

# **TREETAR'S STORY OF LUANG POR WAT PAKNAM**

History of The Great Abbot of Wat Paknam and Dhammakaya Meditation

Year 2012 Edition

Authored by Treetar Niamkham

Compiled by Major General Tassanasri Trikhun

Translated by Pittaya Wong

[www.meditation101.org](http://www.meditation101.org)

## **Foreword**

'The Story of Luang Por Wat Paknam by Treetar' was first published on 23 November 1984 as a memorabilia for patrons who donated for 100 Buddha amulets on the occasion of the Most Venerable Pramongkolthepmuni's (Sodh Candasaro) centennial anniversary. So far, there have been 5 editions of this book totaling 25,000 copies. The book was out of stock as it was always distributed on special occasions. Many people are interested in publishing more copies, but I suggested that this book should be published and distributed on special occasions and ceremonies of Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen only, so that it can be offered to visiting monks.

The reason why I author this book is because I had been under his direction and guidance since 1939, when I was 13 year-old until he passed away on 3 February 1959. It had been 20 years that Luang Por Wat Paknam supported me like what a father would do to his daughter. I had been close to him and received love, compassion, knowledge and training as the youngest daughter [disciple].

What I admire the most in my life is the Triple Gem (Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha), Luang Por Wat Paknam, and my parents. With meditation power, Luang Por kindly extended the lifetime of my mother, so she could recover from illness and became healthy for another 24 years. This allowed my parents and I to make merit in Buddhism furthermore by ways of practicing generosity, observing precepts, and practicing meditation. I attained the Dhammakaya Superknowledge since I was 13 years old. Thereafter, I was ordained to be a Buddhist nun for 13 years. Then, I became a layperson who observes 5 precepts and 8 precepts [on Buddhist observance days].

I owe so much gratitude to Luang Por Wat Paknam, not only to myself but also my parents as well as my descendants. It is impossible to completely describe the goodness of Luang Por even if I spend my whole lifetime because what he gave to me was immense. This results my present lifetime (Buddhists believe in reincarnation) to be one of the most important as I have good opportunities to make merit which will bear good fruits in my future lifetimes infinitely.

Luang Por's holiness does not protect just me, but it has been vastly extended. Although Luang Por already passed away, but it is just about his physical body. I have been under his blessing for about 73 years. I have met and known different types of people, and there are many amazing things and miracles. So, I wish to write about them in this book which will certainly benefit and give guidelines to people of the later generations in their livings. My gratitude toward Luang Por will never fade away, and I wish to honor him as much as I could. So, the first edition of this book was published on the occasion of Luang Por's centennial anniversary from 23 to 25 November 1984.

Personally, I love reading. When my eyes were well, I read by myself. As my eyes become unwell, I ask Fhon, my attendant, to read for me. It is fortunate that she loves to read and

learn. So, I am happy to listen to what she reads. For writing, since I have less experience and time, as I have to direct the advanced meditation session at the meditation workshop everyday in order to cure people from illness and lessen people's sufferings, just like what Luang Por did when he was alive, it is necessary for me to look for an assistant. It would be the best if I can find someone who knows Luang Por and able to stay close to me so I can share my experience about him.

Until mid 1984, there was only 2 months before the beginning the centennial ceremony of Luang Por Wat Paknam, I was still unable to find someone to help me write this book. With such a worry that my book would not be released on time, one day, I sighed and murmured that "I am so worried. I need someone to help me write this book." Then, MajorTassanasri (her rank at that time) questioned me about the book that I planned to write. So, I told her about this project. She volunteered to coauthor this book for me. I asked if she would have time for it, and she said she was on leave for her M.A. thesis writing. She had to complete it before returning to work in October 1984. She promised to coauthor this book and finish it as soon as possible before beginning her thesis, and she would work and write her thesis altogether if she would not be able to finish it as planned.

After listening to her words, I sighed and felt so much relieved that I could find a qualified compiler. Major-GeneralTassanasri is someone whom I know well. She has come to make merits at Wat Paknam since she was younger than 10 year old. She used to stay with Manee Sridhammarak, her grandmother, who was an advanced Dhammakaya meditator who joined the meditation workshop at Wat Paknam. I called her grandmother 'aunty,' and called her mother 'sister.' Her grandmother called her 'Paew,' so I have called her 'Paew' since she was young. I just knew her real name two years ago. Personally, she called me 'aunty.' She is a knowledgeable one who teaches Thai language at the Royal Thai Cadet Academy. By that time, the Academy was located at Lumbini Park in Bangkok.

It was a bit unsmooth when writing this book, but I had fun. I had to find a tranquil place where nobody would disturb me. Because, if I wrote this book at my residence in Wat Paknam, I would not be able to complete it since many people would pay me a visit from early in the morning until late at night. It would be difficult to write a smooth story. Therefore, I borrowed a place at the breezy first floor of visitor building in Buddhamondol (Buddhamandala) Park to be my temporary office. I received good support from the director of this Park as well as other government officers. Besides me and Major-GeneralTassanasri, I also invited Venerable Maha Suchart Dhammarattano (Pali Grad. Level 9) to be my advisor on pali language. He was very much capable in this respect since he could pass the highest level of pali examination since he was a young novice, and he was ordained under H.M. the King's patronage. So, he was a royal ordainee. Presently, he has been promoted to the royal monastic rank of Praprommolee and held the post of deputy abbot of Wat Paknam and Head of Buddhist monks of region 7.

Each day, after having breakfast at Wat Paknam, Ms. Wantana Boonmak would prepare savory, sweet dishes, fruits and beverages in a big basket as if she were to go out for a picnic. The foods were more than enough for both lunch and dinner. Anyway, others who were my close disciples also went there to join and support us with big meals. As a consequence, I did not have much time to write this book. Everyone volunteered to take parts in this project. Some of them helped to type (by that time we had no computer). It was a memorable period of time in my life that I enjoyed as I could change to stay in a more beautiful place with good environment and relax. It was a good opportunity to share my experience about Luang Por Wat Paknam to those who used to be at Wat Paknam and met Luang Por before. The more I shared, the more joy I had. I felt happy and gained more willpower every time when I talked about Luang Por, especially when I did it with a certain goal in mind.

I wish all disciples of Luang Por to practice meditation. For those who have meditated but do not attain the superknowledge of Dhammakaya meditation (Vijja Dhammakaya) yet, I would like them to continue persevering with good commitment according to Luang Por's teachings. Each day, there is 24 hours, if we meditate an hour everyday, it is too short. Time flies by quickly, more and more quickly everyday, the opportunity to meditate become less and less. Life is so short, like just a drop of water when comparing to a vast ocean. We also have to encounter the *mara* (evil ones) which comes to our lives in various forms, whether we are aware or unaware of them or not.

I would like all of Luang Por's disciples to abide to his teachings by practicing meditation at all times, in every moment. All should rest their mind in the middle of the merit sphere at the seventh base of mind always and repeat the mantra *samma arahang*. So, their mind will not cling to the worldly bondage. Do not be concerned about others. Sometimes, we may forget to keep our mind focused. Once, we are aware of it, we should be mindful to bring it back to its place. Nobody can help us to reach nirvana except that we have to do it by ourselves. Luang Por Wat Paknam is a person with high commitment. So, he liked those who made good commitment, and he was willing to be committed to such persons. Please try your best, and you will discover that amazing things about Dhammakaya meditation and Luang Por Wat Paknam by yourself.

When His Holiness Somdet Phramaharajamangkhlajahn first decided to inaugurate the Maharajamongkol Pagoda, which he initiated since 2004, at Wat Paknam from 22 – 31 December 2012, Major-General Tassansri Trikhun informed me that she would like to publish this book for distribution during the inauguration ceremony. She also planned to improve both artwork design and content, so she asked me if I wished to add anything. Unfortunately, I am not healthy as before. I am now 86 years and 9 months old. My memory has been deteriorating as my age escalates. I am no longer energetic enough to make further improvement. So, I decided to be just a supporter and authorized Major-General Tassansri Trikhun to write as she deems appropriate due to the trustworthy that I

have upon her. She knows well about Luang Por Wat Paknam and I because she is a close relative (niece) of her grandmother who was an advanced Dhammakaya meditation practitioner.

Tassanasri always told me what she wrote and added to the content which are all correct and well evidenced in Luang Por's biography and sermons. Regarding the amazing stories of Luang Por and Dhammakaya Meditation, although they are true, I asked her not to overemphasize. Especially, the story about myself because when comparing to Luang Por, I am just a firefly whereas Luang Por is the midday sun.

This book is titled "Treetar's Story of Luang Por Wat Paknam: Maharajamongkol Pagoda Inauguration Edition." I would like to thank and rejoice in the merit of Major-General Tassanasri Trikhun and all donators who support the publication of this book to be released for free during the Inauguration Ceremony of the Maharajamongkol Pagoda, from 22 – 31 December 2012.

I would like to dedicate all the meritorious deeds that I have accrued as an homage to the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha including the Great Master Phramongkolthepmuni (Luang Por Wat Paknam or the Great Abbot of Wat Paknam Temple). I would like to share my merit to my ancestors, Mr. Duang and Mrs. Poom Niamkham who are my father and mother, my teachers, those whom I am indebted to, my friends and all followers.

May the power of the Supreme Lord Buddha's merit and the Great Master Phramongkolthepmuni (Luang Por Wat Paknam) protect and bless H.M. King Bhumibol, H.M. Queen Sirikit, and all other Thai monarchs and royalties. May all of them live a long life. And I would like to offer my merit to His Holiness Somdet Phramaharatchamangkhlachan, senior monks, monks, novices, Buddhist nuns, laymen, laywomen, disciples of Luang Por Wat Paknam, my descendants, family members, friends, fellows, and all followers to be joyful, healthy, prosperous in both the mundane and Dhamma path, and attain the Dhamma of the Lord Buddha.

***Treetar Niamkhum***

Chairperson of Wat Paknam Almuni Association

## **Message from the Compiler**

This is the first book in my life that I compiled, and it is the biography of an extraordinary monk who was well disciplined and mastered the Dhamma in both theoretical and practical ways. This monk was well-known and respected by numerous people. So, it takes much care and extra attention to write this book. However, I never felt discouraged to work on this project because I just wanted to lessen the workload of Aunty Treetar whom I love and respect. In the beginning, I heard her pondering unhappily that Luang Por Wat Paknam's Centennial Celebration would fall in November of the year, and she wished to publish a book about his story which she experienced and witnessed by herself, but she did not know who would be able to help because she did not have much time for it. So, I responded quickly that I volunteered to help. I told her without pondering about my own thesis writing which was behind the schedule as well. I could see that my answer made Aunty Treetar much happier. She told me that "It is such a relief, Paew. You offer to help in the right time."

Afterward, Aunty Treetar and I gathered together to discuss about how we would author this book. I listened to her words and made notes, then I returned home to draft the story. A week later, I went to see her again at Wat Paknam and read the draft for her. She said we could not work at this residence (Mongkoltheppratan Residence, presently unit no. 5 of Analai Building at Wat Paknam. This is also her present residence.) Because many people always went to visit her at this place, and they would disturb the authoring process. She said it would be impossible to complete the manuscript in one year. As a result, she proposed to contact Mr. Mana (the director) and Mr. Koon to borrow the visitor residence at Buddhamondol Park [in Nakorn Pathom Province] to be her office temporarily. Aunty Treetar planned to leave Wat Paknam early in the morning and return in the evening each day. She asked me if I could take-leave [from work] and accompany her. I questioned her how long it would take, and she replied that we had to do it until we finished the manuscript. She also added that I had to look after the publishing process. Regarding the print house, she would ask Ms. Somsri, the owner of Sakulthai Magazine, to print the books for us. However, if her print house was too busy, Aunty Treetar would ask her to recommend another printer.

When I heard this, I became speechless as I wondered how I could take-leave for a long period of time. By that time, I just finished the courses required for my Master's degree, and I had left my job to study for 2 years already. I had some time left for writing my thesis only, and I had not made much progress. According to my schedule, I planned to return to work at my office in October. It would be impossible to take more days off. In addition, I had to search more data for my thesis, but I would not cancel the book project no matter what.

I was looking for ways to spare time for authoring this book. Finally, I came up with a simple solution by suspending my thesis writing temporarily. My university allowed me to work on

thesis for one more year and six months. Another problem is that I received a scholarship from the Royal Thai Cadet Academy with a condition that I did not have to work during my study. So, during my study, I would not get my salary increased. I did not worry much about it because I planned to submit my thesis and have my Master's degree approved by the university first. Then, I would have my salary increased later as a reimbursement. Once I came up with this idea, I did not contact my advisor and friends anymore. There was no mobile phone, so my research advisor had a hard time trying to contact me because I was neither at home nor work.

Thereafter, the concert effort about this book had begun. The first issue was our transportation. By that time, Aunt Treetar did not have a personal vehicle (not provided by Luang Por yet), so we had to look for a car and a driver. But there was no problem at all, we were supported by many people such as Ms. La-Eiad Tintamusik, the owner and director of Sri Wattana Technical School who lent us a van. Also, Ms. Kajit and Ms. Chantavadee Mahakhunkajorndej also offered to provide us a vehicle. Ms. Naporn (Aen) Nutkasem-Arsa had volunteered to drive for us. When we wanted a car, Ms. Kanokporn Adisaralak (deceased) was willing to help, and she even drove for us sometimes.

Aunt Treetar was the one who came up with this idea, so she had everything clear in her mind. She invited Venerable Maha Suchart Dhammarattano, Pali Scholar Level 9 (presently the Most Venerable Phraprommolee) to be her advisor. In the morning, our team members, which comprised of Aunt Treetar, as the head of our team, Venerable Maha Suchart, Ms. Wantana Boonmak, Army Captain Sansanee Teeratamrong (on some occasions) who is now a Major-General, and Ms. Walee Kunaratpanich who helped to type the manuscript with a typewriter, and I, went to Buddhamondol Park together and returned to Wat Paknam in the evening. I stayed overnight at Wat Paknam with Sansanee with the kindness of Buddhist Nun Tanyanee who provided us an accommodation on the second floor of the temple's kitchen.

In order to avoid the other disciples who might disturb our manuscript writing, we went to Buddhamondol Park without informing them (the park was considerably far from our temple). However, our plan did not work because those who went to see Aunt Treetar at her residence and found out that she left her residence to Buddhamondol Park, they headed to see her at the park. Distance was not a concern. When they knew that Aunt Treetar was writing a book about Luang Por Wat Paknam, with the assistance of Venerable Maha Suchart, they wished to take part in this meritorious deed by supporting in any way they could such as providing foods and fruits. Some of them went to the park everyday, some went there every two to three days. For those who could not go by themselves, they would ask someone to deliver the foods on their behalf. Altogether with the foods prepared daily by Ms. Wantana Boonmak and Buddhist Nun Pattama Wongsoontorn, we had more than enough to eat and had to share them with the officers of Buddhamondol Park.

Although I went there everyday to write the manuscript, but I could not make much progress. It was more like having a picnic because many people visited us. After I wrote a little, Aunt Treetar asked me to have some desserts and fruits. When she had a nap, I felt sleep as well. In the beginning, I tried to figure out what I should add to the information given by Aunt Treetar. After I spent sometime thinking with a full stomach, the breeze made me feel asleep again. When I woke up, I continued to write and eat again.

Aunt Treetar had a technique about writing which she recommended to me. She told me to make a wish for Luang Por Wat Paknam to supervise our sensations, perceptions, volitional activities and cognition prior to writing the manuscript. So, I have used this method ever since, even when I wrote my thesis or other writings. I could achieve my goal in writing every time. Sometimes, I got lost when I wrote, so I kept recollecting Luang Por Wat Paknam, and he gave me solutions soon. In addition, having the opportunity to work with a scholar and the wise like Aunt Treetar and Venerable Maha Suchart allowed me to learn more about Luang Por. This enabled me to know and understand more about the Dhamma. Earlier, I was like a Dhamma-illiterate although I had been close to Dhamma. Both of them are experts in two different fields. Venerable Suchart masters Pali language, and he is very quick and accurate. I received guidance from him and studied additionally by myself. Aunt Treetar masters Dhammakaya meditation, so both of them were like a perfect match of violin and piano.

We had worked together for a month, and Aunt Treetar had to suspend the work as she was responsible for encasing Buddha amulets [something like a time capsule in the Western sense, but Buddhists encase precious and sacred artifacts in a pagoda and Buddha statues.] So, she provided a new place for me to write this book which was the first floor of the Vipassana Building at Wat Paknam. In 1984, the building was spacious since there were only few objects. It was used for meditation practice only. Down stairs was spacious since there was no table for donation. The donation was made at the information office and the residence of Aunt Treetar where Ms. Wantana was the only treasurer. By that time, the Luang Por Wat Paknam Alumni Association did not have many activities, mostly they were seasonal. For example, the annual royal Kathina robes offering ceremony, the picked-up robes offering ceremony, the rain-shower robe offering ceremony, and the robes offering in dedication to the deceased ceremony. After the end of each ceremony, we stopped receiving donation. Ms. Walee was still working outside, not at our temple. She did not have to prepare sustenance package for offering to the monks during that time, and we did not have much stuff. So, there was enough room for me to coauthor this book, but mostly I had to do it at nighttime. Some days, I had to do it until very late at night since I tried to finish it on time. I had to walk alone to Aunt Treetar's house and find a place to sleep there. On my way, it was very dark and haunting because the atmosphere of our temple was not like the present days.



When I left the meditation building, I was surrounded by many dogs who barked at me as if I were a stranger. I was afraid of darkness, the thieves, and dogs, so I repeated the mantra *samma arahang*, asking for help from Luang Por. Until I reached the gate of Auntie Treetar's residence, I felt more relieved and safe. However, on some days, the gate was locked. I had to shout asking for someone to unlock the gate while the dogs kept barking. If Luang Por were alive, he would have walked around at night to secure the temple ground. I made a wish to see him so that both the ghosts and the thief would run away, but Luang Por never showed up for me to see. When the gate was locked, I had to walk back to the meditation building and slept there. It was uncomfortable because there is no restroom, mattress, pillow, and blanket. Moreover, there were so many mosquitoes. It was so much different from Buddhamonkol Park.

Once I completed the manuscript of this book, I speeded up in writing my thesis. I already left my job for one semester, it would be inappropriate to take leave again. Finally, it took only one month to finish as I did not expect for an outstanding award. My advisor was also kind enough to let me pass at ease.

This book has a more thorough content than previous editions. We emphasize on the story about Luang Por Wat Paknam (The Most Venerable Phramongkolthepmuni) in term of the superknowledge of Dhammakaya (Vijja Dhammakaya) and the timeline of Wat Paknam under the leadership of His Holiness Somdet Phramaharatchamangkhlachan. We would like to summarize each of his projects without getting into details as they were already separately published.

I would like to dedicate the merit that I have gained from coauthoring this book as an homage to the Lord Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha. Also, I would like to dedicate to the Most Venerable Phramongkolthepmuni (Luang Por Wat Paknam), the Most Venerable Phrabhavanakosolthera (Jiak), the Most Venerable Rajmolee (Narong), my ancestors and parents, especially Grandmother Manee and Auntie Thanom Sridhammarak, those who provided me support and education which enable me to have an honorable work, dignity, and stability in life, as well as my house and land. I would like to dedicate my merit to Mrs. Praneat and Mr. Fon Kaewpraneat, my parents who gave me my healthy body and raised me well so that I am not an incompetent or fool person, and able to work in such a way that benefits our nation and religion. I am indebted to Supreme General Tanom Kittikajorn who allowed me to work as a teacher at the Royal Thai Cadet Academy.

***Major-General Tassanasri Trikhun***

### **Message from The Translator**

I would like to dedicate the merit earned from this translation to the very foremost precedent Lord Buddha, all the Lord Buddhas, either in the past, present, and the future, all noble disciples, all righteous Bodhisattas, The Most Venerable Pramongkolthepmuni (Sodh Candasaro), the discoverer of Dhammakaya Meditation, His Holiness Somdet Phramaharatchamangkhlachan (Chuang Varapunyo), the present abbot of Wat Paknam, The Most Venerable Prarajbrahmthera (Veera Kanuttamo), the vice abbot of Wat Paknam, His Majesty The King of Thailand and His royal family members, my righteous Buddhist masters and teachers, Venerable Phra-kru Kaisornvilard (Natthanan Kulsiri), The Most Venerable Phrathepyanmongkol (Sermchai Jayamanggalo), Venerable Phra-kru Bhavananuwat (Choowith Akkaviccho), Venerable Suvith Vijjaysako (Pali Scholar Level 9), Venerable Mongkol Manggalo (Pali Scholar Level 9), Reverend Maechee Pook Muiprasert, Reverend Maechee Tanom Asawai, Reverend Maechee Yanee Sirivoharn, Kru-Treetar Niamkhum (the chairperson of Wat Paknam's Alumni Association), Kru-Chaluay Sombatsuk, Reverend Maechee Rumpa Bhokamshy, Reverend Maechee Taweepon Liabprasert, Reverend Maechee Wanjai Chookorn, members of Wat Paknam's meditation workshop, my school teachers, Professor Dr. Peter Case, Father Sakon & Mother Duangrath Tisuthiwongse, as well as my family members, relatives, friends, my guardian celestial beings, ones whom I am indebted to, ones who have revenge upon me, and my animal companions.

