way. We need somebody who has reached the goal himself and who represents or manifests that final goal in his own person.

So the Three Refuges begin with the Buddha as the supreme personal refuge, as the unsurpassed teacher. But we do not simply Go for Refuge to one particular historical individual. The word 'Buddha' is an epithet meaning the Enlightened One. This epithet has been given to a lineage of individuals who discovered the Dhamma at a time when the precious Teaching had completely disappeared from the world. Thus when we take refuge in the Buddha, we are taking refuge in the collection of qualities that define this person as a Buddha, as one of the line of Perfectly Enlightened Ones.

These qualities can be summed up very concisely as the abandonment of all faults and the achievement of all virtues. The faults are the defilements together with their *vāsanās*, or residual impressions, all of which the Buddha has eliminated totally, permanently, and irreversibly. Therefore his purity is complete and unparalleled. The incalculable, inconceivable positive virtues that the Buddha has acquired are headed by two

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supreme qualities. One is perfect wisdom, the wisdom that understands all phenomena in all their modes and relationships. The wisdom that knows the path to enlightenment and liberation in all its details. The wisdom that understands the dispositions of living beings. The wisdom that knows how to teach people in the precise way needed to lead them on to the path of awakening and to bring their faculties to maturity.

The other sterling quality of the Buddha is his great compassion. The Buddha did not achieve Enlightenment just for himself, but to confer the blessings of the Dhamma upon the world. The Buddhist tradition speaks of the Buddha as having undergone countless previous lives as a Bodhisatta. Moved by great compassion he underwent inconceivable hardships pursuing the goal of supreme Buddhahood in order to make the Dhamma – the way to liberation from suffering – available when it was no longer known and preserved in the world. That great compassion of the Buddha continues to operate through the centuries after his demise, as embodied and preserved in his Dhamma.

As a refuge, the function of a Buddha is to point to the Dhamma as the Teaching, the Path, and the Goal. The Dhamma as the Teaching is the verbal teaching of the Buddha preserved in the Tipitaka (the Vinaya Pitaka, the Sutta Pitaka, and the Abhidhamma Pitaka). As a teaching, the Dhamma is essentially a map of the way to be followed to arrive at the goal to which the Buddha points. It is a very precise and detailed set of guidelines to understanding and practice, one that we have to apply in our daily life.

We can explain the Path in many different ways, but its highest and fullest expression is the Noble Eightfold Path. The Path is a course of practice along which one walks, and when one walks that Path one eventually comes to the Goal. The Goal is also included in the Dhamma as Refuge. The Goal is the ultimate Dhamma, the unconditioned element, Nibbāna. Although the Noble Eightfold Path is the most perfect path, it is still not the final Dhamma, not the final Refuge. It is a means for reaching the final Refuge, and thus its value is instrumental, not intrinsic. The final Refuge can only be that which is not desirable as an end to something beyond itself, and that means it must be something unconditioned. This is the Deathless, Nibbāna. So, when one says, 'I go for Refuge to the Dhamma', one directs one's mind to Nibbāna as the final deliverance from suffering.

The third Refuge is the Sangha. Here we have to make an important distinction between two kinds of Sangha. One is the Ariyan Sangha. This is the community of Noble Ones, those who have reached certain high planes of realisation from which ultimate liberation is ensured. The texts speak of four levels of realisation: the levels of the stream enterer, the once-returner, the non-returner, and the *arahant*. Those who have reached any of these four levels of awakening, or who are definitely on the paths culminating in these four levels, make up the Ariyan Sangha, the Noble Community. As I understand it, the Ariyan Sangha is not an exclusively monastic order, but includes anyone who reaches one of these levels of awakening. The function of the Sangha as Refuge is to serve as guides in the practice of the Path. The most reliable guides we can

turn to will naturally be those who have themselves

EDITORIAL

Much Ado About Nothing

In this issue we focus on the events that took place at Amaravati early in July; the Temple Consecration – a mega (for us) happening, that took months of planning, significant expense and a huge effort – both for those taking part in the organisation and preparation, and the many people who travelled thousands of miles to be present. This was followed by a less ambitious, but in its own way, equally significant event at Cittaviveka: at last the first of our monasteries in Britain is setting down a Dhamma Hall.

We might reasonably ask: 'What was it all about?' ...and be somewhat puzzled by the equally reasonable answer: 'Nothing'!

Nibbāna, Emptiness, the Unconditioned, the Deathless: these are the terms for the Ultimate Goal of our practice. A Temple, a Dhamma Hall provide physical situations conducive to the realisation of that goal. That's what it's all about...

But why so much of a performance just for the sake of nothing?... Because for beings addicted to something, it takes a major turning away and effort, sustained over years – many lifetimes – to see the need, to awaken to the possibility of Liberation, and to fulfil the work required to bring that about. It's not a small thing to extricate oneself: fleeing from a burning house, crossing a great flood or the ocean, pulling oneself out of a swamp, swimming upstream against a strong current – these are images the Buddha used to describe the sense of urgency and enormous effort required to bring it about.

So such happenings are a celebration of the Buddha and generations of great beings who continue to guide us, reminding us of our potential; they remind us too that help is available. We are not alone in this struggle, and there are delicious fruits to be enjoyed along the way: the delight that comes from skilful service, sharing and renunciation; the pleasure of reflecting on a life lived with care; the sweetness of devotion to what is wholly good – not to mention the subtler forms of happiness that arise with the development of our meditation practice. These are allowable fruits, allowable pleasures; our cultivation and enjoyment of them can only further wisdom and compassion, peacefulness and joy in the hearts of all beings. May these Holy Places serve to awaken and further the practice of beings over countless generations towards that final goal.

