

Bhanté and Land of 10,000 Buddhas

“The Venerable Bhante V. Dharmawara was born in Cambodia. After receiving ordination into the Holy Sangha in his early youth, he left Cambodia and went to Ubon Fajastani, Thailand during the reign of Kings Rama VI and VII, where he was preordained. Here he was introduced to a high-ranking Buddhist monk known as Chaukhyn Upali Gunupamacharya who was believed to be a living Arhat. Here Bhiksu Dharmawara studied the thirteen ascetic (Dhutanga) practices under him. The Dhutanga practices are rigid disciplines expounded by the Buddha involving the taking of one meal a day at noon, living under the foot of trees, possessing only three robes, not lying down to sleep, etc. Under his teacher's guidance, Bhiksu Dharmawara practiced the stilling of his mind in the jungle forests bordering the frontiers of Thailand and Cambodia in the territories of Changwat Surin and Kukhan for six years.

From there he went to Burma where he was ordained a third time and studied under famous masters. He then went to India where he stayed over forty years.



The *Vipassana*, or Insight (Contemplative) meditation that Bhikshu Dharmawara teaches is one of the two main methods of mental development taught in the Theravada school. Shamatha (stopping or tranquility) is the other method. The technical aspects of these forms of meditation are outlined in the Surangama Sutra when Ananda asks for instruction Sa in the Surangama Sutra when Ananda asks for instruction in Shamatha, Shamapatti, and Dhyana. Sakyamuni Buddha replied with a detailed explanation of each of these phrases in order to reveal to him the Great Surangama Samadhi, a Dharma so profound, Ananda had not even known how to request it. With encouragement, enticement, and exhortations, the Buddha thus influenced the Arhats to continually progress along the path of the Bodhisattva to Buddhahood.

Bhiksu Dharmawara

In instructing his students in these initial forms of meditation, Bhiksu Dharmawara points out the emptiness of the Five Skandhas, the Four Elements and the ego, which form the physical and mental aspects of an individual. But he is also careful to emphasize adherence to the five precepts and the necessity to rid oneself of obstacles that result from greed, hatred, and stupidity.

While in India Dharmawara founded a temple and monastery by the name of Asoka Mission Vihara in New Delhi. He then traveled in the West for years, teaching meditation in Europe and England. In Washington, D.C., he has founded temples, and he has now moved to California in the Ukiah area, right near the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas.

Bhiksu Dharmawara attended the 1978 celebration of Sakyamuni Buddha's birthday, and attended the full day's activities which included Universal Bowing to the Buddhas, recitation of Sutras, chanting of mantras and the Buddha's name, the featured Buddha-bathing ceremony where one symbolically washes clean one's own self nature, the vegetarian feast, and the afternoon Dharma lectures. Bhiksu Dharmawara was invited to join other members of the Sangha in offering a Dharma message to the hundreds of disciples and friends of the Dharma gathering in the Kuan Yin Hall of Ten Thousand Buddhas. The united message of the day emphasized the all-encompassing magnitude of the Proper

Dharma, which transcends divisions into vehicles, schools, sects, and nationalities, and reveals that all living beings have the Buddha nature and can become Buddhas.”



The above was copied from a website on Buddhist arhats, those awake and aware.
http://www.drbachinese.org/vbs/101_132/vbs101/101_7.htm

the Ashoka Mission referenced above is on about 8 hectares of land given Bhanaté by Nehru at the urging of Pandit Nehru’s mother.

and

Dharma Affinities: Venerable Bhante Dharmawara and Ajahn Sumedho

In his endeavor to unite the Northern and Southern traditions of Buddhism, the Venerable Master was extremely successful in winning the respect and admiration of the Sangha community from the Southern Tradition. And so it is no coincidence that Ven. Bhante Dharmawara and Ajahn Sumedho, both Bhikshus of the Southern tradition of Buddhism hold such high esteem for the Venerable Master.

Venerable Bhante Dharmawara is one of the elder Dharma Masters that Venerable Master Hua would invite to transmit the precepts during the Threefold Ordination Ceremony. During other times, Venerable Bhante would also make special visits the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas. He continued to visit the City even after Master Hua's passing into Nirvana. Each time, he would exhort the fourfold assembly at the City to cultivate well. Despite his advanced age, the visits continued until his passing away recently. Venerable Bhante is dearly missed by all.



The 103-year old Elder Dharma Master Bhante Dharmawara visiting the CTTB in 1991.

It was my privilege to meet Ajahn Sumedho when Bhanaté, Sky, Steve (the naturalist who lived on our New Jersey land for a year taching Anna and Sky wilderness awareness skills) and I were briefly in residence at the Land of 10,000 Buddha’s in Ukiah, California.