Lastly, I would like to apologize for any mistakes and errors that might occur in this translation. If there will be any offer for improvement or correction, it will be greatly appreciated.

***Pittaya Wong***

[www.meditation101.org](http://www.meditation101.org)

21 February 2013

**LUANG POR WAT PAKNAM**  
**(The Great Abbot of Paknam Temple)**

**Secular Life**

The secular name of Luang Por is ‘Sodh’, and his family name is ‘Meekaewnoi.’ He was born on Friday, 10 October 1884 in Song Pi Nong Village, Song Pi Nong Sub-District, Song Pi Nong District, Supanburi Province. His father is Ngen Meekaewnoi, and his mother is Soodjai Meekaewnoi. He has five siblings as follows:

1. Mrs. Da Charoenrueng
2. Luang Por Wat Paknam (Sodh Meekaewnoi)
3. Mr. Sai Meekaewnoi
4. Mr. Pook Meekaewnoi
5. Mr. Samruay Meekaewnoi

Luang Por helped working for his parents since he was young. He first studied when he was 9 year-old, with Venerable Na, his uncle-monk, at Wat Song Pi Nong. When his uncle-monk moved to Wat Hua Bho, Luang Por followed him to study there. After his uncle-monk disrobed, Ngen managed to have Luang Por studied with Venerable Sub who was the abbot of Wat Bangpla, Bang Lane District, Nakorn Pathom Province which is Ngen’s hometown.

Since his childhood, Luang Por was a truthful person, and he was not an unreliable one. Luang Por loved to study, and he could study well. During that time, he had to study Khmer language as well, so he could write and read Khmer competently. The curriculum of that time was ended with being able to thoroughly read the story of Phra Malai which was written in Khmer.

After studying at Wat Bang Pla for two years, he returned to Song Pi Nong to help his father running rice trading business. Supan Buri Province was well known for rice fertility. His family business was to ship rice from Supan Buri to rice mills in Bangkok and Nakorn Chai Sri for sale. When his father passed away, Luang Por was 14 year-old. As the first son of the family, he had to carry on his family business. He was both patient and diligent. Most of all, he was honest. Although he had to encounter various troubles such as dangers from sailing, robbery, and cheater, Luang Por never felt disheartened. He continued to work until he achieved a level of success in his career and became a well-to-do person in his hometown.

Luang Por had four *brahma vihara* (four virtues of the brahma) since his adolescence. When he did business, he was not afraid of other competitors who would become richer than him. When someone did better, he also appreciated without jealousy. He wished his relatives to have the same career and do well in business just like him. If he knew that someone’s

business breaks even or gets worse, he uttered “Earn for living like a cock. Keep working without saving, one gets poor badly. It is a must to look for a new technique.”

During years of business, Luang Por had to face with many situations that caused him to get bored of the secular life which brought about tiresomeness, difficulties, and dangers which required much patient, effort, diligence, thrift, and encountering. By that time, he was 19 year-old. Luang Por said about his life that:

“... I made a vow to be in monkhood throughout my life since there was a difficulty when I did my rice trading business while I sailed an empty boat back home. I took a shortcut at Bang-E-Tan canal, north of Taladmai, Nakorn Chai Sri River, Nakorn Pathom Province. This shortcut was a short distance, but there were many robbers around. Once I took the shortcut, I was afraid that the canal was narrow and the robbers were harmful. The stern was close to the bank, not much different in level. It was both breathtaking and dangerous. If the robbers arrived, they would shoot steersman first. If they hurt us first, there was no way we could fight. If I placed a rifle at the prow, and I poled the boat instead of my employee, I would be able to fight back when the robbers came.

After I had this idea, I asked my employee who poled the boat to become the steersman instead, and I replaced him. During my poling, I kept thinking that the area was getting more isolated. I started to worry that I paid the employees only 11 or 12 baht per day, and I was the owner of all the properties. It was not right to let the employees die first. This would be inappropriate to take advantage of them. I continued to pole the boat until I could make a decision that I should die first. Then, I asked my employee to replace me, and I grabbed the rifle from the prow and kept close to me. The steersman still continued steering. When it was nearly the end of the shortcut canal, another boat entered the shortcut and passed by. This boat grinded with my boat loudly. Both boats could not either move forward or backward, so we had to stop there.

After this situation, I came to realize that it was so difficult to earn for living. My father did the same thing, and I had to follow his path. All people had to make money all alike without a chance to stop. The one who did not urge to make money until becoming wealthy would become the inferior one who received no respect and fellowship. Someone like this would be shy among others as he is poorer and incomparable to others.

My ancestors had done the same thing. [This practice has been passed down] to my father and myself respectively. Where are my ancestors now? I knew that they already passed away. I will pass away too. When I thought of dying, I started to worry about death. I did not hesitate that I would die for sure. My father also sailed his boat to trade rice. He got sick on the way. After he arrived home for few days, he passed away. While I was nursing him, I saw that he could not bring anything with him, even his clothes and body. I looked after him, and I saw that nothing disappeared. Myself and my siblings, as well as my

mother, were still there, nobody went [to the afterlife] with him. He went alone. I would be the same, nothing could change this [fact].

After I had this thought, I acted like I was already dead by laying down at the stern. I [imagined myself to be a ghost visiting] my relatives, siblings, and friends. Nobody could see me. They would think that a ghost throw something to them. I went here and there, but nobody could see me at all. I did like this until I was absent minded. Once I gained my consciousness, I made a resolution quietly that **“May I do not die at this time. May I have a chance to ordain first. When I get ordained, I will not disrobe until the rest of my life. Indeed, I already ordained [my heart] since I was around 19 year old.”**

After Luang Por made the resolution, he realized in his responsibility as the eldest son who led the family of five siblings without a father. He knew that it was inappropriate to leave his secular life and enter monkhood by then. Thus, he planned to secure the financial status of his family by making enough money for his mother’s happy living throughout her life. Luang Por had worked hard since then and became very thrift on his own spending. For about one year, he could save a considerable amount of money for his mother, so she could spend it throughout her life.

### **Entering Monastic Life**

When Luang Por turned 22 year-old in July, around early August 1906, he ordered his employees to ship rice to Bangkok for sale whereas he stayed at Wat Song Pi Nong, Supan Buri Province, in preparation for ordination. He rehearsed the ordination verses with Venerable Palad Young who is a youngest brother of Luang Por’s maternal grandfather.

Master Dee, Wat Phra Tu Sarn, Mueng District, Supan Buri Province, was the preceptor.

Phra Kru Winyanuyok (Neang Indachoto) was the first co-preceptor.

Master Noang Indasuvanno was the second co-preceptor.

Witnessing monks were members of Wat Song Pi Nong’s monastic community.

Luang Por stayed at Wat Song Pi Nong for the period of one Buddhist lent. He studied both Dhamma doctrine and meditation. This allowed him to be able to memorize the whole chanting book and the monks’ codes of discipline. He also studied meditation with Master Noang who was a student of Luang Por Niam, Wat Noi, Bangplama District, Supan Buri Province. By the end of Buddhist lent, he had the effort to study more about Buddhist doctrine in order to lead him toward proper meditation practice. In Song Pi Nong, there was no one who was knowledgeable enough on Buddhist doctrine, so he persuaded his mother to allow him to continue his study in Bangkok. Luang Por also asked his mother for an amount of money for commuting. He thought that it would be the last time to ask for money from his mother. For text books, he was well sponsored by his sister.

Luang Por traveled to Bangkok with Samruay, his younger brother who was a novice monk. Both of them lived at Wat Phra Chetupon to study Dhamma and disciplines. By that time, His Holiness Somdet Phrabuddhajahn (Khem) was the abbot. Luang Por lived there until the fourth year of his monkhood, then he moved to Wat Chaiyaprukmalā in order to cure smallpox for both himself and his brother. When they recovered, he brought his brother back to Song Pi Nong in Supan Buri Province. His brother passed away in Song Pi Nong when he was 18 years old. After that, Luang Por returned to Wat Phra Chetupon.

The curriculum in that period started from memorizing the grammar of Pali language. Then, students continued to study *mūla*, ranging from *sondhi*, *nama*, *samasa*, *tatti*, *akayat*, and *kitt*, followed by Dhammapada until completing two bunches. Thus, students started to study Mangalateepani and Sarasamkha until they master the texts, being able to teach others.

During that time, education provided by the temple had encountered many difficulties since there was no place to be the permanent venue where teachers and students could meet. Students had to travel from place to place in order to study with different teachers who mastered different fields. So, Luang Por had to commute back to Wat Phra Chetupon to have lunch. Some days, he did not have enough food as nobody offered alms. Luang Por once thought if the ones who observe precepts deserve to starve like this. If it was true, he was willing to die. Then, the news about his death would make the rest of the monks having enough food to eat because people would feel pity upon them.

In the afternoon, he had to travel to other temples such as Wat Sutad and Wat Sam Pleum in order to study with different teachers. Luang Por had to go here and there until the evening, sometimes he had to return to study at Wat Phra Chetupon again. His commuting was quite inconvenient as he had to go by foot and carried his scriptures along. We have to use the term 'carry' because students were from different background knowledge and hometown, they could study anything they wished. The teachers would explain for each student individually whereas other students would listen even though they already studied such topic. They had to listen again and again for better comprehension. This is the reason why students had to 'carry' their scriptures which were Khmer language written on foldable dried palm leaves.

Luang Por was a student who had high commitment. He would dedicate his heart and effort for whatever he did in order to render the best result. Lacking food was not a problem for him, he never felt discouraged and never ditched a class. One day, he received only a ladle of steamed rice and a banana. After chanting to contemplate on the real nature of his food, he was to have his meal. Then, he saw a mother dog and its puppy who were so skinny and hungry. They came to Luang Por and walked around showing their need for food. With his compassion, Luang Por shared a half of his rice and a half of his banana, and he made a resolution that "may scarcity like this never happen to me again." However, the dogs did not eat banana. Luang Por did not know that the dogs would not eat banana, and he

hesitated to bring it back for himself. He finally decided that it was inappropriate because he already gave away. If he was to bring it back, there needed to be someone who reoffered the banana to him. But there was nobody around. So, he had to give up as he was not willing to violate the codes of monastic discipline even though there was nobody else.

This was the time in his life that he never forgot. It also motivated him to set a goal that when he became well supported and more capable, he would run a refectory that treated monks, novices, and those who were in need and poor with free foods since he realized in the Lord Buddha's saying that "Sabbhe Satta Arhararatthitika – All living beings can survive with foods."

Everyday, Luang Por had to carry his scriptures and walked through the peacock gate of Wat Phra Chetupon and took a ferry to Wat Aroon. With the power of his disciplines and resolution, altogether with the merit from sharing foods with a dog and a puppy that bore fruits quickly, a merchant at the peacock gate became faithful upon Luang Por due to his diligence and patience, so she volunteered to offer meals to him everyday. She also volunteered to be Luang Por's supporter on other aspects whenever he made a request. There was also another merchant who sold food whose name was Nuam. She offered lunch to Luang Por every day, so he became more convenient about having meals. When Nuam got older and unable to earn for living, Luang Por managed to let her live at Wat Paknam until she passed away since she had no descendant who looked after her. After she passed away, Luang Por organized a cremation ceremony for her. He said **"It is such a wholesome opportunity. When I faced with scarcity, Nuam supported me. When Nuam became poor, I had a chance to support her. We both met each other in time of need. It is such a wholesome opportunity that rarely happens."**

Luang Por studied with different teachers for several years, and many people became faithful in his good conduct such as the retainers at the royal residence of His Royal Highness Krommuenmahindarodom, who was known by the people as 'Prince Penn.' They always prepared lunch including both savory and sweet dishes for Luang Por. As a consequence, Luang Por needed not to worry and spend too much time on food. This means that they directly helped Luang Por to be able to develop himself. Indirectly, Luang Por used his energy to develop other monks and novice monks who loved to study Dhamma like him.

Luang Por's first project in developing human resources with education was to establish a Buddhist doctrine school at Wat Phra Chetupon. It was a small school where his own abode was used as the classroom. However, this was not the temple's first Buddhist school because, during that time, students could study with any teacher they liked. Teaching monks who were well known on specific fields of Dhamma study would teach at their abodes, and students would come to their place. When Luang Por opened his abode to be a school, Venerable Maha Pee Wasuttama (Pali scholar level 5), who used to live at Wat Mahadhatu, became the first teacher. Luang Por provided him monetary allowances. There were about ten monks and novice monks who came to study with Luang Por. Later on, the

school was closed due to the new Dhamma education system and pali language curriculum which unified the management of Buddhist schools.

Many people may wonder that Luang Por studied hard, but how come he did not become a high level pali graduate. Indeed, Luang Por studied until he finished Dhamma courses, but he did not attend the central examination. Formerly, the examination was made orally. Then, the new Dhamma education system had changed the oral examination to written examination. Notwithstanding, Luang Por did not intend to take the examination because he was clear in mind that he studied in order to learn the Dhamma, not to earn a degree or become a recognized graduate. He just wanted to be able to read, translate, and understand pali language. According to the wish he made in the first year of his monkhood when he lived at Wat Song Pi Nong, he would not stop studying if he was unable to translate. By then, Luang Por could translate pali language, so he wanted to stop studying the doctrine which he already mastered up to a level and continue practicing Dhamma for himself. The Most Venerable Phradhammatasatarn, the past abbot of Wat Chanasongkram used to say about Luang Por that

“He studied the Dhamma doctrine until he became knowledgeable enough. If he were to take the pali examination at that time, he would have become a high level pali graduate, but he did not do so. Because he aimed to study in order to become a *nissarana Pariyatti*, a person who studied doctrine in order to free himself from sufferings or to teach and introduce to people or to be a guideline for further correct practice. He did not wish to use his knowledge to get a diploma, wealth, and fame. If we are to level his knowledge, he completed level 3, level 4, and level 5. Once he studied until he knew well, he moved forward toward *vipassana* meditation...”

### **In Search for Enlightenment**

After Luang Por studied Buddhist doctrine until he became well versed, being able to read both *pali* scriptures and tipitaka (holy Buddhist scriptures), he began his search for enlightenment by studying meditation theories and methodologies from the Visudhhimagga scripture first. During his study, he tried practicing meditation altogether. Regarding his primary meditation practice, Luang Por said:

During the time when I studied meditation theories, I studied vipassana meditation as well. On Buddhist observance days such as the full moon and half moon day, I went to see meditation masters. I studied meditation directly for the first time with my co-preceptor. The day after my ordination, I studied meditation with Luang Por Niam at Wat Noi in Supan Buri Province. The third meditation master was The Most Venerable Samvaranuwong (Aiem) of Wat Rajasitharam (Wat Plub). The fourth one was Phrakru Yanawirat (Poe) of Wat Phrachetupon. The fifth person was Venerable Singha of Wat Lakorndham, behind Wat Rakangkositaram. I could achieve the same level as my two masters, Phrakru Yanawirat and Venerable Singha. They affirmed that I could achieve the same level as they did, and they



assigned me to teach on their behalf, but I was not satisfied yet, so I continued to search further...”

We can conclude that, in term of meditation practice, Luang Por had studied with several meditation masters recommended by others. They are as follows:

- The Most Venerable Phramongkoltipmuni (Mui), the abbot of Wat Chakkawad, Bangkok
- Venerable Master Dee, Wat Pratusarn, Mueng District, Supan Buri Province
- Venerable Master Noang Indasavanno, Wat Song Pi Nong, Song Pi Nong District, Supan Buri Province
- Venerable Master Niam, Wat Noi, Supan Buri Province
- The Most Venerable Phrasamvaranuwong, Wat Rajasitharam, Bangkok
- Phrakru Yanawirat (Poe), Wat Prachetupon, Bangkok
- Venerable Master Singh, Wat Lakorntam, Bangkok
- Venerable Master Pluem, Wat Kao Yai, Tamakar District, Kanchanaburi Province

After Luang Por studied with these meditation masters for a period of time, he came to realize that he still could not reach the highest level, and it was necessary to search further following the footsteps of the Lord Buddha. So, he moved to a more tranquil place which was more appropriate for meditation practice. Luang Por had a motto in mind that:

- **We were born to find the precious. Why should we were born if we found and refused it.**
- **We are fooled by desire. What tricks us also seduces, entangling our mind with worries. Give up desire and say goodbye to bad tricks. Walk away from sensual pleasure, and follow the three *khanda*. Finishing the sixteen achievements, we will not fall to the unwholesome realm. You may say that it is nirvana. [The three *khanda* comprises of *sila* (disciplines), *Samadhi* (meditation), and *panna* (wisdom).]**

In 1917, the eleventh year of Luang Por’s monkhood, Luang Por bid a farewell to the abbot of Wat Phrachetupon and moved to Wat Bode Bon in Bangkuwieng Sub-District, Bangkruay District, Nontaburi Province, in order to practice meditation and teach monks, novice monks, and laypeople there. He chose to stay at Wat Bode Bon because he felt indebted to Abbot Choum who offered him many scriptures for Dhamma doctrine study. Luang Por thought that it was time for him to persevere as much as possible in meditation practice for the sake of his ultimate goal which was to attain enlightenment like the Lord Buddha.

### **Making A Vow**

Luang Por said that “... For my monastic life, I made a vow to become a Buddhist monk throughout my life when I was 19 year-old. I made a wish not to die before I ordained.

After I had left [my secular life] for 15 years, my wish was [partially] fulfilled. But I still had not attained [enlightenment] that the Lord Buddha attained earlier. It was necessary to Practice wholeheartedly. Once I made up my mind when it was in the middle of the 10<sup>th</sup> month. I entered the Buddhist chapel in the evening and made a firm vow that:

If I take my seat here and being unable to attain enlightenment as required by the Lord Buddha, I will not rouse throughout my whole life. Once Luang Por made this intention, he requested the Lord Buddha that “May the Lord Buddha kindly give me the Dhamma that you already attained, even the least and the easiest which you already knew. If the Dhamma that I know from you would harm your religion, please do not grant it to me. However, if it would benefit your religion, please kindly grant it to me. I would like to volunteer to be a [Dhamma] attorney for your religion until the rest of my life...” (an excerpt from Biography of Luang Por Wat Paknam and An Abbot’s Handbook, Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen and Luang Por Wat Paknam Alumni Association : Thaiwattanpanich 1986, 219 pages, page 15).

### **Dhammakaya Attainment**

After Luang Por made a vow, he sat cross-legged to Practice meditation. In the beginning, he was annoyed by ants from the gap between each marble tile. So, he grabbed a bottle of gasoline which he brought with him and inserted one of his fingers into the bottle. He soaked his finger with gasoline and tried to draw a circle around himself in order to block the ants. He drew the border line nearly a half, and he came to realize that “I sacrificed my life already. Why should I be afraid of ants?” Luang Por felt guilty a bit, so he put down the gasoline bottle and started to meditate right away. In the middle of the night, he saw the path to enlightenment which was discovered by the Lord Buddha. Then, he thought “Dhamma is so profound. Nobody can think of it. It is beyond thinking. If one still thinks, one will never attain. The mind must unify at the same point of focus. Once the mind unifies, there comes cessation, followed by the arising. Without cessation, there is no arising. Please take into consideration. This is the truth. This is the connecting point. Without the right [mental] unification, it won’t be possible.” Luang Por contemplated on his rediscovery for a while, and he was afraid that his meditation experience would fade away. So, he continued to meditate further for about 30 minutes. Then, the picture of Wat Bangpla appeared in his meditation, as if he were there. When the mental picture became clear, he knew by himself that some people at Wat Bangpla would be able to attain [Dhammakaya]. Thereafter, he had been thinking about visiting Wat Bangpla to teach meditation...” (an excerpt from Biography of Luang Por Wat Paknam and An Abbot’s Handbook, Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen and Luang Por Wat Paknam Alumni Association : Thaiwattanpanich 1986, 219 pages, page 15)

### **Propagating Meditation**

By the end of Buddhist lent that year, Luang Por moved from Wat Bode Bon to Wat Bang Pla in order to teach vipassana meditation. What he saw in his meditation came true as there were three monks who were able to attain [Dhammakaya] like him. They were Venerable Sangvarn, Venerable Ban, Venerable Oum, and five other laypeople.

