



## News from Amaravati – Winter 2019

### *Travels of a Guinea Pig*

Sr Tisārā, one of the nuns (*siladharā*) based at Amaravati Buddhist Monastery in the UK, was on a one-year sabbatical in Thailand from November 2017 to December 2018. She was invited to give a short personal account of that experience and how it came about —

Monks from the UK Ajahn Chah monasteries often spend their third or fourth year in robes in a different monastery to the one in which they have taken *upasampadā* (monks' ordination). The senior monks responsible for their training arrange for them to experience a different culture and environment within the lineage, either via Wat Pah Nanachat, our Western branch monastery in Thailand or in one of the other Ajahn Chah branch monasteries in Europe, the USA or Australasia. While nuns of our community are invited to teach and travel regularly, and a number of us have spent time individually outside the UK, in Thailand, Sri Lanka or elsewhere, there hasn't been, so far, the pattern in the training of the junior nuns of being routinely supported to spend one year away. For a while it's been in the air amongst some of the sisters to see if there could be a way to do this, perhaps especially to go to Thailand, to get a sense of the roots of the Western lineage and practice of the Ajahn Chah tradition. However, the *siladharā* way of training is only available in three UK monasteries and there is no real precedent for us to be 'in training' in other situations, except occasionally for visiting for a month or a vassa, or being on long retreats.

Ajahn Amaro, having heard of this wish and with his usual foresight, sounded out some places during one of his regular visits to Thailand, places where we could perhaps spend longer periods of time, just practicing with the monastic community there. After he had reported back to the *Siladharā* group with a few ideas and found the community was interested, I was invited to be the experimental guinea pig, to see what would be needed and what it would be like to be there as an ordinary nun.

Personally, I was at the stage where having been in the UK monasteries almost continuously for nearly 12 years, I needed time out. Stiff through an accretion of doing things, my practice of pushing the envelope in order to develop resilience had ended up feeling like carrying a large postal bag branded 'Sister Tisārā'. I was deeply tired; my one real wish being to hang that burdensome bag up and not be doing anything much at all. But frankly, Thailand was off my radar. A dreamed of, idealised but unrealistic scenario was spending time in some abstract frozen North, in a small hut with a deep blanket of snow providing complete stillness. Or, no longer an ant industrious but a library dust mite, soundlessly eating endless books in a dappled corner of the Bodleian in Oxford. Daydreams.

I have travelled alone many times, including in Asia (though only for a very short time in Thailand, and before being much interested in Dhamma practice), but nevertheless, going to Thailand in robes had always seemed somewhat intimidating, and neither quiet nor restful. Yet, if it could help others in the future, and since it was such a serendipitous opportunity, it was too good to not go for it. I hadn't even had to ask!

My travel and visa were facilitated by the EST and Wat Pah Nanachat. Monastery friends helped with necessary items, Ajahn Bodhipālā provided tropical robes made by nuns from the monastery she supports in Cambodia, Suvira in the Amaravati office got onto buying the plane ticket, sending the visa forms to the Thai Embassy and other things. To not be responsible for organising any of it was odd for someone as independent as me. The generosity was abundant, an experience that was repeated many times over the following 12 months. So, it was that on 17 November 2017, I went straight from a cold grey wintry evening and chairing a very full-on two-day nuns' community meeting to the airport, away to Thailand.

I spent the first 2 weeks in Chiang Mai where Ajahn Amaro was giving a retreat, following which he introduced me to Ajahn Kevali at Wat Pah Nanachat. The first months were like a gradual simplification and stilling – from 9 carat gold plated cups to cheap dusty mugs, from air-conditioned transit vans to bare feet on increasingly sharp grit, from mattress to thin mat, from gourmet curry to village sticky rice, boiled eggs and fish heads, from a retreat held in a very beautiful old house in Chiang Mai, to the formality of Wat Pah Nanachat, then to the dirt roads and rural ordinariness of Wat Pah Mahawan in Chaiyaphum. There were meetings – notably with Goong Wanitri, a regular supporter at Wat Pah Nanachat who came to the airport in Ubon on my first arriving there and then proceeded to be a helpful, friendly presence until I left. Sādhu Anumodanā to everyone.

