

Cittaviveka
Chithurst Buddhist Monastery
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July 20th 2001

To: U.B.I, concerning Mario Thanavaro (Proscia)

This is to offer a formal recognition to Mario Thanavaro as a disciple of the Buddha, who has undergone training in the Theravada tradition as practised by Ajahn Chah of N.East Thailand and Ajahn Sumedho of Amaravati Buddhist Monastery in England.

I have known Mario personally since 1979, when I returned to Britain from Thailand to join Ajahn Sumedho in a small vihara in London. Mario had just become a samanera then. Mario took on bhikkhu training as Ven Thanavaro in 1980, and we lived together for much of the next five years, helping to establish Cittaviveka (Chithurst), and Aruna Ratanagiri (in Northumberland). In 1985 he went to New Zealand to help Ajahn Viradhammo establish Bodhinyanarama Monastery, and when he returned from there after a few years, Ven Thanavaro set up Santacittarama Monastery in Sezze Romano. So he was one of the first and most active pioneers of the Western Theravada Sangha.

Mario has also received teachings in the Tibetan tradition, most recently from Namkhai Norbu. In 1995 he took Bodhisattva vows in the Chinese Mahayana tradition from the City of 10,000 Buddhas in Ukiah, Northern California. He disrobed shortly after this, with the intention to continue to teach Buddha-Dhamma in Italy outside of the monastic environment.

I am still in contact with Mario and would confirm that his motivations in teaching are sincere and that he can make a good contribution to the development of Buddha-Dhamma in Italy.

Yours, in Dhamma,


Ajahn Sucitto
Abbot