Later on, Venerable Sangvarn had become one of Luang Por's key persons in propagating Dhammakaya meditation. Luang Por supported them well. On Kathina ceremony day, Luang Por would prepare Kathina robes and necessities and assigned his representatives to offer them at Wat Bangpla on his behalf. When Venerable Sangvarn initiated the Buddhist chapel construction project, Luang Por also helped him by giving his Buddha amulets series two as memorabilia to those who donated for the construction. The Buddhist chapel was not yet completed, but Venerable Sangvarn passed away first. The Most Venerable Phrathepkittipanyakhun (Kittivuddho) had to replace Venerable Sangvarn in leading the project until completion.

Luang Por had opportunities to teach meditation at Wat Bangpla until numerous people attained Dhammakaya, and they could teach others as well. So, Luang Por moved back to Wat Phrachetupon again. He could stay there for a while and felt unpleasant. The reason could be that Wat Phrachetupon was a venue for Buddhist study, and it was not tranquil enough for meditation Practice. Luang Por left Wat Phrachetupon and moved to Wat Phrasrirattanamahadhatu, an ancient Buddhist temple in Supan Buri Province which was almost abandoned. The atmosphere was peaceful and suitable for meditation. There were hundreds of stone Buddha statues, but each of them was imperfect. They looked like handicapped persons due to deterioration over time and damaged by bad people. Luang Por did not isolate himself for meditation Practice alone, but he also helped to develop people in the area by teaching them to Practice generosity, observe precepts, meditate, listen to sermons, and work for Buddhism. Many people became faithful upon him, they came to Practice meditation with Luang Por. He suggested the villagers to fix the broken Buddha statues. His project was not fully completed, and there was a happening that caused him to leave.

The governor of Supan Buri Province and the state official noticed that Luang Por taught many people until they had strong faith upon him. The officials did not study with Luang Por, so they did not know what Luang Por taught. They were unsatisfied and believed that Luang Por would mislead the people.

As a result, when the state official met His Holiness Somdet Phrawannarat (Tissatattamahathera) when he was titled as Phrasakyayuttiyawong, the abbot of Wat Phrachetupon and the chief monk of Bhasicharoen Distict by that time, Luang Por was ordered to leave Wat Phrasrirattanamahadhat. Luang Por had to obey and returned to Wat Song Pi Nong in Supan Buri Province.

When Luang Por was at Wat Song Pi Nong, he established a Dhamma school since he was not an inactive person, and he thought that the temple did not give priority to education. Monks and novice monks who wished to study Dhamma had to move to Bangkok. So, Luang Por, who was capable in both Dhamma theories and meditation practice, decided to establish a Dhamma school. There were many obstacles since the senior monks disagreed. But Luang Por remained steadfast. He did not just establish a Dhamma school, but he also founded a foundation to provide supporting funds for monks and novice monks. Regarding his effort, His Holiness The Supreme Patriarch of Thailand (Poon Punnasirimahathera), had written a message of appreciation that:

**Luang Por Wat Paknam came to Wat Song Pi Nong, and he played an important role in establishing a Dhamma school regardless of obstacles. His work has continued until the present. He also founded a foundation to support education whereas the board members provided funds until nowadays. He had made good contribution to Wat Song Pi Nong.**

#### **Became The Abbot of Wat Paknam**

During that time, His Holiness Somdet Phrawannarat (Tissatattamahathera), who was holding the post as the chief monk of Bhasicharoen District, wished to have Luang Por becoming the abbot of Wat Paknam which was located in his governing region since the position was available. Indeed, he wished to find a temple for Luang Por where he could live permanently. In the beginning, Luang Por refused to take the position because he aimed to spend time on meditation, not to govern a temple. But due to the reasons given by His Holiness Somdet Phrawannarat, Luang Por had to accept unavoidably.

His Holiness knew well about Luang Por's working attitude as a highly committed courage person who was capable and loved to initiated new things to benefit the society and Buddhism without remaining passive. Luang Por had high confident, and he also did what others dared not to do. So, His Holiness asked Luang Por for several promises as he was afraid that Luang Por would have problems with monks who lived there earlier and monks in the nearby area. For example, His Holiness asked Luang Por not to show supernatural power (this means that Luang Por had advanced meditation power which were known by monks and people at that time) and never become more outstanding among other abbots in the area. His Holiness also wanted Luang Por to respect and follow the order according levels of governance, be patient to promote a peaceful atmosphere and avoid overusing his power as an abbot.

As he was requested by the senior monk, Luang Por had to obey because, normally, Luang Por was a highly-disciplined person with good patient. He disliked having problems with others, but he did not really know by that time what he would encounter.

In 1916, His Holiness Somdet Phrawannarat accompanied Luang Por from Wat Phrachetupon to Wat Paknam in order to take the acting abbot position. They traveled by boat provided by the Department of Religion. Wat Paknam was a 3<sup>rd</sup> class royal temple in

the general type. There were senior monks and governing monks in the district who came with Luang Por, and Luang Por had four follower monks. It was like an important procession because it was led by many senior monks. Many people came to welcome them.

### **Brief History of Wat Paknam**

Wat Paknam is located in Bangkok. Formerly, it was called “Thonburi Province” where the northern border was Bangkokyai Canal, the Eastern border was Dan Canal, the Southern border was another small canal that separated the temple from Wat Apsornsawan, the Western border was Bhasicharoen Canal, and the Southwestern border was Apsornsawan Girl School.

There is no evidence showing about who built this temple and built in which era. Considering from old remaining buildings such as the Tipitaka scripture building (before renovation), it was known that the temple was built in Ayudhaya era. The old Dhamma sermon hall and monk-throne are presently at the up stair of Sodh Building. There are also Tipitaka scripture cabinets crafted with traditional Thai arts.

An ancient document shows that many monarchs and royalties had sponsored the renovation of Wat Paknam as follows:

1. King Taksin The Great donated 10 Chung (Thai ancient currency) to rebuild the roof.
2. King Rama III sponsored the renovation of chapel, hall and pagoda. He also built a wooden abode as a monk residence.
3. King Rama V permitted Phrakrusamadhamsamatan (Saeng), the abbot, altogether with the head of laypeople and other laypeople to renovate the whole temple. Many buildings were modified as they deemed appropriate and necessary such as the roof decorations which were made with carved timber plated with gold leaves. They were replaced by sculpted concrete due to insufficient fund.

According to Various Traditions authored by His Royal Highness Prince Krom Phrayadamrongrajanupab, King Rama I had offered a royal Kathina robe to Wat Paknam by himself throughout his life. After that, there were royalties and aristocrats who offered Kathina robes to the temple for many times as follows:

1874 – Kromprajwangbavorn

1875 – Princess Arunwadee

1876 – Princess Waneerattanakanya

1877 – Princess Bussabanbuapan

1919 – Phrayamanopakornnititad

And more

## **Past Abbots of Wat Paknam**

In Thonburi era, The Most Venerable Phradhammakosa was the abbot until 1782.

In Rattanakosin era, the past abbots are as follows:

1.	The Most Venerable Phrathepkrawee	1782 – 1809
2.	The Most Venerable Phrabavornyanamuni	1809 – 1843
3.	The Most Venerable Phrayanabhodi	1843 – 1863
4.	Venerable Phrakru Samadhamsamatan (Mee)	1863 – 1883
5.	Venerable Phrakru Samadhamsamatan (Saeng)	1883 – 1915
6.	Venerable Phrakru Buddhapayakorn (Charoen Oupptisso)	1915 – 1916

## **An Orientation**

Before Luang Por arrived Wat Paknam, the temple was in a poor condition. Most buildings were deteriorating, and the temple looked like it was abandoned even though there were thirteen resident monks. Nobody helped to develop and maintain the temple compound at all. Luang Por's first action was to call for a meeting among monks and novice monks who were there earlier and also those who came with Luang Por. Luang Por gave an orientation to the monastic community of Wat Paknam during a meeting. His Holiness The Supreme Patriarch (Poon Punnasirimahathera) wrote about his orientation speech in details since he was joining the meeting with Luang Por when he was not promoted to the post the Supreme Patriarch yet. The speech was:

"The district chief monk assigned me to look after this temple and govern as well as admonishing the resident monks according to the monastic disciplines in order to prosper this temple. We need both unity and sympathy. I am not familiar with anyone in this local. It is like being left here knowing no one to turn to because we do not know each other. But I am confident that our practice which directly follows the Lord Buddha's teachings will allow those who behave well to prosper smoothly. The *Dhamma* (doctrines) and *Vinaiya* (disciplines) will cease all of the bad [things].

Many of us have been in monkhood for many years. We know by ourselves which level of meditation experience we are at. We also know how well we obey the monastic disciplines. Every one knows the truth about oneself. You deserve a praise if your behaviors are in line with the Dhamma and disciplines; otherwise, it will be pitiful. One can identify the mistakes of oneself. I have seen monks who have been in monastic life for tens of years, but they have no capability to teach others. [This means that] the religion cannot rely on them, on the contrary, they rely on religion only without making any advantage to oneself and others. Even worse, they cause blemish to the religion. A monk like this is like a hermit crab (Luang Por always mentioned about the hermit crab, but later on he no longer talked about it). What would be the benefit for ordination and monastic life?

I come to Wat Paknam with the intention to behave in such a way that is in line with the Dhamma and disciplines. I wish that the resident monks who were here before will cooperate; otherwise, I have no problem with it. I will not bother you all because everyone knows one's own right and wrong. Please do not obstruct me if you do not wish to cooperate, and I will not obstruct you as well. We will live independently, but everyone has to follow the temple's rules and regulations. You must inform me when coming and leaving the temple. We will not talk about the past as I was not on post yet. Now that I am on duty, I will try to maintain [the good order of this temple]." (written by H.H. Somdet Phrawannarat (Poon Punnasiri) in The Biography of Phramongkolthepmuni (Luang Por Wat Paknam) and The Power of Dhammakaya Meditation, Ms. Treetar Niamkham published as a memorabilia on the occasion of The Most Venerable Phrabhavanakosolthera (Theera Dhammatarathera)'s cremation ceremony at Wat Paknam's crematorium Bhasicharoen, Bangkok 23 March 1969, page 10 – 11).

We may see that Luang Por's speech given to the resident monks of Wat Paknam reflects his considerable leadership. Only the outstanding persons can deliver such a thoughtful and meaningful speech. It also showed that Luang Por was confident in his own qualifications. Nobody dared to object him because he spoke of only the truth for the benefit of Buddhism, not for himself. Luang Por pointed out to everyone that they should assess and improve themselves. Notwithstanding, if they did not accept their own false and were not willing to correct the mistakes, Luang Por would not force them in anyway. However, he reproved these people publicly that they **became Buddhist monks in order to earn for living, and this certainly worsened Buddhism**. He compared them to the hermit crab although he knew that this word would dissatisfy them because they used to do whatever they liked. Luang Por also knew that he would surely be objected if he set rules and regulations for them to follow. Finally, Luang Por was overwhelmed by criticism, but he remained unperturbed. He kept his mind indifferent instead of fighting back. Luang Por never ordered them to meet him personally in order to solve the conflict as he realized that it was usual to have both agreement and disagreement toward his decision. It was his responsibility to take such action regardless of either friendly or unfriendly feedbacks.

Luang Por did not pay much attention to the resident local monks of Wat Paknam, but he urged to promote good disciplines, education, and meditation practice among visiting monks and newly arrived monks, as well as laypeople who lived at the temple. There were also people who came to study meditation with Luang Por, but most of them were from afar area. Most of the people in the nearby area had faith in the local monks. Because they never met a monk like Luang Por before. Normally, Luang Por did not speak much, so many unfamiliar people were afraid to get close to him.

### **Establishing a Primary School**

In the past, there was no school in the area of Wat Paknam. Thus, children were uneducated, and they played annoyingly all day long. Sometimes, they damaged the temple's properties as well as killing animals and hurting people in the neighborhood. Luang Por did not teach them because their parents disliked him, and they did not teach their children to behave well either. Luang Por worried about these children as he thought that they were they would become adults who would empower the development of our nation. Without proper education, these children would grow up aimlessly. Luang Por used to express worriedly about their future that **"children without education are poor human resource of the nation. They bully temples, and they may become villains."** He did not just ponder, but he also took solvable actions. It was not his way to be careless and passive toward problems. He always said that **"[I] practice generosity wherever I am and provide education when I have free time in order to help others."** This determination caused Luang Por to work hard throughout his life, but the temple, Buddhism, and people received immense benefits. More people came to support and develop the temple. Monks lived a better life as they were sponsored by the lay community. In return, people learned Dhamma from the temple. So, both monastic and lay community well benefited each other.

During that time there were two types of schools, public and private. Only few public schools were available, and they were not in every district as in the present since the Primary Education Act was not approved yet. So, people could freely choose whether they would study or not, and it was not illegal. Those who wished to study had to commute for a long distance. Unlike private school, public school charged less fees, with no tuition fee but only maintenance cost. Luang Por had established a private school in the compound of Wat Paknam. However, students did not have to pay tuition fee. This could be the very first and the only private school that children could study free of charge. The Department of District Government had assisted in managing curriculums, but Luang Por had to pay for teachers' salary. Many patrons supported Luang Por financially such as Lady Sudhammontree (Kimlai Sucharitkul), Mr. Luangrithnarongron who lived in Khlong Bangluang, next to Wat Sankajai, Mr. Tang Boonyamanop who lived in Talad Plu, and Prabhiromraja Wajarong who lived in front of Wat Paknam.

When the school was newly opened, there were about ten students. Later on, the number of student kept increasing. Although their parents disliked Luang Por, but they sent their children to Luang Por's school since they believed that he had good intention and students could study free of charge without having to commute for a long distance. Finally, the number of students was more than three hundreds. Then, people in the area started to appreciate Luang Por that he turned their children to be good people with better future.

Afterward, Luang Por relocated the school to the compound of Wat Waramatpansararam (Wat Khunchan) because he took the post as an acting abbot for a period of time. When the Primary Education Act was approved, the government was responsible for building schools



and provide education adequately for its population, the temple then transferred the school to be under the government supervision. Thereafter, he turned to invest time and effort in promoting education on both Dhamma doctrine and meditation for monks and novice monks at Wat Paknam.

### **Propagating Dhammakaya Meditation**

Luang Por attained Dhammakaya, the body of enlightenment, during his meditation practice on the full moon day of the tenth month at the Buddhist chapel of Wat Bode Bon, Bangkuweing Sub-District, Bangkruay District, Nonthaburi Province. Since then, he had continued to practice and research on meditation by himself for a long time until he became confident that what he attained was genuine.

He said, in the beginning, he wished to isolate himself to a tranquil and peaceful place such as a mountain or forest in order to practice meditation alone. However, he thought of many other people whose minds were darkened by the clouds of ignorance, delusion, and defilement. Also, there were people who suffer from their livings and illness. Their sufferings in life would certainly diminish if they receive proper guidance and teaching, and they would be able to transform their lives to be better. So, if Luang Por were to isolate himself for his own benefit, he would not have the opportunity to help others. During that time, meditation was not popular among Thai monks and the public. When someone showed his interest or taught others to meditate, he would be criticized negatively most of the time. So, monks who loved to meditate had to practice austerity and isolated themselves from others. Many of them moved to remote areas as far as the borders of Thailand.

Luang Por's attainment of Dhammakaya by himself was well-known among the Thai monastic community during that time. The Most Venerable Pradhammasanatorn, the abbot of Wat Chanasongkram, had affirmed that:

As Luang Por had studied [Dhamma] until he became knowledgeable, he learned more about *vipassana* meditation at various meditation schools. He then compared each method in order to choose the best one, and he decided to use the 'Dhammakaya method' which he rediscovered or achieved before anyone in his generation. Luang Por did not just teach others without being able to do it by himself. When he was to attain the Dhamma from Dhammakaya *vipassana* meditation, he said that on the day of his discovery, he persevered in meditation practice at a Buddhist chapel. He had an intention that he was willing to die if he did not make achievement in meditation. He did the same as the Lord Buddha when sitting under the Bodhi tree with a determination that if he did not attain Buddhahood, he would not rouse even though his blood dried up until there were only bones and tendons left. The Lord Buddha's strong determination under the Bodhi tree caused him to attain enlightenment, likewise, Luang Por could attain the experience from Dhammakaya *vipassana* meditation in the same manner.

Once Luang Por attained Dhammakaya, he did not just stop at that point. He also taught his meditation method to his disciples because he had a steadfast intention to brighten people's lives after he attained fruitful experiences in meditation. He was eager to become a representative of the Lord Buddha in promoting virtues and goodness among the public amidst the criticism without feeling discouraged or disheartened. (A part of his sermon given during a memorial service organized for Luang Por on Wednesday, 25 March 1959)

### **The Meaning and Origin of The Term 'Dhammakaya'**

Luang Por taught about the term 'Dhammakaya' in his sermon 'The Goodness of The Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha' that he was not the one who coined this term, but it is available in the Tipitaka Buddhist scriptures. Luang Por's explanation is as follows:

"... Prince Siddharta had persevered [in search for enlightenment] for six years until he discovered the hidden mysterious Gem [or inner astral body] which is Dhammakaya. Dhammakaya resembles a Buddha statue topped with a lotus bud. His body is crystal clear, appearing at the center of one's body. What I said is well evidenced in Akkanya Sutra where the Lord Buddha uttered to Settha, a novice monk, that *Tathagatassa hetam vasettha adhvaccanam dhammakayo itipi*. This is from the Suttantapitaka, Dhiga Nikaya, Patikavakka of the pali canon which means that "Look! Vasettha, the term Dhammakaya is a name of mine, Tathagata [the pronoun used by the Lord Buddha when addressing himself].

Considering the story of Venerable Vaggali altogether, the discourse shows that the Lord Buddha's saying that 'The One who sees the Dhamma is the one who sees me' simply means 'a person who sees the Dhamma sphere which forms the Dhammakaya is the one who sees me, Tathagata.'

The Lord Buddha said this statement because, by that time, Venerable Vaggali was close to him and able to see Him with naked eyes. But the Lord Buddha said so because he meant that what Venerable Vaggali saw from outside was just his [impermanent] physical body composed of perishable flesh and bones. The pronoun 'me,' in this case, means the inner body [or real self] which is not perishable. It denotes 'Dhammakaya' [the inner body of enlightenment]. This inner body can be seen when one reaches the right mental unification during meditation. One can see with the 'divine eye' or 'insight,' not the physical eyes.

The Lord Buddha's saying quoted above is, therefore, quite profound. Those who do not practice meditation will find it difficult to [decode and] understand. [It gives a clue that] can be comprehended at ease only to meditation practitioners, and there is no need to question others..."

I would like to provide additional information about Venerable Vaggali to readers who never learned about his story before.

Venerable Vaggali became a Buddhist monk because he liked the Lord Buddha's beautiful appearance, not his teachings. No matter where the Lord Buddha went to, Venerable Vaggali would follow closely to look at Him with good impression. The Lord Buddha knew this fact very well, but he did not prohibit Venerable Vaggali in any way. Until one day, when he knew [with his insight] that Venerable Vaggali was ready to attain enlightenment, the Lord Buddha uttered to him that "Stay away from me, Vaggali. My [physical] body is perishable." "Look! Vaggali, the one who sees the Dhamma is the one who sees me. The one who sees me is the one who sees the Dhamma." [Seeing the Dhamma also means 'attaining enlightenment.' "**[I], Tathagata, am Dhammakaya.**" Venerable Vaggali was regretful that the Lord Buddha disallowed him to be around with such a unpleasant statement. So, he decided to commit suicide by jumping off from a cliff. In that moment, the Lord Buddha, showed up and taught in front of him. As a result, Venerable Vaggali could attain enlightenment.

The Most Venerable Pradhammatassanatorn gave an additional explanation on the story of Venerable Vaggali in relationship with Luang Por's teaching on Dhammakaya as follows:

"The Lord Buddha said to Venerable Vaggali that the one who sees the Dhamma [attains enlightenment] will [consequently] see Tathagata [Him] [because] Tathagata is inside the Dhamma. This affirms that the Lord Buddha wished others to know Him by seeing [with insight] into the Dhamma. Altogether with the Lord Buddha's statement said to Brahmin Vasettha, the term Dhammakaya is Tathagata's [His another] name. We can summarize that Dhamma is the Lord Buddha because He is the one who attained it. The Dhamma allowed Him to become a 'Buddha.' When someone is to recollect the Lord Buddha, he should recollect the Dhamma. Thus, Luang Por Wat Paknam, who is now resting inside his coffin, had established this [unique] vipassana meditation tradition in order to give an opportunity to the public to attain Dhammakaya or the [real self of the] Lord Buddha."

