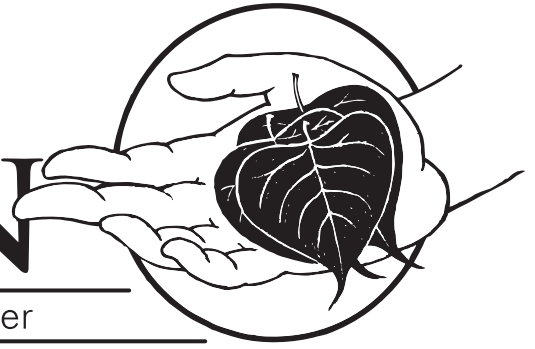


# FEARLESS MOUNTAIN

The Abhayagiri Buddhist Monastery Newsletter



Autumn 2011 • 2554/2555

Volume 16, Number 3

*This season's theme:*

## Life as Skill



## Buddhism-the Supremely Comprehensive Education System

*A talk given by Ajahn Jayasāro on May 28, 2011*

The attitude that the Buddha recommended was the attitude of the student, a student of life. In the meditation practice itself, it helps a great deal to consider the meditation practice as an exploration, as a study. If we consider meditation as an effort to achieve a certain state of mind or the accumulation of certain special experiences, then we are looking at meditation in a very worldly way. This is a very common phenomena, where people rather tragically seek to recreate and re-experience certain meditation experiences they had six months ago, a year ago, or even ten years ago. Ajahn Chah would say things like, "If you're peaceful, know that you're peaceful. If you're not peaceful, know that you're not peaceful. If you're peaceful, learn from peace. If you're not peaceful, learn from not peace." This, I think, takes away a great deal of the tension and gaining attitudes that can arise in the practice of medita-

tion without, at the same time, removing interest or enthusiasm for practice. We are learning all the time, and although some mental states are less enjoyable to learn about than others, in the long run we may well benefit more from being willing to look and to learn from them. In this way, there is more of a seamless relationship between meditation practices and daily life. We are just doing the same thing, but in the meditation practice, we are reducing the amount of distraction and we are practicing life skills in a very focused way.

One analogy that I am fond of using is that if we compare the mind to a moving light, to track the movement of that small point of light across a very complex background is possible but difficult. One thing that will help us to do that is if we spend a certain amount of time regularly following the movement of a small point of light against a white background or a



Ajahn Jayasāro

very simplified background. We attain a certain fluency, a habituation through a much simplified effort, which then enhances our ability to do the same thing in more complex environments: this is an understanding of meditation practice.

We are learning to be with the mind,

*(Continued on page 12)*

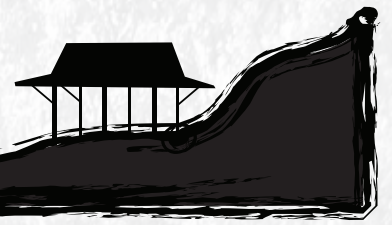
### INSIDE:

<i>From the Monastery</i>	<b>Pg 2</b>
<i>Excerpt from Skillfulness</i>	<b>Pg 4</b>
<i>10,000 Hours of Training</i>	<b>Pg 5</b>
<i>The Craft of the Heart</i>	<b>Pg 4</b>
<i>Calendar</i>	<b>Pg 8 &amp; 9</b>
<i>Lesson from Mom, Quilt-Icons</i>	<b>Pg 10</b>
<i>Pacific Hermitage Update</i>	<b>Pg 11</b>
<i>Sore Feet and Slow Progress</i>	<b>Pg 14</b>
<i>Voice of the Texts</i>	<b>Pg 15</b>
Contributors: <i>The Sangha, Ajahn Pasanno, Ajahn Viradhammo, Thanissaro Bhikkhu, Ajahn Jayasāro, Ajahn Yatiko, Ajahn Sudanto, Ajahn Karunadhammo, Ajahn Jotipālo, Suddhāso Bhikkhu</i>	



# From the Monastery

## Autumn 2011



“The days and nights are relentlessly passing. How well am I spending my time?’ This should be reflected upon again and again by one who has gone forth.” Repeated reflection upon life and its passing is an intimate characteristic and even an imperative of the teaching of the Lord Buddha. As has been noted by various visiting elders in the last several months, this figuring out how to look back, evaluate, and learn from one’s experience is also an integral part of acquiring a skill. This edition of the Fearless Mountain Newsletter takes as its theme “Life as Skill” and touches on some of the various ways in which craft terminology and practice can directly parallel one’s approach to meditation, contemplation, and a peaceful life.

### MASTER AND DISCIPLE

One necessary aspect of any form of study - gross or subtle, interior or exterior - is association with the wise. Abhayagiri is fortunate, not only to have the presence of our abbot, Ajahn Pasanno, along with our several other local elders, but to have a tradition of hospitality which welcomes various senior Theravādan monks from



Ajahn Viradhammo

monasteries around the globe to visit and offer teachings. This year, since the conclusion of our 3-month winter meditation retreat period in April, Abhayagiri has had the pleasure of hosting several such teachers.

The last week in May, Ajahn Jayasāro, former abbot of Wat Pah Nanachat, author of the forthcoming biography of Ajahn Chah in English, and mentor at the Thawsi School of Buddhist education in Bangkok (<http://thawsischool.com/>), made time for a much appreciated visit to Abhayagiri. In addition to giving several formal dhamma talks here, Ajahn Jayasāro generously made himself available for meeting with individuals and various small groups; casual tea-time conversations, one-on-one interviews, guidance for monks and for visiting lay guests, questions and answers with Americans and also with the many Thai people who specifically came to the monastery to hear the Dhamma from this well-known English Buddhist luminary. In the featured article “Buddhism-the Supremely Comprehensive Education System,” we are given some useful perspectives with which to view the practice and its development in a progressive and modern voice.

Shortly after Ajahn Jayasāro’s departure, Abhayagiri was again buoyed up by a visit from Ajahn Viradhammo, monk of 38 years and abbot of Tisarana Monastery in Perth, Ontario. In his several recorded talks, the listener is again and again given parallels between crafts of the hands and the craft of the heart which he feels was made manifest within his own apprenticeship to Ajahn Chah and so also to the present day within the training monasteries of this tradition. His approachable and informal demeanor attracted monk and lay alike with surprisingly quick bonds of affection being formed between teacher and student; inspired by example, several monks here

have since taken up the practical skill of card-weaving and at least one resident monk was able to pass on some of his own knot-tying handiness to our visiting crafts master.

In addition to these visits, Abhayagiri also much appreciated the shorter visits from several other inspiring mahātheras (monks of over 20 years standing) and theras (monks of over 10 years standing) Ajahn Chandako (abbot of Vimutti Forest Monastery, New Zealand) and Ajahn Acalo (abbot of Wat Ānandagiri, Thailand.) Our familiar Ajahn Sudanto also came back for a short stay after a whirlwind year of development at the Pacific Hermitage where he is the residing elder (See the article “Pacific Hermitage Update”). As journeymen would travel to hone their trade and trade their ware, we are fortunate that such teachers have taken up the Buddha’s exhortation to “travel-forth for the benefit of the many.”

### THE ART OF TEACHING

In his recorded talk “Qualities of a Wise Person,” Ajahn Jayasāro examined the Buddha’s list of Seven Sappurisa dhammas: 1) knowing the Dhamma, 2) knowing the meaning, 3) knowing one’s self, 4) knowing moderation, 5) knowing time 6) knowing groups, and 7) knowing distinctions between individuals. In retrospect of this last season’s calendar of events, one can get a picture of the range of social situations encountered as Buddhism comes to the West and can imagine the specific skill-sets needed regarding these various types of knowledge.