Ajahn Candasiri

attained the paths and experienced the fruits, and thus can teach the way from their own direct experience.

But the Buddha, in his wisdom, did not confine

Sangha only to those who have reached the highest levels of realisation. He also established a monastic community, consisting of people keen to dedicate themselves fully to the practice of his Teaching, who wish to tread the path to liberation without being distracted by the concerns and obligations of secular life. So the Buddha deliberately established a monastic Sangha to carry on his message and to fulfil his practice. When one goes for refuge to the Sangha, in the higher sense one goes for refuge to the Ariyan Sangha. At the same time, however, one also expresses a commitment to accept the monastic Sangha as one's guide in treading the Path. The monks and nuns are one's *kalyānamittas*, one's noble friends, and even those who have not reached any stages of awakening, if they are virtuous, knowledgeable, and trustworthy, can still provide great help and support. Even those who merely accept alms silently, if they use their time wisely, become an excellent field of merit for others, and the offerings given to them become fruitful seeds of great meritorious potency.

Usually we think of Going for Refuge as the first step of Buddhist practice, a formula that one recites at the beginning of one's life as a Buddhist but which afterwards drops away into the background. However, the act of Going for Refuge can be used as a vehicle of practice, a method of self-cultivation, because when one Goes for Refuge what one is actually doing is giving a particular direction to the mind. If it is done mindfully, slowly, and deliberately, the Going for Refuge activates certain factors of the mind. We will consider one way this happens in terms of five spiritual faculties (*indriya*).

The five faculties are faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom. By Going for Refuge consciously, one is actually arousing, strengthening, and reinforcing these five mental qualities to the point where they become guiding factors of spiritual development. The Going for Refuge is first of all an act of faith (*saddhā*). When one Goes for Refuge one makes a definite commitment to a particular ideal and to a particular person who represents that ideal. One places the heart upon the Buddha as one's supreme guide; one surrenders one's own will to the Buddha as one's master. One reflects that one is following his path, not as an exercise in self-will, but as a way of relinquishing self-will in its entirety. It is not that one surrenders one's own intelligence and right to critical inquiry, for the Buddha never demands this of his disciples. But when one awakens faith one does put away the egocentric point of view that takes one's own views and opinions as the yardstick for judging everyone else. Instead one accepts the Buddha as someone who is infinitely wiser than oneself. This is done as an act of faith, an act of trust, because one doesn't yet know the Dhamma for oneself; one doesn't fully understand it. However, by recognising the wisdom of the Buddha's teaching one suspends all one's doubts and reservations. In trust one commits

oneself to the Buddha as the supreme master and decides to follow his Dhamma and to respect his Sangha. In short, one looks upon the Three Refuges as one's own refuges. In this way the Going for Refuge becomes an act of faith.

The Going for Refuge should be done with understanding. If it is done solely through exuberant faith and devotion, it will not be very fruitful. To be truly fruitful, faith has to be wedded with *paññā* – with wisdom or understanding. At the outset this is not the profound wisdom which sees into the real nature of things; it is still a kind of reflective understanding arisen from deep consideration of the nature of life. But it is wisdom all the same, and thus the Going for Refuge brings the faculty of wisdom into play. This wisdom then develops and matures through continual practice of the Path, especially through deep contemplation and meditation, until it becomes direct experiential insight.

Both faith and wisdom have to be activated, which means they require energy or vigour (*virīya*). But to prevent vigour from getting out of hand and leading to excessive enthusiasm, we have to balance it by concentration, by mental composure. This is the faculty of *samādhi* or concentration. When energy and concentration are balanced, the Going for Refuge can become a passageway to states of deep meditation.

In many Suttas the Buddha teaches contemplation of the Buddha, contemplation of the Dhamma, and contemplation of the Sangha as means to develop *samādhi*. In the Anguttara Nikāya (Book of Ones) there is even a series of Suttas in which he says: 'There is one thing that leads to supreme peace, to direct knowledge, to Enlightenment, to Nibbana. What is that one thing? Recollection of the Buddha is that one thing.' And in the next two suttas the same is said about recollection of the Dhamma and recollection of the Sangha. Thus one can use the Three Refuges as objects of contemplation for deep concentration. If this concentration is then conjoined with wisdom by the practice of insight meditation, it becomes part of the way to Enlightenment and Nibbāna.

For these four faculties – faith and wisdom, energy and concentration – to function properly, they all have to be held in proper balance. The balance is achieved by the disciplining influence of another faculty, the central one, *sati* or mindfulness. Mindfulness ensures that neither faith nor wisdom, neither energy nor concentration, exceeds the other. It enables all the other faculties to make their appropriate contributions in exactly the right measure. Thereby, when one Goes for Refuge, one does so mindfully, and one uses this mindfulness to bring the other faculties into balance. In this way, within the context of the Going for Refuge, all five faculties will function in unison to bring realisation of the final goal. And with that the Going for Refuge reaches its consummation. ❖

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Consecration

The Amaravati Temple Consecration ceremonies took place over the weekend of 3rd/4th July. Many people came to participate – both local people and friends and special guests from far away places. It was an opportunity to honour, welcome and celebrate Luang Por Chah, the Tradition and all who have been associated with Amaravati in one way or another over the years.

In the following pages is a collection of impressions that perhaps go some way to conveying the flavour of the occasion for the many people unable to be present.