The term Dhammakaya also exists in many other parts of Buddhist scriptures. For example, when [his step mother] Pajapatigotami went to see the Lord Buddha and bid a farewell prior to passing away to nirvana, she told the Lord that she had raised Him since He was 7 day old, but the Lord was not indebted to her because He already granted her Dhammakaya (gave her an opportunity to attain enlightenment or Dhammakaya). This is the [kind of] Dhamma that can truly liberate her from sufferings." Her statement is as follows:

"Your Holiness... the Lord Buddha. I had raised Your physical body, but You had raised the appreciable Dhammakaya within me. I had you drink [milk] (breast-fed) which ceased your anxiety[hunger] for only a while. [In return], You had me drink milk or the Dhamma which can permanently cease [sufferings]. So, You are not indebted to me in any way." (an excerpt from "The Passing to Nirvana of Outstanding Senior Disciples" 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Vol. 1, Page 311)

Again, when Venerable Uppakut Thera defeated the evil Mara until it surrendered, the Venerable asked Mara to disguise itself to resemble the Lord Buddha's physical body. The senior monk said:

"Look! Could you help me one thing? As the Lord Buddha who came to this earth had already passed away to Nirvana, I can see only the Dhammakaya. It is too late to see his physical body. May you use your own power to disguise yourself to be the Lord Buddha altogether with His other proper manners and also both of His leading disciples at this time." (an excerpt from *Pathomsombhodigata* by Somdet Krompraparamanuchitchinoros, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, page 519.)

In the book 'Pathomsombho,' there are also evidences about Dhammakaya, such as:

"... Although the Lord Buddha had passed away for a long time already, there are still the remains of His body called the holy relics as well as His 'Dhammakaya' with the helpful [wish or] heart towards [sentient] beings which are the later generations. There also exists his goodness which is uncommon among others. As His religion and teachings still last, and His disciple monks and followers, who are [knowledgeable and] capable of His Dhamma, are still available..." (an excerpt from "Pathomsombhodigata" Dhammayutti Nikaya Version, His Holiness The Supreme Patriarch (Sa), page 4)

"Although the Lord Gotama Buddha, who has his rare message available for beings. He had come to this world, with the occurrence of both his physical body and the Dhammakaya. He is full of *abbhutadhamma* as usual according to the nature of Lord Buddhas. The occurrence of his physical body happened twice, when He [or His spirit] entered His mother's womb and when he was born. The occurrence of [His] Dhammakaya means attaining enlightenment..." (an excerpt from "Pathomsombhodigata" Dhammayutti Nikaya Version, His Holiness The Supreme Patriarch (Sa), page 9)

Luang Por followed the Lord Buddha's path by preaching and propagating [his knowledge] for others to know like him. He was not possessive of his knowledge at all because he wished others to understand the meaning of Right Mindfulness and Right Mental Unification which were taught by the Lord Buddha. Luang Por tried many ways to motivate people to come practice meditation at the temple and took refuge in Buddhism, not the fortunetellers or lottery numbers predictors. He did not want people to be Buddhists just because they wanted to be in line with their ancestors or called themselves Buddhists without really understand or practice Buddhism. Luang Por knew well that everyone started with birth, continued to age throughout their lives, and ended with death and dissolvent. Thus, everyone is destined to be born, age, and die, all alike. [This process] brings them sufferings both in the present and future. This falls under the Three Common Worldly Characteristics which are impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anatta*).

On everybody's path toward the end of life, one has to experience more or less of both suffering and happiness, with one's wishes both fulfilled and unfulfilled, depending on one's

karma. Although no one wishes to face with sufferings, but when one faces with it, one would struggle to find something [or a refuge] to end them. Some are wise in finding good solutions to their sufferings, but some other are like fools. Therefore, Luang Por aimed to propagate Dhammakaya meditation to lessen people's sufferings and motivate them to visit the temple for meditation practice.

### **Curing Diseases with Meditation**

Luang Por had experimented on the superknowledge of Dhammakaya meditation until he found that it could really help others and better their lives. Although their sufferings would not be completely ceased because it was common that everyone had to experience satisfaction, dissatisfaction, fulfilled wishes, unfulfilled wishes, bad mood, mental difficulties from being separated from loved ones and things, and meet with undesirable situations. Every single life has to face with the aforesaid feelings all alike, more or less. However, meditation practice is like injecting vaccines to one's body in order to create immunities against those negative feelings with better mindfulness and wisdom. One will find that problematic sufferings can be solved more quickly and easily. The severity of karma [or karmic force] will be lessened as it is replaced by good karma like clean water that drives away waste water.

Anyone wants to be healthy and strong, nobody loves to be weak and unhealthy. There is a saying that *"arogaya parama lapa"* which means "having no disease is a grateful gain." When someone is healthy and strong, his mind can be cheerful at ease. Some people appreciate good health more than wealth because it is not worthwhile to spend all of their money to cure their health problems which sadden themselves as well as their closed ones.

Luang Por had proved [the power of meditation] by curing two patients with meditations. The first patient was sick of tuberculosis. During that time this disease was called 'the stomach abscess.' When the symptom turns bad, patients would become skinny and yellowish. They would cough so much and vomit out their blood. Another patient was sick of leprosy. These two diseases were considered to be the most dreadful diseases during that time. They were hard to cure and medications were costly. Only external medicines could be used, and they were infectious diseases. People detested patients who were sick of these diseases, so they were pitiful. Some of the patients were left at temples and medication centers for the helpless by their family members.

Luang Por had both patients practice Dhammakaya meditation. At the same time, he used the superknowledge which he gained from meditation to cure them. Luang Por gained the knowledge from his meditation research and experiment which took a long time with the commitment of his life and much endurance because he had to encounter with negative criticism which overwhelmed him. However, Luang Por did not argue, but he chose to prove what he discovered like a scientist who can prove that things that cannot be seen with naked eyes do exist, with the proper tools such as a microscope. There were people who

affirmed that they could know and see the same things as Luang Por said. Most of all, the superknowledge of Dhammakaya meditation could really lessen sufferings for them.

The news about Luang Por Wat Paknam's capability in curing dreadful patients who were detested by others were wide-spread quickly. As a result, more and more people got interested in Dhammakaya Meditation and went to Wat Paknam to study Dhamma and meditation. They also requested Luang Por for help to relieve their various problems and sufferings [with the power of meditation]. Especially on holidays, some came as a group by boat. During that time, it was quite difficult to commute to Wat Paknam since there was no road access. The bus ended its route as far as Talad Plu and in front of Wat Waramartpansararam (Wat Khun Chan). Then, temple visitors had to walk through Wat Khun Chan and passed by Wat Apsornsawan (Wat Moo) until they finally reached Wat Paknam. Most people came by boat. They got on at Pak Klong Talad Pier and got off at Ta Fai Mai Pier. Next to Wat Paknam, there were bus-boats and rental boats which knew well how to commute to Wat Paknam.

People who went to Wat Paknam were those who had sufferings and wished to take Luang Por as their refuge. There were also those who wished to prove if Luang Por was as good as they learned from the news. In addition, there were people who wished to ordain at Wat Paknam and study Dhamma or Dhammakaya Meditation. People's sufferings and troubles were various such as illness. Normally, people go to see a doctor for diagnosis when they get sick, and they may be recommended to a specialist doctor further. For those who have many diseases, they need to meet many different doctors, and each doctor will not interfere each other's treatment. However, for those who went to see Luang Por, they expected him to cure every disease including tuberculosis, leprosy, cancer, typhoid, psychosis, and mental disorder. Some people got sick due to their mental problems occurred from the relationship with their spouse or children. Some were cheated or mistreated in business. Some wished to get promoted to a higher post more quickly, and etc.

If we were to list the topics of problems of those who came to ask Luang Por for help, they start from birth until passing away. For example, for a couple who were to marry, they would consult with Luang Por if they were the right match or being able to have a sustainable marriage life. Some even asked about their future children, whether their first child would be a boy or a girl.

For those who already married but had no offspring, they would ask Luang Por to grant them a child by using his meditation power to invite good spirit to reborn in the mother's womb. When people found that their children or grandchildren always got sick and were difficult to raise, they would offer the children to Luang Por. In the same manner, if their children were naughty, unwise, misbehave, or difficult to teach, they would ask for Luang Por's power to help. It was peculiar that they did not offer good, healthy, and wise children to him. Moreover, when their children were to take an examination or having an educational competition, they would ask Luang Por for help too.

Even those who faced with problems in their career, either in private or public sector, they seek for advice from Luang Por. Farmers who had problems with draught asked Luang Por to bless for more rain, but those who encountered flood that damaged their farm lands, they asked Luang Por to drive away the monsoon. People who are afraid of rains when they organize events, they asked him to prevent the rains. For those whose relatives were ill, they asked Luang Por to cure [with meditation power]. Some of them could recover, but some could not since it was the end of their lifespan. Luang Por could not delay their death, but after they passed away, their relatives asked him where and how they were, happy or unhappy. They questioned Luang Por on how to make merit and dedicate to the deceased relatives.

You may be able to imagine that Luang Por had to welcome many guests and listened to their pleadings. Each of them took at least half an hour. If there were around 20 people who seek for advice from Luang Por each day, Luang Por had to spend at least 10 hours per day listening to his guests. By the way, he never showed any nuisance or boredom because he had compassion towards them. He helped each of the guests. Regarding rains, he ordered the advanced meditators in the meditation workshop to create or stop rains in the specific areas told by the guests. For those who did not do well in business, he gave good advice as he had experience in business before. In addition, Luang Por was also like a specialist doctor who could cure every disease, either physical or mental diseases, and not excluding mental disorder. He also played the role of fortuneteller and meditation master at the same time.

When ill persons came to ask Luang Por for help, he found that it was a good opportunity to train them to practice meditation by recollecting the Lord Buddha. It was common that people who had sufferings and difficulties wished to get rid of their problems as soon as possible. So, no matter what Luang Por recommended them to do, they followed obediently. For those patients whose symptoms were not too bad and capable of meditation practice, Luang Por instructed them to sit and repeat the mantra *samma arahang*. There were also those who had very bad symptoms that their relatives must carry them to see Luang Por face-to-face. Luang Por had them laid down and repeated the mantra. He also recommended the relatives who accompanied the patients to meditate as well. For example, when a child got sick, the parents had to practice meditation altogether with the child because parents' minds were spiritually linked to the child.

Luang Por explained that he had them repeat the mantra *samma arahang* because, in curing disease with meditation, the two parties needed to cooperate. The two parties were the curer and the cured who was confident in the curer. Thus, their minds can be spiritually connected similar to mobile phones that act like both a sender and a receiver connectable through the same frequency. This was how it made possible for meditation in curing diseases. **Luang Por said it would be okay if [the patients] did not recover because he did not charge any money. He helped with compassion. At least, the patients would know**

**how to practice meditation or had an opportunity to get closer to the Triple Gem somehow.** Luang Por said many could get well, but there were also those who recover a bit. This depends on the karma of each person. However, their opportunity to meet with Luang Por allowed them to commit good deeds in the present which would bear good fruits in the future. Numerous people could recover from illness and attained Dhammakaya. This complied to Luang Por's teaching that:

Curing the body and freed from misfortune, one survives

Attaining Dhammakaya as the by-product is excellent

This wholesome deed is the foremost splendid

May you hold it bright... the crystal that shines

When Luang Por found that someone was likely to attain Dhammakaya, he would have someone curing the disease for such person one-by-one in order to teach meditation as well. In each day, there were several people who went to see Luang Por for curing diseases. Luang Por was willing to cure every disease, but mostly there were the cases of cancer, tuberculosis, paralysis, and mental disorder.

Significantly, when World War II ended, Luang Por wished to treat hundreds of mental disorder patients at the same time because the war caused many people to be stressful, anxious, frighten, and sleepless. Some of them lost their homes, properties, and family members due to bombs, fire, and robbery. So, they were so much sorrowful and lost their mental control. Some of these people even walked around naked or murmured alone.

Some of the patients who were in bad condition, Luang Por did not refuse them. He was willing to cure them with good heart. If their relatives lived in other provinces, Luang Por let them return homes without worrying about the insane patients. Luang Por tied the patients with the hall pillars as he was afraid that they would walk away. He had a good [herbal] medicine called 'Bard-Ta-Jit.' This medicine must be dissolved with water. Some of the patients could not control themselves, Luang Por ordered someone to assist the patients in drinking this medicine. Luang Por would make a decision by himself. Those whose symptom were very bad, he increased the dose, and vice versa. Then, he had those who attained Dhammakaya to meditate and cure the symptom for the patients. This medicine would nurture the mind, and motivate sleepiness. Once the patients woke up, they would feel refreshed and healthy because they had good sleep. Luang Por took care of their livings well including meals, accommodations, and restrooms. Soon, their relatives would come to pick them up to return homes and continue the treatment at homes.

Luang Por managed to have a box in front of his abode where people could fill a form giving their details including name and last name, date of birth in term of both sun and moon calendar, address, and explaining their symptoms thoroughly. They were required to fill-in



date and time of birth because this information was like their personal ID; otherwise, the meditation practitioners might cure the wrong persons. The form must be submitted four times a day including morning, noon, afternoon, and evening. Luang Por would have someone unlock the box and bring him the forms. Then, the forms would be redistributed among Dhammakaya meditation practitioners in the meditation workshop. If a child submitted a form for his parents, Luang Por would question him if he wanted his parents to recover more quickly. If so, he would urge the child to meditate until achieving meditation experience and being able to help curing the disease for his parents.

Luang Por never charged any money for his treatment, and he never set the price for his medicines. He got tired everyday without a holiday because he wished to help fellow living beings who shared the same destiny in experiencing suffering from birth, aging, illness, and death. So, he earned much trustworthy from his disciples. Those who were wealthy would donate their money for merit making at Wat Paknam. Some brought rice, vegetables, fruits, and food to the temple's kitchen.

Aunty Treetar told me about her experience when she first met Luang Por that Luang Por recommended her to meditate in order to help her parents recover from illness more quickly. However, from this point onward, I would like to refer to Aunty Treetar as '**Ajahn Treetar**' which is the formal term commonly known among disciples of Wat Paknam. The word 'Ajahn' means 'a knowledgeable teacher' in Thai language, it is rooted from 'Acariya' in pali/sanskrit. When Thai people call someone as 'Ajahn,' it gives the sense of formality, seniority, honor, and respect toward such person.

Ajahn Treetar's story when she first met Luang Por Wat Paknam is as follows:

When Ajahn Treetar was a girl, she found that her mother always got sick with skinny and weak body. Her mother could not eat much and was unable to sleep well whereas the cause of illness was unknown. The doctor did not know what she got sick of, so he did not know how to treat her either. Ajahn Treetar's father tried looking for a good doctor for many years, but it was hopeless. The medical technology by that time was not modern yet, so there was no tool for researching the true cause of her mother's symptom. When someone recommended a good doctor or costly medicine, her father would try it regardless of the price until her mother became discouraged.

Later on, Aunty Cheun who was one of her kin had recommended that there was a capable monk at Wat Paknam, Bhasicharoen District, Thonburi Province. She said this monk could cure every disease with insight power from meditation, and there was no need to take medicine or pay money. That was what Aunty Cheun said. Ajahn Treetar's father got interested, but her mother was indifferent as she was tired of medical treatment, and she had tried many expensive medicines already. She wondered how she could recover if the monk did not give her medicines. So, her mother made excuse for not going that she did not want to leave her home as her child was still young and had to go to school. Finally, her

father agreed and was willing to wait for their only daughter, Ajahn Treetar, to finish the final examination first. Then, they would go together.

In 1939, Ajahn Treetar was 13 year old. Her father prepared to leave his home in Bangbor, Samutprakarn Province, to Wat Paknam, Pakklong Sub-District, Bhasicharoen District, Thonburi Province. In that generation, it was unlike the present days that we can take the express way for less than an hour to get to Wat Paknam. In 1939, the distance was far and difficult to commute. It was necessary to find a boat for transporting. Without relatives or siblings living on the way, one needed to stay overnight in the boat. Fortunately, Wat Paknam was next to Dan canal and Bangluang canal, boats could reach as far as the pier in front of the temple. Ajahn Treetar's father had to borrow a boat and its engine from Aunt Cheun and prepared rice and food stock because he did not know for how long he would have to stay in the boat.

Ajahn Treetar, her father, and her mother left home early in the morning whereas her elder and younger brothers were at home. Her father hired a tugboat to pull his boat to Samroang Water Gate in order to speed up and save energy. In the afternoon, they got to the pier in front of Wat Paknam. After her father docked the boat, he brought his wife and daughter to see Luang Por. By that time, Luang Por was titled at the monastic rank of Prakru Samanadhammatarn. When Ajahn Treetar saw the white Buddhist chapel of Wat Paknam, she was astonished and cried saying that "Daddy... daddy... here is the place I saw in my dream."

Earlier, Ajahn Treetar dreamed that there was a terrible storm which blew herself into the air. In the beginning, she grabbed the balustrade of her house tightly, but she could not withstand the force so she had to let herself be blown into the air as if she could fly. The gale dropped her at a square in front of a white Buddhist chapel. In front of this chapel, there was a big Pra-Du tree which can be embraced by two persons or more. At the sides of the chapel, there were many pagodas. By that time, there were two rows of Pra-Du trees planted in front of Wat Paknam. The first row was in front of the chapel, and the other row was on the bank of the canal. Later on, Luang Por had them cut down in order to make firewood for cooking rice and food for treating monks. During that time, a large wok was used to cook rice. There was no propane, only firewood was used. Thus, it was necessary to bring wood remains from furniture factory to the temple's kitchen for cooking.

On that day, it was Thursday which Thai people deemed it to be the 'teacher day.' Many people were waiting for Luang Por. It was around two o'clock in the afternoon, which was time for Luang Por to teach meditation. Ajahn Treetar's father went to pay respect to Luang Por and told him about his wife's symptoms. After Luang Por listened to him, he asked Ajahn Treetar's father to fill-in the form and drop into the box four times every day.

Then, Luang Por turned to Ajahn Treetar and questioned "Do you love your mother?" She replied "Yes sir, I do." He asked further that "Do you want your mother to recover?" Ajahn

Treetar said “Yes.” Then, Luang Por said **“If you wish your mother to recover more quickly, you have to meditate. If you attain the superknowledge of Dhammakaya, you will be able to help curing disease for your mother. Your mother will recover from illness when her child attains the superknowledge of Dhammakaya.”**

Ajahn Treetar said it was the first time in her life to hear the word ‘Dhammakaya,’ but she did not even know what it is and did not think if her mother would really recover or not due to her innocence. She was from a remote area where there were no electricity, water work, telephone, and television. She did not enjoy playing far away, but she stayed home with her parents and siblings. What she was afraid of the most was the death of her parents. She did not know how to survive if her parents passed away. She saw her mother always got sick, and she wished to help by studying well, so she could become a doctor to treat her mother. Some people told her that if one did not study well, one would not be able to study at a medical school. So, Ajahn Treetar wished her mother to live longer and wait until she graduated from a medical school, and she would be the one who cure her.

When Luang Por said that meditation practice could help curing her mother, Ajahn Treetar became joyful that she did not have to wait until graduating from a medical school which would take several more years. After she heard Luang Por’s words, she had a determination to meditate until attaining the superknowledge of Dhammakaya and being able to cure her mother. She thought that submitting the symptom report forms everyday to Buddhist nuns who practiced advanced Dhammakaya meditation was like walking by borrowing others’ shoes. It would not be comfortable as one’s own shoes.

### **Paying Homage to the Teacher**

On every Thursday at 2.00 pm, Luang Por led meditation instruction by himself at the Dhamma Hall. There were numerous monks, novice monks, Buddhist nuns, laymen, and laywomen, both from inside and outside Wat Paknam, who studied with him. Each of them would prepare a tray containing flowers, candles, incense sticks and offerings to pay homage to Luang Por who was their meditation instructor. These offerings were also prepared by Buddhist nuns at the price of 10 satang (approximately 10 cents) per tray. When there were more people who studied meditation, Luang Por disallowed them to pay homage privately, so they had to pay homage altogether and combined their offerings. Luang Por would be the one who lighted candles and incense sticks, bow to the Lord Buddha, and chanted in homage to the Lord Buddha. So, the process took less time.

