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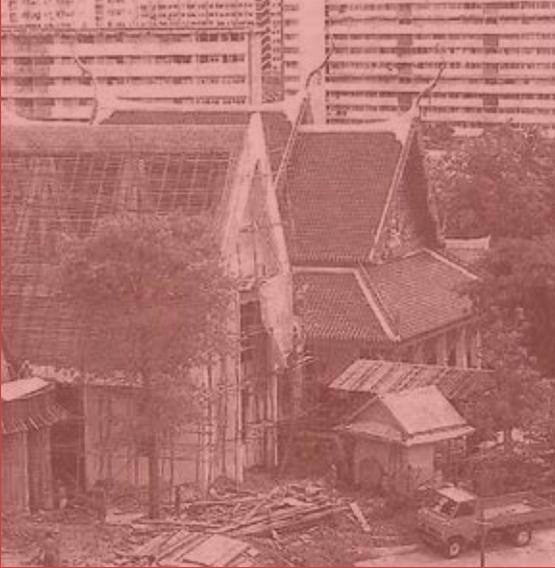
WAT ANANDA METYARAMA

THAI BUDDHIST TEMPLE



VISITOR GUIDE

VISITING THE OLDEST THAI BUDDHIST TEMPLE IN SINGAPORE



**This historic photograph taken in 1975 captures the renovation of Wat Ananda Metyarama.*

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WAT ANANDA METYARAMA

THAI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

VISITOR GUIDE

📍 50B, Jalan Bukit Merah, Singapore 169545

☎ +65 6276 9646

🕒 8:30am to 7pm (Daily)

🚌 Bus: 120, 147, 167, 196, 197, 961

Nearest MRT Station: Outram Park, Redhill

Drive: Turn in at Silat Road

✉ watanandametyarama@gmail.com

🌐 <https://watananda.org>



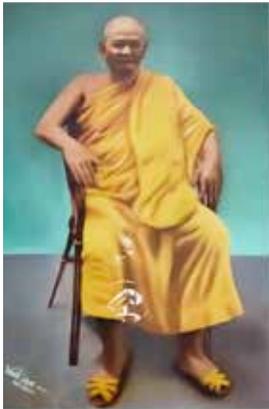
***A photograph from 1925 depicts Wat Ananda Metyarama upon completion*

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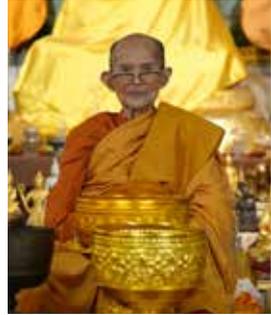
Our Founder



“ The Temple must be accessible and full of peace so that everyone may benefit from it. ”

Our founder, the Late Venerable Luang Phor Hong Dhammaratano (Phra Dhammaratano Bandit), accompanied by his disciple, Samanera Boonler, set out with the mission of spreading the teachings of Theravada Buddhism in 1918. After travelling a great distance from their homeland, they arrived on the sunny shores of Singapore only to discover that the country had no Theravada Temple. This inspired them to build one on this very spot – putting down the very first roots of Thai Buddhism in Singapore.

A Message From Chief Abbot



Firstly, let me honour the late Venerable Luang Phor Hong, the founder of this temple and all his contributions to it. Without him, there would be no Wat Ananda Metyarama Thai Buddhist Temple today.

“ Wat Ananda Metyarama is a place where everyone can find inner peace and happiness. ”

We will continue to serve our devotees and the Singapore community with utmost commitment, making Wat Ananda Metyarama a place for everyone. We welcome members of all faiths and traditions to practise meditation, learn about Buddhism and participate in this community as one.

Venerable Phratep Siddhivides,
Chief Abbot



A Message From Deputy Chief Abbot



“ We move with the times, bringing awareness and education not only to Singapore but to the world. ”

The Temple celebrated its centenary in 2018, making it one of the oldest structures in Singapore. We will preserve its heritage for future generations. It serves not only as a place of worship but also as somewhere to appreciate the rich culture and history of the oldest Theravada Buddhist Temple in Singapore.