IN APPRECIATION

I feel sometimes just amazed at how well this temple has appeared – just out of nothing. My whole mind state doesn't tend to be particularly interested in building things, and in the beginning just the fact that the predictions were that it would cost a million pounds was a bit daunting – mind boggling – to me; it seemed like an enormous amount of money. But there were several people who encouraged this and seemed to be willing to back it up; so I didn't go into it as a total act of blind faith, I did feel confident that it might be possible. Then we had to go through many obstacles in regard to planning permission which was refused at first, so we had the appeal. Then there were criticisms and a lot of acrimony around the project, but gradually it took form and in fact the donations were no problem at all – that was the least amount of trouble! It seemed that there were many people, especially from Thailand, eager to contribute to the temple building so that of all the difficulties that we encountered, the least of them was the fundraising – that all seemed to happen, even without any kind of fundraising event.

The actual opening of the temple, the ceremony on July 4th, was another unknown factor: having to prepare, and invite the venerable monks from Thailand, plus the Princess Galyani Wattana from the Thai royal family. There were many different aspects of etiquette and culture to be taken into account with the Sri Lankan community, the Thai community, the royal family, the *mahā theras* and the many monks and nuns from different places. So I did really appreciate the way it was organised. For the past two years Ajahn Attapemo, Ajahn Jutindharo, Sister Thānasanti and all the others who worked with them, people like Shirley and Nancy and Venerable Saccako really planned it so well. They were very good at estimating and taking into account the little details, so it wasn't just roughly planned but was rather refined in the way it happened; the thoughtfulness that went behind it was impressive. I really felt a lot of

confidence in those people – that they were doing what they could, according to the knowledge they had, to make it a smooth running and good event for everybody – and they were very successful.

Luang Por Sumedho

PREPARATION

Though on a rational level, as a novice, I had no grand map or overview for understanding the situation, on an intuitive level the work was clear. Each gesture of trimming, cleaning, fixing
planting, building, moving
sorting, uprooting, discarding
could be an expression of devotion (heart open), or a meaningless task (heart contracted).

One sunny morning, gravel crunching under my sandals as I pushed a load of sleeping bags to be aired, I met a fellow novice pushing a wheelbarrow of topsoil. The image arose: ants shifting grains of dirt to be transformed into the cells and arches of the anthill. At the same time came a sense of joy and personal responsibility – it is true that ants simply know how to build, yet part of that knowing must be the need for division of labour.

The events themselves? The same stillness, manifesting in the splendour and chaos of the days of celebration. Reminders: don't forget the Dhamma-root, *dāna*-root of these shimmering things, this vast nomad camp in the field, these pilgrims. Parts came together, long-expected names become tangible presence; each meal, each meeting, each act of attention is a consecration. I remember the slow forceful cadence of Thai forest teaching, the valiance (more wheelbarrows) of lay women bringing food to offer in the marquees; the inter-relatedness of sustained, wholehearted effort and effortless ease.

Anagārikā Julie

THE OPEN DAY

A Saturday afternoon, somewhere in southern England...

'My Lord Robin, Bishop of Hertford!' exclaimed the broadly smiling man in the dark blue suit – bedecked with mayoral chain of office and the escutcheon of Berkhamsted town – 'I've been longing for a chance to use your proper title.' The two men shook hands and greeted each other warmly.

It was indeed a day when banners were out and the English way of life was able to display itself in glory: bishop in full purples, tea and cucumber sandwiches on the lawn with local dignitaries, the garden party buzz of several dozen animated and inter-flowing conversations. Where could we be? Somewhere near Henley? Beaulieu perhaps? A church fete in the Chalfonts?

Spotlessly white-clad servers graciously offered glasses of fruit juice to the assembly and it was only the shaven-headed nature of these women and men – plus the preponderance of brown-robed and equally shaven monks mingling with the dog collars, floral dresses, blazers and pastels of the crowd – that gave the clue that we were actually in a Buddhist monastery. That and the golden, pyramidal spire of the Amaravati Temple beyond the garden wall that winked and flashed in the brilliant July sun.

The Open Day at Amaravati, on the Saturday afternoon preceding the consecration ceremonies, glistened and gleamed in its own right as a small jewel in the glorious diadem which was the week-long Temple Opening session. It had been arranged to be a 'totally English' event and was an occasion for the monastery not only to invite the great and the good of the local area, but also the members of staff and friends from all the shops, surgeries, offices and local agencies who had served Amaravati over the years. True to the Englishness of the day many confessed that they had been longing to visit for years but had not wanted to intrude.

Everyone felt very much at home. There is a strange blend of humility, grandeur and the absurd that is close

to the heart of both the English and the Buddhist way: besandalled Bishop Robin's hearty approval of the deliberate barn-like mixture of beams and bare brick in the Temple; Nick Halsey's insistence, even though his family have been squires of the manor of Great Gaddesden since the 15th Century, that he be introduced simply as 'a representative of the local community' when invited to give his speech; Lord Young of Dartington's metaphor of the increasing comfort of a sofa as a synonym for the process of liberation; and the recollections by Mother Rosemary of Fairacres (wimple ever-so-slightly askew) of a profound and beautiful insight gained whilst rinsing her laundry.

The denouement of the guided tour that guests were given before the formal speeches began was the explanation about the *luk nimit* – the large gold-covered orb, at that time perched on its ramp, holding the central place in heart of the temple – and the velvet-clad chamber in the floor poised to receive it. As it was explained that 2,500 people were gathering from five continents in order to witness the Princess Royal of Thailand cut the ribbon and thus commit the 'symbolic seed' to rest at the Temple's core, and that no-one quite knew when the tradition began, and that it wasn't exactly a part of Buddhist monastic form but that no temple could possibly be considered complete without it, every head nodded in complete empathetic accord.

In a country where the highest form of knighthood is The Most Noble Order of the Garter (instituted either by Sir Gawaine, the Green Knight and King Arthur or King Edward III, depending on which history you choose), and where someone with the title of Lion King at Arms is actually only the fellow who looks after the heraldic records office, such significant pointlessness is perfectly understood, honoured and cherished.