Over the last several months, Abhayagiri welcomed several groups of returning interested student groups: Second-graders from the local Waldorf school visited, sat full-lotus, walked some trails and asked questions; Middle-schoolers from the City of Ten Thousand



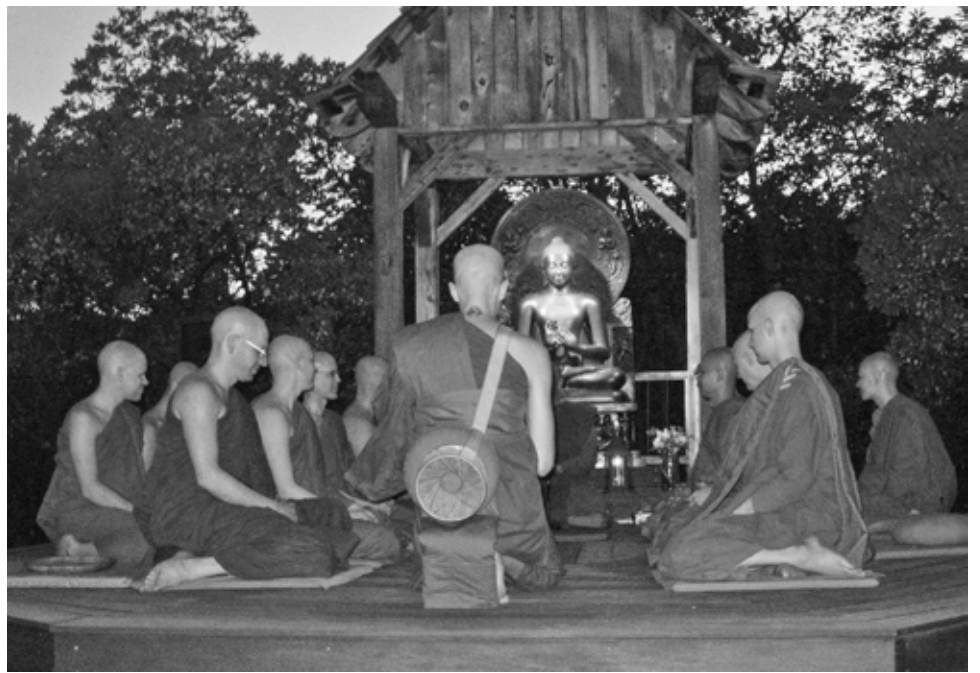
Buddhas (CTTB) came for the afternoon as per tradition of some years; and 2 days in July became the “Spirit Rock Teen Weekend” as 15 teens voluntarily gave up “normal life” for a while to come and practice with the community..

As for older students, Ajahn Pasanno and our several other teaching Ajahns have been continuing to offer Dhamma at various on-going venues: day-longs at Spirit Rock meditation center; university classes at CTTB; tea and reflections at the Berkeley Buddhist Monastery; guided meditations at 3 Jewels in Ft. Bragg; sitting, and instruction at Yoga Mendocino, Ukiah and Yoga Samādhi, White Salmon; talks at the Thai monastery Wat Buddhanusorn in Fremont; and good wishes at the inauguration of the Mindfulness Care Center in SF. In early August, as in years past, several monks headed by Ajahn Pasanno, traveled to Spirit Rock Meditation Center to participate in their yearly, five-day long “Family Retreat.” A mutually- appreciated wholesome summer camp. Such events become “workshops” where students can connect with a teacher.

In addition to going out to speak to interested groups, other groups choose to come to the monastery for a more immersive learning experience: A group of Dhamma Punx of Santa Cruz and San Jose visited and sat with us for a weekend; the monastery-affiliated Upāsaka group had its annual “renewal day” of dāna, sila, and meditation; and the Buddhist Bike Pilgrimage, once again, made Abhayagiri the final stop on its over 120- mile bike ride north from Mendocino County.

## APPRENTICESHIP

The Buddha often spoke of the eight-fold noble path as a “gradual path” with “gradual fruit.” In the monastic form which he devised and which remains practiced to this day within Theravādan Buddhist countries and within the international branch monasteries associated with Luang Por Chah (of which Abhayagiri is one), a corresponding gradation of training is observed. After several months of lay residency here, Jordan Van Nest and Wade Sanders, have taken Anagārika ordination. This entails a one-year commitment to living and training at the monastery



Ven. Suddhāso's ordination

inline with the schedule and in keeping with the 8 moral and renunciate precepts. Joe Ginsberg has taken on the further one-year Sāmaṇera training adding the precept of foregoing the use of money and has thus been given the new name Pesalo, “One of Endearing Virtue.” On the same evening, Sāmaṇera Suddhāso was given full bhikkhu ordination, avowing to live another 5 years in “dependence” on his preceptor and teacher. In a shift of roles, after a short stay outside the monastery, former Anagarika Robert Coyner has returned as a long-term lay resident to give support and assistance to Debbie Stamp—helping out in the Sanghapāla office and brightening the monastery with his kindness. With these new community members coming in, Abhayagiri too has occasion to send warm well-wishes to the Abhayagiri-born Venerables Kaccāna and Thitapaṇṇo who are spending their third rains retreats at Wat Pah Nanachat, Thailand. May these students of the Dhamma use this incredible workshop and human birth well and grow and learn in accordance with their highest aspirations.

## JOURNEYMAN

In the Thai Forest tradition the practice of going “tudong” is widely practiced as monks decrease their possessions to merely what they can carry on their person and set out to wander on alms-pilgrimage.

In mid-summer, Ajahn Yatiko, Canadian monk of 20 years who trained in Thailand but has lived at Abhayagiri for the last 3, slowly walked his way down over 400 miles of coast to San Diego—no money, no food in the afternoon, and very little fixed plan. Stopping at various Buddhist temples, meeting up with assorted lay meditation groups, and being helped out by dozens and dozens of strangers, Ajahn Yatiko survived and has returned to Abhayagiri for this years more stationary “Rains Retreat.”

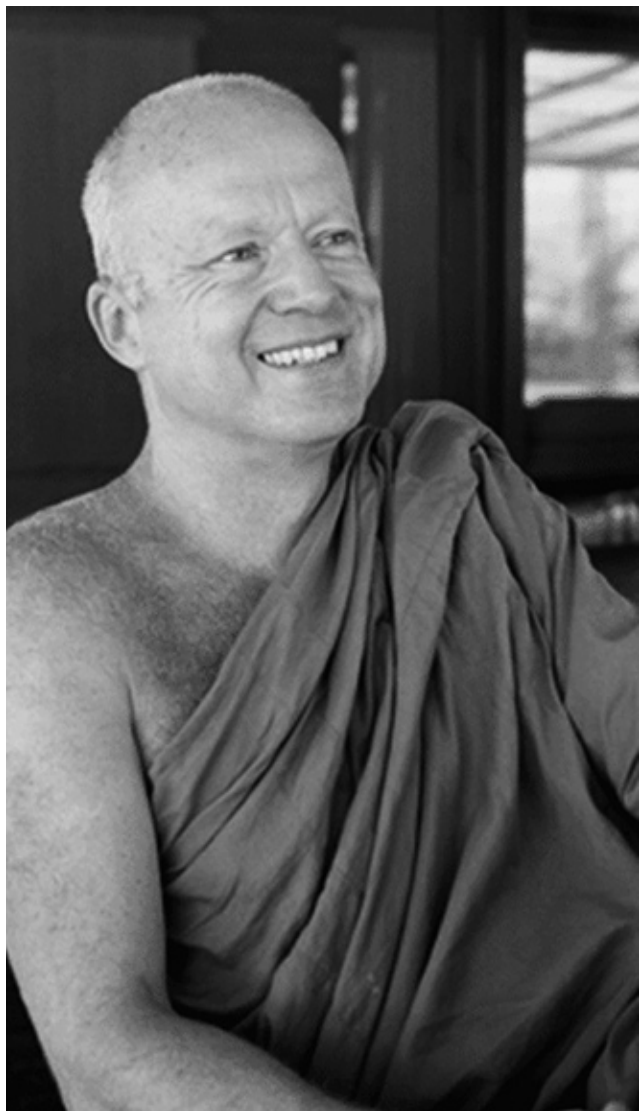
A modern day American Buddhist journeyman, of sorts, took to the road to study with respected teachers and to practice his art—living simply, moment-to-moment, reflecting wisely, and practicing non-violence, offering an example for future generations. (the article “Sore Feet and Slow Progress” is a letter sent during his travels).