We offer you this guidebook which explains the mural paintings in our Main Shrine as if you are visiting an exhibition of our art. You will learn more about the Buddha's life from diverse perspectives through the paintings on display.

I thank you again on behalf of Wat Ananda Metyarama for your support and involvement in the life of our Temple.

Chao Khun Rian,
Deputy Chief Abbot

Just a few things to remember...

Rules for Visiting the Temple



You do not need to practise Buddhism to visit a Thai Buddhist Temple. Our monks and other residents extend a warm welcome to visitors of all religious faiths and none. For visitors who may be unfamiliar with the Thai Buddhist Temple culture, here are a few simple rules of etiquette that we ask you to follow:

- Please dress appropriately and modestly.
- Remove your shoes, hat and sunglasses before entering any indoor premises.
- Please refrain from talking loudly and keep other noise to a minimum.
- Do not point with your fingers or feet.
- Do not touch or climb on the statues of the Buddha in the temple.
- Behave respectfully whilst in the Temple.
- Ask permission from the Temple authorities before taking pictures.
- Refrain from expressions of physical affection whilst in the temple.

Please make a donation

If you enjoyed your visit, please consider donating a small amount towards the maintenance and upkeep of the Temple.



Founded in 1918 and completed in 1925, the Wat Ananda Metyarama is officially the oldest Theravada Buddhist temple in Singapore.

For more than a century, the Wat Ananda Metyarama has played a pivotal role in promoting religious understanding and harmony in Singapore's multi-racial and multi-religious society.

As an undisputed historic icon and cradle of the development of Thai Buddhism right in the heart of Singapore, it is a must-visit landmark for devotees and culture aficionados alike.

Tucked away from the hustle and bustle of Singapore's bustling city life, on a small hilltop along Jalan Bukit Merah road, the distinctive golden pagoda and red pointed roof of the Wat Ananda Metyarama temple awaits you.

FACTS

- Theravada Buddhism is the official religion in Thailand.
- This is the only temple outside of Thailand that is recognised by the Thai royal family.





In celebration of the Temple's 90th anniversary, the Wat Ananda Metyarama underwent a major transformative facelift, completed in 2014—upgrading the monks' quarters and expanding its footprint with a massive new five-storey block to incorporate new modern facilities like prayer halls, meditation centres, a dedicated museum and even communal space for festivities.

Nominated for the 2014 World Architecture Festival Awards, the new five-storey building extension of the Temple is the perfect embodiment of age-old traditional values of introspection expressed in bold modern execution.

Beyond the modern façade and interiors of the new development lies an underlying thematic design drawn from the Temple's religious roots, translated into subtle design details that intrigue and fascinate visitors, devotees, and others, time and again.

Come explore the grounds to discover the many interesting design elements in the new building for yourself!







Rahu God



Cultural Museum
(2nd Level)