I was at Wat Pah Mahawan Hermitage in Chaiyaphum Province for 8 months, spread over three visits. Phra Paisan Visalo is the abbot there. He has a connection with Amaravati, having spent time in the UK monasteries in the late 90s. This hermitage and the much larger branch called Wat Pah Sukato (also under Phra Paisan's guidance) 15 kilometres down the road, were started by students of Luang Poor Teean, the originator of 'dynamic meditation', a technique using hand movements tailored especially towards developing awareness and clear comprehension (*sati-sampajañña*).

Wat Pah Mahawan turned out to be a fairly basic and informal place, with simple huts (*kuti*) set back into a steep forested hill. The local village is not wealthy but supported us with food every day, while during the rains retreat season (the *Vassa* or

Phansa), entire families would come once a week on moon days for a shared meal. Following a major forest fire a few years back, there is an active forest re-plantation programme in the area that many of them seemed to be involved with. As with many rural villages it seems the younger generation are often absent, working in factories or in the towns. Phra Paisan would describe Wat Pah Mahawan as an 'ordinary place' and he himself is quite unassuming – I suppose it was ordinary, a small group of Thai bhikkhus and white-robed maechee coming and going, the rhythm of the year, temporary ordinations, funerals, daily alms-round, the relationship with the village. And, Phra Paisan is an interesting, captivating teacher. He comes from a background in social activism, something he has continued to foster in his many years as a monk, and as I discovered, he is well known in Thailand for his writing, clear compassionate teaching, death and dying workshops, conservation work and socially engaged Buddhism.

Periodically, large groups of people would come to Wat Pah Mahawan to visit the forest and to plant trees. I joined the annual young people's camp held at the much larger Wat Pah Sukato branch to get a taste of how they approach things (having been involved with the Family events at Amaravati), as well as sitting in on a couple of longer visits by foreign student groups, one a group of young grassroots activists from different Asian countries taking part in a course offered by the INEB (International Network of Engaged Buddhists), and another a group of mature American MA students studying the advantages of locally-engaged conservation projects. I was glad to be able to do this as Phra Ajahn taught in English on these occasions, as he did when I was visited for a few days by intrepid friends from the Amaravati Family Camp!

I had the use of a pleasant kuti on stilts with a very big balcony a bit up the hill among some larger trees. This kept it cooler when the hot season kicked in, and it was actually pretty quiet. No planes, nearly no traffic noise. Not even much music or dogs' barking coming from the villages. Cicadas sounding like table saws, yes, but unexpectedly many times of mesmerising stillness. There was the usual menagerie all around – worrying monkeys (I think they were macaques and they could be aggressive), all sizes and kinds of biting insects, butterflies as big as your hand, deadly centipedes bright red and orange or dun and black, poisonous snakes, small, large and medium scorpions, pangolins, tiny indigo blue birds, Mynah birds, and of course dogs, including four monastery dogs, two of whom eventually decided to move in with me! In September and October, the evening was lit up by fireflies, a touch of magic on my way up the hill at dusk following the stream-bed that forms the forest path. Most surreal was the sight of freshwater crabs marooned along paths and outside buildings during the rainy season downpours, waving their large front claws as they tried to ward off unknown dangers.

There was a lot of time to be by myself. The day starting early with chanting in Thai and Pāli and, when Phra Paisan was in residence, a Dhamma talk. This would be followed by a brisk 90 min barefoot alms-round with the monks and two of the monastery dogs, a procession of barking, tail wagging, excitement and the occasional fighting mêlée all the way out and all the way back. Then the meal, helping clear up and do the washing up, sweep and clear rubbish before wandering up the hill to the kuti at around 10.30 or 11.00. A half hour or so gathering in the evening was usually the only other formal part of the day.

Not speaking any Thai and with only a few of the regular residents speaking English, my contact with everyone was a bit

limited. I still wonder how it was for them, having this foreign nun around, and for the villagers ... so I am very grateful to Phra Ajahn, Maechee Oud, Fin and the various resident ladies Pi Pum, Pi Nok, Pi Tan for supporting me during my stay.