After three and a half years of travel and residency at several different branch monasteries in New Zealand and Australia, Ajahn Jotipālo, Abhayagiri ordained monk of 11 rains, has returned to America to continue his practice and training. Along with Ajahns Yatiko, Karunadhammo, and Saṅṅamo, Ajahn Jotipālo has been giving assistance and teaching in various roles.

## THE JOY OF SKILLFULNESS

To give expression to the faculty of faith, and to allow space for the joy of

*(Continued on page 15)*



"Thanissaro Bhikkhu (Geoffrey DeGraff) is an American Buddhist monk of the Thai forest kammathana tradition. After graduating from Oberlin College in 1971 with a degree in European Intellectual History, he traveled to Thailand, where he studied meditation under Ajaan Fuang Jotiko, himself a student of the late Ajaan Lee. He ordained in 1976 and lived at Wat Dhammasathit, where he remained following his teacher's death in 1986. In 1991 he traveled to the hills of San Diego County, USA, where he helped Ajaan Suwat Suvaco establish Wat Mettavanaram ("Metta Forest Monastery"). He was made abbot of the monastery in 1993. Many of his original books and essays along with his translations of suttas and Thai meditation manuals can be found online at [www.accesstoinsight.org](http://www.accesstoinsight.org)"

## Excerpt from “Skillfulness”

*A chapter of the book *Wings to Awakening*  
by Thānissaro Bhikkhu ©2011*

We can say that the Dhamma — in terms of doctrine, practice, and attainment — derives from the fully explored implications of one observation: that it is possible to master a skill. This point is reflected not only in the content of the Buddha's teachings, but also in the way they are expressed. The Buddha used many metaphors, explicit and implicit, citing the skills of craftsmen, artists, and athletes to illustrate his points. The texts abound with explicit similes referring to acrobats, archers, bathmen, butchers, carpenters, farmers, fletchers, herdsmen, musicians, painters, etc., pointing out how their skills correspond either to the way the mind fashions stress and suffering for itself, or to the skills a meditator needs to develop in order to master the path to release. On the implicit level, the passages dealing with meditation are filled with terms derived from music theory. In his younger days as a prince, the Bodhisatta — like other young aristocrats of his time — was undoubtedly a connoisseur of the musical arts, and so was naturally familiar with the theory that lay behind them. Because the terminology of this theory is so pervasive in the teachings he formulated as a Buddha, it will be useful to discuss it here briefly.

Unfortunately, we do not have a full treatise on the theory of musical performance as practiced during the Buddha's time, but there are enough references to music scattered through the texts for us to piece together the outlines of that theory. The first step in performance was to tune one's instrument, "establishing" one's tonic note (literally, "base," thana) to make it on-pitch ("even," or sama), then to fine-tune or attune ("ferret out" or "penetrate") the remaining notes (again, "bases") of the scale in relation to the tonic. This required a great deal of skill, sensitivity, and some mathematical knowledge, as the well-tempered scale had not yet been developed, and many different ways of calculating the scale were in use, each appropriate to a different emotion. The musician then picked up the theme (nimitta) of the composition. The theme functioned in several ways, and thus the word "theme" carried several meanings.

On the one hand it was the essential message of the piece, the image or impression that the performer wanted to leave in the listener's mind. On the other hand, it was the governing principle that determined what ornamentation or variations would be suitable to the piece.

These musical terms recur throughout the Buddha's discussion of meditation [SN 51.20, SN 48.50, AN 6.55, AN 5.28, MN 128, etc.]. For instance, in one context the Buddha says that one should establish one's persistence to the right pitch, attune the remaining faculties to that pitch, and then pick up one's theme. In other contexts, he says that one should become attuned to a particular theme, or that one should develop meditation in tune with a particular object. Impossibilities are said to be "non-base,"

analogous to tones that cannot function as musical notes. There are enough passages to show that the Buddha used this terminology conscious of its musical connotations, and that he wanted to make the point that the practice of meditation was similar to the art of musical performance. We should thus try to be sensitive to these terms and their implications, for the comparison between music and meditation is a useful one.

In the most general sense, this comparison underlines the fact that the knowledge needed for release from suffering is the same sort as that involved in mastering a skill — a continued focus on the present, a sensitivity to one's context, one's own actions, and their combined consequences, rather than a command of an abstract body of facts. To develop the path is to become more and more sensitive to the present — in particular, more sensitive to one's own sensitivity and its consequences. This is similar to the way in which a musician must learn to listen to his/her own performance, a process that ultimately involves listening to the quality of one's listening itself. The greater one's sensitivity in listening, the more profound one's performances become. In the same way, the greater one's sensitivity to one's own mind in the development of skillful qualities, the more one abandons the causes of suffering and realizes its cessation.

In addition to this general observation, the comparison between music and meditation highlights a number of practical points in the development of meditative skill. First, it underscores the need for flexibility and ingenuity in the practice, tempered by an awareness of the limits of how far that flexibility can go.

A skilled musician in the Buddha's time had to master not one but many tuning systems so as to handle a full range of musical themes, while simultaneously knowing which ways of tuning were unworkable. In the same way, a skilled meditator should know of many valid ways of tuning the mind to the theme of its meditation — and should have a command of them all so as to deal with various contingencies as they arise — but at the same time must be aware that some varieties of meditation simply do not lead to Awakening. In this light, the seven sets of the Wings to Awakening can be viewed as the Buddha's complete list of workable systems for tuning the mind. (There is evidence suggesting that seven is the number of musical tuning systems (gramaraga) recognized in the Buddha's time.) The implication here is that any path of practice deviating from these systems would be like an instrument tuned to a discordant scale, and would not be in harmony with the way of the contemplative (samana) who aims at a life in tune (sama) with the Dhamma.

A second point is that the musical analogy makes vivid the need for balance in meditative practice, a lesson that appears repeatedly in the texts [SN 51.20, AN 6.55, SN 46.53, MN 128]. Just as a musical instrument should neither be too sharp nor too flat, the mind on the path has to find a balance between excessive energy and excessive stillness. At the same time, it must constantly watch out for the tendency for its energy to slacken in the same

way that stringed instruments tend to go flat. The "rightness" of right view and other factors of the path thus carries the connotation not only of being correct, but also of being "just right."

A third point is that this analogy helps clarify passages in the texts that speak of attaining the goal without effort [SN 1.1]. Taken out of context, these passages seem to contradict or totally negate the many other passages that focus on the need for effort in the practice. Viewed in context of the music analogy, however, they make perfect sense. Like a musical virtuoso, one develops skill to the point where it becomes effortless, but the perfection of the skill does not negate the fact that it took a great deal of effort to reach that level of mastery.

In fact, the Buddha's path is a meta-skill — the full art or science of skillfulness, in and of itself — in which one focuses on the mind as the source of what is skillful and unskillful, learns to deal skillfully with unskillful states of mind, then to deal more skillfully even with skillful states to the point of focusing not on the skill, but on the skill of acquiring a skill, so that one ultimately sees what lies both in the skillfulness and beyond [MN 78]. 🙏

## Ajahn Pasanno on "10,000 hours of training"

*—from informal question and answers at midnight tea at  
Abhayagiri July 23, 2011*

**Question:** *We're all familiar with the research on the "10,000 hour" skill-acquisition time-line; that to become really accomplished and masterful at any particular job, or trade, or sport, one has to put in so much time. I'm wondering if there is any equivalent to this kind of specified time-line with regards to attaining stream-entry [the first, unshakable stage of realization]?*

**Ajahn Pasanno:** Well...You can turn up the crank and get to 10 or 20,000 hours...but, for stream-entry you also have to have right view. This brings to mind the sutta from the Saṃyutta Nikāya (S.i.21): "As if smitten by a sword, As if his head were on fire, A bhikkhu should wander mindfully To abandon identity view." So, yeah, you do the practice but you also have to have the angle that lets you apply right view... There are 2 results of suffering: more suffering or search. (So with time) a feel for how this practice works starts to emerge. On a certain level, we just have to flail around for a while. But, its not in vain. That's why spiritual friends are a huge support.