Library



Seating Area



Jinaraj Buddha



Guan Yin



Founder's Statue



Phra Sangkachai



Four-Faced God



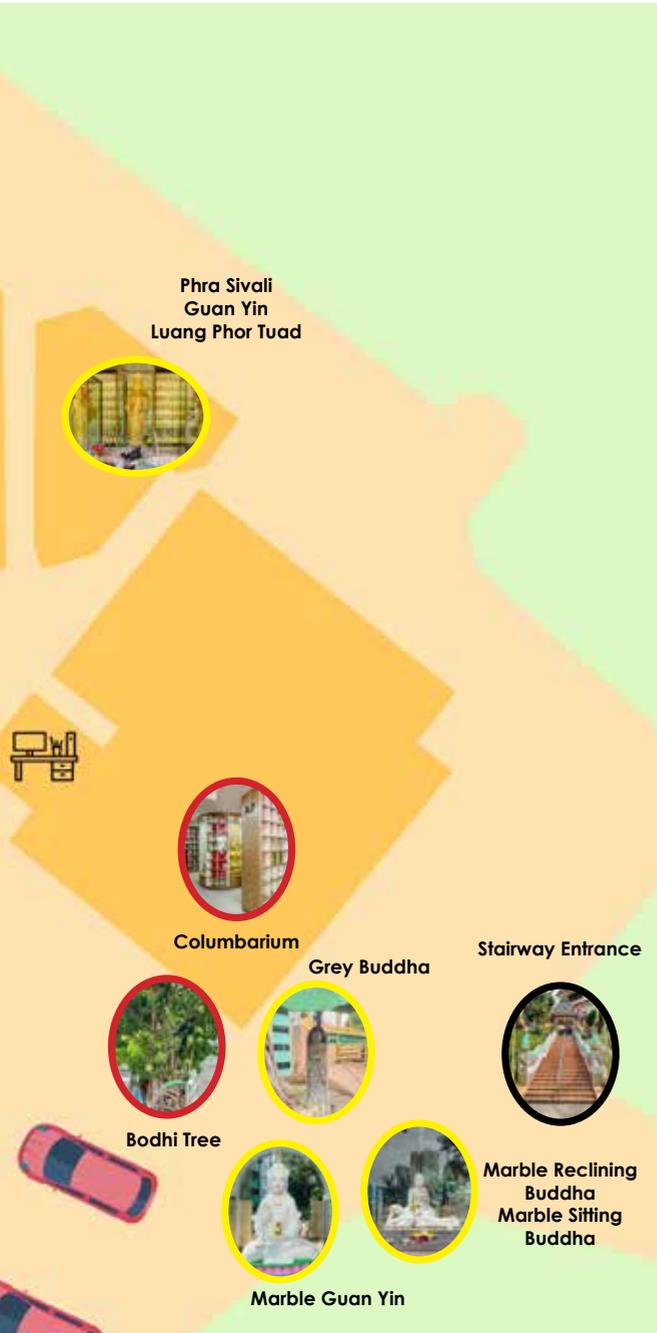
Temple Driveway



Main Entrance



MAP OF THE TEMPLE



LEGEND



Office



Offering
Counter



Toilets



Carpark



There are two entrances to our Temple – one is a stairway that leads uphill from Jalan Bukit Merah, and the other is a driveway entrance along Silat Road that leads to a carpark next to the main gate of the Temple.

Getting here by public transport: The stairway entrance can easily be spotted from the nearby bus stop with its two serpent sculptures adorned with vibrant and colourful crystals guarding the way into the Temple.

At the gates at the top of the stairwell, you will notice two Golden Angels, or Thepphanom, who serve as the Temple's guardians and protectors, depicted in a symbolic praying stance.

As soon as you pass through the gates and step onto the temple grounds, you will notice the 'Marble Reclining Buddha' altar and the sacred Bodhi Tree to your left and the columbarium to your right.

As you then head straight along the pathway, you'll find yourself at the main entrance of the Temple.

Getting here by private transport: Take the first right turn on Silat Road and drive up the slope to reach the Temple carpark. Alternatively, you may park your vehicle at the bottom of the hill and enjoy a leisurely walk up the driveway.

Leaving the carpark, you'll walk past our new extension which houses many exciting modern facilities such as a dedicated





museum and plenty of communal spaces, including a communal seating area which can be seen as you pass the building. This is a great spot to rest and unwind with your friends and family after you have explored the entire Temple.

Right beside the seating area is our Library where everyone is free to browse through our collection of Buddhist books donated to our Temple.

Don't forget to pick up our Temple's very first book, published for children: 'The Life of Buddha for Beginners!'

Whichever entrance you arrive from, it will lead you to the Temple's Main Entrance which is guarded by a pair of traditional stone lions.

As you enter the Temple, your attention will be drawn to the Phra Sangkachai, also known as the Golden Buddha. The statue is flanked by burners which are used for offerings of incense and small fire lamps which are used for lighting the incense.

Joss sticks are located to the right side of the altar, free of charge, for devotees who would like to offer incense. If you would like to make further offerings, please enquire at the information counter nearby for guidance on suitable offering sets.

