



Ajahn Munindo, Ajahn Sucitto and Luang Por Sumedho lead the Sangha gathered at Aruna Ratanagiri to a tree planting and blessing for the new monastery property

his appearance that disappointed me, everything disappointed me: he wasn't sensitive enough, patient enough, fair enough or anything enough. All I could see was what was wrong with him and the community. In some areas in my life I am able to learn things quite fast, but in giving up ill will I am a slow learner. In this case it took me seven years.

For seven years Luang Por Sumedho, as we had come to call him, put up with my resentment and bitterness. Until, during the Winter Retreat one year, I woke suddenly in the middle of the night from a disturbing dream and realized what I was doing to him and to myself. Ostensibly I was a Buddhist monk, cultivating kindness and understanding, but in reality I was a seriously deluded unhappy person lost in blaming others for my suffering. As soon as day broke I rang Luang Por and asked if I could come down to Amaravati and see him. This was not a normal request for midway through the three-month retreat period. But characteristically he said I was very welcome.

We didn't need to say much when we met. It was clear. There were tears and they spoke louder than words. Quietly I found I could remember what it was that called me to embrace spiritual life in the beginning, and gratitude returned. With a feeling like being nourished with nectar, a selfless sense of participating in something wonderful reappeared. I remembered the gift of spiritual community. The gift Luang Por Sumedho had given us. Yes there was remorse for having allowed myself to be so caught in criticism and complaining but the strength of

heart which comes with gratitude kept remorse and sadness in perspective. Such suffering is what teaches us. If we don't add anything extra we 'get the message' and let go. I guess the time it takes before we let go depends on how stubborn we are. It also makes a big difference if we have a good example to inspire us.

Luang Por Sumedho is more than a great guy. He is a great being. He knows the truth that whatever our experience may be, in essence it is *just so*. He knows how to live life without adding anything extra. What an example. What a blessing. What a privilege. ॐ