Since Ajahn Treetar loved to study. She would study something thoroughly in advance prior to working on it and completed it before others. On the first day that she studied meditation, she rushed to buy a set of offerings from a Buddhist nun and took her seat earlier than anybody. It was peculiar that she chose to sit in the middle of the hall, and she waited for Luang Por’s arrival.

On that day, Luang Por walked in from the back of the hall, through the Western wing. Ajahn Treetar saw his body in saffron robes shining brightly and beautifully while he was walking. She learned later on that Luang Por normally had clean and clear complexion. But his complexion was outstandingly bright and clear on that day until it caught her eyes without knowing why Luang Por appeared to be like that.

Then, Luang Por headed toward a Buddha statue and bowed, and he continued to the monks' seat. After he took his seat, he greeted his disciples who frequently visited him and asked them about meditation experience for a while. Thus, he led everyone to pay homage to the Triple Gem, chant, and explained about meditation method.

### **Meditation Method**

Luang Por taught his disciples to meditate by sitting cross-legged, placing right leg over the left, placing right hand over the left with two palms up, allowing the left thumb to touch the right index fingers, and sitting with a straight back. Then, close the eyes [as if one were to fall asleep] and keep oneself mindful. After that, picture a crystal clear sphere without flaw, like a diamond, in one's mind. This sphere should be about the same size as an eye pupil. We call this sphere a 'meditation object' or '*nimitta*.' Picture this sphere at the nostril which is the first base of mind, right side for men and left side for women. Repeat a mantra '*samma arahang*' three times while focusing one's mind at the sphere. Luang Por explained the meaning of mind that it is the state when sensations, perceptions, volitional activities, and cognition are united at the same point.

Mind is a profound subject. It can reach anywhere depending on its quality and capacity. A narrowed mind can function narrowly while a vast mind can perform vastly. This is the same to its level of refinement that affects how it functions. We have to bring the wandering mind back into the middle of the meditation object which is the crystal clear sphere. While repeating the mantra '*samma arahang*,' we picture the crystal clear sphere and rest our mind stillly in the middle of the sphere.

Then, move the crystal clear sphere to the second base which is the corner of the eyes, right side for men and left side for women, and repeat the mantra '*samma arahang*' three times in the same manner.

Next, move the meditation object to the third base which is exactly in the middle of the head and repeat the mantra three times. While moving the meditation object to the third base, Luang Por taught that one needs to roll the eyeballs upward, trying to rotate to the back as much as possible, in order to lead the mind inward. Thereafter, move the mind to the fourth base.

The fourth base is at the roof of mouth where we choke. Repeat the mantra '*samma arahang*' three times and move the meditation object to the fifth base.

The fifth base is at the top of throat, above one's Adam's apple. Repeat the mantra three times and move the picture of crystal clear sphere to the sixth base.

The sixth base is in the middle of one's body where one's breath reaches the end. Imagine that there is a thread stretching from one's naval to the back and another thread stretching from one's right waste to the left waste, the sixth base is at the intersection of the two threads. Still the mind in the middle of the Dhamma sphere which forms the human body and repeat the mantra '*samma arahang*' three times. Then, move the meditation object to the seventh base.

The seventh base is two fingers-width above the sixth base, at the center of one's body. At this base, there are five elemental centers (see illustration). The front center is the water [or fluidity] element. The right center is the soil [or solidity] element. The left center is the wind [or motion] element. The back center is the fire [or heat] element. The middle center is the air [or space] element. Luang Por taught us to rest the meditation object, which is a crystal clear image, at the center of the air element.

Luang Por explained that it is called the 'center' because when one is to reborn, one's refined human body or spirit would stop in the middle of the sphere first. When a father and a mother have an intercourse, the spirit which is waiting at the father's seventh base will be drawn through different bases, from the father's seventh to the first base, respectively, and continue to the mother's first base to the seventh base, respectively. Finally, the spirit will be embedded at the mother's seventh base. This is how a human being reborn. **This 'center' is significant. When one is to reborn on earth, one has to rely on the 'center.'** To enter nirvana, one needs to access the 'center' as well. The spirit travels the opposite way between persons who are to die and reborn. When one is to reborn, the mind travels outward. If one wishes not to reborn, the mind has to go inward through the center by way of resting the mind still only.

### **Seeing the Initial Path Sphere**

On the day that Ajahn Treetar went to meditate with Luang Por, she followed Luang Por's instruction accordingly without any hesitation. She did not question in mind whether it was right or wrong. Upon the end of Luang Por's meditation instruction, Ajahn Treetar could see a crystal clear sphere appearing at the center of her body, in the middle of the center of the air element. The sphere was as large as a full moon. Luang Por called it the 'Pathamamagga Sphere' which means the Initial path towards the path and fruits of nirvana (Initial Path Sphere) or 'Dhammanupassanasatipattan Sphere' (the foundation in order to cultivate wisdom and enlightenment) which is the initial path leading to nirvana.

She, then, opened her eyes to look at Luang Por and found that Luang Por still closed his eyes meditating. So, Ajahn Treetar closed her eyes to meditate again, and she could still see the clear sphere. She opened her eyes again, but the sphere was still there whether she

opened or closed her eyes. By the end of the meditation session, Luang Por led everyone to pay respect to the Lord Buddha.

After the end of meditation session, Luang Por asked some of the practitioners about their meditation experiences. He also pointed to Ajahn Treetar and said “Come here, Lek!” (Lek is Ajahn Treetar’s nick name). Then, Ajahn Treetar moved closer to Luang Por. He asked her “You saw it already, right?” Ajahn Treetar was both surprised and amazed that Luang Por could know her meditation experience. She dared not to question anything, and Luang Por said “You made it now. Your mother will not die. You have to continue further [to the higher level of meditation]. Once she heard that her mother would not die, she had a goose bump full of delightfulness. She thought “Mom! I can make it. I can help you now. I will cure you to be healthier, so you can live with me for a longer time.”

As Ajahn Treetar saw the initial path sphere, Luang Por had her meditate further with *Maechee* (Buddhist Nun) Boonchuay in order to reach the more advanced level. Finally, Ajahn Treetar attained the superknowledge of Dhammakaya meditation (Vijja Dhammakaya). Soon after that, *Maechee* Boonchuay passed away. So, Ajahn Treetar studied furthermore with a Buddhist nun, Reverend Yanee Sirivoharn.

Reverend Yanee passed away on 6 December 1976. Ajahn Treetar organized a merit-making memorial service for her yearly. Previously, *Maechee* Rampa Bhokhamshy was the organizer. Later on, she asked Ajahn Treetar to replace her. So, Ajahn Treetar has organized the merit-making memorial service for everyone who attained Dhammakaya and already passed away whereas Luang Por Wat Paknam is at the top of the list. It is called ‘**Dhammakaya Memorial Day.**’

After Ajahn Treetar attained the superknowledge of Dhammakaya Meditation, she could cure the disease for her mother who had a chronic unidentifiable disease for 12 years. There was no doctor who could cure her successfully, either the Western or traditional doctors. However, her mother could recover and get well after she came to have treatments with Luang Por for 13 months. In addition, she did not have to take any medicine. Since then, she could live her life normally as in the time before she got sick, and she could live as long as 24 more years after that.

Some of the readers may doubt why Ajahn Treetar could attain the meditation experience easily within just the first meditation session. It took her only a while to see the sphere, but some people were unable to see it although they had meditated for tens of years. She explained that there are two cofactors that contribute to the attainment of meditation experience. The first one is *pubbekatapunyata* and the other one is *attasammapanidhi* which mean the level of merit accumulated from the past and perseverance in the present. In case of Ajahn Treetar, she said that she did not have much perseverance by that time since she was just a child who did not know much about the Dhamma, but she had a firm intention to attain and see the meditation experience because she wanted her mother to

recover. So, she tried to keep her mind focused and followed Luang Por's instructions accordingly.

Ajahn Treetar said that a person who attained Dhammakaya would have a special capability in curing his sick parents as his mind became more determined and powerful, similar to a stream that flows to one direction only. The water force is more powerful than a stream that splits into different channels.

After Ajahn Treetar attained the superknowledge of Dhammakaya meditation, she knew that she could see Luang Por's bright and beautiful aura on the first day he taught her meditation because of '*ayatana*' or 'sense' that reconnected her opened mind [that acted like a receiver]. Everyone's mind normally has *ayatana*. The *ayatana* of one's eyes functions by attracting pictures whereas the nose's attracts smell; the tongue's attracts taste; the body's attracts feeling from touching. Lastly, the *ayatana* of one's mind functions by attracting emotions.

At that time, Ajahn Treetar's mind became fully faithful. She was waiting for someone to guide her, similar to a lotus flower that is ready to bloom as soon as it receives sunlight in the morning. Thus, by the end of Luang Por's meditation instruction, she could see the initial path sphere appearing at the seventh base of her mind immediately.

### **Charging Pure Energy with Dhammakaya Meditation**

Luang Por did not only cure sick people, he could also help those who already passed away by charging merit [energy] to them as requested by their relatives. Luang Por used the word 'charging' merit instead of 'dedicating' merit because he used [the power of Dhammakaya meditation] to charge merit energy into the merit sphere of each diseased person. This is different from traditional merit transference or dedication made by common Buddhists.

Ajahn Treetar has always emphasized that this is real, not a fiction. Those who attained Dhammakaya, during the lifetime of Luang Por, knew about this very well. Many of Luang Por's disciples told their descendants to organize a merit-making memorial service for them at Wat Paknam after they passed away. Even in the present, Wat Paknam still organizes merit-making memorial services for [close] disciples although there is no crematorium and memorial service hall. [When Luang Por was alive,] the merit-making memorial service was organized at an old multipurpose hall which was used for various activities such as having meals for monks and novice monks during daytime and becoming a sleeping place for Buddhist nuns at nighttime. Sometimes, Buddhist nuns had to sleep in front of the coffins. Those who were afraid of ghosts had to move to sleep somewhere else. But most Buddhist nuns were not afraid of ghosts because they were confident in Luang Por's power of goodness.

At night, when the monks conducted a memorial service by chanting Abhidhamma Verse in dedication to the diseased person, Luang Por would order at least 3 advanced Dhammakaya

meditators to join the ceremony and meditate. The advanced Dhammakaya meditators would invite the spirit of the diseased one to receive dedicated merit, no matter where they were, either heaven or the unwholesome realms such as hell, realm of hungry ghosts, realm of demons and monsters, realm of animals, or as a wandering ghost. The advanced meditators were capable of inviting these spirits [to join the memorial service.] The spirit was normally invited before the laypeople made their vows to observe Buddhist precepts because Luang Por wished the spirit to observe Buddhist precepts as well. Then, they listened to the Abhidhamma Verse chanting as a way to gain merit. Moreover, Luang Por managed to prepare an empty cushion mat for the spirit to sit on. [Note: Abhidhamma is the Lord Buddha's teaching that was delivered for the first time to His angel mother and other celestial beings in heaven. Abhidhamma or high Dhamma is very complicated and hard to comprehend.]

After the Buddhist monks finished the first round of chanting (Abhidhamma Verse, Malai Verse, or Sanghaha Verse), Luang Por would question the advanced meditators if the spirit of the diseased person had joined the ceremony. All of the three Buddhist nuns' answers must be the same; otherwise, Luang Por would order them meditate and recheck again. This is the reason why Luang Por required as many as three Buddhist nuns to invite the spirit. By the end of each round of chanting, Luang Por would ask the meditators again and again until the end.

When Ajahn Treetar was a young Buddhist nun, Luang Por also ordered her to invite spirits during memorial services for many times. She said whenever Luang Por questioned her, she was shy and felt uncomfortable to reply because she was afraid that others would not believe in what she said. She was aware that, indeed, Luang Por already knew if the spirit had come or not. As she was still young, she wondered why Luang Por had to ask since he was more capable in meditation. In fact, Luang Por wished others to know the power of Dhammakaya meditation as witnessed by herself [and other advanced meditators.] Although she was afraid of Luang Por, she had to reply according to his order. By that time, she did not want anyone to die and organize a memorial service at Wat Paknam because she was too shy and wished to avoid inviting spirits during the ceremony.

### **A Celestial Being from Yama Heaven**

Luang Por's capability in communicating with the spirits is well evidenced in the article of Pratipparinya (Dhoop Klampasut, Pali Grad Level 6) who used to be a judge of Thai court. A part of his article is as follows:

"One day, I visited a temple in Bangkok area. I met Luangjopkrabuanut who told me that he had gone to Wat Paknam with his wife since they heard the rumor that the abbot (Luang Por) could visit heaven and hell. So, they went to see the abbot and expressed their wish to meet their father who already passed away. They wished to know where their father was. The abbot was reluctant, so they reproved that if the abbot did not prove them the truth, it



would mean that the rumor was untrue. They said that, finally, the abbot could not bear it and ordered a monk and a Buddhist nun to see him. Then, the abbot told them what Luangjopkrabuanut wanted. After that, the monk and the nun started to meditate while Luangjopkrabuanut told them his father-in-law's name. For a moment, the monk said he could not find such person. So, the abbot asked the monk to recheck the list thoroughly. Soon, the monk said he found such person who already reborn as a celestial being in Yama Heaven (the 3<sup>rd</sup> level from 6 levels of heaven in Buddhism). Then he told the Buddhist nun that he wished to borrow her body. In a few moment, he said [the celestial being already arrived] and the Buddhist nun opened her eyes. The abbot asked the spirit in the Buddhist nun's body where he was from. He said he was from Yama Heaven, and he lived around Wat Yairom when he was alive. The abbot asked him further what was the meritorious deed that resulted him to reborn as a celestial being or angel. The Buddhist nun replied "Building a Buddhist chapel." At this point, Luangjopkrabuanut was surprised because his father-in-law really made merit by building a Buddhist chapel which he also took part, but it was a long time ago. He noticed that the Buddhist nun was still young, and it seemed that she was born after that. He wondered how she could reply correctly. Then, the abbot asked again "How many children did you have?" The Buddhist nun could give the right answer by telling about both the son and daughter. Next, the abbot asked the Buddhist nun about Luangjopkrabuanut and his wife. The Buddhist nun looked at both of them and asked Luangjopkrabuanut "You are Cham, right?" Then, the nun turned to the wife and said "You are Kruaem right?" Both of them said "Yes." Finally, they cried since they missed their father so much. They wondered that the abbot and the Buddhist nun did not know their nicknames, and how could the nun tell their nicknames correctly. This is the story that Luangjopkrabuanut, whose name was Cham, experienced by himself. It was amazing how the Buddhist nun could call his former name correctly."

Luang Por had explained about the method in charging or transferring merit (pure life-energy) to a person who already passed away as follows:

A human being who already passed away and had sufferings in the hell realm is unable to come and receive merit energy [or punya]. Also, one who reborn as an animal, having [worldly] foods, is unable to receive merit energy. This is the same to human beings and various types of animal who are unable to receive [the transferred] merit. If a person reborn as a celestial being, he is eligible for receiving the transferred merit. However, if his relatives do not dedicate to him or nobody informs him [about the dedicated merit], he will not receive it as well. There is an exception for some kind of the hungry ghosts, but the other hungry ghosts who suffer [the punishment] badly are unable to come and receive merit as well.

Those who can receive merit are the hungry ghosts who seek for merit dedicated by their relatives, similar to Buddhist monks and novice monks who seek for alms from alley to alley, village, and market. The faithful people would offer foods to the monks. When the people

give alms to the monks, it is not the business of beggars, senior people, and young people who pass by. These people do not receive foods because it is not their duty to receive alms. The people give alms to monks and novice monks only. The hungry ghosts have to live like that because they are poor. They need to rely on others. When someone dedicates merit in general without any restriction, they can receive it. It is the same manner as monks and novice monks who can receive alms. Everyone likes and wishes to receive food. It can be given to the general beings. Even celestial beings can receive by rejoicing in the merit (*anumodana* or expressing the wish to accept or take part in the dedicated merit with appreciation). If they do not rejoice in the merit, they cannot receive [the shared good life-energy].

It is much easier for those who attain Dhammakaya. [The diseased person] can receive all the merit made [for them] because the Dhammakaya can inform them to rejoice in the merit. Then, the merit dedication will be successful as one's wish. Although a spirit reborn in hell realm, the Dhammakaya can visit them in hell and bring merit energy to them. So, they can receive merit and be freed from [punishment in] hell. The [dedicated merit energy] can also be delivered to the celestial beings who already have much merit and dignity. For human beings and animals, the merit energy can be given to their refined body [which rests inside their physical body]. Although the human body is unaware, but [the Dhammakaya] can give [merit energy] to his refined human body or celestial body [inside him]. (A Sermon titled "Bhattanumodanagatha" given on 16 January 1955)

### **A Japanese Monk Who Attained Meditation Experience**

The Most Venerable Prarajpromthera (Veera Uttaranadhi) wrote an article about Japanese Buddhist monks who attained meditation experiences that "when the Buddhist clergic representatives from Japan visited Wat Paknam on 16 June 1954, after they attended the Fellowship of Buddhist Conference in India and observed the holy Buddhist scriptures revision in Myanmar. On 17 June which was the following day, the Most Venerable Prarajpromthera, who was called Pra Veera by that time, had paid a visit to His Holiness the Patriarch of Japan's Shoto Sect. They had conversed about *vipassana* meditation whereas Pra Veera explained the Dhammakaya meditation method which His Holiness was very much interested. Moreover, His Holiness said that the meditation method of Wat Paknam was very good, and he would bring it into practice further. Normally, the Buddhist monks of Shoto Sect in Japan focus their mind at their forehead or bridge of nose.

Venerable Kashiyuisai, one of the Japanese Buddhist clergic representatives, wished to know where his father was in the afterlife. So, Pra Veera invited members of the clergic representatives and their followers to try meditation practice, and the whole group agreed. For Venerable Kashiyuisai, Pra Veera told him specifically in details about the way to look for his father in the afterlife. Upon the end of the meditation session, Venerable Kashiyuisai opened his eyes brimmed with tears and said with impression that "... since I was born until now, I never experienced the kind of happiness which is superior to the attainment of

Nirvana among the Lord Buddha's disciples as I just had experienced in a few moment earlier." (An excerpt from 'When a Japanese Monk Attained Meditation Experience' by Kanuttamo Bhikkhu)

It was uncommon that numerous people were faithful upon Luang Por when he was alive. But it is even extremely rare that people in the present still take refuge upon him as if he were still alive although he has already passed away for 50 years. In addition, these people of the present generation never met Luang Por personally before. Many of them request him for help and they promise to make merit in dedication to him if their wishes come true.

After Luang Por passed away, his disciples still follow Luang Por's practice by preparing an empty cushion mat in front of his coffin. Some of the children who followed their parents and elders to pay respect to Luang Por said they saw a Buddhist monk sitting on the mat. In addition, the temple also manages to offer a tray of savory and sweet dishes to Luang Por daily for both breakfast and lunch. Laypeople also do the same thing by offering food, fruits, and beverages to Luang Por and they requested these offerings back for their own consumption for the sake of their good health. Not so long after Luang Por passed away, there were people who offered foods after noon including liquor, and they offered a dinner sometimes. It was probably because they followed the tradition from Thai Buddhist memorial service where the diseased person received three meals as offerings. So, The Most Venerable Rajmolee (Narong Thitayano, Pali Grad Level 4), the past abbot of Wat Rajorossaram, who used to live with Luang Por and hold the monastic title as 'Prakrupalad' and supervised the construction and general affairs of Wat Paknam like the temple's manager, had to post a regulation that prohibited people from offering liquor and afternoon meals to Luang Por.

In 1983, Luang Por's disciples had managed to build a wax image of Luang Por and enshrined this image on the empty cushion mat.

### **A Stratagem for Introducing Meditation**

In reality, Luang Por's effort in lessening sufferings for people who had difficulties, illness, as well as helping the spirits who already passed away is merely the by-product of his main goal in promoting people to practice generosity, observe precepts, and practice meditation. He wished to see everyone practicing meditation in order to diminish their own sensual desire, cease sufferings, enhance mental calm and wisdom, and attain Nirvana. Luang Por's meditation method is to recollect the wholesome and virtuous Lord Buddha. As a result, one's mind will absorb such wholesomeness and virtues [automatically]. Thus, one will get bored of the worldly pleasure, and this will eventually lead towards liberation of life.