Behind the Golden Buddha, a statue commemorates the Temple's founder, the Venerable Luang Phor Hong.

Please note: As soon as you enter the Temple, you should make your way towards the magnificent Jinaraia Buddha at the main shrine to offer your prayers before you begin your exploration of the Temple grounds, just as you would greet people when you enter their home. The main shrine is found just behind the large incense burner.

We hope you enjoy your visit!



***The main entrance of Wat Ananda Metyarama*



The Main Shrine

As soon as you enter the Main Shrine, you will be transported into a traditional Thai Temple! Captivating murals depict scenes from the life of the Buddha and the Dhamma, the Buddha's teachings, from which you will learn so much during your visit.

However, the real highlight is the main altar upon which a huge golden statue of Lord Buddha sits, surrounded by a plethora of smaller statues, mostly in gold, in various standing and prayer positions.

If you wish to receive blessings from the monks, please form an orderly queue with the other devotees and patiently await your turn. When it is your turn, please kneel down in front of the altar, lower your head and offer your prayers sincerely while the monks chant beside you and sprinkle holy water over your head. Upon receiving your blessing, it is customary to offer thanks to the monks by placing a red packet on the golden plate.

On your way out, should you wish to make a donation to the Temple, you will find a donation box on the left side right below the altar. These donations will go a long way towards helping us maintain the Temple and spread the word of Theravada Buddhism.

Last but not least, don't forget to ask for a bottle of blessed water to take back home for good luck!

Please kindly remember to take off your shoes before entering the main shrine.





Mural Paintings

The murals were commissioned in 2015 to decorate the temple's main shrine. They tell the story of the Buddha's life and were hand-painted over three years by two talented Thai artists.

***NOTE**

Scan the QR codes to read the stories shown in the mural paintings as you walk around the Shrine. You will also be able to listen to the audio-descriptions on our website as you look at the murals.



The Artists



Krisana Chavanakunakorn
Artist



Krisana Wasana Srisang
Artist

“

The murals of Ananda Temple are divided into two main parts: pictures telling the story of the Buddha's life on the top and pictures of the Buddha's dharma below. To depict the Buddha's history, I still draw in the traditional Thai painting style. But I improve the composition of the picture to make the story easier to understand both in the lower part and in the image behind the principal Buddha. There are many areas in which I have incorporated images familiar from everyday life today to convey meaning instead of using ancient forms. One example is of a picture in which behind the Lord Buddha in the human world I have drawn the landmarks and shown the lifestyle of people in modern Singapore. It captures my impression of being here and I think it will impress the Singaporean audience as well.” - Artist

THE ASSAULT AND DEFEAT OF MARA



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This mural depicts a key moment on the eve of the Buddha's Enlightenment. On the right, the demon Mara leads his army into battle against the Bodhisatta, as the future Buddha was called before he attained enlightenment. The army uses ancient and modern weaponry, illustrating the timeless struggle and victory of Buddhism. To make his claim to the throne of wisdom, the future Buddha (centre) reaches down to touch the earth, where Mother Earth wrings the Buddha's libations from her hair (centre bottom). The water creates a flood that sweeps away Mara's army (left) as Mara holds his hands in prayer and his elephant kneels.



CALL OF THE DEITIES

In this mural, a Bodhisatta has been called to the gods of the Tusita heaven. He will be born on Earth as the Buddha to complete His path to enlightenment and save all sentient beings. He contemplates His answer before accepting the deities' call.

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QUEEN MAYA'S DREAM

Queen Maya has been chosen by the Bodhisatta to give birth to Him on earth. She dreams of a white elephant bearing a white lotus. The white elephant and lotus represent the Buddha, entering her womb from heaven.

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THE LOTUS PATH

Queen Maya has just given birth to the future Buddha, standing upright and holding on to the branch of a sal tree. The infant Bodhisatta is immediately able to walk. He takes seven steps as lotus flowers bloom before Him. He proclaims Himself superior in all the world.