# The Craft of the Heart

Collected from teachings by Ajahn Viradhammo given at Abhayagiri in June, 2011

One of the observations I have reflected on lately is that our life and spiritual practice are like a craft. Both for bhikkhus and lay people, it's a bit like the guild system in the Middle Ages. In that system, a student would be apprenticed to a master - a goldsmith for example, or a glassblower, or a potter. The master's duty was to train the apprentice in his craft. The apprentice's duty was to live in obedience to the master, regarding him as a father. The apprenticeship usually lasted seven years, after which the apprentice had to create a mature piece of work that demonstrated his skills - for example a pot or a cabinet. If he passed the test, he could become a journeyman and go to other villages or cities and earn a livelihood with his craft. In time, if he became respected in his guild and in the community, then he himself could become a master and teach other apprentices.

This seven year apprenticeship is very similar to our training here as monastics: one year as an anagārika, one year as a sāmaṇera, and then five years as a navaka bhikkhu. And like the journeyman of the Middle Ages, the next five majjhima years are often spent trying out other monasteries and places or being on one's own

. Finally, it's not uncommon for a monk of ten or fifteen years to begin to set up something on his own, just as Venerable Sudanto and others are doing at the Pacific Hermitage in Oregon.

In the early Renaissance years though, a new phenomenon arose in the European guild system. This was the notion of "the artist" - an individual who was uniquely gifted and could exhibit a novel personal touch in his work. There were people like Bernini, the famous goldsmith, who became famous for his unique designs.

If I remember correctly, he made a salt and pepper shaker for the king of France - it was a huge, elaborate affair depicting Neptune, god of the sea... This was no longer simple, solid guild work: it was the personal expression of a superstar, an artist.

In monasticism, we are craftspeople, not artists. The work we do is not spectacular. Notice how our monastic system works. It's not about being a superstar - it's about quietly plying one's craft. It's not about self-expression - like the early guilds, it's more about communal adherence and support. It's a very quiet thing. One's own insights and understandings

are not broadcast all over the world. Certainly, there are popular, charismatic teachers in the Sangha, but charisma can be pretty deluding too - Dhamma can become a kind of spiritual entertainment. You start to say, "Well, that was a good talk," or "Those jokes were great," rather than reflecting on the teaching and applying it to our craft. We all like good talks and humor is good, but the point of it



is not entertainment, it's reflection and contemplation.

How do you learn something new? If you've never woven, or if you've never done any woodworking, where do you begin? You just have to kick it a bit or move it a bit - in that engagement, you begin to learn. If you've never meditated and they say watch your breath, your mind's all over the place! Your knees hurt, but you pick it up and start to engage with it. In the engagement you begin to see, "ah!" That's insight, isn't it? That's what craft is about. Perhaps you're asked to throw a pot and you've never done it before you can't lift the clay or it keeps getting floppy. Eventually, you learn to apply an even pressure, and the clay starts to rise. This is a kind of insight, but the insight is visceral - something in your body, not just conceptual teaching. But then the next pot you do, of course it flops. You keep trying until it becomes a part of you. This is how we bring it in, how we become skilled in



Sāmaṇera Khemako's first attempt at belt-weaving. The pattern improves from the beginning to the end.

our craft.

For the last eight and a half years I have been living with my elderly mom, who recently died. I was spending quite a long time in her condo. I had never taken care of an elderly person or lived in a condominium before. There was a lot of fumbling, but I began to see that I was learning the craft of caring. How do you really care for someone? The training that we get in taking care of each other, our seniors and sick monks, was tremendously helpful. Think about the beautiful choreography we monks live by.

When the junior brings the Ajahn a flask of hot water, he gets down on his knees and approaches gracefully. That kind of mindfulness of the body is part of our craft. Also the way we ask a question to a senior monk - we'll put our hands in anjali. This kind of training carries us and brings us into the present moment. It's a craft of body and speech, the way we communicate, the way we relate in community. That's the interesting thing about community - it makes you and you make it; it carries you, but you carry it too. All of us are trying the best we can to live in harmony, to live by the Vinaya. We create the community, but also the community creates us. There is a lovely interchange. In the craft we're learning, what is the object? What is the pot we're making, or the cabinet? It is simply beings-who-don't-suffer, but also it's a community. It's both. If the purpose of our monastic life is just the community, just the external, it wouldn't work. But if it was just the internal we would be selfish, wouldn't we?

All of these examples point to learning - how do we learn? While with my mom, I wanted to do something with my hands, living in her condo day after day, year after year. Since I couldn't fit a workshop into the living room, I was looking for something appropriate for a small space. Eventually I discovered a craft called card

weaving, or belt weaving. Card weaving is a very simple form of weaving that goes back a long time. At first, I only had books to go by, and found it very confusing - there was a lot of frustration and lost yarn! Yet through persistence and repeated application I began to be able to do card weaving. It was quite complex but I made some lovely stuff. When I began my little project, I just had squiggles of ink on paper, and I made my own weaving cards - all I could do was just begin, just try. In the beginning, the skill was in the book, explicit and external. Through training, though - failing, remaining available, trying again - that skill became a part of me, became implicit.

This is the way we learn something that we don't yet understand - by trying something, even if it might be askew. By being watchful and available and trying, we begin to see the results. Natural, isn't it? If there is an honesty there, and if there is a freshness of inquiry, then you'll learn, "no, this doesn't work," or "yes, this does work." Insight arises from that process of being watchful and available, of experimenting and trying: "Oh, look at that. That's how that works." Intellectual insight from books is a kind of understanding that manifests in the mind, but such insight isn't enough, is it? In craft - let's say I'm trying to make my belt - I might get the mental understanding of how to get the right kind of twist, but I have to repeat that. A number we hear a lot these days is 10,000 hours - a good craftsman needs 10,000 hours training to become a master. We have to bed it in until it becomes our own.

It's the same with the craft of the heart. Here, we are trying to understand the negative aspects of our consciousness, our own fears and angers - all the emotions we have as human beings. We're also trying to develop the paramitas [the spiritual perfections of generosity, virtue, renunciation, wisdom, energy, patience,

truthfulness, determination, loving-kindness, and equanimity]. If you think about developing the paramitas - patience, for instance - a teacher can tell you to be patient, but it isn't that easy. It's not that easy to understand what patience is and why it is important. If I come from a sense of "I should be patient!", that's not really engaging the problem. It's not a reflective mindset, it's a judgmental mindset. So rather than this type of willfulness, we try reading about patience and try seeing impatience. The understanding that comes from learning how impatience works in the mind and why patience is skillful and wholesome is the insight into the paramitas. Something like patience is not something you get by one tremendous insight. You have various insights into it, but then the craft is remembering and training. These incremental suggestions, doings and intentions have tremendous power. They have the power to settle the mind, to make the mind very able to be with the vicissitudes of life.

You can apply this learning process to anything - family situations, even simply listening. You make mistakes. You try, try, and try and then finally think "Okay, I'll look at it." This engagement is the First Noble Truth of understanding suffering: "What is it? What does it feel like? How does it arise? What are the patterns? How does it feel in the body?" You see what wasn't effective and what is. You practice again and again and you come to understand cause and effect. Over time you become a good parent, a good listener. This is true in all things. It's a gentle practice but it's also very determined. Making effort, not from simple willfulness but from insight: this is the beauty of the practice and the beauty of the craft. The product, of course, is a beautiful community, beautiful human beings.

This is quite lovely, in a natural and quiet way, rather than in a spectacular way.