It is uneasy for common people who have no background and knowledge in Buddhism to get inspired to practice meditation because they have many worldly responsibilities each day. Some of them wish to practice meditation at a temple, but they are too busy. Some still enjoy working to earn for living and initiating new things for their lives. Many people want

to get rich and go to the temples after they retire. Also, there are people who think that only elders or troubled persons go to the temples. Some people want to be freed from responsibilities toward their family or their career first. Some parents want their children to graduate or marry first, and they will practice Buddhism at the temples later. However, when they have grandchildren, they tend to get busy with their grandchildren and unable to empty their mind to meditate.

These people are unaware that the five kinds of evil *mara* are trying to minimize their opportunities in cultivating good deeds. The five groups of evil *mara* are as follows:

1. *Khanda Mara* who causes illness. When people practice meditation, *Khanda Mara* makes them get sick and causes pains [and bodily discomfort]. So, they are unable to meditate for a long time.
2. *Kilesa Mara* who causes mental blemish or impurity. As a result, people become moody or have their minds wandered, busy, and puzzled.
3. *Abhisankhara Mara* means both wholesome and unwholesome karma that cause people to cling into this realm and become saddened?
4. *Dhevabutr Mara* means those who have ill wills. This is the personification of ones who destruct [and obstruct] others [who do good deeds].
5. *Majju Mara* means death which ends one's life as well as one's opportunity in doing good deeds.

### **Meditation Sessions**

Luang Por dedicated his life for the study, research, and propagation of Dhammakaya meditation. He supervised the instruction by himself. After evening chanting and sermon, he would teach monks and novice monks by himself daily. Buddhist nuns would meditate separately at the multipurpose hall or at the residence of Ms. Saiyud Piankerdsuk, but later on they moved to the residence of Ms. Liab Sikanchananun (already demolished).

On every Thursday at 2.00 pm, Luang Por taught meditation to all disciples altogether at the multipurpose hall. There were Buddhist monks, novice monks, Buddhist nuns, laymen, laywomen, and other interested people who participated the meditation session. This session had more people when comparing to other sessions, but most participants were new comers who wanted to pay homage to the meditation teacher. [It is comparable to an orientation for new students.] There were also monks from Cambodia and Lao. Luang Por would record the number of participants every time, and he also assigned a monk to create an attendant listing.

At this hall, Luang Por managed for the monks to sit on monks' stage whereas the laypeople sat on the floor. Luang Por prepared his presentation very well. He had explanations which could be understood easily. In addition to his verbal narration and explanation alone, he also had tools for illustration. So, the audience did not have to rely on their own imagination only. Luang Por had prepared the best illustration tools that he could find in

that time. If he were to teach in the present, I believe that he would have use a computer and an animation software.

### **Luang Por's Tools for Teaching**

Prior to meditation practice, Luang Por distributed a booklet titled "The Path to Nirvana" which was like a handbook for basic Dhammakaya meditation. In front of Luang Por, there was a glass, a crystal ball which was 0.5 inch in diameter, a blackboard with a drawing showing the seven bases of mind where a meditation object is pictured and focused in mind.

There are three levels of a meditation object seen in meditation. They are (1) *parikamma nimitta* which is pictured or visualized during meditation (2) *ukkaha nimitta* which is a meditation object that is pictured and clearly seen in mind with closed eyes and (3) *patipaka nimitta* means an *ukkaha nimitta* that a meditation practitioner becomes familiar with until it appears clearly in mind without an effort to visualize. This image can be scaled up and down per one's wish.

The First Base: The crystal sphere is at the nostril, right side for men and left side for women

The Second Base: Move the crystal sphere to the corners of the eyes, right side for men and left side for women

The Third Base: Move the crystal sphere to the middle of the head. Luang Por used the term 'Jomprasart'

The Fourth Base: Move the crystal sphere to the roof of mouth (same level as the first base)

The Fifth Base: Move the crystal sphere to the top of throat

The Sixth Base: Move the crystal sphere to the middle of the body at the navel's level

The Seventh Base: Move the crystal sphere two fingers-width above the sixth base

When Luang Por explained, he used a wand to point at the illustration [on the blackboard] showing how the crystal sphere is moved from base to base.

Luang Por explained the seven bases of mind as the background for students. After that, Luang Por would use the words 'the seventh base' the most. If the students did not learn about the seven bases of mind, they would doubt where the other six bases were.

Significantly, in meditation, it is necessary to focus our mind within our body, not somewhere else outside. Once the meditation object is located in one's body, one may question where the meditation object should enter the body. After learning the seven bases of mind, new meditation practitioners would know this because Luang Por taught

them thoroughly in details. Before moving the meditation object from base to base, Luang Por taught everyone to repeat the mantra 'samma arahang' three times first in order to allow the mind to become still at each base for a moment.

### **Preparation Before Meditation Practice**

When practicing meditation, it is necessary for the meditators to feel relieved and detached from all worries [on worldly responsibilities]. One does not have to think of both good and bad things. If the mind keeps wandering, the mind cannot be focused. Therefore, the meditators have to let go of everything including the Dhamma doctrines and theories that they have learnt and focus on meditation practice only; otherwise, they will have *vijikijcha* (doubts and hesitation which eventually prevent them from attaining goodness or prohibit their mind from receiving wholesomeness), as a result the meditators are unable to achieve meditation experience as they wish.

Luang Por started from the Lord Buddha's teaching that required all creatures not to commit misdeeds through their action, speech, and thought, but commit only good deeds and keep their mind pure. These three requirements are the teaching of all the Lord Buddhas in the past, present, and future. (Buddhists believe that a common person can cultivate good deeds for a considerable number of lifetime until his perfections are fulfilled and become a Buddha.)

In abstention from misdeeds, one has to observe at least five Buddhist precepts. In committing good deeds, one has to practice at least the five ethical conducts. However, the mental purity is achievable through *samatha* & *vipassana* meditation practice. *Samatha* is the primary practice that Buddhists should take into account. It simply means 'mental calm.' Whenever one achieves *samatha*, the sensual desire in one's mind will cease. *Vipassana* is the more advanced practice which means 'insight' and 'the cultivation of wisdom.' When one gains wisdom, the ignorance in one's mind will be ceased by the insight power. Luang Por had always emphasized that he learned meditation continuously since the very day after his ordination until he attained Dhammakaya. Then, he still continued to learn further and taught meditation at the same time.

### **What and Where is The Mind?**

In order to achieve *samatha* meditation, there is only one method which is to still the mind. Normally, one's mind is in the form of a sphere which comprises of **sensation sphere, perception sphere, volitional activities sphere, and cognition sphere**. The sensation sphere is a sphere of element or *dhatu* that enables us to see things whereas the perception sphere is a sphere of element that allows us to remember things. The volitional activities sphere processes our thinking, and the cognition sphere makes us gain understanding. When these four spheres unite at a single point, it is called the mind. **There is only one [permanent] location of the mind which is in the middle of the Dhamma sphere that forms the human body**, at the center of one's body. If we imagine that there is a thread stretching from the

navel to the back and another thread stretching from the right waste to the left waste, the intersection of the two threads is called 'the middle of the body at navel's level' or the sixth base of mind. Two fingers-width above this intersection is called 'the center of the body' or the seventh base which is the home-base of our mind.

Luang Por always emphasized during a meditation session that practitioners had to 'pay attention.' This means that their mind must rest at the seventh base. Whenever one makes merit, observes precepts and practices meditation, one should rest the mind there. The seventh base comprises of the five earthly elements which are water or fluidity (to the front), soil or solidity (to the right), wind or motion (to the left), fire or heat (to the back), and air (at the center). This is why the seventh base is the most important.

Luang Por compared the seventh base of mind to an opening of a glass, and he pointed the tip of his wand into it saying that "this is the base of mind."

### **Meditation Object & Mantra**

A *nimitta* is an image used in meditation. [It is also called a meditation object]. It helps keep the mind focused and allows the mind to familiarize with it. The main reason why we need a meditation object is because one's mind normally wanders at all times. Although the scientists claim that the speed of light is the fastest, but Buddhism teaches that the speed of one's mind is the fastest. It is also compared to a 'monkey.' Thus, the Lord Buddha taught us to control the mind to become still with meditation practice. When we meditate until making achievement, our mind will be able to see and understand various conditions quickly, it can go anywhere, no matter which realm.

Luang Por had techniques that promoted mental stillness. In the beginning, we need something for the mind to cling on by way of picturing a meditation object which is a crystal clear sphere in our mind. Luang Por chose a crystal clear sphere because it resembled the *Pattamamaggha* Sphere or the Initial Path Sphere. So, we will not see other [distracting] pictures that cause mental anxiety and discomfort or lose our mental focus. For those who cannot still the mind with a meditation object only, they also need to repeat a mantra. Mantra repeating means repeating sacred words in mind during meditation. Luang Por recommended his students to repeat the mantra '*samma arahang*.'

Some people did not understand why Luang Por had to teach meditation by picturing a crystal sphere as a meditation object. They criticized that he taught people to have attachment on a subject or cling to a meditation object. So, Luang Por asked them back "if we don't cling first, how can we know when we get detached." Luang Por made an analogy that when we were to go upstairs, we need a staircase. If we don't step on the first step firmly, we will not be able to move forward to the second step. So, it is necessary to step on the first step firmly before leaving the first step and move up to the second step. When we are to take the third step, we have to step on the second step firmly first before leaving it later. This means that we do not really cling to any particular step.

Some people doubt why the meditation object has to be a crystal sphere in mind. They also wonder if they can picture or visualize something else if they cannot picture a crystal sphere.

Ajahn Treetar said that the *nimitta* or meditation object can be anything because it is simply a technique that helps keeping the mind focused until gaining meditation experiences. One should master the visualization until the image becomes clear in mind at all times, even when he closes his eyes, the image should appear clearly in mind. In order to achieve this level, one needs to picture the image in one's mind frequently until it appears automatically.

Luang Por had experimented on meditation objects and found that the image of a crystal sphere was the easiest and the most convenient and appropriate for picturing in mind because it resembles the Dhamma sphere within everyone's body. However, if one is to visualize a Buddha image, one has to choose among several Buddha images in different postures. They are also different from each other in term of material and size.

If any meditation practitioner is unable to visualize an image of a crystal sphere, he may visualize a Buddha image or the image of Luang Por Wat Paknam or a flower. The important issue is to be able to still the mind which normally wanders like a playful monkey.

### **The Origin of 'Samma Arahang'**

In the beginning, Luang Por's meditation mantra 'Samma Arahang' was criticized by some people that it was an unfamiliar and unknown word. Also, some mentioned that the mantra was lengthy and incompact. They wondered why Luang Por had to choose this word and asked if he could change to something else. Luang Por listened to their comments with a smile. Indeed, there is a good reason behind his decision which is explainable. Luang Por knew that this mantra would be beneficial for practitioners as it was derived from holy verses involving the Lord Buddha's goodness. So, repeating this mantra is a recollection of the Lord Buddha.

The Most Venerable Dhammakosajahn, from Wat Mahadhatu, had explained about the auspicious meditation mantra 'Samma Arahang' as follows:

"The recollection of the Lord Buddha seems to be the first reason why the Lord Abbot of Wat Paknam was interested and taught his disciples in particular. In every meditation session, one needs to recollect the Lord Buddha in one's mind because recollection of the Lord Buddha is the practice that awakens, brightens, empowers, and motivates the mind in practicing meditation further. It is a good practice for common Buddhists. Normally, when someone has no refuge, his mind usually wanders. It is uneasy to have it calmed. So, the mind needs the Lord Buddha as its refuge. Then, the mind will be secured day and night because the mind is reconnected to the Lord Buddha. This complies to the Lord Buddha's saying that "Any disciple of Lord Gotama Buddha whose mindfulness focuses on the Lord all day and night, either when they are awake or sleep, they deem to be well awaken already."



Due to this reason, recollection of the Lord Buddha is the foremost virtue that cherishes happiness to the practitioners. Therefore, Luang Por Wat Paknam was very much interested, and it was well-known that he always cautioned the Buddhists not to be ‘an empty person.’ He recommended them to take the Lord Buddha as the subject of their mindfulness cultivation. Although one is still unable to attain the superior levels of enlightenment, but it is affirmable that one will reborn in heaven, not in hell. This agrees with the Lord Buddha’s saying that “people who take refuge in the Lord Buddha, they will not reborn in the unwholesome realms. After they pass away, they will join the celestial society.”

Therefore, the recollection of the Lord Buddha is the virtue that secures one’s mind to be in good condition. As Luang Por always cautioned his disciples to recollect the Lord Buddha always. This is admirable and should be taken into practice by the general public.” (by Pradhammakosajahn, Wat Mahadhatu, a sermon delivered during Luang Por’s Memorial Service at Wat Paknam on 9 February 1959)

### **The Meaning of ‘Samma Arahang’**

The term ‘Samma Arahang’ is from Pali language. It is a combination of two separate words which are *samma* and *arahang*.

*Samma* is a profound word which means ‘right,’ ‘good,’ ‘superb,’ and ‘complete.’ In the nine verses for recollection of the Lord Buddha, this term appears in the form of ‘sambuddho’ which means the one who attains enlightenment rightfully by himself. Beside these verses, it also appears in the Noble Eightfold Path discourse where the term ‘samma’ is the prefix of eight paths such as ‘sammadhitti’ and ‘sammasamkappa.’

The term ‘arahang’ (araham) is the beginning part of the Lord Buddha’s virtue verse. It means that the Lord is an arahant (fully enlightened one). When the two terms are placed together, *samma arahang* means the Lord Buddha is righteously an enlightened one. Hence, Luang Por’s mantra has a sublime meaning which refers to the recollection of the Lord Buddha.

A Buddhist guru in the ancient time had divided the mantra *samma arahang* into five components and clarified them separately as ‘sam,’ ‘ma,’ ‘ar,’ ‘ra,’ and ‘hang.’ Each of the prefix and suffix is given definitions as follows:

#### **SAM**

*Sangkata sangkate dhamme samma teseti paninam sam sarassa vikateti sambuddhampi namamigam*

1. The Lord Buddha righteously taught both Samgata Dhamma and Asamgata Dhamma to sentient beings.
2. The Lord Buddha could terminate the cycle of birth and death.

3. The Lord Buddha attained enlightenment by himself.  
I humbly pay homage.

The Buddhist guru gave a hint that if one chants this verse prior to entering a battle, nobody can harm him.

### MA

*Matava manapalite manasatte pamatdhi yo manito devasangkehi managat mamiham*

1. The Lord Buddha trained those who had ego.
2. The Lord Buddha is well respected by celestial beings.
3. The Lord Buddha could destroy ego.  
I humbly pay homage.

The Buddhist guru hinted that this verse could be used when one faced with an arrogant person; meaning that when you have to meet with an arrogant person who treats you in an unpleasing way, this verse can be used to ease the situation.

### AR

*Anussaha sabba sattanam anussaheti yo shino anantakuna sampanno anuttagami namamiham*

1. The Lord Buddha taught those who had no diligence to be diligent.
2. The Lord Buddha was infinitely full of virtues.
3. The Lord Buddha had reached the end of suffering.  
I humbly pay homage.

The Buddhist guru explained that one could chant this verse to protect oneself against tigers and crocodiles; meaning that when one had to enter a jungle which was full of wild animals or enter a water source which was full of dangerous animals, one may meditate and chant this verse to secure oneself.

### RA

*Rato nibbanasampatto rato so sattamo ca no ramapetita satteyo ramatatam namamiham*

1. The Lord Buddha was mindful in the Dhamma which enabled him to attain Nirvana.
2. The Lord Buddha freed sentient beings from suffering.
3. The Lord Buddha was the one who granted Nirvana which was enjoyable.  
I humbly pay homage.

Anyone who chants this verse regularly will be able to secure himself against black magic and bad spirits.

## HANG

*Hanyati papake dhamme ham sapeti patam chanam ham samanam mahaveeram  
hanpapam namamiham*

1. The Lord Buddha had killed sin.
2. The Lord Buddha caused others to prefer killing sin.
3. The Lord Buddha was cheerful.
4. The Lord Buddha already killed sin.

I humbly pay homage.

The Buddhist guru taught that when one was to have a war, one should chant this verse to secure oneself.

The verses which clarify the meanings of each prefix and suffix in the mantra *samma arahang*, altogether with their benefits, are for the faithful ones who meditate until their minds become stable. As a result, they will achieve the benefits as explained.

However, this mantra can be used for the worldly expectation; meaning that when one repeats it regularly, one will be free from harm, deal with the arrogant persons more easily, protect oneself against dangerous animals, as well as black magic and shamanism which were explained earlier. In term of Dhamma, those who repeat this mantra will see and know thoroughly in the Dhamma, destroy the cycle of birth and death, destroy one's ego, enhance one's diligence, promote one's preference in Nirvana, and kill all the sins.

In addition, the mantra *arahang* was used by people in the ancient time or some people in the modern days for guiding those who are to die. One would introduce the sick persons to repeat this mantra before passing away. It is believed that the sick persons whose minds could incline toward this mantra will be able to reborn in the wholesome realm such as heaven. So, this mantra has been recommended until the present days.

This is a good practice. In a Buddhist scripture called *Dhammapada*, there is a story about an angel Mattakundalee. Before he passed away, he was overwhelmed by illness, but his mind was delighted by the Lord Buddha's radiance. This enabled him to reborn as an angel in heaven. So, introducing this mantra to severely sick persons will yield good impact to one's mind. However, the meaning of *arahang* will be explained further.

In the *Visuddhimagga* Text, Volume 1, which is an important Buddhist text, the definition of *arahang* is given clearly as follows:

*Aragatta hatta ca kilesarina so muni hattasamsara cakkaro paccayatana maraho na raho  
karoti papani araham tena vuccati*

The Lord Buddha who is a sage is called *arahang* because he is distant from his enemy, and he could defeat his enemy or defilement. He could put an end to [his] reincarnation. He is

the one who deserves offerings which comprises of the four necessities as he is the one who does not commit bad deeds, even in an unseen place.

According to the aforesaid pali verses and their translation, we can see that the mantra *samma arahang* is very much meaningful, and it connotes the Lord Buddha's virtues directly. The meditation guru used this mantra for meditation practice and instruction because he clearly understood its meaning and aimed toward the sublime goal because when he repeated this mantra, he needed to have a determination in eradicating defilement, ending the cycle of birth, behaving himself well as a fertile field of merit, and abstaining from bad or sinful deeds both in the public and private places. So, it is a righteous practice of Luang Por's disciples who put an effort to meditate with this mantra in order to attain the arahantship (*araham* or *arahang*). (Compiled by Colonel Arporn Diloksophon)

### **Stillness of Mind is The Key to Success**

Disciples of Luang Por Wat Paknam who follow his meditation practice would understand this axiom. When he was alive, Luang Por always emphasized on 'stilling' the mind. The reason why we have to still the mind is because it is the path toward mental liberation and purity that frees oneself from sufferings. If one wishes to learn more about this path, one has to contemplate on impermanence with his wisdom. This starts from considering the five aggregates (*khanda*) of oneself and other surrounding beings until covering the infinite universe.

As we understand that things are not permanent, we will be bored of sufferings. Then, we will be able to let go of all things and eliminate attachment. On the contrary, if one still believes that one's five aggregates, lovers, and belongings will last forever, and one is willing to hold on to them without letting go, one will not be able to keep one's mind still.

Luang Por said **"Stillness is the most significant because it is the heart of *samatha*, and it is the key to success in both the worldly and Dhamma path.** Happiness will occur to the world when the mind becomes still in the worldly way. However, happiness in the Dhamma path will occur when the mind becomes still in the Dhamma way. This complies to the *pali* axiom that "No other happiness surpasses the stillness of mind." This is why stillness is so important.

Up to this point, Luang Por emphasized with an amusement that "Isn't it peculiar? In the worldly way, one has to be quick, speed up, and study until becoming knowledgeable and able to know others' tricks and strategies in order to govern others and manage to be prosperous. On the contrary, the Dhamma way requires one to be still only in order to proceed."

Luang Por said that it is not his own saying, but it is from the Tipitaka (holy Buddhist scripture). Then, he exemplified the story of Angulimala who ran after the Lord Buddha with an effort to kill Him, but he was not able to catch up. Thus, he felt disheartened and

yelled at the Lord Buddha asking him to standstill. The Lord Buddha turned his face toward Angulimala and replied “*Samana* (priest) is still, but you are not.” His words allowed Angulimala to gain wisdom [and decide to become a Buddhist monk.] The word ‘still’ complies to the *samatha* approach, from the very beginning until attaining arahantship or full enlightenment. It is the key of Buddhism which follows the Lord Buddha’s teaching. If one is unable to keep one’s mind still, one will not be able to follow the Lord Buddha’s steps correctly although one has been practicing for 40 to 50 years or even a hundred years. Later on, the Lord Buddha taught Angulimala until he attained full enlightenment.