That day in the heart of the country – a few stone's throws from the castle of the Black Prince and where William the Conqueror received the keys to the kingdom – it seemed that the way of the Buddha and the way of the English were fully at one. *Ajahn Amaro*

EXTRACTED FROM A LETTER HOME:

...After bidding farewell to 'my' VIP, I wandered back to the temple courtyard where Ven. Dr. Vijirañāna – the most senior Sri Lankan monk in this country – and about 13 other Sri Lankan theras had arrived. He was looking a little flustered so I went to greet him and took him into the temple where preparations were in progress for the all-night paritta chanting. Some of the lay people had made an octagonal pavilion – a light wood frame, covered with white paper cut in the most lovely intricate patterns; it was small, about 8 feet in diameter – and elevated on the monks' staging. Fortunately the lodgings monk was there; he took them under his wing and I continued on to the next highlight:

...talks by Christina Feldman and Jack Kornfield.

They are two of the best known lay teachers. I was very pleased that they had been invited to speak – both gave excellent talks. Jack had been a monk in Thailand many years ago and spoke very warmly of his friendship with Ajahn Sumedho there.

...and then it was time for the evening chanting and meditation...

and then the Sri Lankan event, which was really something!

...It's interesting that each of the ethnic groups that come to our monasteries has its own unmistakable character. I think for the Sri Lankans you'd say that they are thoroughly enthusiastic – exuberant even! So it was not too much of a surprise when the 14 very senior

A PERSONAL VIEW

An hour or so before dawn and the first stirrings of the monastery, I lay listening to the world service of the BBC, to a voice set at so low a level it sounded thin and squeaky like a wheezing lung. But on hearing mention of the words 'Northern Ireland' I turned it off. The light that had begun to smear the walls of the room looked dingy: not at all the kind of pre-sunrise light one hoped for on the day of the Grand Opening. I turned the radio on once more to listen to the weather forecast. It boded uncertain for the weekend.

Not being one for ceremonies and uneasy in crowds, I was not particularly looking forward to the coming two days. Not that I had much of a part to play in it, save looking after a group of VIPs, wear a suit and tie and affect a little gravitas for a change.

Early in the temple (sans suit) I was struck by the presence of the *luk nimit*, the large marble sphere poised on its runway in the way that boats are set to be launched, held in place by ribbon and positioned in the exact centre of the Temple awaiting HRH Princess Galyani Wattana to release it and send it to fall into a cubic pit designed to receive it. It had the aura of portent about it, a sense of something impending: a certain finality.

In the grounds, everywhere had the look of being finished. Lawns replaced piles of earth and building materials, flower beds glowed with colour, even the Zen-like dish of apparently still water flowing: Ajahn Chah's simile for the living Pure Mind. I liked it very much. In fact I liked it all: the impressive simplicity of Tom Hancock's overall design, the choice of materials and economy of detail. *Piti* lifted my unease.

It had been over a year since, unplanned, I joined the community at last after all these years – not fully, but tentatively, finding a place like grit in a crevice. A loner tends to feel even more alone in a crowd, but it did not happen that day. The joy was too infectious and, curiously, even though Amaravati was to receive over three and a half thousand guests (six times more than it

had contained before), there was lots of space to stroll in. And the field with its new Borobudur stūpa, the great marquee and collection of tents was festive and English like a gymkhana, aromatic with the scent of delicious Thai food. What a pleasure to see so many saffron robes, meet friends not seen for years, chat with monks, former monks, nuns and former nuns: Pabhākaro, Sister Jotakā, Kittisāro, Ādicco, Peter Da Costa: faces from the past, feeling love and gratitude to them, memories of times together, compiling all their news with the casual freedom of the scrap book.

For Luang Por Sumedho, I reflected, all this was the culmination of twenty years of sustained commitment and endurance, and the realisation of a vision. Yet soon, the moment will have passed, it will be as memories of a dream, 'an insubstantial pageant faded' and, like the gilded orb of the *luk nimit*, together with the collection of memorabilia which would be sealed with it in the floor of the *sīmā*, it would be gone.

It didn't rain. Well just a sprinkle to coincide with the arrival of Princess Galyani; explained, as one gallant put it, as tears of *pīti* from the devas. Godlings must have been jostling for their place on the tips of many needles that day. Rural England was bang-up-to-date with its own proper Buddhist temple with traditional English monastic cloisters and international Sangha, and the sister of the King of Thailand was about to fix the moment in time in perpetuity. A snip of scissors, the golden orb rolled down its ramp and fell into its hole with scarcely a thump.

I expected cheers, whoops and whistles even, but not even one hastily-stifled cheer broke the solemnity of the moment. Perhaps the devas were doing it for us – they are more used to being happy than we are.

So, for all intents and purposes, it was all over, and, twenty two years after Luang Por Chah's arrival at Hampstead accompanied by four western monks, the Sangha has grown, flourished and taken root in the foreign land. And I for one am very happy about that.

George Sharp

monks arrived in the Temple in a procession, preceded by 4 laymen in traditional costume with trumpets and drums led by the ex high commissioner dressed all in white – one really knew that something major was about to happen! Almost all of the monks squeezed into the octagonal paper pavilion and Dr. Vijirañāna explained what was to happen: after the first hour when the whole group would chant together, there would be a rota of monks chanting through the night until early morning, then at 5.30 they'd all gather to finish at 6.00am. After the first hour or so which was quite wonderful – a very different style to our chanting – Dr. Vijirañāna emerged from the pavilion, absolutely beaming, to announce that now there'd be an interlude of drumming, and the men

in national costume reappeared for a stunning performance.

... Walking past the Temple at 4.00am on my way to the shower block, I could hear them continuing – still going strong. At 4.45 I joined them again; it was a very special time...