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THE NAMING CEREMONY

Eight Brahmas sit before the newborn prince, telling His fortune. The youngest Brahma, seen here with a light around his head, is the only one to correctly prophesy that the child will become the Buddha. They give Him the name Siddhattha, "one who achieves his aim."

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THE PLOUGHING CEREMONY

The King has brought his son to watch the ploughing ceremony. Seeing the oxen work so hard, Siddhattha Gotama feels the unfairness of this and experiences sorrow for the first time. Under a broad tree, the prince sits in lotus pose and enters His first meditative trance. When the King sees this, he proclaims it a miracle.

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THE FOUR GREAT SIGHTS

We now see the Bodhisatta riding His royal chariot to the park. The King has tried to prevent Him from witnessing four sights as they will draw Him to the path of Enlightenment. However, the gods contrive to show Him these four sights that will lead Him to renounce the world: an old man, a sick man, a dead man and a monk.

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A FINAL FAREWELL TO PRINCESS YASODHARA AND SON

Siddhattha Gotama is disillusioned by palace life and the women who seek to divert Him, shown here half-naked. He has decided to renounce the world, but He has just had a son, born to Princess Yasodhara. He visits them but leaves the palace before they awaken so that He will not be distracted by the pleasures of family life.

READ MORE



THE RENUNCIATION

That night, Siddhattha Gotama renounces His royal life of privilege. The gods cushion His horses' hooves in their hands so that the Bodhisatta can escape quietly. The evil Mara appears and attempts to stop Him. Siddhattha Gotama is not tempted by the sensual pleasures Mara offers and continues His journey.

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CUTTING HAIR ON THE RIVERBANK

Siddhattha Gotama reaches the River Anoma, ready to renounce the world. He cuts off His own hair with His sword and throws it into the air. The king of the gods, seen here in green with a blue flame, collects it in a gilt box. Siddhattha Gotama's horse, Kanthaka, dies of grief at the thought of never seeing his master again, and His horseman, Channa, is overcome with sorrow.

READ MORE



SELF-MORTIFICATION

Siddhattha Gotama has withdrawn from the world. For six years, He suffers and starves Himself. Finally, He realises that neither the harsh path nor the easy path will lead to Enlightenment. He must pursue the middle path. These three paths are represented by the strings of the lute that the deva musician is playing.

READ MORE





THE GOLDEN BOWL

The day of Enlightenment has arrived. Siddhattha Gotama receives an offering of milk rice in a golden bowl from Sujata and her servant Punna, as seen at the top of the mural. He takes the golden bowl and throws it into the river. It floats upstream and lands in the palace of the Serpent King, atop the bowls of the previous Buddhas. This confirms Siddhattha Gotama's place in the line of Buddhas. The Serpent King praises the new Buddha.

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BUDDHA'S FIRST DISCIPLES

Once He has attained Enlightenment, the Buddha meditates in the shade of different sacred trees. He breaks His seven-week fast when two merchants offer Him food. They become His first disciples and receive His first teachings. He offers them strands of His hair to worship.

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THE THREE DAUGHTERS OF MARA

Three beautiful women approach the Buddha as He meditates under the bodhi tree. They are the daughters of the demon Mara, sent to turn the Buddha away from the path of Enlightenment. But the Buddha is now free of earthly desires and calmly resists them.

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THE SERPENT KING

A storm approaches as the Buddha sits under a powderpuff tree. Mucalinda, the Serpent King, appears and offers the Buddha shelter. He wraps his coils around the Buddha's body, spreading his cobra hood in splendour over the Buddha's head against the rain.

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THE INVITATION TO TEACH THE DHAMMA

The Buddha meditates under the banyan tree. A group of Brahmas approach Him, asking Him to share the Dhamma with the world. The Buddha contemplates all the different kinds of people in the world, comparing them to lotus flowers that grow in and out of water. He resolves to teach the Dhamma.

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THE FIRST SERMON

The Band of Five Elders are now living in the deer park. The Buddha goes to them to teach the Dhamma. At first, they are doubtful and resist Him, but eventually they listen to His teachings. Kondanna, seen here with a golden halo, is the first to attain sainthood.

