

Events at Serenity Insight Meditation Center in 2009

Serenity Insight Meditation Center was formed in Western North Carolina by Venerable U Jotika Bhivamsa, a Theravara Buddhist monk from Burma. The Center is located on 3.6 acres of land at 888 Gash Road, Mills River, North Carolina, which was donated by a supporter originally from Burma. The property consists of two buildings. We used the resident building as a Dhamma Hall (Meditation Hall) before major renovations of the Dhamma Hall building were completed.

Our Dhamma Hall renovation was completed in December, 2009. The opening of the Hall coincided with the visit of three out-of-state monks - Ven. U Pannananda (Sayadaw from Maymyo Chanmyay Meditation Center, Burma), Ven. U Revata (Sayadaw from Chanmyay Satipatthana Vihara, Springfield, Illinois, U.S.A.) and Ven. Bhikkhu Gunaratana (from Mahasatipatthana Meditation Center, Malden, Massachusetts, U.S.A.). Along with the three visiting monks, a small opening ceremony was held and the premises was officially handed over to our abbot, Venerable UJotika Bhivamsa.

Special Visits

In 2009, we had ascetics, friends and relatives visiting from as near as DC and as far away as Burma. We are fortunate to have monks from Burma, Illinois, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Boston, and also a nun from Missouri visit us. Although their stays were short, it gave many of us a chance to pay our respects to them.

Outreach Activities

Bhante UJotika was invited to speak about meditation to students of religious studies at Mars Hill College, NC. Meetings were also held at Earth Fare, Jubilee Hall, residences, offices and community buildings in Asheville, Fairview, Saluda and Tryon, NC. In the absence of Bikkhuni Sudhama of South Carolina, he also participated in the Symposium of World Religions held at the Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities in South Carolina.

Vassa Celebration in 2009

Our first celebration after moving to Mills River, NC, was the Vassa Celebration (Vassa Robe Offering Celebration) held on a cool summer evening in July. It was attended by many friends and supporters locally as well as from Charlotte, Raleigh, and Georgia.

7- Day Retreat

We held the first 7-Day Retreat in our new Dhamma Hall in December. It was a wonderful session as seven Americans participated in the retreat.