

LOOKING AHEAD

No 19

News from Amaravati Autumn 2014

Pausing to Reflect

KATHINA ANNOUNCEMENT

A Royal Kathina Festival will be held at Amaravati Buddhist Monastery on Sunday, 2nd November. The Kathina is a tradition that has been followed for over 2500 years. It takes place during the month following the end of the Vassa (the three months' Rains Retreat).

Kathina is a very happy, warm-hearted time for celebration. It is a time to come together, focusing on the single act of generosity of offering the cloth and other requisites.

If you would like to offer any useful items on this occasion, a Kathina list is available. Details of the Kathina programme and Kathina list can be found on the Amaravati website.

The lay Kathina organising committee is also seeking volunteers to help out during Kathina day. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Sharron Chan on 07825 013110 or email her at sharron.chansc@gmail.com

Ajahn Chah once said: 'You say you are too busy to meditate, do you have time to breathe? If you see that Dhamma practice is vital to your life, then you will feel that breathing and practising the Dhamma are equally important.'

Similarly, when life seems rather too full of other things, it can feel like there is little time to reflect. But just as we are always breathing, we are always pausing in between everything we do and to bring awareness to the pauses can be enough for *sati* to be present. Drop by drop, a short pause to recollect makes all the difference to the mind.

2014 has truly been a year of gatherings and celebration, the final one being the Kathina in early November. Our founding abbot, Luang Por Sumedho will once more be there to offer his encouragement and wisdom. He will then return to Thailand on the 10th November. Seeing him and hearing him teach the Dhamma on various occasions through this year has been a true blessing, so we very much look forward to welcoming him for this last visit for this year. A display reflecting on Amaravati Monastery's story from its opening in 1984 to now is planned to be on show for the Kathina day. This promises to offer a fascinating glimpse into what it was like at Amaravati back when it started and how it has evolved.

Prior to this, Ajahn Amaro will be away travelling after the close of the Rains Retreat on the eight of October. Once again, after a period of relative stability, the community is on the move; returning to Amaravati having spent the Rains elsewhere; returning to a usual place of residence having spent the Rains at Amaravati; moving away to other monasteries or moving away entirely.

The autumn is when the schedule of retreats is made available for the following year

and you will find details of all the retreats running in 2015 on the inside pages. A notable innovation for the Retreat Centre is the introduction of an online booking system for the monastic retreats, scheduled to be available by the first of November. For a number of years now, the RC office has been getting requests to submit forms through the website. The numbers of cancellations for all the retreats keep increasing too, leaving the office volunteers having to juggle demand and fill places at the last minute. The online system will help reduce the workload involved in managing the bookings and introduce a feature retreatants have been asking for.

This is quite a big change for the Retreat Centre and for our regulars, so please bear with us as we introduce this new system. Note that the Family, ALBA, and BWN events will continue to have separate booking arrangements. Details of how to book for these retreats are also listed inside.

Ajahn Amaro's thirteen day retreat will be happening in May next year rather than September, then there is the usual mixture of longer retreats for more experienced meditators and shorter introductory weekends, with a few new faces and the return of some old friends as teachers.

The Amaravati Monastery website has also been re-developed this year, with a go-live date scheduled in October. The intention has been to simplify the upkeep and updating of the site; reducing reliance on tech-savvy community members and avoiding costly re-designs. Visually, it retains the openness of the current website but with simplified navigation. While not directly related, the Family Events website has been given a complete overhaul. New structure, new content, new forms and everything up-to-date.

New Retreat Schedule for 2015 Available Inside !!

