



THE INTERNATIONAL
FOREST MONASTERY
WAT PAH NANACHAT



THE STORY OF BUDDHISM

The Buddha's original name was Siddhattha Gotama. He was born in northern India two-and-a-half thousand years ago as a prince in a wealthy family, but even with his wealth and worldly status he still felt unfulfilled. Seeing that life's fleeting pleasures were quickly fading, he set out in search of lasting happiness. He undertook a quest of meditation and asceticism that culminated in the attainment of profound enlightenment: the realization of the ultimate true nature of all phenomena, the ending of sensual desire, anger and delusion, the perfect peace and happiness.

He now called himself the Buddha, The Awakened One, and he devoted the remaining forty-five years of his life to helping others realize the same sublime freedom and bliss that he had discovered. His teachings, known as the Dhamma, describe the true nature of reality, showing both the sweet taste of the world and the danger lurking in it. In addition, the Buddha clearly laid out a course of spiritual training, which leads anyone who practises according to his instructions to the



end of all suffering. He established communities of monks and nuns, the Sangha, for those people inspired to dedicate their lives to the practice and preservation of this path of virtue, concentration and wisdom.



THE MONASTIC WAY OF LIFE

The contemplative life of a Buddhist monk or nun is one of simplicity, celibacy, and contentment. They do not seek the happiness based on sensuality and worldly distractions, but instead strive for the more subtle, inner happiness that blossoms forth when peace and wisdom take root in the heart. Meditation is a central feature of the lifestyle, and monastics cultivate those qualities that support it: generosity, renunciation, loving-kindness, humility, integrity, determined effort and mindful awareness in all activities.

Since the time of the Buddha, monks have followed his example by living close to nature in forests, mountains and caves. Far from the stress and busyness that afflict city life, a tranquil, natural setting provides the perfect environment for developing peace and wisdom. Forest monasteries in Thailand provide a calm atmosphere of silence and solitude.





THERAVADA BUDDHISM AND THE THAI FOREST TRADITION

The Theravada Buddhist Tradition looks to the original teachings of the Buddha as its guide and offers a comprehensive system for effectively exploring and liberating the deepest levels of consciousness. It has flourished mainly in Southeast Asia, Myanmar and Sri Lanka. The monastic Sangha in its original form has survived throughout twenty-five centuries and is one of the oldest continuous institutions in history.

For 800 years Thailand has been under the serenely compassionate shelter of Buddhism, and the Buddha's teachings pervade almost every aspect of life within the kingdom, uniting the people into a harmonious, peace-loving society. The contemporary Thai Forest Tradition, growing and blossoming throughout the 20th century, is a down-to-earth, 'back to the roots' movement that models its practice and lifestyle on that of the Buddha and his first generation of disciples. The advent of the modern age notwithstanding, forest monasteries still keep alive the ancient traditions through following the Buddhist monastic code of discipline (Vinaya) in all its detail and developing meditation in secluded forests.





VENERABLE AJAHN CHAH

Thailand has been blessed with a great number of impeccable and profoundly wise Buddhist meditation masters, and one of the most eminent was Venerable Ajahn Chah. Born in 1918 he studied and trained in remote monasteries with some of the most impressive teachers of his era before establishing his own



forest monastery near the city of Ubon. Until his death in 1992, he guided and trained his disciples in the simple, austere and peaceful ways of the Buddha. Ajahn Chah taught in a direct, uncomplicated and straightforward manner. He taught with charm and humor and was a

master at using everyday situations as opportunities for learning. He stressed that mere intellectual knowledge can never bring true happiness. This can only be known through personal experience and transformation, through the insight that arises naturally when the mind is radiant, quiet and still. His popularity grew by leaps and bounds, and presently there are more than 300 forest monasteries that look to his teachings and example for their inspiration.



WAT PAH NANACHAT

As the number of Non-Thai disciples of Ajahn Chah grew, in 1975 he established a nearby branch monastery specifically for them. The Community now consists of people from throughout the world. English serves as the primary language for communication and instruction, initially making it far easier for those not fluent in Thai to learn the traditional ways of monastic training, study the teachings of the masters of the Forest Tradition and assimilate the appropriate behavior for blending in harmoniously with the local culture.

The main purpose of Wat Pah Nanachat is to provide an environment for ordaining and training monks in the lifestyle and practices of Venerable Ajahn Chah and the other Forest Masters. It is not a meditation center that conducts retreats, but there are facilities for a



limited number of male and female guests to stay at the monastery and practise with the resident community. Guests are expected to follow the daily monastic routine and join in with

all communal meditation sessions, meetings, and work activities. Generally, guests have many hours of the day free for study and individual meditation practice. In order to make the best use of the situation it is expected that they will have had previous experience in Buddhist teachings and meditation.

In accordance with the monastic environment, emphasis in practice is placed on cooperation, self-sacrifice, diligence and communal harmony. The lifestyle encourages the development of restraint, modesty and quietude. It is the deliberate and sincere commitment to this way of life that facilitates a community atmosphere where people of diverse backgrounds, nationalities, and personalities can co-operate in the effort to walk the path of the Buddha and realize its goal of enlightenment.

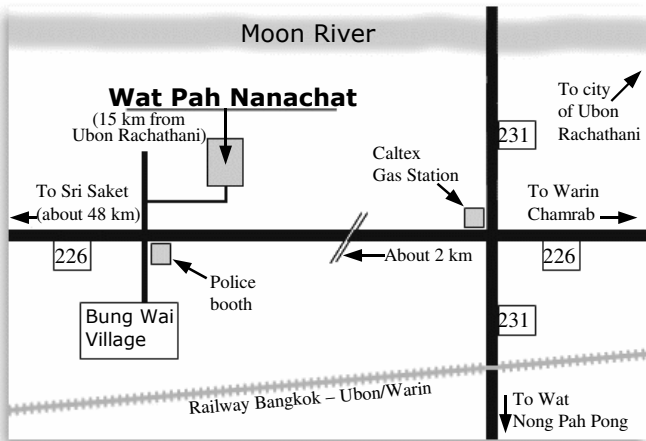
W a t P a h
Nanachat is situated in a small forest in the northeast of Thailand about 15 kilometers from the city of Ubon Rachathani. Anyone wishing to visit for the day is recommended to



Photo by Andreas Teichmann

arrive before 8:00 am in order to take part in the meal offering and have the opportunity to speak with the abbot. Those interested in staying for a period of time or considering ordination are requested to write to the monastery at least one month in advance, because space is limited. Please address your letter to 'the Guest Monk', suggest possible dates and allow time for a response.

Wat Pah Nanachat is a Buddhist monastery in Northeast Thailand, in the Theravada Forest Tradition. It was established by Ajahn Chah to provide English-speaking people the opportunity to train and practice in the way the Buddha taught his monks in the forests 2600 years ago.



Wat Pah Nanachat
 Bahn Bung Wai
 Warin Chamrab
 Ubon Rachathani
 34310 THAILAND

วัดป่านานาชาติ
 ตำบลบึงหวาย
 อำเภอวารินชำราบ
 จังหวัดอุบลราชธานี
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