

## Visit to Ajahn Thate, 1991 at Wat Hin Maak Peng, Thailand

Thomas Faunce. Excerpt from my 1991-1992 Diary

I visited the Ajahn Thate in Northern Thailand, by chance, as a final year medical student in 1991. That was just a few years before his death. Fortunately I arrived in the rainy season when the monks traditionally go wandering. I was clad in ochre robes with a shaven head as a result of my meditative training in India. After a brief interview Ajahn Thate allowed me to occupy a kutir and practise meditation.

“Wat Hin Maak Peng is located at Ban Thai Charoen, Tambon Phra Phutthabat near Chang Mai. Wat Hin Maak Peng borders the Mekong River. The temple compound (sala) is spacious, clean and shady with various species of plants growing around the marble floor and tiled columns. On one side is a mural depicting a multi-headed snake protecting the Buddha while he is in meditation. Nearby are small wooden kutirs occupied by the monks. A gong sounds well before dawn to signal the time when the monks should begin their practise of prolonged concentration of the mind on a single point. Around dawn the monks file out with their bowls to receive food from the villagers. This is received with gratitude and taken back to the temple to be consumed only for the preservation of the body as the only meal of the day. The rest of the day is spent sweeping the paths, studying scriptures or in spiritual discussion with senior monks or Ajahn Thate. A cup of sugared tea was available at lunch and in the afternoon. Chanting took place in the temple after dark and before sleep meditation was again practised.”

I recall that, at that stage of my life, I had the presumption and ignorance to ask Ajahn Thate, after explaining I understood Buddhism did not require belief in a God, what were his personal views on the matter.

Dr Thomas Faunce. Canberra, Australia.