. . . o o o o o . . .

...People gathered, and we waited for the arrival of the Princess Galyani. Looking around I saw many people I knew – quite a few of them former monks or nuns...also some important looking people I didn't know, and a very comfortable collection of good friends from Christian monasteries...

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We waited quietly and in she came: quite an ordinary, matter-of-fact looking lady in a modest outfit, surrounded by several men and lady attendants. I kind of liked her and wondered a bit what she was making of the whole thing, as she did what she was supposed to do. I was pleased when Ajahn Sumedho presented her with one of the replicas of the engraving of the reclining Buddha that we have in our chapel of rest.

There was some chanting; and then she cut the ribbon, and gravity did the rest. That was it.

The following morning, since I had nothing in particular to attend to, I helped with cleaning up – wandering around with a black plastic rubbish bag picking up bits of litter; actually there was hardly any, but it felt like a good thing to do. It helped me to appreciate in a small way the incredible behind-the-scenes effort of preparing for the event and helping it to run smoothly...

. . . o o o . . .

...The final thing I'd like to tell you about was the ceremony that took place the following evening, when we covered over the stone in its final resting place. We were told that we could put precious objects in there with the Luk Nimit. So all kinds of things went in: coins, bits of jewellery, scraps of paper with prayers on, stones (Ajahn Sumedho had been collecting bits of rock from all over the world for this); one lady offered an enormous crystal; a monk from the City of 10,000 Buddhas added the wrist watch belonging to the late Master Hua...

Actually, that's all that happened really; apart from covering the hole with some wood and tiles, and a bit of chanting – but the mood was magical, such a sense of lightness and joy. We wondered what archaeologists finding it in 2000 years' time would make of it all... A curious juxtaposition of the 'significant' with the completely ordinary, I wouldn't have missed it for anything!

Ajahn Candasiri

IN RETROSPECT

As I think back to July 4th I can't help but feel tears well up, such was the beauty and meaning of this special event. For many of us there was a strong sense of consolidation of the last twenty five years of grounding Dhamma in this particular form of the 'Forest Sangha' in the West. All of us, in so many different ways, have been a part of that process, but of course in particular one felt profound appreciation for the incalculable contribution of Luang Por Sumedho.

Although all have their own individual stories, there was a great sense of being lifted from everyday inter-personal dynamics and concerns into the transcendent. This communal gathering generated a very high and potentized energy which was deeply felt by many as healing, uplifting and unifying with a recognition of many strands being connected together. The mutual respect between Western and Asian Buddhists was tangible as we all savoured the positive *Kamma* that has been contributed by each community over the years. For many of the Vipassanā teachers who had founded lay centres, and ex-monastics, there was a sense of reconnection with lineage and family. For others it was a time to see old friends, fellow practitioners and acquaintances and to just delight in the auspicious and historic nature of the occasion.

One of the small but meaningful gestures which delighted me was the offering made by the Princess Galyani to Ajahn Sundarā and Ajahn Candasiri. That the nuns' community has developed in England on a par with the monks is the outcome of many years of delicate, considered and quite difficult processes. That the fruits of this work were acknowledged by such a high ranking member of the Thai Royal Family seemed wonderful to me!

One cannot finish without appreciating the enormous service and the substantial offerings that supported the occasion; in particular by those living at Amaravati, who have shed blood, sweat and tears to bring this remarkable happening together!

Sādhu Bhante, sādhu Sisters!

May the Dhamma long flourish upon these blessed shores!

Thānissarā

Poem in September

Why complain if the road gets muddy when it rains?

the complaining mind has feet of clay

It is itself completely, in order, wild

like the ugly beauty of seedling thistles

Sāmanera Issaramuni

Bhante Dharmawara

Venerable V. Dharmawara Mahāthera died peacefully in Stockton, California, on June 26th 1999, aged 110. Born in Cambodia, he was well educated and became a lawyer, judge and provincial governor before he began studying Buddhism and became a monk in his 30's. Bhante practised in the Forest Tradition in Thailand before travelling through Burma and India, where he spent much of his life. He studied natural healing and became well known for his healing abilities, in recognition of which he was given the land on which to found The Asoka Mission in New Delhi by Jawarharalal Nehru, first Prime Minister of Independent India. He was a gifted linguist – fluent in many tongues and able to use words very precisely as many of his friends and disciples will remember. He was a great teacher and became spiritual advisor to Prince Norodom

Sihanouk. He taught meditation every year to the students at Mr Bennett's Academy for Continuous Education in Sherborne, Gloucestershire. Later, Bhante moved to USA and worked tirelessly to help settle the thousands of refugees who fled there from the war in Cambodia. He founded Wat Dharmawararama in Stockton where his wake and cremation were attended by many followers from around the world. There are plans to inter his ashes in memorials being built in Cambodia, Thailand, Stockton and at Asoka Mission in Delhi. Towards the end of a lifetime of Love and Compassion, he pronounced a simple message:

*'You are what you think;
you are what you eat and drink.'*

Sam St. Clair Ford

A Shared Treasure

*Ajahn Sucitto comments on the laying of the Foundation Stone
for the new Dhamma Hall at Cittaviveka...*

The Millennium?... or just a rare and classically gorgeous English Summer, when the celestial beings who frequent Cittaviveka were out to do their utmost to impress the visitors? Surely this could not be the Dhamma-ending Age? The weekend that saw the foundation stone for the monastery's new Dhamma Hall ceremonially laid had the feeling of a culmination and a completion, even though it ought to have felt more like a raw beginning.