At other times and not in this order, I was a month with the Bhikkhuni communities at Nirodharam, Suddhajt and Anālaya ārāmas in Chiang Mai together with my friend Ayya Jayati Bhikkhuni. I spent an instructive ten days with Samaneri Viveka, another friend from anagārikā days at Amaravati, who is staying long-term at Luang Por Ganha's big monastery, Wat Pah Subthawee Dhammaram. My father came to Thailand and took me on a week-long tour taking in historical sites from pre-historic paintings along the Mekong to the ruins of Ayuttayah. I was also very fortunate to be able to go Tudong in the Chiang Mai/Chiang Rai area. Happily, Atiporn Lornthong (Maechee Fin) who was staying at Wat Pah Mahawan when I was there, had the knowledge and willingness to go with me, otherwise I doubt it could have happened. It was one of the most interesting times of my whole trip, walking out from Chiang Mai along main roads, then deeper into hills where Ajahn Mun had travelled, staying mostly in forest monasteries at night.

Of course, I got to stay at Wat Pah Nanachat several times, visit Wat Nong Pah Pong, and also take part in the Ajahn Chah 100-year anniversary gathering with the siladharā who came over from the UK for the occasion. It was very interesting to be in these places so many of the monks I know have been to, and get a sense of how the non-Thai monks fit in to the Thai way to varying degrees, as well as get a feel of the styles of training outside the Ajahn Chah tradition. Sometimes, when I would mention Wat Pah Nanachat elsewhere – there would be an intake of breath followed by a laughing "Geng!" – hardcore!

What I found during my travels, is many variations, with Buddhism and Sangha an umbrella for all kinds of approaches. Styles of practice seem defined by big teachers in various provinces, who go from the deeply mystic and magical to dry, rigorous to rather loose, mainstream to fringe. I encountered a fascinating range of diversity, opportunity, different standards and, perhaps not unlike churches in Europe, an established national institution (the Thai Sangha of Bhikkhus) under pressure from all the societal and environmental changes that have occurred in the last 50 years or so.

I relaxed into the experience, getting a taste of the background to our monastic tradition, a bigger view of how the culture there works, both Sangha and lay. Many ways of doing things are different compared to the Western branch communities I am used to. I tried my best to respect this, to adjust my way of doing things to keep in harmony. Doing this, having to examine my attitudes and assumptions, I recognised the real power of having a solid training in monastic discipline. I made mistakes, certainly I was clumsy at times, but the basic discipline of reflecting on one's intention within the framework of the Precepts is like having a universal guide or protector, whatever the circumstances. Eventually, the experience of 'being a nun in Thailand' became deeply impersonal, free, even as sometimes I would be having the feeling that just being there in the form was a radical statement.

Mostly, I was perceived as a female monk, people, lay and Sangha, either thinking 'here is a bhikkhuni', or 'this is a venerable, even if I don't know what she is'. For a few laywomen, especially at Wat Pah Nanachat, to be able to offer service as an 'Upatak' or attendant, (setting up an eating place, carrying my bowl) gave them real joy, as they are unable to do that for the monks.

For some others, seeing a woman in brown robes was moving. In the large bhikkhunī communities in Chiang Mai under Ajahn Nandhayani, I was just one of many different kinds of nun. Context is everything.

For all the new information, new situations, the most precious thing for me was simply being able to spend time alone, especially in the forest at Wat Pah Mahawan. Every day the same, more or less. Seeing moods, impulses, experiences passing. Some times of deeper seclusion and solitude, most of the time just following the rhythm of the monastery I was in, observing what was going on there, the nature of conditioning, of understanding, of desire, of being affected by this or that event or person, but with long daily stretches of not much going on compared to my everyday routine and duties in the UK. Here you are, I would say to myself, with nothing to do except be and let go of the 'burdensome postal bag'. Watch the fireflies, play with the dogs, notice the subtle changes of season, everything that arises, comes to end, ever other than it appears to be.

I returned to the UK almost exactly a year after leaving, and found myself minuting a nuns' meeting the following morning. Full circle. There is much more I could write, but in brief, it was a significant time for me, having this year of living more simply, and being away from the seeming certainties, personalities and complexities of our established communities. I personally hope that there will be continued interest in finding a way of routinely including a sabbatical year into Siladharā training, and over time, support for building up a regular flow of visits to Thailand or other conducive places.