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THE TWO CHIEF DISCIPLES

The Buddha's following has grown. He sits at His monastery in the evening, surrounded by a great many monks. These new monks were brought to Him by Sariputta and Moggallana, on whom He endows the titles of the first and second of His chief disciples.

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THE LEGEND OF JAMBUPATI

The following murals depict events that impart the Buddha's moral teachings. Here we see King Jambupati to the left, an evil and tyrannical ruler. The Buddha tries to persuade him to act with kindness, but Jambupati refuses to listen. The Buddha magically appears to him in His full divine splendour, leaving Jambupati humbled. The Buddha is represented wearing His royal ornaments to enable King Jambupati to understand his own humility. As the king begins to recognise the Buddha's greatness, he submits to the Dhamma, changes his ways and becomes a monk.

READ MORE





THE DISPUTE OVER RIVER ROHINI

This mural shows the Buddha resolving a dispute over the waters of the Rohini River. Farmers on both sides of the river are in desperate need of the water for their own crops and almost come to blows. The Buddha intervenes to bring peace, teaching that life is to be held sacred.

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THE ORDINATION OF PRINCE RAHULA

The Buddha is sitting in front of His former royal palace. His son Rahula kneels beside the Buddha to His left and gazes up at his father as the disciples look on. Rahula has asked that his earthly inheritance be given to him, but the Buddha chooses to ordain him a monk instead.

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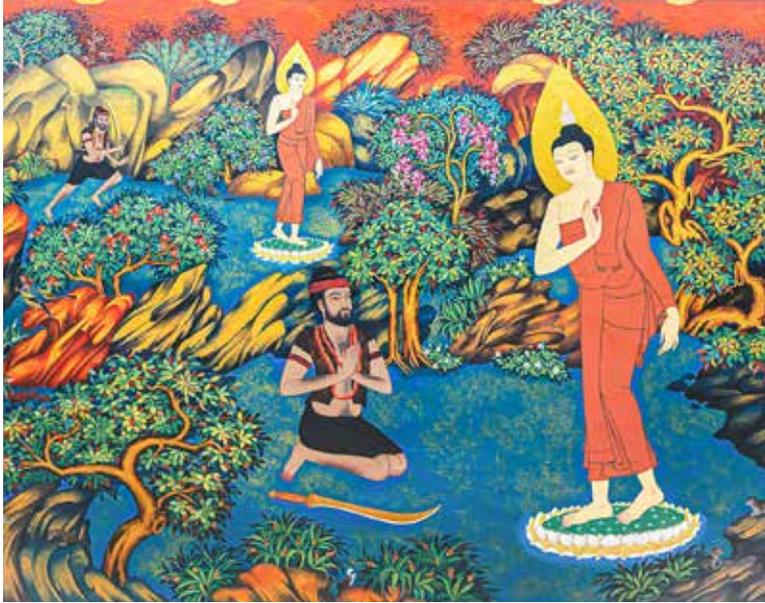


THE ELEPHANT NALAGIRI

The Buddha and His disciples are gathering alms in the market. Devadatta, seen here in grey, is jealous of the Buddha, so he sends a drunken elephant, Nalagiri, to trample Him. But the Buddha's loving kindness pacifies the elephant and it kneels instead at His feet. We see the Buddha blessing Nalagiri with His right hand.

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THE CONVERSION OF ANGULIMALA

The murderer Angulimala is pursuing the Buddha through the forest in order to kill Him and cut off His little finger to add to his necklace of fingers. He is unable to catch Him so calls to the Buddha to stop. The Buddha, still walking, explains that He has indeed stopped when He renounced all violence towards living beings. Angulimala understands His meaning and changes his ways, becoming the Buddha's next disciple.

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SUBJUGATING NANDOPANANDA

The Buddha and His disciples anger Nandopananda, the Naga King, as they pass through the sky on their way to the Tavatimsa Heaven. Nandopananda blocks the monks' path. The disciple Moggallana, seen here in the red flame, transforms his body into an even bigger form and coils it around Nandopananda, who breathes smoke into Moggallana's face, but to no avail. Moggallana and Nandopananda return to their human form and kneel at the Buddha's feet.