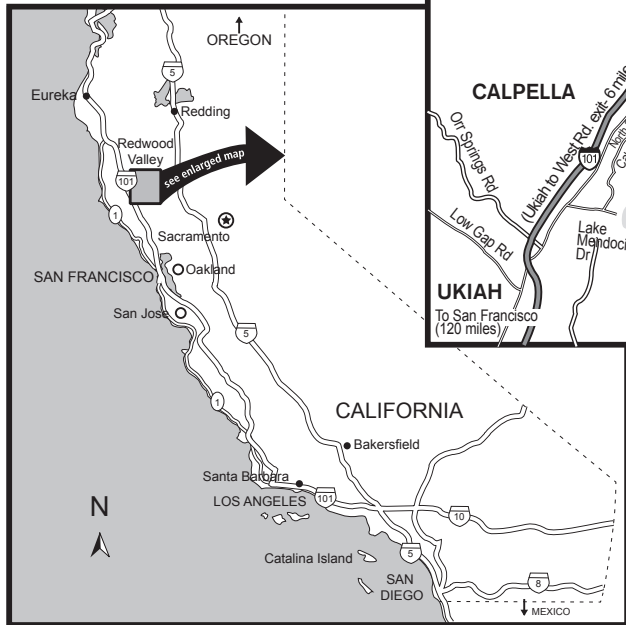
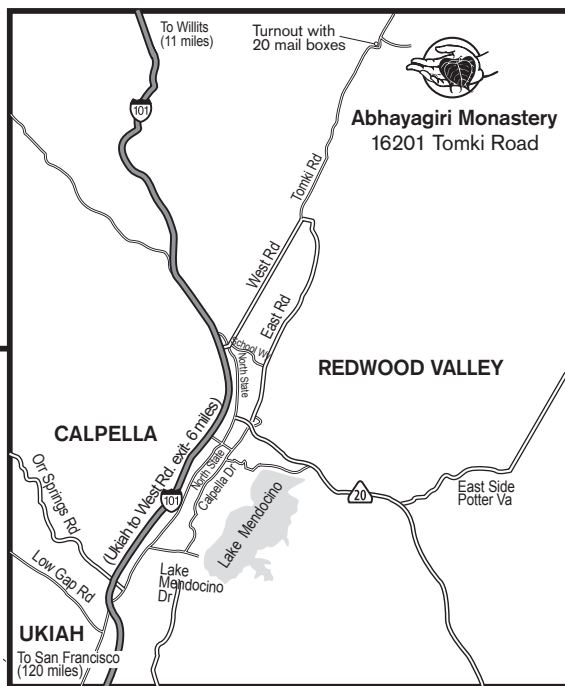
**LUNAR OBSERVANCE DAYS - 2554/2555**

	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
	WED <b>5</b>	THU <b>3</b>	SAT <b>3</b>	SUN <b>1</b>			
	WED <sup>1</sup> <b>12</b>	THU <b>10</b>	SAT <b>10</b>	SUN <b>8</b>	TUE <b>7</b>	WED <sup>3</sup> <b>7</b>	FRI <b>6</b>
	THU <b>20</b>	FRI <b>18</b>	SUN <b>18</b>	MON <sup>2</sup> <b>16</b>	WED <b>15</b>	THU <b>15</b>	SAT <b>14</b>
	WED <b>26</b>	FRI <b>25</b>	SAT <b>24</b>	MON <b>23</b>	TUE <b>21</b>	THU <b>22</b>	FRI <b>20</b>
				TUE <b>31</b>	WED <b>29</b>	FRI <b>30</b>	SAT <b>28</b>

1. Pavāraṇā Day 2. Ajahn Chah Memorial Day 3. Māgha 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 FOR EVENTS**

**NORTH AMERICA**

- Āloka Vihāra**  
1632 48th Ave.,  
San Francisco, CA 94122  
www.saranaloka.org
- Sitavana Birken Forest Monastery**  
PO Box 5, Knutsford, B.C.  
Canada V0E 2A0  
+1 (778) 785-6059  
http://birken.ca/  
email: meditate@birken.ca  
(preferred method of contact)
- Tisarana Buddhist Monastery**  
1356 Powers Road, RR #3  
Perth, Ontario K7H 3C5  
Tel: +1 (613) 264 8208  
www.tisarana.ca  
Stewards: Tisarana Buddhist Monastery
- Berkeley Buddhist Monastery  
Institute for World Religions**  
2304 McKinley Ave.  
Berkeley, CA 94703  
Tel. (510) 848 3440  
Fax. (510) 548 4551  
www.drba.org
- Portland Friends of the Dhamma**  
1422 SE Tacoma St., 2nd Floor  
Portland, OR 97202  
sakula@notjustus.com
- Spirit Rock Meditation Center**  
5000 Sir Francis Drake Blvd.  
Woodacre, CA 94973  
Tel. (415) 488 0164  
Fax. (415) 488 1025  
www.spiritrock.org

**Yoga Mendocino**  
206 Mason St.  
Ukiah, CA 95482  
Tel. (707) 462 2580  
www.yogamendocino.org

**Wat Buddhansorn**  
36054 Niles Blvd.,  
Fremont, CA 94536  
Tel. (510) 790 2294  
http://www.watbuddha.org/

**UNITED KINGDOM**

- 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
- Cittaviveka  
Chithurst Buddhist Monastery**  
Chithurst, Petersfield,  
Hampshire GU31 5EU.  
Tel. +w44 (0) 1730 814 986  
Fax. +44 (0) 1730 817 334  
www.cittaviveka.org
- Aruna Ratanagiri  
Harnham Buddhist Monastery**  
Harnham, Belsay,  
Northumberland NE20 0HF.  
Tel. +44 (0) 1661 881 612  
Fax. +44 (0) 1661 881 019  
www.ratanagiri.org

**THAILAND**

**Wat Pah Nanachat**  
Bahn Bung Wai,  
Amper Warin,  
Ubon 34310

**AUSTRALIA**

**Bodhivana Monastery**  
780 Woods Point Road,  
East Warburton,  
Victoria 3799.  
Tel. +61 (0) 3 5966 5999  
Fax. +61 (0) 3 5966 5998

**NEW ZEALAND**

- Bodhinyanarama  
Monastery**  
17 Rakau Grove  
Stokes Valley,  
Lower Hutt 5019  
Tel. +64 (0) 4 5637 193  
www.bodhinyanarama.net.nz
- Vimutti Monastery**  
PO Box 7  
Bombay, 2343  
Tel. +64 (0) 9 236 6816  
www.vimutti.org.nz

Also visit our online calendar at <http://www.abhayagiri.org/main/days/> for the most up-to-date information.

Oct

- 3 Dhamma talk at Three Jewels Dharma Hall, Fort Bragg, CA – Contact: *Mettika Hoffman (707) 964-4606*
- 4 Monthly gathering at Berkeley Buddhist Monastery
- 8 Upāsika Day at Abhayagiri – “Compassion in Action”
- 9 Community work day at Abhayagiri
- 12 Pavāraṇā Day full moon—the ending of the Rains Retreat Meditation and Dhamma talk at Yoga Mendocino (Yomo), Ukiah, CA
- 16 Kathina Festival at Abhayagiri

Nov

- 1 Monthly gathering at Berkeley Buddhist Monastery
- 9 Meditation and Dhamma talk at Yoga Mendocino (Yomo), Ukiah, CA
- 13 Community work day at Abhayagiri Daylong at Spirit Rock with Ajahn Yatiko and Ajahn Karunadhammo— Contact: *www.spiritrock.org*
- 18-27 Thanksgiving Retreat led by Ajahn Pasanno and the Abhayagiri Community at the Angela Center, Santa Rosa, CA. *Registration opens on September 1*
- 15 Āsalhā Pūjā – full moon observance at Abhayagiri
- 16 ‘Rains Retreat’ (Vassa) begins

Dec

- 4 Upāsika Day at Abhayagiri – “Applying the Four Noble Truths in Daily Life”
- 5 Dhamma talk at Three Jewels Dharma Hall, Fort Bragg, CA Contact: *Mettika Hoffman (707) 964-4606*
- 6 Monthly gathering at Berkeley Buddhist Monastery Monthly gathering at Wat Buddhansorn Fremont
- 11 Community work day at Abhayagiri
- 14 Meditation and Dhamma talk at Yoga Mendocino (Yomo), Ukiah, CA

Jan-Mar

- 1 Abhayagiri community in three-month Winter Retreat period, ending on March 31
- Check the online calendar at <http://www.abhayagiri.org/main/days/> for updates on events.

**Every Saturday evening at Abhayagiri**

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

**Every Lunar Quarter at Abhayagiri (see calendar on this page)**

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

**Second Sunday of each month at Abhayagiri (April through December)**

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 Upāsika.

