

A Profound Interdependence

Since the time of the Buddha over 2,500 years ago, the relationship between the monastic and lay communities has been one of mutual benefit and interdependence.



The training for monastics in the ancient Theravada tradition is to cultivate harmlessness and contentment and to live a renunciant

and celibate life. The nuns do not earn or handle money or grow food. They are entirely dependent on the generosity of the lay community for the basic requisites of almsfood, shelter, clothing and medicine.

This ancient tradition is as alive as ever today as the Dhamma takes root in the countries of the West.

The life of a monastic community arouses the faith and energy we all need—whether ordained or lay—to walk the Buddha's path. By joining together to support each other's practice, we are all enriched.

As one lay supporter so aptly put it, "It is rare to find a teacher who can offer great wisdom and can touch not only the mind, but also the heart. The nuns possess this ability, and they are devoted to generously offering it to others. They possess a deep knowledge of Buddha-Dhamma and also a deep sense of humanity and the challenges of Western life."

Saranāloka:

"refuge in the clear light of awareness"



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Creating a Theravada Buddhist Nuns' Community

... an Unfolding Aspiration



Please help us in establishing a training monastery for nuns in the Theravada Forest Tradition

Saranāloka FOUNDATION
an organization of lay volunteers

... a time of transition ...

Why a New Monastic Community?

The History: The co-abbesses of Aloka Vihara, Sister Anandabodhi and Sister Santacitta, trained with the nuns at Amaravati and Chithurst Buddhist Monasteries in England from 1992 to 2009. These communities were founded by Venerable Ajahn Sumedho, the first Western disciple of the Venerable Ajahn Chah, a meditation master of the Thai Forest Tradition.



In 2009, the Saranaloka Foundation invited the Sisters to establish a nuns' community in California. With the encouragement of U.S. and worldwide lay supporters, Aloka Vihara was established in San Francisco. The vision? To provide training in America with the same level of recognition and respect as is given to the monks (bhikkhus).

In April 2011, the Sisters took leave of the Ajahn Chah lineage and their Sisters in England to pursue bhikkhuni ordination (the equivalent for women to bhikkhu ordination) and take the next steps toward creating a training monastery.

Bhikkhuni Ordination: Sister Anandabodhi and Sister Santacitta are requesting bhikkhuni ordination from Venerable Tathaaloka Theri on October 17, 2011. This ordination will officially establish their connection with the growing Theravada bhikkhuni community and help to revitalize the Fourfold Sangha



Prajnaparamita, also known as Mother of all the Buddhas, symbolizes wisdom and emptiness, from which everything arises and ceases. This sculpture was created and offered to Aloka Vihara by Ajahn Vimalo Bhikkhu.

as established by the Buddha. The Fourfold Sangha includes laywomen, laymen, bhikkhunis and bhikkhus.

The Vision: Saranaloka, the Sisters and lay supporters wish to establish a monastery where nuns and novices can train, practice in Dhamma-Vinaya and live the renunciant life. The monastery will be a place of refuge that is close to nature, quiet, and secluded – providing suitable conditions for meditation and contemplation – yet easily accessible for male and female guests to visit, make offerings, listen to teachings and take part in daily community life.

The lay community is grateful for the Dhamma provided through the feminine form, and there is an expanding global awareness of the need for women to also have equal opportunity to fully dedicate their lives to monastic practice.



The Saranaloka Foundation:

Saranaloka is a nonprofit stewardship organization that was started in 2005 by a group of lay practitioners for the purpose of bringing nuns to the United States to visit, teach and establish a training monastery for women.

As its initial project, Saranaloka opened Aloka Vihara in San Francisco and is now managing the donations of food, supplies and money to support the vihara. Within the next year, Saranaloka is hoping to enable the transition from the urban Aloka Vihara to a rural training monastery.

The transition from San Francisco to a rural property in Northern California will allow the Sisters to begin accepting women for training who aspire to join a nuns' monastic community.

Saranaloka invites you and lay supporters from around the world to join together in gathering the resources to acquire and offer the land, buildings and furnishings needed. You are also invited to participate in the teachings, chanting and meditations offered by the Sisters at the vihara and at locations around the Bay Area. Their teaching schedules are announced on the Saranaloka website.

A Founders Fund is established to collect donations offered for the purpose of founding a training monastery. For more information, please contact the Saranaloka Foundation. General support for Aloka Vihara and the Sisters is also deeply appreciated.