History & Plans

- **2004-06**: Opened meditation & teaching center in **Oak Park, IL** where we held classes & programs for local students, provided housing for residents & guests, published new writings, and gathered together friends working to heal body, heart, society, & earth.
- **Fall 2006**: Purchased 40 acres (later expanded to 70) in southwest Wisconsin. The rural site is a small valley with a mix of woods, fields, & a beautiful winding stream. In the spirit of Suan Mokkh, we are studying options for sharing this haven with others who share our commitment to Dhamma.
- **2007-2009**: Set up two tent cabins for retreatants. Dug well. Building cabin, tipi, and facilities for living out and sharing a Dhamma centered life, and as a base for book making & teaching around the Midwest & USA.
- **On-Going**: Cooperating with other Buddhist groups locally and around the Midwest to offer creative responses to the suffering of modern life & explore skillful means for facing the great issues of life & death.

Our Activities

We value service as a foundation for study & practice. Therefore, we will provide & sponsor:

- support & space for personal practice & retreat (short & long term)
- Dhamma study classes & instruction
- individual counseling re: Buddha-Dhamma practice, meditation, & spiritual direction
- books & articles on early Buddhism
- translations from the extensive corpus of Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu
- leading retreats & workshops

See website <www.liberationpark.org> or call 608-823-7141 for current details.

Support & Participation

We dedicate our energy to this Dhamma practice & work. Help & support are needed to maintain our residence, develop facilities, & pay the bills. You can contribute to building & sustaining this Dhamma refuge & its residents in numerous ways – financial support for buildings & ongoing expenses; architect & carpentry skills; medical & dental services; Dhamma books & tapes for the library; the traditional four supports – food, clothing, shelter, & medicine – and, as always, friendship.

Your help will be gratefully received & appreciated. Please let us know how we can support your study & practice.

For more information on developments, classes, & activities, or to help, please contact:

www.liberationpark.org

info@liberationpark.org

608-823-7141

Donations may be sent to:

Liberation Park (Dana)
P.O. Box 205
Norwalk, WI 54648, USA

IRS Tax Exemption under section 501(c)(3).

Liberation Park

Norwalk, WI*

"Nothing is worth clinging to as 'me' or 'mine.'"

Gotama Buddha

"There is no need to separate Dhamma from everyday life. Just have this mindfulness & ready wisdom of doer-less doing. Not only will the work be successful and free from error, but at the same time the Dhamma will develop & grow exceedingly. Doer-less doing is to live naturally & ordinarily in not-having and not-gaining."

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu

** Norwalk is 4 hours northwest of Chicago, 3 hours southeast of Minneapolis, & an hour east of La Crosse, WI.*

LIBERATION PARK

CORE PRINCIPLES

- We study life using the framework of the **Four Noble Truths** and **Dependent Co-Origination**: What is suffering? What are its causes & conditions? How does it end? What way of life ends suffering?
- **Mindfulness** is the core practice through which we cut through the veils of ignorance & selfishness that cause suffering. Compassion, generosity, simplicity, tolerance, & wisdom are cultivated through the practice of mindfulness, both in systematic meditation *(ānāpānasati)* & daily life.
- Spiritual practice is supported & nurtured by **healthy community life**, which is based in mutual kindness, sharing of resources, skillful communication, a common ethical discipline, & shared understanding of spiritual practice.
- **Suffering** is a spiritual issue as well as **social & ecological**. We endeavor to lessen suffering in all its dimensions, including personal, relational, gender-based, ecological, & structural.
- **Understanding & cooperation among the world's spiritual traditions** is essential for genuine peace today. Healthy religion is the best means we have for restraining the self-centeredness that causes so much suffering & violence in our world.

OUR PURPOSE

As Buddhism deepens its roots in America, new forms of Buddhist community arise to support modern practitioners in living a simple life dedicated to the practice of virtue, meditation, wisdom, & compassion. Along with the monastic training centers that have preserved Buddhist learning through the ages & the retreat centers scattered throughout the West, innovative practice places are needed to anchor the spiritual lives of present day Buddhists. As well as being a refuge for Dhamma practice, they should provide a healthy challenge to society's concepts of success, power, sexuality, communication, & consumption. Liberation Park intends to explore new adaptations of Buddhist life & to sustain the Dhamma teachings, while offering a haven for friends who aspire to similar practice.

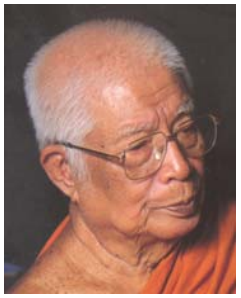
Therefore, we are committed …

- To creating a home for teaching meditation & early Buddhism in a down-to-earth & ecumenical way, adapted to the needs of the Midwest.
- To provide shelter, training, & livelihood for serious students of Buddha-Dhamma without bias regarding gender.
- To adapt the lifestyle & spirit of Suan Mokkh to America & make Venerable Buddhadāsa's approach to Buddhism widely available. This approach aims at being well grounded in tradition while open to the modern world — ecumenical, socially progressive, non-patriarchal, pragmatic, & creative.
- To work with all people of good will for the moral & spiritual rejuvenation of American society and the eradication of destructive social structures.

FOUNDING TEACHER

Santikaro endeavors to live the Middle Way following the teachings of the early Buddhist suttas and his teacher. Born & raised in Chicago,

he graduated from the University of Illinois in 1980. While a Peace Corps volunteer & rural school teacher in Thailand for 4 years, he discovered Buddhist practice. Seeking further training, he lived as a Buddhist monk from 1985 into 2004, primarily at Suan Mokkh, a forest monastery in Southern Thailand, where he studied under & translated for **Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu**. Teaching Buddhism & meditation, leading retreats, translating the work of his teacher, writing about Buddhist practice, & applying Buddhist principles to social issues are aspects of that on-going training. He has explored the interdependence of spirituality, peace work, and Dhammic social change. He also teaches Enneagram, in so far as it supports Dhamma practice, and participates in explorations of how Buddhism & the 12 Steps can work together. He returned to the Midwest in 2001 & retired from the monkhood in 2004. He has since dedicated himself to the development of Liberation Park in the Midwest.



OUR TEACHER & INSPIRATION

Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, was a well-known teacher & reformer of Theravada Buddhism, as well as Thailand's leading voice for inter-religious understanding & cooperation. He founded ***Suan Mokkh*** (The Garden of Liberation) in 1932 & developed it into Thailand's most innovative & influential center for Buddhist teaching. (Santikaro has served as his main translator since 1986.) Ajarn Buddhadāsa stressed that 'this life bites its owner' through the ignorance of grasping at 'me & mine.' Through insight into the inter-concocted nature of mind-body experience, we cultivate a refined awareness of how this process arises & learn to end it, its selfishness, & the associated suffering ('biting'). All women & men have the inner potential to awaken from the sleep of self-centered suffering in this very life. He dedicated his life to the Buddha's path for realizing this potential.

For more about Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu & his teaching please visit www.suanmokkh.org.