**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)  
Updated Autumn 2011

Pasanno Bhikkhu	38	<b>LONGTERM LAY RESIDENT</b> Upāsikā Debbie Stamp Upāsaka Robert Coyner
Yatiko Bhikkhu	19	
Karunadhammo Bhikkhu	14	
Saññamo Bhikkhu	13	
Ṭhitābho Bhikkhu	5	<b>AT PACIFIC HERMITAGE</b> (hermitage.abhayagiri.org)  Sudanto Bhikkhu 17 Jotipālo Bhikkhu 12 Cāgānando Bhikkhu 7
Kassapo Bhikkhu	5	
Cunda Bhikkhu	4	
Suvaco Bhikkhu	3	
Kovilo Bhikkhu	2	
Pamutto Bhikkhu	2	
Suddhāso Bhikkhu	1	
Sāmaṇera Khemako		
Sāmaṇera Pesalo		
Anagārika Jordan		
Anagārika Wade Sanders		

For a comprehensive directory of branch monasteries please visit [www.forestsangha.org](http://www.forestsangha.org)



# Lesson from Mom

by: *Ajahn Jotipālo*

The then Sameṇera Karuṇadhammo, after the meal, kindly gave me a fifteen minute tutorial on how to use the sewing machine, he set me up with some cloth, a pattern, and taught me how to sew a “flat felled seam”. Four hours later when people returned for evening tea, I had completed a monastic jacket and was surprised when several people were surprised the jacket was complete. “I thought you had never used a sewing machine before? How did you sew that so quickly?”

It seemed an odd question as, at the time, it didn't seem like it was quick or slow; it just was what it was, I had nothing to compare it to. Perhaps “Why was it so easy?” might have been a better question. So I gave that some thought, and the immediate answer came, “I was watching my mother”.

My mother had been a professional seamstress and she worked out of the house. I grew up subconsciously watching her create the most beautiful works of art. My mom never gave me a sewing lesson and I have no memory of ever using a sewing machine, other than the one week of sewing we were required to have in eighth grade. I can remember dozens of times, maybe hundreds of times, being around my mom as she was sewing and noticing her do things like thread a bobbin, change the needle on the machine, sharpen the scissors, make alterations to a pattern. I'd seen everyday how a well organized sewing room could look and saw how to keep it clean. I remember learning tricks like wetting the end of the thread to make it easier to thread the needle, how to crease fabric with your fingernail so you wouldn't have to waste time drawing with chalk, and how to get special effects by using the machine in non-conventional ways. I even learned a few curse words being near the sewing room.

Thinking about what I learned from observing my mom, I now realize that I learned far more than how to sew. One of the more valuable lessons was that she would charge only a fraction of what she could have been charging for her wedding dresses. Thinking back, she probably felt this was one way she could help these young couples. My mom wasn't in it for the money. She got satisfaction from learning new skills, creating beautiful clothing and then being able to basically give them away.

Thanks for the lessons mom!



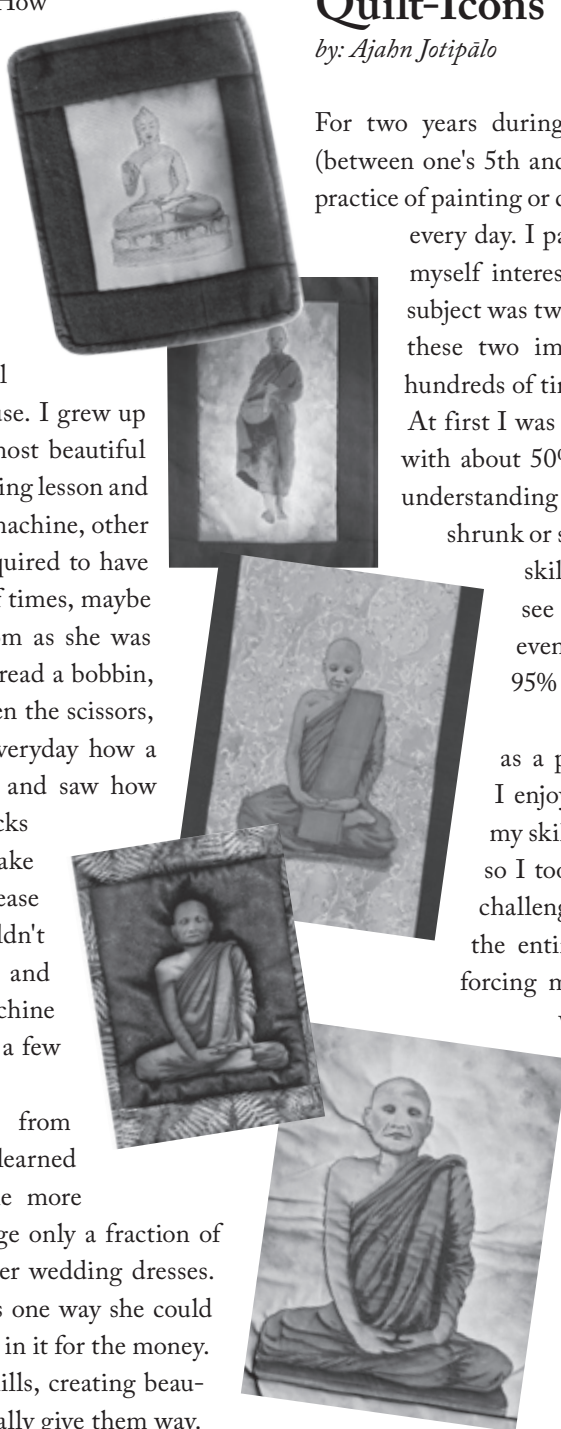
## Quilt-Icons

by: *Ajahn Jotipālo*

For two years during my training as a Majjhima monk (between one's 5th and 10th years in the robes), I took on a practice of painting or doing some aspect of quilt-icon making every day. I painted many different pictures to keep myself interested and challenged, but my primary subject was two images of Ajahn Chah and I painted these two images over and over again, probably hundreds of times.

At first I was able to get an image that I was happy with about 50% of the time. But slowly as I gained understanding into how to mix colors, how the fabric shrunk or stretched depending on conditions, my skill in painting improved. I was able to see new details in the original photos and eventually to get satisfactory results about 95% of the time.

My motivation in taking this on as a practice was for several reasons. One, I enjoyed painting and being creative. Two, my skill as a portrait painter was non-existent so I took this as an opportunity to learn and challenge myself. Three, I consciously used the entire process as a discipline, some days forcing myself to draw or paint, and on days when I really didn't feel like being creative I would work on cutting fabric or sewing on the borders, or even doing maintenance to the sewing machine. I never really got to point where I felt like I was getting the images to look as I wanted them to, but I had fun in the process, created lots of gifts to give away, and discovered many insights into how we learn. 🙏



# Pacific Hermitage Update

(from <http://hermitage.abhayagiri.org/Home>)

In late May, after nearly 18 months searching for a suitable location in the Pacific Northwest, the monks here with the help of Sanghāta (the hermitage's steward organization) have successfully found a permanent home for the Pacific Hermitage. The land purchase was enabled by a timely five-year loan to Sanghāta, with faith that there is sufficient enthusiasm to support the establishment of a monastic community in the Gorge.

For nearly a year previously, we had been living in Snowden, which required a long, several-mile, 1900-foot descent for our alms-rounds in White Salmon. This new location, a five-acre forested parcel which lies along Jewett Creek just on the outskirts of White Salmon, affords us a more reasonable walk, and therefore more time and energy to devote to meditation and study of the Buddha's teachings.

The summer has been going quickly, and we have been engaged in many activities, both at the hermitage and off-site. The talks on Tuesday nights at Yoga Samādhi, a local yoga studio, have focused on further exploration of the Four Noble Truths, and we are now plunging into the Fourth Noble Truth -- the Eightfold Path. In August, we had our first Upāsaka Day here in White Salmon. It was attended by 30 people from Portland and White Salmon, with teachings centered around the three "cardinal" suttas from the Pāli tradition.