It was partly because the event of July 11th occurred as the last of a series of inter-related events that linked together origins and associated growths of the Theravāda dispensation in the West, in which contemplatives – robed, disrobed and as yet unrobed – as well as well-wishers from other Buddhist and non-Buddhist traditions gathered to share views, memories and aspirations. By the time that a few of us had talked and shared with the Western lay teachers at Gaia House during the Vipassanā Teachers' Conference, moved through the many facets of Amaravati's Temple Opening, received and attended to the deputation of Elders from Thailand, exchanged insights and state-of-play news with *samanas* from associated monasteries in Australia and America, I for one was becoming a little light-headed. The input was rich. Whether it was sitting by a bonfire listening to Ruth Denison reminisce over thirty years of Dhamma-practice in America, or resonating with the all-night *Paritta* chanting (punctuated by staccato drum-rolls) of the Sri Lankan Mahātheras in Amaravati's temple, or sitting as part of a group conversation with one of the many distinguished visitors on the lawn at Chithurst, I was left with the impression of a huge and still-resplendent Dhamma-mandala, beautiful in its diversity, but calming in its unity of purpose and commitment.

It was also because the occasion at Cittaviveka had its momentum, though rolling along in a slightly haphazard way: the commemorative stone was driven down from Northumberland overnight by the sculptors, Ken and Jenny Grant – arriving just a few hours before the ceremony with Ken still anxiously attending to polishing final details. The stone was set in place early in the afternoon by means of a makeshift crane that Ven. Kusalo had devised for constructing the new Amaravati stūpa, with the builder and the architect nervously looking on as 82 year-old Tan Chao Khun Dhammapariyattimuni, Ajahn Liam from Wat Pah Pong and Ajahn Sumedho wielded trowels and cement. For the lay community around Chithurst it was a wonderful moment, a blessing for the materialising possibility of having a Hall in which to gather for meditation. Just the other side of the garden wall, swallows swooped exuberantly over the newly-created pond: seemingly erratic but actually unerring, living symbols of how Dhamma-processes proceed. To predict when and how the Hall would get finished would signify a loss of faith.

Eventually everyone dispersed leaving e-mail addresses, books...and memories: hours spent discussing filial piety with Dharma Master Heng Sure, emptiness with Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi, or *saṃādhi* with Ajahn Be-ak, or listening to Ajahn Jayasāro's readings from Ajahn Chah's (as yet unpublished) biography. Perhaps one of the fondest is of the sight of the Thai Ajahns standing out by the *simā* on a golden evening, standing in silence among the cooing of wood-pigeons and the hopping rabbits, standing and slowly looking this way and that, drinking it all in. There is a joy in seeing others looking at something with which one has become familiar and seeing it anew as a treasure enriched by the sharing. ❖



AMARAVATI NOTICES

We will be holding a **New Years Retreat/Vigil** 28th December – 3rd January. Additional accommodation is available in the Retreat Centre for what we expect will be a popular time to come and stay. Write to Guest monk/nun.

Monastic winter retreat – January – March 2000. As in previous years we are looking to have a small team of lay people staying at the monastery to help with the kitchen etc. We will only accept people who have stayed before, and ask for a minimum stay of a month. Please write a.s.a.p. to the Secretary.

School Groups visiting Amaravati. Are you interested in helping to make these possible? There are various types of help needed, especially with co-ordination. *Please contact Ven. Kusalo for details.*

Rainbow (Children's) Room. Has now been relocated and refurbished by this year's Family Camp, and is to be found in the "Publications building".

Family events in 2000

Rainbows: 26th – 29th May.

Family Weekend: 14th – 16th July

Summer Camp: 19th – 27th August.

Young Persons' Retreat: to be decided

Community Work Weekend

at Amaravati November 20th & 21st, 1999

The Amaravati Community would appreciate your support with the ongoing upkeep of the grounds and garden. Can you join us to help with gardening on the above dates? If you would like to come for either a day or the whole weekend please write enclosing an SAE to *Sister Kovida at Amaravati or fax 01442-843721.*

CITTAVIVEKA NOTICES

Although we have no great Millennium Plans for New Year's Eve, those who would like to end the century with neither a bang nor a whimper might like to know we will be holding the usual Forgiveness and Aspiration Ceremony at Cittaviveka on the evening of 31st December. Bring good heart and a few regrets.

Winter Retreat

The Sangha will be going on retreat at Cittaviveka from January 5th until the end of March. If anybody is interested in coming to act as a retreat supporter (basically cooking) for a month or more, please could they write to the Guest Monk or nun.

Meanwhile, there are a couple of **Lay Forums** that you might be interested in attending. These are discussion groups taking place between 2:00 pm and 4:00 pm in the monastery's Reception Room:

November 21st: What is suffering?

December 4th: Forgiveness

Forest Work Days

All welcome – meet at the main house at 1.30

13th November,

18th/19th December

major tree planting weekend. Please contact guest monk/nun beforehand if overnight accommodation is required.

GENERAL NOTICES

Monastic Style Lay Community in France: Niccanando and June Glen would welcome people interested to live a life of simplicity and celibacy, following the routines of a Theravāda Forest Monastery.

For more information, please write to the secretary at: Mas de Molières, F-30440, Saint Laurent le Minier, France.

KATHINA/ALMSGIVING CEREMONIES

All welcome to attend

Cittaviveka, 31st October
Contact: Barry Durrant
01730 821479

Aruna Ratanagiri (Harnham), 7th November
Contact: Namtip Milligan
0191 240 3522

Santacittarama (Italy), 7th November

Amaravati, 14th November
Contact: Dilsiri & Sudanta
0181 995 2677

Almsgiving ceremonies at Hartridge (Devon) & Dhammapala (Switzerland) monasteries took place during the vassa.