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CINCA FALSELY ACCUSES THE BUDDHA

The renown of the Buddha is spreading to such an extent that the other gurus are losing their followers. They decide to ruin the Buddha's reputation by persuading the beautiful Cinca to bring shame on the Buddha. We see Cinca with her fake pregnancy confronting the Buddha at His monastery as people gossip nearby. Cinca's lie is exposed and she flees town to her death.

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THE QUARREL AT KOSAMBI

While the Buddha resides in Kosambi, an argument breaks out between two groups of monks. As they will not stop quarrelling, the Buddha retreats to the forest to live in peace. Every day an elephant brings Him fruit and a monkey offers Him honeycomb. The Buddha teaches the monks that it is better to live by oneself than amongst foolish people.

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THE MIRACLES UNDER THE MANGO TREE

The Buddha has promised His followers to perform a miracle under the mango tree. The other sects cut down all of the mango trees out of spite, but the King's gardener gives the Buddha a mango to eat. As the Buddha plants its seed, water pours over His hands causing it to grow into a flourishing tree. The Buddha appears in various positions in mid-air next to the tree. Both fire and water flow from Him at the same time: a double miracle.

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ABHIDHAMMA DESANA

After performing the two miracles of the mango tree, the Buddha ascends to Tavatimsa Heaven to teach the Abhidhamma to His mother and the other devas. The Buddha's mother kneels beside Him whilst the other deities gather around in the heavenly palace, attending to the Buddha's teachings.

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THE DESCENT FROM HEAVEN

The Buddha resides in Tavatimsa Heaven for the duration of the rains. After three months, He returns from heaven on a jewelled staircase. The gold staircase is for the devas and the silver for the Brahmas. The place where the staircases touch the earth is Sankassa, which became an important pilgrimage site.

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CONQUEST OVER BAKA BRAHMA

Baka is a Brahma who believes that there is no higher world than his own. The evil Mara speaks through Baka's servants, attempting to bring the Buddha over to his side. The Buddha declares that there are always more worlds as nothing is permanent. This mural shows the Buddha demonstrating His higher consciousness: He can see Baka, yet Baka cannot see Him.

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THE BUDDHA'S PARINIBBANA

The Buddha has reached the end of His life. He lays down on His right side between two sala trees, which sheds blossoms all around Him. Monks come to worship Him for one last time. The wanderer Subhadda arrives to ask the Buddha questions about His teachings. The Buddha's servant, Ananda, turns him away but the Buddha allows him to approach. Subhadda becomes the last of the Buddha's direct disciples.

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MAHA KASSAPA PAYS HIS LAST RESPECTS

The Buddha has now passed away. It is time for His cremation. However, the funeral pyre will not light until the Venerable Maha Kassapa has paid his last respects to the Buddha. Here, we see the Venerable one in a blue flame, walking twice around the funeral pyre with his head bowed and his hands clasped in reverence as the devas and monks look on. As he pays his last respects, the pyre bursts into flames.

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DIVIDING THE BUDDHA'S RELICS

After the Buddha has been cremated, eight kings fight for His relics in the ashes. The Brahmin Dona offers to distribute them equally. He secretly hides one of the Buddha's teeth, but when he feels for it, it has vanished. In this mural, we see a deva of Sakka, green in a red flame, reaching down to take the tooth. Dona settles for the Buddha's golden vessel, too ashamed to admit that he had stolen the relic.

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THE PLANES OF REBIRTH



This mural depicts the different planes of existence in which Buddhist rebirth may take place. At the lower centre is the human plane, also indicating a tribute to Singapore's 50th anniversary celebrations, "SG50," when social cohesion and mutual care were much in evidence. At the sides of the mural, we see depictions of hell. In the upper centre, we see the six vertical deva realms, followed by the Brahma plane of form (16 realms), and finally the formless plane (four realms) where brahmas exist as pure minds.