Combined with the teachings here on the first Saturday of each month, and periodic trips into Portland, it seems like a fruitful and full teaching schedule. And that doesn't include all of the great Dhamma discussions we have after the meal offerings at the hermitage with the people who are coming out to offer the meal that day!

On the more material plane, work

at the hermitage has centered around moving in to the new site and getting infrastructures and extra-structures in place. Tan Cāganando spent a significant amount of time researching and installing a new water filtration and treatment system to remove the iron from our water, with very gratifying results.

All of us have spent a lot of time selecting and preparing sites to put up the meditation huts that were brought from our first location, and are now in the process of getting the structures in place. We have had lots of much appreciated help from our supporters, both local and from the Portland area. At this writing, structures are almost up and ready for use. (Check out the time-lapse video of construction work at <http://hermitage.abhayagiri.org/Blog/timelapsemeditationhuts>)

Portland lay supporters Joan and Scott Benge, and Rachel Uris will be sponsoring an end-of-Vassa Pah Bah offering ceremony on October 15th. This will be an opportunity for all of the lay supporters to come together in White Salmon to celebrate our spiritual friendship and share some Dhamma teachings. The financial offerings made at the Pah Bah will be dedicated to help pay off the five-year loan that was acquired for the purchase of the new property.

As for the monastic community at the hermitage, Ajahn Sudanto will be travelling to Thailand to attend the funeral services for his preceptor, Ajahn Mahā Amorn, and also the gathering in Ubon in memory of Ajahn Chah's passing 20 years ago. He will be gone from approximately November 20th until January 20th. Ajahn Karunadhammo, who has been at the hermitage for the Vassa, will be returning to Abhayagiri in mid-October, and Ajahn Jotipālo will be coming to join the hermitage monastic community from early



November until April, 2012.

At times, it's hard to believe that we moved down to Jewett Creek just a few months ago, so much has happened. If you haven't had a chance to visit us in our new home, please take the time to do so. We'd welcome a visit. 🙏





Kids from the Spirit Rock Family Camp gather around Buddha statue

**Buddhism...** (continued from page 1)

to learn from the mind, to understand the mind by creating an artificial situation in which sense contact is radically reduced, allowing us to see the arising and passing away of mental objects as mental objects, to see memory as memory, to see thought as thought, imagination as imagination and so on. It's just that much - nothing more, nothing less. A sense of interest in learning and understanding is key here. It's a refreshing kind of desire, not a draining and agitated kind of desire, and it's sustainable.

Even in the early stages of meditation when the mind is wandering frequently, what happens when you bring your mind back to the meditation object? Often, meditators will complain or become discouraged that they are just wasting their time. They try to meditate on an object and the next thing they know, the mind has gone here and gone there, so they bring it back but before very long it's gone again. However, I would suggest looking at that whole process again. What is that moment when you realize that you have been distracted? That is a moment of enlightenment. That is a moment of awakening; you have woken up and then you bring your mind back, and that's a moment of renunciation. So you are training on that very basic initial level; you are learning to wake up to your experience

and to realign yourself with your considered aims and objectives. The more that you do it and apply yourself to it, the easier it becomes.

Some time ago in a study at a leading music school, I think in America, they divided a group of pupils who were already quite gifted into three groups: the very gifted genius types, the middle type, and the less gifted, in order to see the relationship between inborn genius and practice, the idea being that someone who is naturally gifted doesn't have to do so much practice while the less gifted have to do more practice to make up for their lack of inherent giftedness. The actual results were exactly the opposite. The more gifted the pupil, the more time they spent practicing. They came up with this theory called the 10,000 hours theory, which says if you want to be really fluent and adept at anything of any substance, you have to be willing to make a commitment of 10,000 hours.

If you've been meditating, you might say I've been meditating for weeks now or months now, not every day but quite often. Rather than looking at the calendar, if you have to have some quantitative assessment, look in terms of 10,000 hours and take the long-term view: 10,000 hours of study. Going back to the three-fold training of the four kinds of bhāvanā and the bhāvanā development of one's rela-

tionship to the physical world, the social world, the emotional development, and the wisdom development and how they affect each other, the more that one is willing to observe, then the more one's wisdom and one's confidence and faith in the Buddha's teaching matures.

I am fond of making the suggestion that Buddhism is ultimately the supremely comprehensive education system. If you adopt this assumption, then where does this education take place, where is the classroom? The classroom is the present moment. Being in the present moment is not the goal—it's just a necessary condition for this education to take place. The necessary emotional condition is primarily that of equanimity. Being equanimous in the present moment is not the goal but an important part of the process leading to the development of wisdom. Before you can assess any situation accurately, before you can act effectively, you have to be able to put the mind into an equanimous mental state. It's not like, now you're not suffering anymore, now your mind is on an even keel, you've done the work. This is just a stage. After that, the wisdom faculty takes over. Should you say something, should you do something or not? Should you just be patient and endure or should you apply yourself in some way? One of the life skills involved in training ourselves is sustaining this



Cartoon courtesy of Ryan Houck

relaxed alertness in the meditation process in order to be able to sustain that more and more effectively in daily life, to have the ability to be awake, aware and equanimous with regard to sense contact and various experiences, not as an end in itself, but in order to facilitate in the abandonment of the unwholesome, the development of the wholesome, and the purification of the mind.

One way I look at practice is broadly distinguishing four primary areas: 1) physical development, 2) virtue (sīla) development - our relationship to the social world, 3) emotional (citta) development - the abandonment of negative emotions and the development of positive emotions, and 4) wisdom (pañña) development - to be applying the Buddha's teachings in these four areas in terms of the frameworks given by the Buddha, called by him sammā vāyāmā, or Right Effort. So in these four areas, physical, sīla, citta, and pañña development, the challenge that one takes upon oneself is to figure out how to protect the mind against unwholesome dhammas that have not yet arisen, to overcome those unwholesome dhammas that have arisen, to arouse those wholesome dhammas that haven't yet arisen, and to cultivate those that have. What is the most skillful way to prevent, reduce or eliminate the unwholesome aspects in any one area?

Which wholesome dhammas in this other particular area of life have not yet arisen which may arise, and which wholesome dhammas have arisen and need to be cared for and developed further? So I apply these four efforts in those four areas, a systematic way of looking at practice and one that recognizes and upholds the primacy and the necessity for formal practice but yet integrates it into an understanding of one's whole life as a Buddhist, as a student. Only the Arahant is the asekka puggala, the graduate; everyone else is a student, not yet graduated.

Let me give you an example. If you're in a car or you're in a city - this is really great fun - and you have the luxury of just looking out the window: try to wish some good thing for every person you can see.

You can do it with, "May you be happy, may you be happy," and that is already very good practice. But you can make it more fun and creative by trying to think of something more specific. I do this in all kinds of contexts. There is a little boy in the village in Ubon, and he has been coming out to put food in the monks' bowls since he was a small child, about 2 years old. This little boy has got really big ears and he has just started to grow up since I left Wat Pah Nanachat, but whenever I go back and he puts food in my bowl, I always wish, "May no one tease you about your ears." I see young women walking along on really high heels and wish, "May you never fall off your high heels," or "May you have the wisdom to choose sensible footwear."

You can make it fun and creative, just trying to find some specific good thing for each passing person that you've never met before. It's a very simple, practical means of developing and protecting the mind. If you are doing that, then you are not getting distracted by all the colors and advertising, looking at a person's dress and thinking, "Oh, I'd like one like that," or looking at members of the opposite sex with more unwholesome thoughts. You are substituting wholesome dhammas; you are protecting the mind against unwholesome dhammas. You can remove unwholesome dhammas through this practice—you are creating and sustaining wholesome practices.

This is also meditation: taking responsibility for your mind, working with your mind, massaging your mind, disciplining your mind in whatever situation you find yourself. What happens is that you develop a strong appreciation for goodness, even in its most mundane expressions.