The Buddhist Group of Kendal Please send any donations of unwanted Buddhist books to:
C/O Fellside Centre, Low Fellside, Kendal, CUMBRIA LA9 4NH.

Lay Events at Amaravati in 2000 to which you are welcome.

Day events (no booking required)

April 22nd – Enjoyment

May 27th – Sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair

July 1st – Topic to be confirmed

Nov. 18th – Topic to be confirmed

Weekend events (please send SAE to the AUA at Amaravati, for booking form)

March 24–26th – Dukkha, Anicca, Anatta

Sept. 29th – Oct. 1st – Greed, Hatred & delusion

for more information contact:
*Nick Carroll, 0181 740 9748 or
Chris Ward, 01442 890034*

We try to bring out the *Newsletter* quarterly, depending upon funds and written material. In the spirit of our relationship with lay people, we naturally depend upon donations: any contributions towards printing/distribution costs can be made to: 'The English Sangha Trust', Amaravati. In that same spirit, we ask you to let us know if you wish to be put on (or removed from) the mailing list, or if you have moved. Write to *Newsletter*, Amaravati. The newsletter is also available on the internet from: <http://www.fsnews.cjb.net>

Data Protection Act: The mailing list used for *Forest Sangha Newsletter* is maintained on computer. If you object to your record being kept on our computer file, please write to *Newsletter*, Amaravati, and we will remove it.

This Newsletter is printed by: *Ashford Printers*, Harrow. Telephone – (0181) 427-5097

Teaching and Practice Venues

MEDITATION GROUPS

These are visited regularly by Sangha members.

BATH Catherine Hewitt, (01225) 405-235	LONDON BUDDHIST SOCIETY 58 Eccleston Square, SW1 (Victoria) (0171) 834 5858 Meditation Sundays: led by a monk or nun, every 2nd month. 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Thursday classes – 6.00pm
BERKSHIRE Penny Henrion (01189) 662-646	
BRISTOL Lyn Goswell (Nirodha), (0117) 968-4089	
SOUTH DORSET Barbara Cohen-Walters (Sati sati), (01305) 786-821	
EDINBURGH Muriel Nevin, (0131) 337-0901	LEEDS AREA Daniella Loeb, (0113) 2791-375 Anne Voist, (01274) 670-865
GLASGOW James Scott, (0141) 637-9731	SOUTHAMPTON Ros Dean (01703) 422430
HAMPSTEAD Caroline Randall, (0181) 348-0537	SURREY/WOKING Rocanā, (01483) 761-398

MEDITATION GROUPS

These meet regularly & receive occasional visits from Sangha.

BEDFORD David Stubbs, (01234) 720-892	MAIDSTONE Tony Millett, (01634) 375-728
BELFAST Paddy Boyle, (01232) 427-720	MIDHURST Barry Durrant, (01730) 821-479
BRIGHTON Nimmala, (01273) 723-376	NEWCASTLE ON TYNE Andy Hunt, (0191) 478-2726
CAMBRIDGE Gillian Wills, (01954) 780-551	NORWICH Elaine Tattersall (01603) 260-717
CANTERBURY Charles Watters, (01227) 463342	PEMBROKESHIRE/S. WALES Peter and Barbara (Subhdra) Jackson, (01239) 820-790
DUBLIN Eugene Kelly, (1) 285-4076 or (1) 284-9019	PORTSMOUTH Dave Beal, (01705) 732-280
ESSEX (Billericay) Rob Howell, (01702) 482-134 or (Harlow) Pamutto, (01279) 724-330	REDRUTH Daniel Davide (01736) 753-175
HEMEL HEMPSTEAD Bodhinyana Group Chris Ward (01442) 890-034	STEYNING / SUSSEX Jayanti (01903) 812-130
LONDON / NOTTING HILL Jeffrey Craig, (0171) 221-9330	STROUD John Groves, 0796 7777-742
LEIGH-ON-SEA Gool Deboo, (01702) 553-211	TAUNTON Martin Sinclair, (01823) 321-059

AMARAVATI CASSETTES

Cassette tapes of Dhamma talks given by Ajahn Sumedho and other Sangha members, plus tapes of chanting and meditation instruction are available for sale at cost price. For catalogue and information send SAE to:

Amaravati Cassettes, Ty'r Ysgol Maenan,
Llanrwst, Gwynedd, LL26 OYD U.K.

Amaravati

Retreats:



1999

Oct.	15 – 20	5 Day	Sister Thānasanti — FULLY BOOKED
Nov.	5 – 7	Weekend	Ajahn Ariyasilo — (<i>Death & Dying</i>)
Nov.	19 – 28	10 Day	Ajahn Candasiri
Dec.	3 – 8	5 Day	Venerable Kusalo

2000

April	7 – 16	10 Day	(Ajahn Sundarā)
April	21 – 23	Weekend	(<i>to be decided</i>)
April 28 – May 12	14 Day	Ajahn Sumedho	— (Experienced)
May	19 – 21	Weekend	(<i>to be decided</i>)
June	2 – 11	10 Day	Ajahn Sucitto — (Experienced)
June	16 – 21	5 Day	Ajahn Ariyasilo
Aug.	11 – 18	7 Day	Ajahn Sumedho — (in Thai)
Sept.	1 – 3	Weekend	(<i>to be decided</i>)
Sept.	8 – 17	14 Day	Ajahn Sumedho
Oct.	6 – 8	Weekend	(<i>to be decided</i>) ☸
Oct.	13 – 22	10 Day	Ajahn Ariyasilo ☸
Nov.	10 – 19	10 Day	Ajahn Candasiri
Nov.	24 – 26	Weekend	(<i>to be decided</i>)
Dec.	27 – Jan. 1	5 Day	(<i>to be decided</i>)

☸ *These dates are still provisional.*

To take part in the retreats marked 'experienced', you need to have done at least one 10-day retreat at Amaravati.