2015 Monastic Retreats at Amaravati Retreat Centre

Monastic Retreats (led by a monk or a nun)

2015	Duration	Teacher
3 – 7 April	5 days	Ajahn Dhammanando
24 – 28 April	5 days	Ajahn Bodhipālā
8 – 20 May	13 days	Ajahn Amaro †
5 – 14 June	10 days	Ajahn Vimalo ♀
19 – 21 June	weekend	Ajahn Cittapālā
10 – 12 July	weekend	Ajahn Ratanavanno – Thai Language Retreat
17 – 26 July	10 days	Ajahn Kalyāno ♀
31 July – 4 August	5 days	Ajahn Ahimsako
11 – 20 September	10 days	Ajahn Amaro <i>'Have you seen the messengers? – ageing, sickness, death and renunciation'</i> †
2 – 6 October	5 days	Ajahn Ānando
16 – 18 October	weekend	Ajahn Mettā & Brother Nicholas – Buddhist/Christian Retreat
23 – 25 October	weekend	Ajahn Brahmavarā
6 – 10 November	5 days	Luang Por Pasanno
20 – 29 November	10 days	Ajahn Sundarā ♀
11 – 13 December	weekend	Ajahn Subhaddo
27 Dec. – 1 Jan.	6 days	Ajahn Nyānarato

♀ We request that you complete a five-day or longer retreat, either at Amaravati or elsewhere, before attending this retreat.

† This retreat is for experienced meditators only who have previously attended a 10-day retreat at Amaravati or elsewhere.

New Booking Information

Due to the high demand for retreats, the Amaravati Retreat Centre is replacing the current postal booking system with an online booking system which will be easier and quicker to use for everyone, regardless of location. As well as booking retreats, the new system will allow you to update your personal details, to cancel your booking should you need to do this, and to check where you are on the waiting list. If you do not have easy access to the internet or a contact email address, the new system allows someone to book on your behalf.

Bookings for 2015: All bookings will now have to be made using our new online booking system at www.amaravati.org/retreat-centre/booking/ Paper forms will no longer be accepted for 2015 bookings.

Note the new online system will only be available after November first 2014 after which bookings can be made. Booking for each retreat will open six calendar months before the start date of the retreat, at 7pm GMT. The exception to this is for the first two retreats in April 2015 when booking will open on the first of November 2014. You can apply for up to three retreats in any one retreat year.

Bookings for 2014: This remains the same as it has been throughout the year, so you will need to download a booking form, available on the website, and then post it to us, or use one of the booking forms available at the monastery.

Please visit www.amaravati.org/retreat-centre/booking/ for booking opening dates, retreat status, or to contact the Retreat Centre.

The Retreat Centre managers only deal with bookings for the monastic retreats. The ALBA, Buddhist Women's Network (BWN) and Family Events each have their own booking system.

Remaining Monastic Retreats in 2014

No.	2014	Duration	Teacher	Status
R13:	7 – 11 November	5 days	Ajahn Nyānarato	☀
R14:	21 – 30 November	10 days	Ajahn Sucitto & Ajahn Mettā ☸	☀☀
R15:	12 – 14 December	weekend	Ajahn Dhammanando	☀
R16:	27 Dec. – 1 Jan.	6 days	Ajahn Sundarā	☀

☀ Fully booked – waiting list in operation

☀☀ Fully booked – waiting list closed for women

2015 Family Events at Amaravati Retreat Centre

The usual schedule of retreats for families, young people and the Creative Retreat for adults will be running in 2015. These events are all held in the Retreat Centre with camping available during the long August camp. They are led by the monastic sangha in cooperation with a group of coordinators and helpers.

Rainbows Weekend	1 – 4 May
June Weekend	26 – 28 June
Family Camp	22 – 30 August
Young Person's Retreat	30 October – 1 November
Creative Weekend	4 – 6 December

New families are encouraged to attend the shorter June weekend before applying for the family camp, so you can experience the style of the events before committing to a longer retreat.

The deadline for receiving bookings for the Rainbows Weekend, June Weekend and Family Camp is the **31 March 2015**. Places fill up quickly, so be sure to get your application in on time.

The Family Events website has been re-designed with new information and booking forms, so have a look!
www.family.amaravati.org

bookings: familybookings@amaravati.org
enquiries: family@amaravati.org

2015 Lay Retreats at Amaravati Retreat Centre

Amaravati Lay Buddhist Association (ALBA)

The ALBA was started in 1994 as a way to offer the lay community that frequents Amaravati a forum to connect with like-minded people. It runs a series of Days of Practice and short retreats at Amaravati, led by experienced lay teachers.

