

## Sunday Services at the ABM (Atammayatarama Buddhist Monastery) 9:30 AM – 12:30 PM

### The Function of Buddhist Service:

- A way to express religious feelings.
- An opportunity to learn about Buddhism by listening and discussing the teachings.
- A chance to perform Buddhist practices (meditation, chanting, requesting the Five Precepts, etc.) under the guidance of a Buddhist monk and/or a trained teacher.
- Mutual support and encouragement in your religious efforts.
- A chance to join a community of like-minded people, and to be a part of a group that shares our opinions.

### Etiquette:

- Before entering the temple, a visitor should remove his/her shoes and place them in a Shoe Rack.
- Enter the Meditation Hall through the front door.
- Quietly find the place to sit, on a chair or on the floor.
- Pay respect to the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha by putting your palms together in a “*wai*<sup>1</sup>” position, and then bow three times. If you are uncomfortable with the “*wai*” you can just keep quiet and be courteous while observing the services.
- No food or drinks allowed in the Meditation Hall.

**A Buddhist Altar or Shrine** usually has the following items: Buddha Statue, flowers, candles and incense sticks.

1. The Statue of Buddha provides a serene and reassuring reminder of the basic teachings of Buddhist religion.
2. The flowers, beautiful one moment and wilted the next, remind us of the impermanence of life. The flowers, picked from different plants, arranged uniformly in a vase, are representations of monks, coming from different backgrounds, but following the same monastic codes (*Dhamma Vinai*).
3. The candle’s flame symbolizes enlightenment. The lighting of a candle represents the light of wisdom illuminating the darkness of ignorance.
4. Incense is placed as an offering in front of the Buddha Image. Its odor calls to our mind the sweet scent of moral virtue that emanates from those who are devout. We burn three sticks of incense at once, one for the Buddha’s wisdom; one for the Buddha’s purity; and one for the Buddha’s loving-kindness (*metta*).

### Paying homage to the Buddha

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<sup>1</sup> *Wai* is the respectful Thai gesture of thanks, apology, or greeting – see- <http://www.kingdom-of-thailand.com/wai.htm>; <http://www.chiangmai-chiangrai.com/wai> and [sawasdee.html](http://www.sawasdee.html)

The first thing most Thai Buddhists do upon entering a Temple is to kneel in front of the Buddha image with hands in “wai”, and bow three times. Each time touching the ground with their forehead, as their head approaches the floor they spread their hands flat onto the floor. At this point, five parts of their body is in contact with the floor: their knees, hands and head. Thai people consider this way of *wai* the highest way of paying respect. They call it “*khrap*”. This *wai* or *khrap* here is for the Triple Gem.

**Lighting the Candles** signifies the start of the service. The monk will invite one person in the group to come to the front to perform this task. He/She will *wai* to the Buddha image three times, before lighting the candles on the altar; first the left candle then the right. Then bow down three more times before returning to his/her seat. Lighting a candle signifies ‘wisdom’.

### **Morning Chanting<sup>2</sup> :**

Salutation to the Triple Gem  
(*Arahang samma.....sanghang namami.*)

Chant (3 times) the preliminary passage revering the Buddha, the Exalted One.  
(*Namo tassa bhagavato, arahato, samma sambuddhassa.*<sup>3</sup>)

Chant in praise of the Buddha  
(*Yo so tathagato.....tamahang bhagawantang sirasa namami.*)

Chant in praise of the Dhamma  
(*Yo so savakkhato.....tamahang dhammang sirasa namami.*)

Chant in praise of the Sangha  
(*Yoso supatipanno.....tamahang sanghang sirasa namami.*)

Veneration of the Triple Gem = Taking refuge in the Triple Gem  
(*Buddho susuddho karunamahannavo.....ma hontuweh tassa pabhawasiddhiya.*)

Reflections on detachments from worldly miseries  
(*Idha tathagato loka uppanna.....antakiriyaya sang wattatu.*)

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<sup>2</sup> Early Buddhists would get together and recite the things the Buddha had taught them. This led to the tradition of chanting in services. Chanting can give an encouraging sense of participation in a long and active tradition. It can also be used as an aid to or the object of meditation. It has developed into an art form of great beauty, very different from singing.

<sup>3</sup> These three epithets of Gotama the Buddha express the three great qualities of Enlightenment. BHAGAVATO shows the Great Compassion (mahakaruna) of the Buddha and this we should recollect first as loving-kindness and compassion is the necessary base for our own practice of Dhamma. ARAHATO represents the Purity (visuddhi) of the Buddha, purity unforced and ever-present to be approached by us through the practice of the Precepts. SAMMA-SAMBHUDDHASSA stands for the quality of Wisdom (pañña), the Unsurpassed Perfect Enlightenment (anuttara samma-sambodhi) which distinguishes a Buddha from all other men. Here, "Samma" means "perfect," "sam" stands for "by himself," and "Buddhassa" is "to the Enlightened" or "to the Awakened."