All weekend retreats are suitable for complete beginners. It is advisable to do a weekend retreat before doing any of the 5 or 10 day retreats.

Please note that bookings are only accepted on receipt of a completed booking form and booking fee. The fee is refundable on request, up to one month before the retreat starts. To obtain a booking form, please write to the Retreat Centre, stating which retreat you would like to do.

Retreat Centre Work Weekends 2000

March 31 – April 2 : June 23 – 25 : Sept. 22 – 24

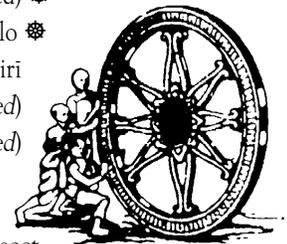
INTRODUCTORY MEDITATION—AMARAVATI

Saturday Afternoon Classes 1.30 – 3.30 pm

Meditation instruction for beginners;
with an opportunity for questions
to be answered.

Classes are in the Bodhinyana Meditation Hall.

Feel free to come along – no booking is necessary.



V I H A R A S

BRITAIN

◆ Amaravati Monastery
Great Gaddesden,
Hemel Hempstead,
Hertfordshire HP1 3BZ
Tel: (01442) 84-2455 (Office)
84-3411 (Guest Info.)
84-3239 (Retreat Info.)
Fax: (01442) 84-3721

*Stewards: English Sangha Trust,
Amaravati.*

◆ Aruna Ratanagiri
Harnham Buddhist Monastery
Harnham, Belsay,
Northumberland
NE20 0HF

Tel: (01661) 88-1612
Fax: (01661) 88-1019
web site: www.ratanagiri.org.uk
e-mail: harnham@mailcity.co

*Stewards: Magga Bhavaka
Trust.*

◆ Cittaviveka: Chithurst
Buddhist Monastery
Chithurst, Petersfield,
Hampshire GU31 5EU
Tel: (01730) 81-4986
Fax: (01730) 81-7334

*Stewards: English Sangha Trust,
Cittaviveka.*

◆ Hartridge Buddhist
Monastery,
Upottery, Honiton,
Devon EX14 9QE
Tel: (01404) 89-1251
Fax: (01404) 89-0023
Stewards: Devon Vihara Trust.

THAILAND

◆ Wat Pah Nanachat
Bahn Bung Wai,
Amper Warin,
Ubon Rajathani 34310

AUSTRALIA

◆ Bodhinyana Monastery
Lot 1, Kingsbury Drive,
Serpentine 6125 WA
Tel: (08) 952-52420
Fax: (08) 952-53420

◆ Dhammaloka Buddhist
Centre (Perth)
18-20 Nanson Way,
Nollamara 6061 WA
Tel: (08) 934-51711
Fax: (08) 934-44220
*Stewards: Buddhist Society of
Western Australia.*

ITALY

◆ Santacittarama
Via Delle Prata 22
Località Brulla
02030 Frasso Sabino (Rieti)
Italy
Tel/Fax: (0765) 87 21 86
*Stewards:
Santacittarama No 20163/38.*

SWITZERLAND

◆ Dhammapala
Buddhistisches Kloster
Am Waldrand,
CH 3718 Kandersteg
Tel: 033 / 675 21 00
Fax: 033 / 6752 241
*Stewards:
Dhammapala 31921-201-5.*

NORTH AMERICA

◆ Abhayagiri Monastery,
16201 Tomki Road,
Redwood Valley,
CA 95470
Tel: (707) 485-1630
Fax: (707) 485-7948
(Sangha literature and West
Coast newsletters are
distributed from here.)
*Stewards:
Sanghapala Foundation.*

◆ Boston Area:
Dorothea Bowen, Boston,
Mass. Tel.(617)332-2931
Mailing for E. Coast USA
& Thailand: to be placed on
the mailing list, please write
directly to Amaravati.

NEW ZEALAND

◆ Bodhinyanarama
17 Rakau Grove,
Stokes Valley,
Wellington 6008
Tel: (+ + 64) 4 563-7193
Fax: (+ + 64) 4 563-5125
e-mail: sangha@actrix.gen.nz
*Stewards:
Wellington Theravada Buddhist
Association.*

◆ Auckland Buddhist Vihara
29 Harris Road,
Mount Wellington,
Auckland
Tel: (+ + 64) 9 579-55443

NUNS' ORDINATION

AMARAVATI, DECEMBER 12, 1999

All are welcome to attend the
Pabbajjā (Going Forth)
ceremony of:

*Anagārikā Renée,
Anagārikā Jutta,
Anagārikā Karen*

who will be accepted into the
Nuns' Sangha.

The ceremony will take place in
the Temple at 1:30 p.m.

*(Those wishing to offer requisites please contact
Sister Thānasanti at Amaravati.)*

OBSERVANCE DAYS

On these days the community devotes itself to quiet reflection and meditation. Visitors are welcome to join in the evening meditation vigils, and on the Full and New moon, there is an opportunity to determine the eight precepts for the night.

Moon Phase	☾ HALF	● NEW	☽ HALF	○ FULL
OCTOBER	2 (Sat)	9 (Sat)	17 (Sun)	24 ☺(Sun)
NOVEMBER	1 & 30	7 (Sun)	15 (Mon)	22 (Mon)
DECEMBER	30 (Thurs)	7 (Tues)	15 (Wed)	22 (Wed)
JANUARY	28 (Fri)	5 (Wed)	13 (Thurs)	20 (Thurs)
☺ Pavāranā Day (vassa ends) Buddhist New Year 2543 begins 4th November				

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Closing date for submission to the next issue is 15th November 1999