## Monastery News

In December we had the good fortune to be visited by Luang Por Sumedho for two weeks. Skilfully supported by Ajahn Asoko his attendant, he was abundantly generous in making himself available for meetings and questions despite the difficulties he experiences though wear and tear of an ageing body. A distillation of his more than 50 years of practice and insight, the Dhamma talks as well as the public Q&A sessions he offered in the temple on many mornings during his stay have been made available on our website [www.amaravati.org/audio/](http://www.amaravati.org/audio/)

The community entered their winter retreat on Jan 3. It is always appreciated by all of us at the monastery, for its blend of group and solitary formal practice and for giving us a long stretch of time when we can turn inwards with few duties or outside distractions. The Sangha are quite numerous this winter: thirty-one monks and male novices, thirteen nuns and female novices, many young or new to the training. There is also a full-house on the lay support team for the next three months. Ajahn Amaro is giving his customary readings most evenings, this year having chosen to read from Ajahn Sumedho's book, Anthology Vol 2 - Seeds of Understanding. These sessions are being well attended; by monastics, some of whom have not lived here before, but also by the support team and visitors from outside.

As was mentioned in the Autumn 2018 issue of Looking Ahead, the next phase of the Amaravati Long-term Plan is under way. This current phase, Phase 5c, will concentrate on the nuns' area and includes utility and accommodation buildings. The first project in this phase involves the construction of a Senior Nun's dwelling (Amara Kuti) and a multi-purpose community building (Nissoko), that will contain a hall, bowl-washing area, small library and offices. Four buildings will be also be removed as part of this project: the existing Amara Kuti and the womens' drying room in April, followed by Lotus House and the existing Nissoko portacabin at the end of the project,

in the late Autumn. The new buildings are all designed to a PassivHaus standard as per the environmental concept of the Long Term Plan.

Dacorum Borough Council approved the planning application for the project in August 2018. Following the tendering process and final interviews, a preferred builder was selected by the ADL directors in the beginning of December 2018 and approved by the EST committee. The chosen contractors, Jigsaw Construction, are a local building firm with existing experience of PassivHaus projects, who also demonstrated they should be a good fit for the monastery's particular requirements. They are currently working with the architect and the planning team to finalise the building cost and contracts. Once this is complete, we expect to begin the construction on 1 April 2019, immediately after the Winter Retreat ends. The building work is planned to last approximately nine months.

The current women's laundry and drying room will be replaced with a portable cabin, which was installed mid-December in the small garden behind the kitchen car-park. This will provide laundry and drying facilities for the nuns and the female lay residents for the foreseeable future. Work is underway to connect the services.

The first job is widening the path that runs from the kitchen car-park at the back of the monastery to the nuns' area, and setting up an access route to the Amara Kuti site from St Margaret's Lane via Mr Blains' field. Demolition of the first two buildings and foundation piling will happen soon afterwards. To keep costs down, the builders will use Lotus House for their site facilities. They will then carefully take it down, saving any wood that is in good condition for us to re-use elsewhere. We will keep visitors informed of any possible changes to car-parking arrangements, and obviously, there is going to be some noise and disruption as the builders do their work. Over the next months, we will be putting up information in the monastery and updating the website to keep everyone informed of progress.

The nuns moved out of Lotus House in mid-December and are occupying the recently donated Heartwood House and Bungalow on St Margaret's Lane. These buildings will provide them with facilities and abundant living space until all their new accommodation is available, at which point they will return the use of the places to the community. Needless to say, the gift to the Trust of these new buildings and the accompanying land has opened many possibilities. One of the immediate effects has been a rethink of the phasing of the long-term plan. Now, the aim is to complete the re-design of the nuns' accommodation over the next four or five years rather than spread it over several separate construction phases. (A drawing of the overall design is on page 5). More immediately, the anagārikā and nuns who would usually occupy the Lotus House, can rest easy. Had the new accommodation not been available, it would have been very tight, the construction site and new building only a metre or so away from their windows. For the nuns' community generally, there is a distinct feel of 'Out with the Old'. Lotus House has been much loved by several generations of nuns, while its idiosyncrasies and past inhabitants have become part of the community folklore. The now rather battered Nissoko cabin has been used for decades, having been a meeting space on the site of the Abbot's Kuti before becoming the nuns' meeting hall and library. However, the move to the new places gives a sense of space and opportunity that is refreshing, indeed, invigorating. So we move on with gratitude for all the opportunities for practice we have. May the blessings of that practice be shared with all of you.



## Retreat Centre Information

The 2019 schedule is now available online. Booking for retreats opens six calendar months before the retreat start date. You can apply for up to 3 retreats in any one calendar year. If you are on the Waiting List for a retreat and do not get offered a place, you may then apply for another retreat in the same year. But remember that there is always a chance that you will be offered a place, especially if you are available at the last minute.

