

EX-MONK HELD FOR LYING ABOUT ARREST

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Body

A former Buddhist monk, who was defrocked after reports that he seduced female followers, was arrested by immigration authorities for allegedly denying he had been arrested in Thailand.

Phra Yantra Amaro Bhikkhu, once considered one of Thailand's holiest men, was arrested April 8 when he arrived at the downtown federal building for what he thought would be an interview regarding his application for legal residency, said Kathy Mauntino, his immigration lawyer.

Yantra had applied for legal resident status in the United States under a special provision of immigration law for religious workers.

Yantra was arrested on a federal grand jury indictment charging that he lied last September when he swore on an immigration document that he had never been arrested. In fact, according to the indictment, Yantra had been arrested in April 1995 in Thailand.

Yantra has been turned over to the Immigration and Naturalization Service, which is seeking to deport him for overstaying the six-month period allowed on his original visitor's visa.

He is being held without bail at the INS Service Center in El Centro.

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