



**Dear Friends of Cittaviveka, warm greetings,**

### **Opening Reflections**

Apart from all of the joyful gatherings at Cittaviveka over these last months – Songkran, Wesak and the Tort Pha Pa – many Elders visited or stayed at Cittaviveka. With Luang Por Sumedho's 90th birthday gathering at Amaravati from 17-19 May, and all of the joy and uplift those of us who were able to attend encountered,

Cittaviveka experienced great benefits from having so many respected Elders in this country who were able to come and visit us. Beginning in mid-May, the following senior monks, listed in the order of their arrival date, either came for a day visit or several days: Ajahn Nyānadharmo, Luang Por Piak, Luang Por Sophon, Luang Por Sawong, Luang Por Koon (Napoh), Luang Por Damrong (Ubon), Luang Por Liem, Luang Por Jundee and Luang Por Thong Daeng.

On 20 and 21 May, Cittaviveka hosted the Branch Abbots Meeting, which included the abbots of the fourteen branch-status monasteries in the West along with Wat Pah Nanachat in Thailand. The following abbots participated this year: Luang Por Khemadhammo, Luang Por Vīradhammo, Luang Por Munindo, Ajahn Amaro, Ajahn Vajiro, Ajahn Chandapālo, Ajahn Jutindharo, Ajahn Kalyāno (Australia), Ajahn Jayanto, Ajahn Abhinando, Ajahn Ānando, Ajahn Kevali, Ajahn Nāniko, Ajahn Ahimsako and Ajahn Nandiyo. Other abbots and Elders visiting at that time included Ajahn Khemasiri, Ajahn Kusalo, Ajahn Sudanto and Ajahn Nānadīpo.

One, much smaller but significant event took place this summer at Amaravati, which opened on 2 August 1984. On Sunday 4 August this year, many people gathered there to celebrate that monastery's 40th anniversary. The day concluded with Luang Por Sumedho offering a Dhamma talk in the Temple, offering some remembrances of four decades of that thriving community but embedded within the context of Dhamma.

Visits and gatherings like these are a wonderful opportunity to deepen spiritual friendships, communal harmony and understanding. The Cittaviveka community is grateful for the efforts made by these Elders to come to our monastery and share their knowledge and experience.

### **Rains Retreat (Vassa)**

It's easy for people less familiar with our traditions to think our annual Winter Retreat is the 'Rains Retreat'. But the Rains Retreat, or Vassa in the Pali scriptural language, takes place during the monsoon season in much of Asia, which is during Britain's summer into autumn when we are possibly experiencing our drier and warmer seasons. So why do we follow it? I understand this question was addressed relatively soon after our communities were established in the West. The decision was made to keep to the tradition as laid down by the Buddha whereby from the full moon of July until the full moon of October, each member of the monastic community determines to live in one place and follow the extra rules associated with the Rains Retreat. Following the same calendar as our monastic brothers and sisters around the globe enhances the sense of communal harmony, as well as the practical aspect of being 'in step' with our worldwide communities during the year. This Vassa, which we entered on Sunday 21 July, will see a community of eleven bhikkhus, two sīladhara, one sāmenera, one sikkhamānā, three anagārikas and two anagārikās.

### **Change**

Those of you who visit Cittaviveka frequently may have noticed that since 8 June Ajahn Thitadhammo has been wearing white robes as Anagārika Thitadhammo. He decided to give up his bhikkhu status to facilitate receiving physical treatment and care from a broader spectrum of people of his choice; in ways that are generally restricted by the bhikkhu rules. Regardless of the clothes he wears or the number of rules he is required to follow, he is our beloved 'Thita'!

### **Comings and Goings**

Since our last newsletter, several members of the Cittaviveka community have moved on to other places and several new faces can be seen here. On the departure side, Venerable Cāgadharmo is in North America

staying at Tisarana Monastery in Canada and Temple Forest Monastery in the United States, expecting to return here after one year. In January, Sāmanera Ābhassaro decided to leave the novice training after six years and return to lay life back where he is from in Victoria, BC, Canada. After spending the Winter Retreat here, Anagārikā Atsuko returned to Amaravati. Anagārikā Kelly recently moved to Amaravati Monastery as part of her monastic training. Anagārika Fergus completed his yearlong commitment as an Anagārika and is exploring Dhamma practice back in Scotland. Anagārika Rajiv is now ‘Caregiver Rajiv’, no longer living as an anagārika but continuing in his responsibilities of caring for Anagārika Thitadhammo.

On the arrival side, Cittaviveka has two Thai ajahns living here now: Ajahn Mahā Foo-kit Jutipañño and Ajahn Mahā Sompob Bhūriñāno (aka Ajahn Big). These two Elders bring a welcome dimension to our community because of their background in Pali studies that accompanied their development of meditation. Venerable Tittañāno has now acquired a long-term visa and is back with us. Venerable Nimmalo, from Santacittarama Monastery in Italy, has joined us for six months. Venerable Surato has come to live at Cittaviveka community after two years of monastic training at Amaravati. Anagārika Craig has joined us from Aruna Ratanagiri Monastery, continuing his training here.

On the women’s side, Amaravati nun Sister Jayavīrā joins us again for several months, as does Anagārikā Jotakā who had previously lived at Cittaviveka as the Guest Assistant. Another temporary addition to the nuns’ community is Venerable (Sister) Sumedhā from Canada.

### **Precept Ceremonies**

On 18 July, a Bhikkhu Upsampadā was held at Amaravati, the ceremony whereby men formally enter the Bhikkhu Sangha. This year there were five new bhikkhus: Venerable Sampajāno from Hartridge, Venerable Attaññū from Aruna Ratanagiri, Venerable Surato from Cittaviveka and from Amaravati Venerable Thapano and Venerable Karuñño. It’s thought that this may have been the first time that an Upsampadā has taken place with candidates from all four of the Luang Por Chah monasteries here in England. Each of these five new bhikkhus has spent time living at Cittaviveka, and experiencing them make this commitment was a true joy to see.

### **Forest Work**

From 13 through 19 July, Venerable Sīhanādo and Forest Manager Chris Matthews, assisted by Venerable Virajo, led a team of volunteers in a large array of tasks in our sizeable forest. Using Tutthi Kuti as a basecamp for breakfast and teatime, the team spent most of their daytime hours in the forest. We’re grateful for all of the kindhearted efforts that go into maintaining the precious forest environment that we are so blessed with.

### **Upcoming Events**

This year’s Kathina Festival is scheduled to take place on Sunday 3 November. More information will appear on the monastery website, through both paper and electronic mailouts and notices posted around the monastery. As always, we greatly look forward to this auspicious gathering and hope you can join us.

The autumn Forest Work Period this year is scheduled to be held from 13 November through 4 December. People are invited to join us for either all or part of it, staying here in the monastery or coming as an outside volunteer.

### **Gratitude**

Before closing, the Cittaviveka community wishes to say how much we recognize and appreciate all of the support we receive, in various ways. Whether it’s the gift of your peaceful presence, a bag of groceries or help in the gardens... these offerings all maintain this tranquil corner of West Sussex as a place to encourage us all to realize the liberation of the heart discovered by the Buddha.

With all good wishes from the entire Cittaviveka community,

Ajahn Ahimsako

Abbot — Cittaviveka, Chithurst Buddhist Monastery