Retreats open for booking on the scheduled day at 19.00 and often fill up very quickly. As it is very important that you fill in all the information, we have now added a 15 minute delay between starting and completing the booking process.

All bookings have to be made online: we are not able to accept telephone or email applications. For information about coming on retreat, how to book, what to expect, what to bring and more, please visit [www.amaravati.org/retreat-centre](http://www.amaravati.org/retreat-centre)

If you need to change your personal details or cancel your booking you can do this by going to [www.amaravati.org/retreat-centre](http://www.amaravati.org/retreat-centre) and selecting 'Manage your details' or 'Cancel your retreat'. If you need to contact the Retreat Centre directly please email: [retreats@amaravati.org](mailto:retreats@amaravati.org)

We look forward to welcoming many of you to the retreat centre in 2019.

## Monastic-led Meditation Retreats at the Retreat Centre

Dates for 2019	Duration	Teacher
5–7 April	Weekend	Ajahn Ahimsako
19–28 April*	10 days	Ajahn Bodhipālā
17–19 May	Weekend	Ajahn Dhammanando
24–28 May	5 days	Ajahn Kalyāno
7–11 June	5 days	Ajahn Vinita
21–23 June	Weekend	Ajahn Ariyasīlo
28 June–7 July**	10 days	Ajahn Amaro
19–28 July*	10 days	Ajahn Sundarā
2–6 August	5 days	Ajahn Amaro & Ajahn Kongrit Ratanawano <b>IN THAI LANGUAGE ONLY</b>
13–25 September**	13 days	Ajahn Amaro
11–13 October	Weekend	Brother Nicholas & Ajahn Nandiyo <b>Buddhist-Christian Retreat</b>
18–27 October*	10 days	Ajahn Vimalo
15–17 November	Weekend	Ajahn Jutindharo
22–26 November	5 days	Ajahn Candasirī
6–10 December	5 days	Ajahn Sundarā
27 Dec.–1 Jan 2020* (New Year Retreat)	6 days	Ajahn Ñyānarato

\* Previous silent meditation retreat experience required

\*\* This retreat is for experienced meditators. Attendance at a previous 10-day retreat required

### Introductory Meditation Workshops

Every Saturday 2 – 4 pm

The workshop is suitable for all levels. It includes meditation instruction for beginners and the opportunity for questions and dialogue. Everyone is welcome – there is no fee and no booking is necessary.

From Jan-Mar the workshops are held in the Sālā (Main Hall)  
and lead by experienced lay teachers.

## Other Retreats held at the Retreat Centre in 2019

### Amaravati Lay Buddhist Association (ALBA)

ALBA runs a programme of Days of Practice and short retreats at Amaravati Retreat Centre led by experienced lay Buddhists. All are welcome including those new to Buddhism or meditation.

Days of Practice: no need to book, just turn up. Registration is in the Retreat Centre kitchen from 9.30am for 10.00am start. The day finishes at 5.00pm.

Advance booking is essential for ALBA retreats. To find out more and to download an ALBA retreat booking form visit us at: [www.buddhacommunity.net](http://www.buddhacommunity.net) or email: [buddhacommunity@gmail.com](mailto:buddhacommunity@gmail.com)

Days of Practice: 9 February, 9 March, 11 May, 1 Jun, 10 Aug, 28 September, 9 November, 14 December.

Retreats: 12–14 April, 12–14 July, 30 August–3 September

### 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 support for 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.

BWN Days of Practice: 10 March, 2 June, 11 August, 15 Dec

4-day retreat: 4–7 October

For bookings and information please write to:

[buddhistwomensnetwork@gmail.com](mailto:buddhistwomensnetwork@gmail.com)

### Amaravati Family Events

Family Events are 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 lay coordinators and helpers. There are five retreats held each year, including a retreat for 13–19 yr-olds. The weekend in June is intended as an introduction for new families thinking of applying for the camp.