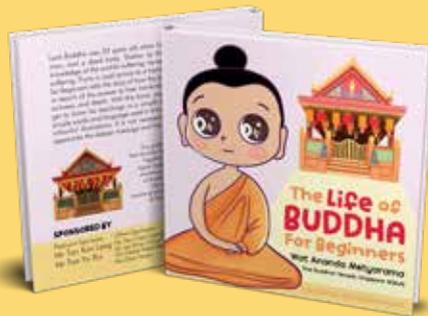
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ACTIVITIES

- Novice Ordination Programme
- Sunday Classes for Children
- Thai Language Class
- Children's Buddhist Sunday Class
- Sunday Chanting Services
- Daily Online Chanting Services

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This publication was commissioned by Wat Ananda Metyarama, Thai Buddhist Temple. Together with children's writer, Apple Sophia Lim, it was created to raise awareness and increase understanding of Buddhism among young children. Feel free to collect a copy from our Temple.



Our Generous Sponsors

It is our pleasure to express our deepest gratitude to the kind sponsors who have made this publication possible.

Special thanks to our Diamond Sponsor:

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**Associate Professor Yow Cheun Hoe
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Dana is a Sanskrit and Pali word that means “generosity” or “giving.” It refers specifically to taking delight in giving — that is, getting in touch with the natural generosity and wish to share that is inside us all. A mind characterised by generosity is a joyful mind: it does not feel regret or poverty. Rather, the act of giving itself is pleasurable and seeing others enjoying our offering is an extra bonus.

– Venerable Thubten Chodron

Thank You!

You may donate to our Temple by:

Crossed cheque made payable to ‘Wat Ananda Metyarama’

OR

Bank transfer to 155217002 (Bangkok Bank Public Company Limited)

Join us in spreading the Dhamma and helping those in need!

A MESSAGE FROM EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Apple Sophia Lim

Dear readers,

We are honoured to be a part of this publication and to have the opportunity to preserve the Temple's history for future generations. Our team is deeply grateful to all the writers, editors, and other contributors who have made this publication possible. We also want to express our heartfelt thanks to our sponsors, whose generous support has enabled us to continue our vital work. And, of course, we are deeply grateful to Wat Ananda Metyarama for entrusting us with this opportunity to serve the Buddhist community.

If you have any questions, suggestions, or concerns as you read through this visitor guide, please do not hesitate to contact us at contact@thewishingbookcompany.com. We hope that you will find this guide informative and enjoyable.

Thank you.

The Team

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Apple Sophia Lim

DESIGN EDITOR

Luo Mei Zi

MANAGING EDITOR

Paul Rickett

MURAL ART WRITER

Jill Marcum

COPY EDITOR

Elissa Tan

PROOFREADER

Harpreet Kaur Grewal

PHOTOGRAPHER

LP Tony

PHOTO EDITOR

David Savage

COVER DESIGNER

Blokowsky

CONTRIBUTORS

Christian Freed

Staci Mitzman

Shaheryar Nadeem

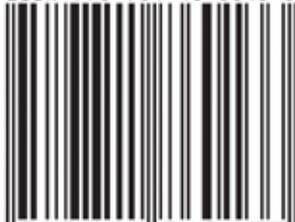
**At the crossroads of faith and history—in the heart
of Singapore—lies a treasure to behold...**

Welcome to Wat Ananda Metyarama—the oldest Thai Buddhist Temple in the country—where thousands of visitors flock each year to witness one of the world’s oldest religions in a modern context.

This complimentary book serves as a guide for visitors spending time on this holy ground—and for you to keep as a memento. Inside, you’ll discover a map of the Temple showing everything you’ll want to see, a section about proper etiquette, and insight into the history and culture of Buddhism. The pages also include beautiful pictures of intricate murals found within the Main Shrine, explaining the symbolism behind each one. There are also tips on what to do at Wat Ananda Metyarama—such as visiting the bodhi tree or receiving a blessing from a monk.

It will be an incredible experience you’ll cherish for years to come. Let the journey begin...

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