A still mind becomes pure naturally and automatically since there are no mental difficulties such as lust, desire, revenge, wrong views, greed, anger, delusion, sexual desire, dissatisfaction, and ignorance. Luang Por said “Simply remain still... from the very beginning until attaining complete enlightenment.” As a Buddhist, we should believe in the Lord Buddha and follow his teachings accordingly. This is what Luang Por always taught.

### **Techniques for Mental Stillness**

If we were to question Luang Por which level of mental stillness would be enough, he would have answered “as much as possible” because the more mental stillness we gain, the more prosperous we will be. However, mental stillness requires some techniques. One needs to leave the experience at a level in order to advance into the deeper levels. In Dhammakaya meditation, it does not mean that nothing happens when one keeps his mind still because the progress of meditation experience occurs when the mind becomes still. So, one has to persevere in keeping one’s mind still firmly and continuously, and one will be able to make progress quickly.

Luang Por advised those who wished to make merit in Buddhism to practice *samatha* and *vipassana*, starting from stilling and stabilizing the mind. He reaffirmed that “Stillness of mind is crucial because it is the way leading to Nirvana. Those who practice generosity and observe precepts are too far behind. Stillness allows you to be closer to Nirvana. Once you can still your mind, it corresponds to the Lord Buddha’s teaching, and there is no variation. When one’s mind becomes still, one’s thought, speech and action will be righteous [automatically] and comply to the precepts. One will not break precepts when his mind is still. This is something certain and never changes. Thus, we call it ‘*kalayanasila*.’

### **Point of Mental Focus**

The point of focus where we should still our mind is at the ‘center of body;’ otherwise, it will not be effective. Luang Por said “Still the mind. Enter ‘sib.’ Enter ‘soon.’ Unify the mind. Unify at ‘sib.’ Unify at ‘soon.’ And achieve the right [mental] unification. If one can completely still the mind at the center of body, one will enter sib (sixth base). When one’s mind enter the sixth base, it will enter ‘soon’ (seventh base) respectively. This follows the ancient guru’s poem as follows:

Seeing 'sib' and 'soon' respectively,  
this certain methodology has been inherited  
Keep in mind of the worldly change  
where everyone reincarnates as a cycle  
our physical bodies are impermanent  
when the impurity is gone we will see

If one cannot still the mind, one will not be able to attain Dhammakaya. Some people say that their mind stops thinking already but they still cannot see the primary attainment sphere, and they question why it is so. Ajahn Treetar explains that it is because the mind has not achieve the right mental unification, and the practitioner should persevere further in every motion whether he is sitting, standing, walking, or sleeping until he masters. One day, his mind will achieve the right mental unification and unify at the sixth base and the seventh base respectively. This could be difficult for new practitioners, but they should not feel discouraged. Ajahn Treetar always emphasized that "the distance is far but we will surely reach our destination if we don't stop."

### **The Importance of Sib and Soon**

Luang Por explained that 'sib' and 'soon' are very important because all creatures have to enter 'sib' and unify at 'soon' in order to form a new life. The world and the Dhamma are interrelated and rely on each other. In the Dhamma way, one has to enter 'sib' first. When the mind becomes still, the mind will enter 'sib' first. Then, the mind will deepen into 'soon' which is the state of complete mental stillness. One will see a clear sphere as big as the sun or the moon, appearing in the middle of the stilled mind. This is the sign that signifies the arriving at 'soon.' This is why it is said that 'entering sib and seeing soon.' When one sees 'soon,' the mind is still in the middle of 'soon' (the seventh base at the center of one's body) or in the middle of the crystal clear sphere. The size of this sphere varies. It could be as large as the midday sun or the full moon and no smaller than the eye pupil.

### **The Primary Attainment Sphere**

The crystal clear sphere about the size of the midday sun or the full moon which one sees at the center of body is given different names such as *Dhammanupassanasatipattan*, *Pattamamagga* Sphere, and *Ekayanamagga* Sphere (the single or the only path). This sphere is the only path of all Lord Buddhas and enlightened *arahants* when they enter Nirvana. They all access the same path, but at different speeds depending on their cultivation.

When the mind becomes completely still, one can stop repeating 'samma arahang' and rest one's mind in the middle of the sphere only whilst keeping the mind indifferent regardless of brightness and darkness which one experiences in meditation.

Luang Por taught us to meditate until we could see this sphere first. He told his disciples not to mention about the more advanced level yet. For those who could achieve this level, he advised them to proceed as follows:

### ***Sila Sphere (The Sphere of Moral Discipline)***

Keep one's mind still in the middle of the primary attainment sphere. When the mind becomes still, deepen the mind into the center of the sphere. Then, one will see emptiness about the size of a sesame seed in the middle of such sphere. Keep one's mind still further in the middle of such sphere. When reaching the right mental unification, one will see another sphere, about the same size, appearing at the center of the primary attainment sphere. This new sphere is called '*sila sphere*.'

### ***Samadhi Sphere (The Sphere of Concentration)***

Still one's mind further in the middle of *Sila Sphere* and deepen one's mind further into the middle. When the mind becomes firmly still at the center of *Sila Sphere*, there will arise another sphere which is about the same size. This sphere is called '*Samadhi Sphere*.'

### ***Panna Sphere (The Sphere of Wisdom)***

Keep one's mind still in the middle of *Samadhi Sphere* in the same manner as one did to *Sila Sphere*. Thereafter, one will see the *Panna Sphere*.

### ***Vimutti Sphere (The Sphere of Liberation)***

Still one's mind in the middle of *Panna Sphere* as one did to *Samadhi Sphere*, soon, one will see the *Vimutti Sphere*.

### ***Vimuttinanadassana Sphere (The Sphere of Insight)***

Still one's mind in the middle of *Vimutti Sphere*, and one will see the *Vimuttinanadassana Sphere*.

### **The 18 Bodies in Samatha and Vipassana**

The Dhammakaya meditation taught by Luang Por is both *Samatha* and *Vipassana*. When a practitioner reaches far beyond the *arupabrahma* body, this marks the end of *Samatha*. Then, Luang Por advised them to continue to *Vipassana* level which comprises of the inner Dhamma bodies. The inner Dhamma bodies start from *Gotrabhu* Dhamma body. The more refined inner Dhamma bodies are *Sotapanna* Dhamma body, *Skitagami* Dhamma body, *Anagami* Dhamma body, and *Arahat* Dhamma body. Each Dhamma body is divided into two levels, the unrefined level and refined level. So, there are totally eighteen bodies in both *Samatha* and *Vipassana* level.

When one first meditates, focus one's mind at the first base and move to the seventh base respectively. As one's mind becomes still, one will see the primary attainment sphere, *Sila* Sphere, *Samadhi* Sphere, *Panna* Sphere, *Vimutti* Sphere, and *Vimuttinadassana* Sphere within the human body which is the first body of the eighteen. When stilling the mind further in the middle of *Vimuttinadassana* Sphere, one will see the refined human body or the dream body. This body resembles the human body, but (s)he is more refined and subtle.

Once one sees the refined human body, let the body sits in meditation posture similar to the physical human body. Then rest one's mind stillly in the middle of the life sphere which forms the refined human body. At the right mental unification, one will see the primary path sphere of the refined human body, followed by *Sila* Sphere, *Samadhi* Sphere, *Panna* Sphere, *Vimutti* Sphere, and *Vimuttinadassana* Sphere of the refined human body respectively. Resting one's mind still in the middle of the *Vimuttinadassana* Sphere, one will see the celestial body.

Once one sees the celestial body, let the body sits in meditation posture similar to the refined human body. Then rest one's mind stillly in the middle of the life sphere which forms the celestial body. At the right mental unification, one will see the primary path sphere of the celestial body, followed by *Sila* Sphere, *Samadhi* Sphere, *Panna* Sphere, *Vimutti* Sphere, and *Vimuttinadassana* Sphere of the celestial body respectively. Resting one's mind still in the middle of the *Vimuttinadassana* Sphere, one will see the refined celestial body.

Once one sees the refined celestial body, let the body sits in meditation posture similar to the celestial body. Then rest one's mind stillly in the middle of the life sphere which forms the refined celestial body. At the right mental unification, one will see the primary path sphere of the refined celestial body, followed by *Sila* Sphere, *Samadhi* Sphere, *Panna* Sphere, *Vimutti* Sphere, and *Vimuttinadassana* Sphere of the refined celestial body respectively. Resting one's mind still in the middle of the *Vimuttinadassana* Sphere, one will see the rupa brahma body.

Once one sees the rupa brahma body, let the body sits in meditation posture similar to the refined celestial body. Then rest one's mind stillly in the middle of the life sphere which forms the rupa brahma body. At the right mental unification, one will see the primary path sphere of the rupa brahma body, followed by *Sila* Sphere, *Samadhi* Sphere, *Panna* Sphere, *Vimutti* Sphere, and *Vimuttinadassana* Sphere of the rupa brahma body respectively. Resting one's mind still in the middle of the *Vimuttinadassana* Sphere, one will see the refined rupa brahma body.

Once one sees the refined rupa brahma body, let the body sits in meditation posture similar to the rupa brahma body. Then rest one's mind stillly in the middle of the life sphere which forms the refined rupa brahma body. At the right mental unification, one will see the primary path sphere of the refined rupa brahma body, followed by *Sila* Sphere, *Samadhi*



Sphere, *Panna* Sphere, *Vimutti* Sphere, and *Vimuttinanadassana* Sphere of the refined rupa brahma body respectively. Resting one's mind still in the middle of the *Vimuttinanadassana* Sphere, one will see the arupa brahma body.

Once one sees the arupa brahma body, let the body sits in meditation posture similar to the refined rupa brahma body. Then rest one's mind stilly in the middle of the life sphere which forms the arupa brahma body. At the right mental unification, one will see the primary path sphere of the arupa brahma body, followed by *Sila* Sphere, *Samadhi* Sphere, *Panna* Sphere, *Vimutti* Sphere, and *Vimuttinanadassana* Sphere of the arupa brahma body respectively. Resting one's mind still in the middle of the *Vimuttinanadassana* Sphere, one will see the refined arupa brahma body.

Once one sees the refined arupa brahma body, let the body sits in meditation posture similar to the arupa brahma body. Then rest one's mind stilly in the middle of the life sphere which forms the refined arupa brahma body. At the right mental unification, one will see the primary path sphere of the refined arupa brahma body, followed by *Sila* Sphere, *Samadhi* Sphere, *Panna* Sphere, *Vimutti* Sphere, and *Vimuttinanadassana* Sphere of the refined arupa brahma body respectively. Resting one's mind still in the middle of the *Vimuttinanadassana* Sphere, one will see the Gotrabhu Dhamma body which resembles a Buddha statue. This body is crystal clear and topped with a lotus-bud. The Dhamma body sits in meditation posture, and the width of his lap varies. The Dhamma sphere which forms the Dhamma body has the same size as the Dhamma body's lap width.

Still one's mind further in the middle of the Dhamma sphere which forms the Dhamma body or Dhammakaya, one will see the primary path sphere. Rest one's mind still in the middle of this sphere, one will see the *Sila* Sphere. Still one's mind further in the middle of *Sila* Sphere, one will see *Samadhi* Sphere. Rest one's mind still inside the *Samadhi* Sphere, one will see *Panna* Sphere. Then, still one's mind inside the *Panna* Sphere, one will see the *Vimutti* Sphere. Resting one's mind inside the *Vimutti* Sphere, one will see the *Vimuttinanadassana* Sphere. Resting one's mind still further in the middle of *Vimuttinanadassana* Sphere, one will see the refined *Gotrabhu* Dhamma body which is five times larger than the previous Dhamma body.

Next, still the mind of the refined Dhamma body within the middle of the Dhamma sphere which forms the refined Dhamma body, one will see the primary path sphere. Rest one's mind still in the middle of this sphere, one will see the *Sila* Sphere. Still one's mind further in the middle of *Sila* Sphere, one will see *Samadhi* Sphere. Rest one's mind still inside the *Samadhi* Sphere, one will see *Panna* Sphere. Then, still one's mind inside the *Panna* Sphere, one will see the *Vimutti* Sphere. Resting one's mind inside the *Vimutti* Sphere, one will see the *Vimuttinanadassana* Sphere. Resting one's mind still further in the middle of *Vimuttinanadassana* Sphere, one will see the *Sotapanna* Dhamma body which is ten meters in lap-width and ten meters in sitting height. This body is clearer than the previous Dhamma body.

Still the mind of the *Sotapanna* Dhamma body within the middle of the Dhamma sphere which forms the *Sotapanna* Dhamma body, one will see the primary path sphere. Rest one's mind still in the middle of this sphere, one will see the *Sila* Sphere. Still one's mind further in the middle of *Sila* Sphere, one will see *Samadhi* Sphere. Rest one's mind still inside the *Samadhi* Sphere, one will see *Panna* Sphere. Then, still one's mind inside the *Panna* Sphere, one will see the *Vimutti* Sphere. Resting one's mind inside the *Vimutti* Sphere, one will see the *Vimuttinanadassana* Sphere. Resting one's mind still further in the middle of *Vimuttinanadassana* Sphere, one will see the refined *Sotapanna* Dhamma body which is ten meters in lap-width and ten meters in sitting height. This body is clearer than the previous Dhamma body.

Then, still the mind of the refined *Sotapanna* Dhamma body within the middle of the Dhamma sphere which forms the refined *Sotapanna* Dhamma body, one will see the primary path sphere. Rest one's mind still in the middle of this sphere, one will see the *Sila* Sphere. Still one's mind further in the middle of *Sila* Sphere, one will see *Samadhi* Sphere. Rest one's mind still inside the *Samadhi* Sphere, one will see *Panna* Sphere. Then, still one's mind inside the *Panna* Sphere, one will see the *Vimutti* Sphere. Resting one's mind inside the *Vimutti* Sphere, one will see the *Vimuttinanadassana* Sphere. Resting one's mind still further in the middle of *Vimuttinanadassana* Sphere, one will see the *Sakadagami* Dhamma body which is twenty meters in lap-width and twenty meters in sitting height. This body is clearer than the previous Dhamma body.

Still the mind of the *Sakadagami* Dhamma body within the middle of the Dhamma sphere which forms the *Sakadagami* Dhamma body, one will see the primary path sphere. Rest one's mind still in the middle of this sphere, one will see the *Sila* Sphere. Still one's mind further in the middle of *Sila* Sphere, one will see *Samadhi* Sphere. Rest one's mind still inside the *Samadhi* Sphere, one will see *Panna* Sphere. Then, still one's mind inside the *Panna* Sphere, one will see the *Vimutti* Sphere. Resting one's mind inside the *Vimutti* Sphere, one will see the *Vimuttinanadassana* Sphere. Resting one's mind still further in the middle of *Vimuttinanadassana* Sphere, one will see the refined *Sakadagami* Dhamma body which is twenty meters in lap-width and twenty meters in sitting height. This body is clearer than the previous Dhamma body.

Next, still the mind of the refined *Sakadagami* Dhamma body within the middle of the Dhamma sphere which forms the refined *Sakadagami* Dhamma body, one will see the primary path sphere. Rest one's mind still in the middle of this sphere, one will see the *Sila* Sphere. Still one's mind further in the middle of *Sila* Sphere, one will see *Samadhi* Sphere. Rest one's mind still inside the *Samadhi* Sphere, one will see *Panna* Sphere. Then, still one's mind inside the *Panna* Sphere, one will see the *Vimutti* Sphere. Resting one's mind inside the *Vimutti* Sphere, one will see the *Vimuttinanadassana* Sphere. Resting one's mind still further in the middle of *Vimuttinanadassana* Sphere, one will see the *Anagami* Dhamma

body which is thirty meters in lap-width and thirty meters in sitting height. This body is clearer than the previous Dhamma body.

Still the mind of the *Anagami* Dhamma body within the middle of the Dhamma sphere which forms the *Anagami* Dhamma body, one will see the primary path sphere. Rest one's mind still in the middle of this sphere, one will see the *Sila* Sphere. Still one's mind further in the middle of *Sila* Sphere, one will see Samadhi Sphere. Rest one's mind still inside the Samadhi Sphere, one will see *Panna* Sphere. Then, still one's mind inside the *Panna* Sphere, one will see the *Vimutti* Sphere. Resting one's mind inside the *Vimutti* Sphere, one will see the *Vimuttinanadassana* Sphere. Resting one's mind still further in the middle of *Vimuttinanadassana* Sphere, one will see the refined *Anagami* Dhamma body which is thirty meters in lap-width and thirty meters in sitting height. This body is clearer than the previous Dhamma body.

Still the mind of the refined *Anagami Dhamma* body within the middle of the Dhamma sphere which forms the refined *Anagami Dhamma* body, one will see the primary path sphere. Rest one's mind still in the middle of this sphere, one will see the *Sila* Sphere. Still one's mind further in the middle of *Sila* Sphere, one will see Samadhi Sphere. Rest one's mind still inside the Samadhi Sphere, one will see *Panna* Sphere. Then, still one's mind inside the *Panna* Sphere, one will see the *Vimutti* Sphere. Resting one's mind inside the *Vimutti* Sphere, one will see the *Vimuttinanadassana* Sphere. Resting one's mind still further in the middle of *Vimuttinanadassana* Sphere, one will see the *Arahat* Dhamma body which is forty meters in lap-width and forty meters in sitting height. This body is clearer than the previous Dhamma body.

Then, still the mind of the *Arahat Dhamma* body within the middle of the Dhamma sphere which forms the *Arahat Dhamma* body, one will see the primary path sphere which is forty meters in diameter. Rest one's mind still in the middle of this sphere, one will see the *Sila* Sphere which is forty meters in diameter. Still one's mind further in the middle of *Sila* Sphere, one will see Samadhi Sphere which is forty meters in diameter. Rest one's mind still inside the *Samadhi* Sphere, one will see *Panna* Sphere which is forty meters in diameter. Then, still one's mind inside the *Panna* Sphere, one will see the *Vimutti* Sphere which is forty meters in diameter. Resting one's mind inside the *Vimutti* Sphere, one will see the *Vimuttinanadassana* Sphere which is forty meter in diameters as well. Resting one's mind still further in the middle of *Vimuttinanadassana* Sphere, one will see the refined *Arahat Dhamma* body which is very clear and sublime. The refined *Arahat Dhamma* body is the eighteenth body.

One who attains the refined *Arahat Dhamma* body has no mental impurity or defilement. This is the end of our duty in Buddhism, either in *Samatha* or *Vipassana*. The *Samatha* level ranges from the physical human body until the refined *Arupa Brahma* body. However, *Vipassana* level starts from the *Gotrabu Dhamma* body until reaching the refined *Arahat*

*Dhamma* body. This is the way, and there is no alternative. Luang Por said if we do not follow these steps, we will meet with failure in our practice.

### **The Most Important Body in Buddhism**

Luang Por said that the Dhamma bodies or Dhammakaya(s) which range from the 9th body onward are the most important bodies in Buddhism. The Dhamma body is the 'Buddha-Gem' whereas the Dhamma sphere which forms each Dhammakaya is the 'Dhamma-Gem.' In addition, the refined Dhamma body within each Buddha-Gem is called the 'Sangha-Gem.' Anyone who can manage to have these bodies appear within him, he is called '*anubuddha*' which means 'becoming a Buddha' or 'following the Buddha's path.' However, there are several types of the Lord Buddha namely, the Lord Buddha, the Silent Buddha, *savakabuddha*, *suttabuddha*, *pahusuttabuddha*, and *anubuddha*. The Lord Buddha once said that "I, Tathagata, would say that the one who learns much is one of the Buddhas called *pahusuttabuddha* (becoming a Buddha because of learning much).

When attaining the Dhamma body, the divine eye allows the attainer to see the human body, refined human body, celestial body, refined celestial body, *Brahma* body, refined *Brahma* body, *Arupa-Brahma* body, refined *Arupa-Brahma* body. All of these eight bodies can be known and seen with the insight and the divine eye of the Dhamma body. However, the human body, celestial body, *Brahma* body, *Arupa-Brahma* body do not have insightful capability, but they have their own cognition sphere. One will gain insight when attaining the refined Dhamma body only.