Rainbows Retreat: 3–6 May

June Weekend: 14–16 June

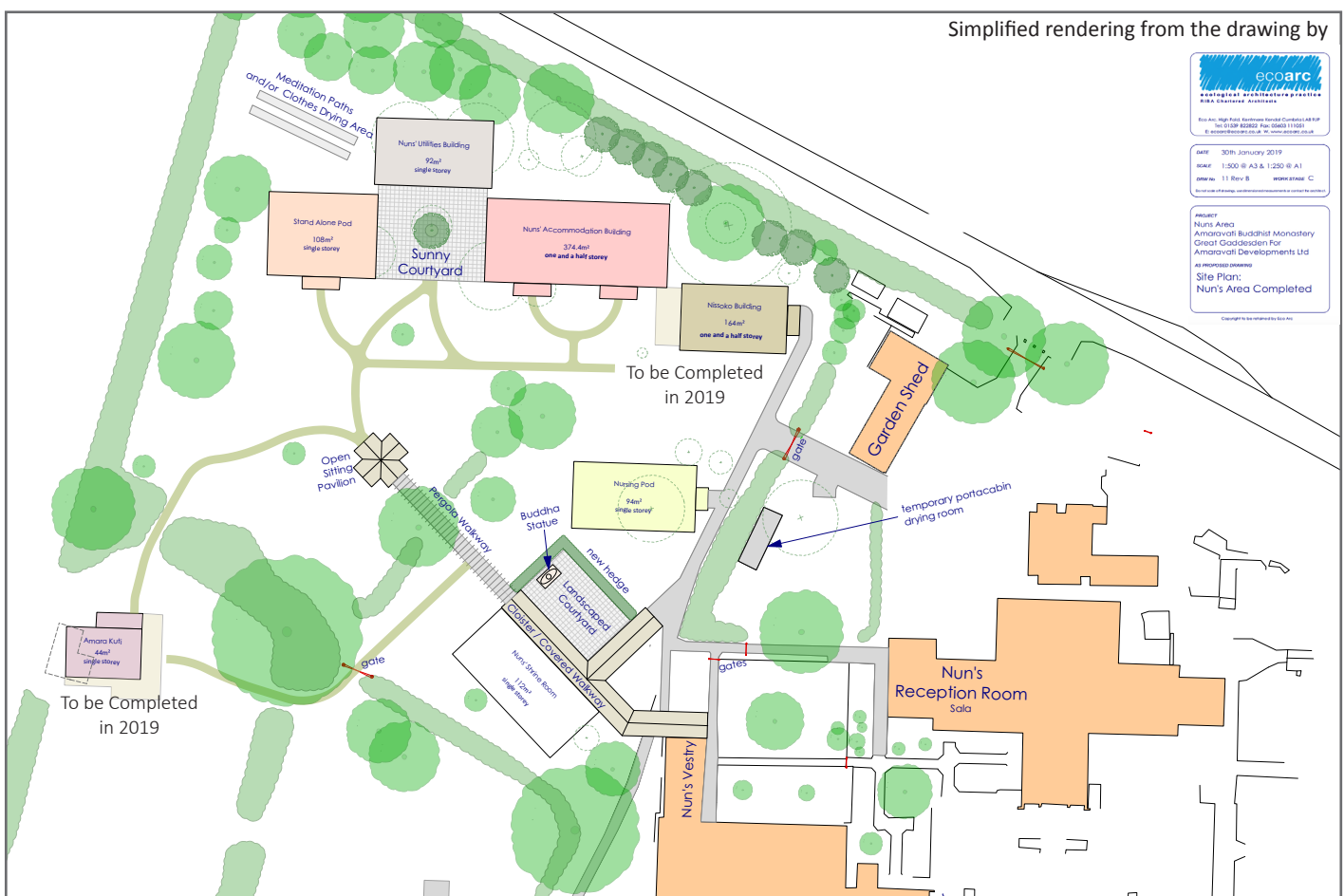
Family Camp: 17–25 August

Creative Weekend (18yrs+): 1–3 November

Young Person's Retreat (13–19 yrs): 29 November–1 December

For bookings and information please visit the Family Events Website [www.family.amaravati.org](http://www.family.amaravati.org) or contact the bookings coordinator Gina Cheetam [family@amaravati.org](mailto:family@amaravati.org)

## Amaravati Long-Term Plan: Nuns' Area Layout when completed (not including laywomen's buildings)



## The winter months at Amaravati

Starting January 3 in the evening and extending over three months to March 31, the community is on retreat.

### Visiting

Visitors are very welcome to come to participate in the meal offering at 10.45 am (10.30 am on Sundays), attend the weekly Saturday afternoon meditation workshops, spend some quiet time, use the library, attend the moon day talks and join in the group meditation in the Temple. The gates open daily shortly before 5 am and close at approx. 9.30 pm.