A teaching given by one of my teachers is that if you are practicing correctly, how do you know? You know because before you started practicing so many things made you suffer and so few things made you happy, and as you practice, if you're practicing correctly, what you should find is fewer and fewer things make you suffer and more and more things make you happy. That's one of the best criteria to see whether you are on the Buddha's

**Udakañhi nayanti nettikā,**  
*water/ indeed/ lead/ Irrigators/*  
Irrigators lead the water;

**Usukārā namayanti tejanam;**  
*arrow-makers/ bend/ arrow shaft*  
Fletchers straighten the arrow shaft;

**Dāruṃ namayanti tacchakā,**  
*wood/ bend/ carpenters*  
Carpenters shape the wood;

**Attānaṃ damayanti paṇḍitā.**  
*themselves/ control/ the wise*  
The wise control themselves.

path or not. Things like getting up early in the morning, "Oh, what a torture", or sweeping, manual work and other chores like that, "How would a chore like that be a source of happiness?" But as you see the importance and centrality of your state of mind, your attitude, your quality of attention and your respect and interest for whatever might be your responsibility at any given time, you see how it's that more than anything else that affects the quality of your life.

There is this great sense of confidence and freedom; you don't have to be a victim or prey of anything. Nobody can make you unhappy. People can create conditions where it's very conducive for you to feel unhappy, but nobody has the power to control your mind. People can oppress you physically, certainly, but in the end dukkha is always caused by tanhā. If you are suffering, you say, "Where is the tanhā right now?" If there is no tanhā, then there is no craving, there is no attachment, there can't be any suffering. Irrespective of what this person has said or done or the situation, in the end if there is mental suffering there has to be craving. This is taking the Buddha's teachings on trust and taking them as the lens through which we look at life. Thus, in this study of life, as we learn from life, we have the Buddha's teachings as tools, things we don't grasp onto as dogmas but learn how to make use of through a constant and consistent practice and application. 🙏



## “Sore Feet and Slow Progress”

-a letter sent from Ajahn Yatiko during his walking pilgrimage  
(Summer 2011)

Hi there.

How you doing? Last night I slept at an awesome state park and I think I will sleep there tonight as well. Things are going really well actually. Having some nice meditations [esp. last night] and being consistently called on to draw on inner resources to bear with the itching back and sore feet and shoulders.

So far food hasn't been a problem, but I must admit standing with the alms bowl [rather than walking as is customary in Thailand] feels a bit awkward for me.

The external energy in general is extremely positive. Everyday there will be at least 4 or 5 honks and raised thumbs and waves - not a single bad comment.

Though this tudong [pilgrimage] is actually very challenging, it is really a valuable experience for me. Like other tudongs but even more so, it helps raise a sense of commitment to the Triple Gem that lies beyond living at Abhayagiri. Furthermore, though I am probably walking 20 miles a day on average, I seem to be making slow progress. It's better going through the smallest possible towns, and it would be a relief to feel that I don't have to walk the fastest possible route.

Anyhow, please be well.

Lots of Mettā,  
Ajahn Yatiko

**208: Dhīraṇ'ca paññaṇ'ca bahussutaṇ'ca,**  
*Intelligent &/ discerning &/much-learned &*  
One who is intelligent, discerning, learned;

**Dhorayha-sīlaṃ vatavantam-ariyaṃ;**  
*enduring-virtue/ dutiful-noble*  
of steadfast virtue, dutiful, and noble;

**Taṃ tādisaṃ sappurisaṃ sumedhaṃ,**  
*that/ such-like/ True-man/ good-wisdom*  
With such a wise and worthy person associate,

**Bhajetha nakkhatta-pathaṃ-va candimā.**  
*Associate/ star-course-as/ moon*  
as the moon with the stars.



**326: Idam pure cittaṃ-acāri cārikam,**  
*this/ formerly/ mind-wandered/  
wandering*

Formerly this mind wandered about  
wandering,

**Yenicchakam yathakāmaṃ  
yathāsukham;**

*as it wishes/ according-to-desire/  
according-to-pleasure*

As it wished, according to its desire,  
according to its pleasure;

**Tadajjaham niggahessāmi yoniso,**  
*that-today-I/ I will restrain/ judiciously*  
But today I will restrain it judiciously,

**Hatthippabhinnaṃ viya ankusaggaho.**  
*Elephant-in rut/ just as/ goad-holder*  
Just as a mahout an elephant-in rut.

*From the Monastery... (continued from page 3)*

good friendship to grow, the Buddhist calendar year is punctuated by various celebratory observation days. The full moon of May, Vesākha Pūjā, marks the Buddha's birth, enlightenment, and passing away. With beautiful freshly-arranged flowers, incense and candles, friends and students gathered at Abhayagiri to chant, meditate, and to circumambulate the hall showing deep gratitude for the fruits of the Buddha's skillfulness. Two months later, the full moon of July, Āsālha Pūjā, the commemoration of the Buddha's first teaching, again arrived with heartfelt devotion from laypeople and monks who were now able to circumambulate the outdoor shrine. Two other birthdays, those of our "Venerable Father" Luang Por Chah (June 17) and Ajahn Pasanno (July 26), were also celebrated with meditation, reflection, and abundant offerings.

In the Sāmaññaphala (DN 2), the Buddha is asked by a king: "There are these various craftsmen: elephant-trainers, horse-trainers... confectioners, barbers...cooks, garland-makers...weavers, basket-makers, potters... accountants, and many other various craftsmen of a similar sort. They live off the fruits of their crafts, visible in the here and now. They give pleasure and refreshment to themselves, to their parents, wives, and children, to their friends and colleagues. They establish themselves in generosity...leading to heaven, resulting

in happiness...Is it possible to point out a similar fruit of the contemplative life, visible in the here and now?" As the events of the last several months – the everyday teaching events, the ordinations, the wanderings, the visitings, and festive occasions - make palpably manifest, simple joy and happiness - both for oneself and for others – are some such mandane and natural fruits of a life lived wisely and well, with reflection and attention. 🙏



Osiris offers tomatoes to Samanera Pesalo as he walks on our new local almsroute through the Frey family organic farm.

## Voice of the Texts

*by Suddhāso Bhikkhu*

Beyond the shared training in conduct (sīla) and meditation (bhāvanā), there is a wide range of individual abilities that may be developed as part of one's monastic career. One such talent that several Abhayagiri monks have found nourishing to their practice, is the ability to read and understand Pāli – the scriptural language. As many people find studying textbooks and declension charts a daunting and challenging task, one technique for acclimating oneself to the language is through trilinear-format translations. The first line presents the Pāli text; the second line, a literal word-by-word translation; the third line, a fluent translation. In this way a reader can - with a single glance - both learn exactly what each Pāli word means, and also see how those individual words are assembled into colloquial sentences. With a feeling what it is to read the Buddha's words (Buddhavacana) in Pāli, one may be inspired to delve deeper into the language – substantially enriching one's understanding and appreciation of the Dhamma. 🙏

**33: Phandanam capalam cittaṃ,**  
*wavering/ fickle/ mind/*  
Unstable and fickle is the mind,

**dūrakkham dunnivārayam;**  
*hard to protect/ hard to restrain*  
difficult to guard and restrain;

**Ujum karoti medhāvī,**  
*upright/ makes/ wise one/*  
The wise one makes it upright,

**usukāro va tejanam.**  
*Arrow-maker/ as/ arrow-shaft*  
As a fletcher the arrow shaft



### ***Fearless Mountain Production Team***

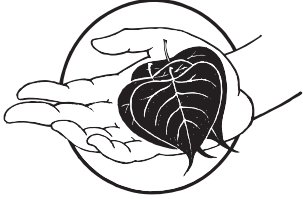
*We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to Jeannie Lavoie for design and layout, along with editorial assistance from Hisayo Suzuki and Marilyn Lemon*



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# LIFE AS SKILL

**Sekho pathaviṃ vijessati, Yama-lokaṅca  
imaṃ sa-devakam;**

The student will master this earth, this  
world of Death and his retinue;

**Sekho dhamma-padaṃ su-desitaṃ,  
Kusalo puppham-iva pacesati**

The student will perfect the well-taught  
path of truth, as an expert garland-maker  
arranges flowers.

*Dhammapada 40*