For bookings and information please visit
<www.buddhacommunity.org>

Days of Practice: 10 January, 7 February, 7 March, 30 May, 4 July, 5 September, 14 November, 19 December

5-day Retreat: 17 – 19 April, 7 – 11 August

Weekend Retreats: 9 – 11 October

Buddhist Women's Network (BWN)

The BWN was set up in 2004 by women who are associated with Amaravati. It provides an opportunity to develop spiritual friendship and to support each other in our practice. These events are led by experienced lay women and include periods of sitting and walking meditation, sharing and discussion. Beginners and those new to this tradition are welcome.

For bookings and information please contact Shirley McDonald at <shirleymcdonald@hotmail.co.uk>

Days of Practice: 8 March, 5 July, 15 November, 20 December.

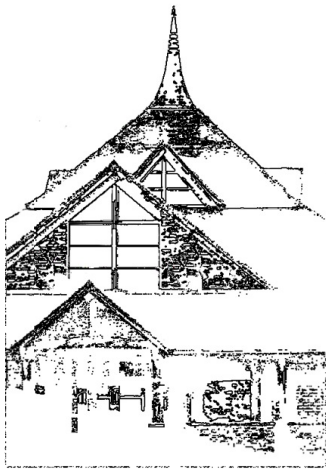
Weekend Retreat: 25 – 27 September

Saturday Meditation Workshop

Saturday afternoon 2.00–4.00 p.m.

Sitting and walking meditation instructions for beginners led by a member of the sangha, with the opportunity for questions and dialogue.

You can come for all or part of the session. There is no fee and no booking is necessary.



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Monastery Contacts

Amaravati Buddhist Monastery

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Retreat Centre: +44 (0) 1442 843 239

Website

<www.amaravati.org>

Stewards: *The English Sangha Trust*

The English Sangha Trust is a registered charitable trust which stewards funds to support the sangha at Amaravati and Cittaviveka monasteries.

Contributions can be made to the English Sangha Trust c/o Amaravati or online via:

<www.amaravati.org/Support>

Staying Overnight

If you wish to stay as a guest, contact the Guest Nun (guestnun@amaravati.org) or Guest Monk (guestmonk@amaravati.org). More information about staying as a guest is also available on the website at <www.amaravati.org/visiting>

General Monastery Enquiries

For general enquiries such as arranging school visits, please write to the monastery secretary at the address above or email monasterysecretary@amaravati.org

For enquiries about giving dana, the kitchen and what is happening in the monastery on a given day, please contact the office (details above).

Lunar Observance Days 2014 - 2015

October ● 1st (Wed.) ○ 8th (Wed.)
 ● 16th (Thurs.) ● 22nd (Wed.)
 ● 30th (Thurs.)

November ○ 6th (Thurs.) ● 14th (Fri.)
 ● 21st (Fri.) ● 29th (Sat.)

December ○ 6th (Sat.) ● 14th (Sun.)
 ● 20th (Sat.) ● 28th (Sun.)

January ○ 4th (Sun.) ● 12th (Mon.)
 ● 19th (Mon.) ● 27th (Tues.)

February ○ 3rd (Tues.) ● 11th (Wed.)
 ● 17th (Tues.) ● 25th (Wed.)

March ○ 4th (Wed.)¹ ● 12th (Thurs.)
 ● 19th (Thurs.) ● 27th (Fri.)

On lunar observance days, there is a pūjā at 7.30 pm, followed by a Dhamma Talk and midnight vigil. The winter retreat will start in early January and run through to the end of March. Check the winter issue of Looking Ahead or the website for information closer to the time.

2nd Nov. – Amaravati Kathina

16th Jan – Ajahn Chah Memorial Day

¹ 4th March – Māgha Pūjā

Looking Ahead is a newsletter from Amaravati. You can pick up a copy at the monastery or receive it directly by email or by post. Please send your email and/or home address to: <abmnews@amaravati.org> or post it to Amaravati. Please indicate whether you wish to receive *Looking Ahead* by email or by post.