

Prateep Ungsongtham Hata Award 2009

Abbot Sophonphatthananusit

In August 2009 Abbot Sophonphatthananusit of Wat Saphan in Khlong Toei became the third recipient of the Prateep Ungsongtham Hata Award.

Abbot Sophonphatthananusit won the award for his commitment to anti-drugs and community work, which he has been involved in at Wat Saphan since 1986.

Abbot Sophonphatthananusit was born 54 years ago in Nakhon Pathom province, west of Bangkok, where he finished his schooling after completing primary school level 4. Later as a monk, Abbot Sophonphatthananusit resumed his studies and obtained an education degree from Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University. In 2001 Abbot Sophonphatthananusit was appointed secretary of Buddhist temples in the Suan Luang district of Bangkok. The following year Abbot Sophonphatthananusit was appointed leader of Wat Saphan, where he has some 50 monks under his leadership, of whom 20 are involved in anti-drugs activities. In 2007 Abbot Sophonphatthananusit was also appointed head of Dharma Centre 18.

Abbot Sophonphatthananusit's anti-drugs activities have involved him in working closely with Khlong Toei community leaders and anti-drugs volunteers, as well as district officials and local police. Abbot Sophonphatthananusit has been active in joining with the local community to organise anti-drugs day events in Khlong Toei for many years. Abbot Sophonphatthananusit has hosted many training sessions for Khlong Toei youths. Addicts have come from all over Bangkok to attend two month long full time drug rehabilitation programmes. Over the years over 1,200 addicts have gone through Abbot Sophonphatthananusit's rehabilitation programme. The abbot has also provided financial support to families suffering because of an addict in the family.

Abbot Sophonphatthananusit is a Buddhist monk who works with people of all faiths. He has previously received recognition for his community work and his work as a meditation leader. In 2002 Abbot Sophonphatthananusit received a meditation award from Princess Sirindhorn. In 2005 Abbot Sophonphatthananusit received a certificate from the Office of the Narcotics Control Board and an award from Princess Sirivannavari on National Youth Day. In 2007 Abbot Sophonphatthananusit was honoured with a certificate from the then Prime Minister Surayud Chulanont. The following year the abbot received an award from the then Bangkok Governor Apirak Kosayodhin. However, the Prateep Ungsongtham Hata Award presented the first time that Abbot Sophonphatthananusit had received a significant monetary award, which will be used entirely to support his community and anti-drugs work.