After chanting, there is a meditation practice for about half an hour.

### **Meditation on Breathing (Anapana<sup>4</sup> Sati<sup>5</sup>)**

*Anapana sati*, the meditation on the in-and-out breath, is the first subject of meditation expounded by the Buddha in the *Maha Satipatthana Sutta*, the Great Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness. The Buddha placed special emphases on this meditation, for it is the gateway to enlightenment and Nibbana adopted by all the Buddhas of the past as the very basis for their attainment of Buddhahood. When the Blessed One sat at the foot of the Bodhi Tree and resolved not to rise until he had attained enlightenment, he took up anapanasati as his subject of meditation. Meditating this way, he attained the four jhanas; recollected his previous lives, fathomed the nature of samsara, and aroused the sequence of great insight knowledge. At dawn, while 100,000 world systems trembled, he attained the limitless wisdom of a Fully Enlightened Buddha.

**Sending Metta or a Prayer of Kindness.** Following this Meditation Practice the leader will recite a Prayer of Kindness phrase by phrase, laypeople will repeat each phrase.

*Sabbe satta* (May all living beings, who share the truth of sufferings, i.e. being born, getting old, getting sick, and die.)

*Awera hontu*, (Be happy and free from animosity.)

*Abya pajjha hontu*, (Be happy and avoid seeking revenge or exploit others.)

*Anikha hontu*, (Be happy and free from oppression (bodily and mentally.)

*Sukhi attanang pariharantu*. (Be happy physically and emotionally. Look after yourselves by keeping away from trouble and harm.)

### **Effective Sending Of Metta**

Only when you earnestly wish the well-being of someone or some beings can we say that metta has been performed properly. If you just say, "Awera hontu" by rote with a wandering mind and without concentration, then you are not sending metta as you intended. It is better therefore to recite in one's own vernacular rather than in Pali so that you really comprehend what you are saying. You should mention a person by name when you send metta; for example: "May my mother be free from dangers and difficulties; may she attain mental and physical happiness; may she be in good health and may she live long." You should say these words with great enthusiasm and sincerity. The same holds true for your father, teacher, etc. In the case of metta for all living beings; replace 'my mother' with 'all living beings.' The only essential point is to have sincerity and enthusiasm for their welfare, peace and progress.

### **Requesting the Three Refuges and the Five Precepts.**

Laypeople begin by requesting the Three Refuges and the Five Precepts. (*Mayang bhante....siilaani yaacaama*)

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<sup>4</sup> **Anāpāna** refers to inhalation and exhalation.

<sup>5</sup> **Sati** means "recall, recollection, awareness, attention, mindfulness." All of these concern the present and do not involve memory or thought. The activity of **sati** is conveyed through a number of verbs: to fix, to note, to attend, to pay attention, to be aware, to experience. (**Sati** does not mean "to concentrate or focus.") Please study these various words and their meaning in each context, and then you will have a correct understanding of sati, namely, what it is and how to use it to get free of dukkha.

### Salutation to the Buddha

The monk recites the Salutation to the Buddha three times, after which the laypeople repeat it three times.

*Namo Tassa Bhagavato* (I pay homage to the Holy One)  
*Arahato Samma* (The One who is free from faults)  
*Sambuddhassa* (and is completely enlightened.)

### Taking the Refuges

The monk then recites the following passage line by line, and the laypeople reciting each line after him. (*Buddhang saranang gacchami.....Tatiyampi Sankhang saranang gacchami.*)

Translation:

I go to the Buddha for refuge.  
 I go to the Dhamma for refuge.  
 I go to the Sangha for refuge.

A second time I go to the Buddha for refuge.  
 I go to the Dhamma for refuge.  
 I go to the Sangha for refuge.

A third time I go to the Buddha for refuge.  
 I go to the Dhamma for refuge.  
 I go to the Sangha for refuge.

The monk then says: *Tisarana gamanam nitthitam* (This ends the going for refuge.)

The laypeople response: *Ama bhante* (Yes, Venerable Sir.)

### Taking the Five Precepts (Panca Sila)

The monk recites the precepts line by line, and the laypeople reciting each line after him.