Ajahn Amaro will offer readings and Dhamma teaching at 6 pm in the sālā every day. (Except February 8-28, when he is personal retreat, on moon days and the day after).

We kindly request that visitors respect the quiet as much as possible, especially when entering or leaving the Temple. The sangha are expected to keep Noble Silence; as a support for their practice, please try not to engage them in casual conversation.

The Saturday workshops continue, lead by experienced lay teachers. They will be held in the sālā.

### Monastery Guest and Retreat Centre Enquiries

There is no overnight guest accommodation available Jan-Mar and the guest monk/guest nun will not be answering booking queries until the end of March. Information about staying as a monastery guest is on our website at [www.amaravati.org/visiting/staying-overnight](http://www.amaravati.org/visiting/staying-overnight)

The Retreat Centre is closed, with the first meditation retreat of 2019 taking place in early April. You can however, still make bookings for the Retreat Centre through the website and for ALBA, BWN and Family Events through their own booking systems. You will find details of these retreats on pages 4 and 5.

### General Monastery Enquiries

For enquiries about giving dana, the kitchen and what is happening in the monastery on a given day, please contact the monastery office on 01442 842 455. During the winter months, the office is open Mon-Fri, 8.15-10.30 am only. You are welcome to leave a message outside those times. The monastery secretary will check messages regularly but only reply to those deemed urgent. General enquiries will be filed away to be answered once the winter retreat is over.

### Website

News and events updates and an extensive selection of downloadable new and archive Dhamma talks and books can be found on our website [www.amaravati.org](http://www.amaravati.org)

### Lunar Observance Days in 2019

Feb	● 4 (Mon)	● 12 (Tue)
	○ 19 (Tue)	● 27 (Wed)
Mar	● 5 (Tue)	● 13 (Wed)
	○ 20 (Wed)	● 28 (Thur)
Apr	● 4 (Thur)	● 12 (Fri)
	○ 19 (Fri)	● 27 (Sat)
May	● 3 (Fri)	● 11 (Sat)
	○ 18 (Sat)	● 26 (Sun)
Jun	● 2 (Sun)	● 10 (Mon)
	○ 17 (Mon)	● 25 (Tue)

Jul	● 1 (Mon)	● 9 (Tue)
	○ 16 (Tue)	● 24 (Wed)
	● 31 (Wed)	
Aug	● 8 (Thur)	○ 15 (Thur)
	● 23 (Fri)	● 29 (Thur)
Sept	● 6 (Sun)	○ 13 (Fri)
	● 21 (Sat)	● 28 (Sat)
Oct	● 6 (Sun)	○ 13 (Sun)
	● 21 (Mon)	● 27 (Sun)
Nov	● 4 (Mon)	○ 11 (Mon)
	● 19 (Tue)	● 26 (Tue)
Dec	● 4 (Wed)	○ 11 (Wed)
	● 19 (Thur)	● 25 (Wed)

On lunar observance days there is usually a pūjā, Dhamma talk and midnight meditation vigil.

### Notable Dates in 2019

Jan-Mar: Sangha Winter Retreat

Jan 16: Ajahn Chah Memorial Day

Feb 19: Māgha Pūjā Day

Apr 9-10: ECM (Elders Council Meeting)

Apr 13: Thai New Year (Songkran)

May 12: Vesākha Festival

May 18: Vesākha Pūjā

Jun 17: Ajahn Chah's Birthday

Jul 16: Asālāhā Pūjā

Jul 17: Enter Vassa

Jul 27: Acariya Pūjā (LP Sumedho's Birthday)

Oct 13: Pavarānā Day (end of Vassa)

Nov 10: Kathina Festival

### Lotus Volunteer Group

If you would like to spend some time helping out at the monastery or find ways to become more involved, please contact the Lotus Volunteer Group. We rely on outside support to keep the place going, but it is also an opportunity to meet like-minded people and get a insight into using meditation practice and Buddhist teachings in everyday situations.

[www.facebook.com/LotusVolunteerGroup](http://www.facebook.com/LotusVolunteerGroup)

[www.lotusvolunteergroup.amaravati.org](http://www.lotusvolunteergroup.amaravati.org)

### Stewards

The English Sangha Trust (EST) 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: [www.amaravati.org/support](http://www.amaravati.org/support)

### Monastery Contact Details

Amaravati Buddhist Monastery

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