1. *Panatipata veramani sikkha padang samadiyahi*
2. *Adinna-dana veramani sikkha padang samadiyami*
3. *Kamesu miccha-cara veramani sikkha padang samadiyami*
4. *Musavada veramanni sikkha padang samadiyami*
5. *Sura meraya-majja-pama-datthana veramani sikkha padang samadiyami*

Translation:

1. I take the precept to abstain from destroying living beings.
2. I take the precept to abstain from taking things not given.
3. I take the precept to abstain from sexual misconduct.
4. I take the precept to abstain from false speech.

5. I take the precept to abstain from distilled and fermented liquor that causes intoxication and heedlessness.

The reciting these precepts reminds us to observe them, resulting in a happy, peaceful and righteous life. By so doing, we also help others to live peacefully and happily by not causing them any form of disturbance or harm.

The monk then concludes with the following:

*Imani panca sikkhapadani  
Silena sugating yanti  
Silena bhogasampada  
Silena nibbuting yanti  
Tasma silang visodhaye*

Translation: These are the five training rules.  
Through virtue they go to a good birth.  
Through virtue is wealth attained.  
Through virtue they go to Liberation.  
Therefore we should purify our virtue.

Lay people response: *Sahdu, sahdu, sahdu.*

### **Dhamma Talk in Thai and English.**

English Dhamma Talk is in the Library; the Thai language talk is in the Meditation Hall.

Members request the Dhamma by reciting the following:

*Brahmaa ca lokaadhipatii sahampati  
Kat anjalii andhivaram ayaacatha:  
Santiidha sattaapparajakkha-jaatikaa  
Desetu dhammam anukampimam pajam.*

Translation:

The Brahma Sahampati<sup>6</sup>, Lord of the World,  
With hands palm-to-palm before his heart, requested a blessing:  
There are beings here with only a little dust in their eyes.  
Please teach the Dhamma out of compassion for them.

The monk gives a dhamma talk for 45 minutes. When he finishes members bow to express thanks.

### **Offerings of food and other articles to the monks (Tak Batr and Sangha-dana)**

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<sup>6</sup> Sahampati is the God who asked the Buddha to make the teaching known to all, for the sake of all living beings.

Bringing food and small gifts of money or goods to the Temple is not only a gesture of gratitude and an aid in supporting Temple activities, but also practice in overcoming attachment to material things. It is better not to give such large amounts as to arouse anxiety or resentment in yourself, nor so little that it is meaningless to you; just enough to practice of letting go. If there is not a temple in your area, donating to other charities also help.

The 'Alms Round' service is performed by the laypeople forming a circle in the hall and putting rice in the 'alms bowl' of each monk as he makes the round. When completed the monks go to the kitchen to get their food from. When they return to their seats, members chant the Sangha-Dana as follows:

*Imaani mayam bhante, bhattaani, saparivaaraani, bhikkhu-sanghassa, o nojayaama.  
Saadhu no bhante, bhikkhu-sangho, immani, bhattaani, saparivaaraani,  
patigganhaatu, amhaakam, diigha-rattam, hitaaya, sukhaya.*

Translation:

We present these foods of ours, together with their accompanying articles, to the Bhikkhu Sangha. May our Bhikkhu Sangha accept these foods, together with their accompanying articles, for our long-term welfare and happiness.

The monks accept and give the laypeople a blessing.

### **The Blessing & Pouring of Water by the Laypeople**

The monks chant giving blessings to the laypeople, while the laypeople pour water into bowels to share the merit with their ancestors. Theravada Buddhist honor and transfer merit to their ancestors on every occasion of merit making and sharing. Afterward this water should be poured over some plants or trees outside the building so it will nourish them as well as seep into the earth. As the rains fill the rivers and overflow into the ocean, so likewise may this water reach the departed.

### **Lunch (pot luck, buffet style)**

Before taking leave to get lunch, members chant the Triple Gem again, bow to the monks, listen to any announcements, then go to the kitchen to get their food. Please:

Stay in line.

Take just enough food to fill your appetite.

Be considerate to those behind you.

Be patient if the line is long.

Once the meal is over, members may take the leftover food home. Food should not be wasted.

### **Clean Up and others**

Help keep your *wat* clean and tidy by being a volunteer to do some chores such as:

- cleaning dishes and utensils after meals
- taking garbage out
- cleaning bathrooms

- arranging and/or putting away Chanting books and cushions before and after the services
- welcoming visitors and guests
- shelving books in the library
- stuffing mailing newsletters
- setting up tables and chairs
- weeding/gardening

The weekly Observance Day rituals at the monastery are opportunities for both the laypeople and the monks to strengthen their faith, discipline, understanding, and to make and share merit.

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