### **One is One's Own Refuge**

Most people have ever heard this Buddhist motto 'One is one's own refuge.' They may think that they understand the true meaning of this simple statement. However, in the Dhamma sense, this motto has a profound meaning. Luang Por had explained it as follows:

"... what is self? *nama rupam anatta* Many people translated it that '*nama*' and '*rupa*' are not self. So, what is the self that one can take as one's refuge? *Rupa*, *vedana*, *sanna*, *samgara*, and *vinnana* are altogether called the five *khanda*. To make it precise, it can be called as *namarupa* by maintaining the *rupa*, namely the five *khanda*. As the five *khanda* is not true self, we question further what the true self is. If we cannot discover the true self, we will not know what ought to be our refuge. The Lord Buddha's saying states that "*attahi attanonadho*." It is not impossible to find the answer to this question.

The Lord Buddha already taught us about *anicca*, *dhukkha*, and *anatta*. He emphasized on *anatta*, so that we can realize on *atta*. Therefore, there is the issue of *atta* and *anatta* (self and non-self) to be researched further.

The Lord Buddha's teachings or Dhamma do not contradict to each other. To prevent the contradiction on this issue, we have to divide '*atta*' into two different categories namely

temporary *atta* and true *atta*. The temporary *atta* are the human body, celestial body, *brahma* body, and *arupa brahma* body because these bodies are subject to reincarnation. Simply speaking, they are 'worldly bodies.' On the contrary, the body which is lokuttara or permanent and true self is Dhammakaya. Dhammakaya is thus the true self.

The motto 'one is one's own refuge' means the relying of one another by proceeding through different layers, starting from focusing on the human body until reaching the celestial body. Then, focusing on the celestial body until reaching *brahma* body, *arupa brahma* body respectively until reaching Dhammakaya. Each body is 'self' which relies on each other respectively from layer to layer. This is why it is said to be 'one is one's own refuge.'

In addition, there is a Buddha saying that "*kaye kayanupassi*" in the *mahasatipattana sutta*. It is a supporting evidence to the aforesaid idea. *kayanupassim* means "seeing bodies respectively." To shorten or make it precise, we can translate as 'follow the seeing of body within body.' This means that we can see respectively from layer to layer, ranging from the human body, celestial body, *rupa brahma* body, *arupa brahma* body and the Dhamma body. This is the evidence that verifies this truth. How does the human body look like? The human body does not look like anything else but oneself. The celestial body is more beautiful. The *rupa brahma* body is even more beautiful, but less than the *arupa brahma* body. Dhammakaya is crystal clear, sitting in meditation posture like a Buddha statue, topped with a lotus bud.

### **The Difference Between Intuition and Cognition**

One who attains Dhammakaya views the Dhamma differently from others. Those who can see and know have different views from those who can't. This is comparable to a literate and illiterate persons. It is useless to argue who is right or wrong as it would be such a waste of time. One party has insight, but another party does not. The party that has no insight can use only his cognition sphere. Without insightful power, one can only think and comprehend on a subject. His comprehension may be incomplete or even incorrect. The term 'insight' and 'comprehension' are much different. Luang Por had explained that:

"The cognition sphere is a kind of Dhamma sphere which exists inside one's *citta*. Its size is about the same as eye pupil. Cognition sphere is crystal clear within a pure *citta*. So, where is *citta* sphere? *Hatayakuhasayacittam...* *Citta* is inside one's heart chamber, amidst the celestial liquid that nourishes one's heart. *Citta* is there. Wherever *citta* sphere is, the cognition sphere is there. In the middle of *citta* sphere, one can perceive anything such as what one sees, hears, and feels. These are perceptions through the functioning of cognition sphere. It is made possible through sensual perceptions only, similar to a blind who knows how to urinate and excrete with no need for a guide as the blind can fondle around. The

perception through a cognition sphere is the same. It examines whatever is transferred through the six sensual receptors namely eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

Without these tools, it cannot perceive anything. It works like this, and it makes mistake sometimes. For example, perceiving something falsely. This is because it does not perceive through wisdom. Knowledge gained through wisdom is genuine and clear, but this is still different from knowledge gained from intuition, especially the Dhammakaya's intuition. It is much different from cognition sphere. Although both of them function through the same process of sensation, perception, volitional activities, and cognition. They differ in the way that one who attains Dhammakaya will have this sensation sphere expanded about the same size of Dhammakaya's lap-width [in the sitting meditation posture] followed by perception sphere, volitional activities sphere, and cognition sphere. This corresponds to human's cognition sphere. The four spheres overlap each other respectively at the equal size as the width of Dhammakaya's lap in sitting meditation posture.

When the four spheres expand at the equal diameter, this state is called intuition or *nana*. At the normal state without expansion, it is called cognition sphere. One who attains Dhammakaya can have intuition. They are two different things. Cognising through cognition sphere results one to believe in [worldly] permanence, joy, and true-self. However, cognizing through intuition results us to realize the world as impermanent, sufferingful, and non-self. Impermanence in such a way that they are subject to change. Suffering in this case means discomfort of body and mind.

As long as the five *khanda* lasts, there is no true happiness since one still has to suffer from the feelings of hot, cold, and etc. One will face with the six difficulties namely chillness, heat, hunger, thirst, feeling a bowel movement, and feeling like urinating. These difficult feelings are uncontrollable. So, we conclude that it is non-self or *anatta*. Thus, life is sufferable, impermanent and non-self. It can be cognized intuitively by the Dhammakaya. (Luang Por delivered this sermon to monks and novice monks after chanting at the Buddhist chapel on 18 October 1955)

### **Dhammakaya Is Our Refuge**

Luang Por tirelessly taught people because of his compassion. He wished others to attain meditation experience like him. This is similar to the Lord Buddha who spent numerous eons [20 asangaiya and a hundred thousands maha kappa] to accumulate enough merit and cultivate perfections to attain Buddhahood with the aim to enable the sentient beings to reach nirvana. This requires cooperation from sentient beings who had to be willing to learn and train themselves through serious generosity practice, observance of precepts and disciplines, and meditation practice that comply to the guidelines of the Lord Buddha and his disciples.

We have to ponder on what we should do now. Should we just memorize the mantra '*Ittipiso Bhagava?*' Should we think of its translation for better understanding too? Isn't

there anything more than recollecting the Lord Buddha's goodness? I would like you to recall the Buddha's sermon on 'worshipping.' There are two kinds of worshipping namely worshipping by making offerings and worshipping by practicing the Dhamma. Among these two, the Lord Buddha admired that practicing Dhamma as an act of worship is much superior.

We can clearly see that the Lord Buddha wished us to persevere in practicing the same as he did rather than worshipping him only. It is clear that even though time has flew by for a long time since he passed away to nirvana. Everyone who follows the Lord Buddha's practice will receive the same results with no exception. However, there are merely excuses made by the lazy ones. This statement is verified by the term '*akaliko*' which appears in the *Dhammakuna* verse..."

### **Relying on Oneself**

Luang Por had emphasized that *Samatha* and *Vipassana* study must be in line with this principle. *Samatha* is *Vipassana*'s foundation, and there is no other approach. Luang Por said 'other than this would be falsifying.' To comply to Luang Por's approach, one must begin with the human body and proceed respectively, step by step. There is no short-cut. Importantly, one's mind must be completely still. This means that one stops thinking until one's mind become still. We may compare this process to a person who stops jogging around and stands at a spot. If he moves his body while he stands, it is not the state of complete stillness yet. Likewise, to achieve the state of mental unification, one's mind has to be completely still only.

How can we know when the mind is completely unified? It is not difficult to prove because when our mind reaches that state, we will see and experience the same as taught by Luang Por. What we see in meditation will indicate the level of our practice. If we still see nothing, we have to train our mind further. Indeed, the practitioner will know by himself if his mind is already unified or not. Someone may be able to achieve the state of mental stillness, but only temporarily. He needs to train his mind to be still longer in order to achieve mental unification.

Luang Por said as we know this, we have to be able to see through our mind. When the mind wanders, this means that it craves for reincarnation. But when the mind becomes still at the center of body, it heads toward Nirvana and refrains from reincarnation. As a human being, we should not mistaken it; otherwise, one would become an impractical Buddhist.

Once we study it until we know and understand, we do not have to ask anyone to do us a favor anymore. We have to still our mind only. We will earn enormous merit if we can still our mind for only a while. The merit from practicing *Samatha* and *Vipassana* meditation practice is enormous. It is greater than the merit from constructing a hundred Buddhist chapels or Buddhist halls.

### **The Committed One Can Do It**

Some people complaint to Luang Por that his meditation method was too difficult because they could not achieve anything after a period of practice. Luang Por told them not to blame anyone else but themselves. He said “others could still their mind. If you cannot do it, you should rather blame yourself.” It is inappropriate to blame or complain others but oneself. Some of the Buddhist monks and novice monks had a strong will to attain meditation experience, and they tried to meditate to still their minds. However, they started to complain when they could not still their mind successfully. At Wat Paknam, there are numerous people who can do it, so you should be able to do it as well; otherwise, you will not be able to attain Dhammakaya. Only those who can still their mind will be able to attain Dhammakaya. You are also human beings and eligible to practice Buddhism. Won’t you be able to attain Dhammakaya like others? When I say ‘commitment,’ I mean you have to do it with the dedication of your life. You have to let go and sacrifice even your blood, bones, and flesh. Although you have to sacrifice your life, you should meditate without leaving your seat. If you are seriously committed, you will be able to attain. Those who are not committed will fail.

The reason why one does not attain Dhammakaya is because of his recklessness and lack of commitment. It happens when one does not focus one’s mind well enough. This is like cheating oneself resulting to be unable to attain Dhammakaya. It is called ‘cheating oneself’ because one is too lazy or uncommitted enough. Some people stop meditating when feeling a little pain or numb, so they do not have stable meditation experience yet. These people stop meditating when they encounter small problems, and they turn to do something else. Their minds turn to focus on other things such as figures, sound, smell, taste, sensation from touch, the present, the past, and the future. [This means that one thinks of what one sees, smells, tastes, touch, and experience either in the present, past, or the future.]

Luang Por said there are many more people who still enjoy the beauty of this world through the five sensations without making any progress. Some of them find it hard to change the way they are, and they plunge into domesticity again and again. Being frivolous like this, one will never overcome it.

### **Do Not Stop Until Reaching The Uttermost**

Luang Por always encouraged meditation practitioners that, in meditation practice, one must not stop until reaching the uttermost. No matter if we see anything in meditation or not, we have to continue practicing. Do not let time fly by worthlessly. There is the uttermost level of perseverance, so do patience. If we do not persevere to the uttermost level in our practice, and we should not claim that we already persevere and be patient enough.



The uttermost levels of each person's perseverance are not the same. Comparing to reading, some people can understand after reading the content only once, but some other people have to read for many times before they can gain the same understanding. This depends on the accumulated level of wisdom which differs from person to person.

To attain enlightenment, one needs to let go one's life and heart without holding on to anything. If one still loves or worries about something, one will never make achievement. Luang Por gave a poetic advice that:

Row and row, my dear  
the business will be over and the lotus will dry  
how can you go by any further  
without unlocking the key and the fetters

When one is so much worn out as if one were to die, keep in mind that one is almost there. One is so close to goal, let it be even at the cost of one's life. Soon, one will attain. Luang Por said that he had made it twice. The first time occurred in his sixth year of monkhood, when he was new to *samatha* and *vipassana* meditation. He sat in meditation posture and vowed that he would not rouse until he attained [meditation experience] although his blood would dry up and having only bones and skin left. Luang Por continued to meditate, and he soon attained the primary path sphere (*pattamamagha* sphere) without losing his life.

The second time that Luang Por sacrificed his life for meditation was in the eleventh year of his monkhood, he told his companion monks not to bother him, saying that "let me die if I would die. Please allow me to meditate as I wish. If I do not achieve any meditation experience, it would be such a waste to feed me." After saying this, Luang Por went to meditate in the Buddhist chapel, and he could see Dhammakaya in the middle of the night.

Luang Por always exemplified the Lord Buddha who did the same by persevering with the cost of his life on the day of his enlightenment. The Lord was willing to sacrifice his bones, skins, flesh, and blood in order to progress in meditation. As a result, when his mind was at the right mental unification, He attained the ability to recollect past lifetimes at early evening. In the middle of the night, He attained the ability to know the death and birth of creatures. Finally, before dawn, He attained the ability to eradicate his defilement. Luang Por said the Lord Buddha is our teacher, so we have to be committed in our practice just like Him. We must be willing to sacrifice our life for enlightenment.

The senior people complaint to Luang Por that they were too old to meditate since they could not sit in meditation posture for a long time. Luang Por said to them that "Being old is good because old people know that they will die for sure. If they were to die, they should die while their mind is with the Dhammakaya. For those who are not old yet, they are still youngsters who wish to build up their lives. So, let them be. For those who have realized that they are old already, they should rush up. Do not wait for anyone. Do not complain if you feel pain and numb a little. If they feel worn out and start to rest and sleep, they will

not make it even in a hundred years. This is because they cheat themselves. They are not committed like the Lord Buddha who was so dedicative. If one cannot withstand it, let it be. Anyone who can do like this will become one with Dhammakaya at this very moment. Only the committed ones deserve the genuine thing.” (Luang Por’s sermon on ‘The Ultimate Dhamma’ delivered on Sunday, 1 October 1953)

### **The Path to Success**

We can see that Luang Por thoroughly taught how to attain meditation experience. He explained from the crust to the core without being possessive of his knowledge. Luang Por never withheld his knowledge when he taught Dhamma and meditation. For those who had not attained Dhammakaya yet, he suggested them to practice the four steps to success as follows:

“The four *iddhipada* (the four steps to success) is the heart to success comprising of *chanda*, *viriya*, *citta*, and *vimansa*. To translate, they mean to determine, persevere, assess, and improve. No matter what we do, if we apply these four steps, we will be successful. Especially, in case of meditation practice:

1. We must be very much determined to practice meditation like a young man who falls in love with a woman.
2. Be committed to persevere in meditation. It is difficult for the lazy one to focus his mind, but the diligent one will find it easy.
3. Assess one’s practice if it complies to the instruction or not.
4. Consider what one should do in order to improve one’s practice or correct one’s mistake.

Practitioners have to take the four steps above into account as they can lead them to success.

Luang Por mentioned about ‘perseverance’ which is the second of the four steps that time does not just fly by, but it also takes away our life. Time takes our life away day by day, so our lifetime has been shortened all the time.

Luang Por advised the following poem in order to speed up one’s attainment:

Be confident when you persevere without recklessness  
Keep your passion under control  
The wise learns how to stand firm and stay safe  
Hence he will be secured in the sea of life

For the term ‘sea of life,’ Luang Por meant the cycle of rebirth which is driven by the four waves of mental impurities that submerge the heart of most creatures. The four mental impurities are (gamoga) sensual desire, (bhavoga) the realm, (dhittoga) the prejudice, and (avijjoga) the ignorance.

### The Three Characteristics of Life

Luang Por used to question his students “Why did the Lord Buddha emphasize on *anicca* (impermanence), *dukkha* (suffering), and *anatta* (non-self)?” Then, he revealed that, after pondering completely, he found that the Lord Buddha wished to make His disciples think further and discover by themselves with their wisdom. For example, He taught about the ‘impermanence’ in order to let people search for the ‘permanence.’ This is similar to ‘suffering’ which motivates people to search for the ‘true happiness,’ and the ‘non-self’ that urges people to look for the ‘true self.’

The wise ones who have wisdom will foresee the Lord Buddha’s guideline towards the solution. We may compare to two persons standing together, one of them is tall and another one is short. When someone questions us if we know the two persons, we can reply that we know the tall one. Then, the questioner will know automatically that the one whom we do not know is the short one, and there is no need to explain this. Likewise, the Lord Buddha’s teaching on impermanence, suffering, and non-self imply about the permanence, true happiness, and true self to be attained, which are altogether the qualities of *Dhammakaya*.

Luang Por had explained about the impermanence of the five aggregates that all forms, either beautiful or not, are impermanent all alike. This means that they all have to die no matter which class or social status they belong to. They have to cling to the cycle of rebirth. Moreover, the impermanence brings about suffering. The permanence and true happiness can be found within our body only. We cannot find them elsewhere. ‘Within our body’ means inside the human body, going through the refined human body, the celestial body, the refined celestial body, the *rupa brahma* body, the refined *rupa brahma* body, the *arupa brahma* body, and the refined *arupa brahma* body. Finally one will reach the dhamma body, then one will realize that this is the true happiness and there is the permanent quality within the Dhamma body or *Dhammakaya*.

Whenever one attains *Dhammakaya*, the narrow-minded will be widened until feeling vast and comfortable. Whoever can reach *Dhammakaya* will feel blissful and cheerful as *Dhammakaya* is permanent. The Lord Buddha’s saying that things are impermanent, in the case he meant the external or worldly things. This implies that there is something permanent. To explain, all other bodies, ranging from the human body, refined human body, celestial body, refined celestial body, *rupa brahma* body, refined *rupa brahma* body, *arupa brahma* body, and refined *arupa brahma* body, are impermanent, subject to suffering, and non-self since they still cling to the cycle of rebirth. However, only the *Dhammakaya(s)* are permanent, true happiness, and true self.

When one attains *Dhammakaya*, one reaches the permanence, true happiness, and true self. These qualities increase in the manifold as one reaches higher level of *Dhammakaya*, ranging from the Sotapanna *Dhammakaya*, refined Sotapanna *Dhammakaya*, Sagatagami

Dhammakaya, refined Sagatagami Dhammakaya, Anagami Dhammakaya, refined Anagami Dhammakaya, Arahata Dhammakaya, and refined Arahata Dhammakaya. Especially, the Arahata Dhammakaya is absolutely permanent, blissful, and true self. This body is like the mountain that is unaffected by the storm of the eight worldly conditions comprising of gain, loss, dignity, loss of dignity, fame, defame, happiness, and suffering. Luang Por quoted a Pali verse to reaffirm this fact that “For those whose mind is unperturbed by the eight worldly conditions as well as remaining ungrievous, indifferent, calm, and free from being emotional, this is one of the highest blessings.”

Luang Por also gave an axiom for succeeding meditation practice as follows:

“Commit the cause and observe the end result... keep paying attention... It is great. Commit the cause within and observe the result inside... keep paying much attention... It is wonderful. Commit the very cause within and observe the very result inside... keep paying much attention... It is greatly wonderful.”

### **Attachment and Detachment**

Luang Por said that ‘attachment’ occurs due to sensual desire. If one can eliminate sensual desire, there will be no attachment left. Luang Por always gave an analogy involving a couple who live together. If a party causes troubles or suffers from anything, another party will be affected as well. However, if the couple divorces, they will no longer be affected by each other no matter what happens. Luang Por asked his student why it was so. And he added that it was because the couple no longer had attachment that they were bound together as husband and wife. We can clearly see that suffering exists due to attachment which functions like a bondage. The five aggregates (khandas) alone are not suffering. This complies to the saying that “It is sufferingful if one cannot let go of attachment. One will be free from suffering if one can let go of it.”

If we cannot let go of attachment, it means that we are ‘attached.’ If we can let go, we are ‘detached.’ For Luang Por, the term attachment in this case means clinging in the worldly realm. To be detached, he meant that we enter the noble realm or Nirvana. To do so, one has to eliminate the attachment in the human body, celestial body, rupa brahma body, and arupa brahma body. Therefore, as some people criticized Luang Por that he taught a wrong meditation method to people to convincing them to be attached to forms and imagery like crystal sphere without letting go, this is a misunderstanding. They believe that letting go or detachment means sitting still without thinking of anything. Indeed, Luang Por knew that people’s minds are quicker than monkeys. Their minds will never stay still if they have nothing to hold on to, except those who are well trained before. If meditation is so easy like sitting still and thinking of nothing at all, there must be many people who attain enlightenment at ease. Anyone who can practice meditation until reaching the level as taught by Luang Por would know that there is no such thing like attachment in Dhammakaya

meditation. This complies to the Lord Buddha's teaching that the [Dhamma] practitioner will see by oneself, and the Lord Buddha is simply the one who gives a guideline.

### **Keeping One's Mind Clear**

Sensual pleasure is desirable by all whereas sensual displeasure is not preferred. As we, both the monks and laymen, already know about both sensual pleasure and displeasure, we can avoid them by controlling our mind. We have to stabilize our mind at its base, then we will be able to encounter with both sensual pleasure and displeasure.

Keep focusing the mind at the solar plexus, which is the center of the Dhamma sphere which forms the human body. Rest our mind at this point always in every moment whether we sit, sleep, stand walk, eat, drink, speak, take any action, or even when we go to a restroom. Simply keep our mind there until we become familiar and gain expertise, and our mind will become still.

When the mind become still, we will not be affected by worldly influences which comprise of gain, praise, grace, happiness, loss, defame, disgrace, and suffering. We will remain indifferent. If one can achieve this level, such person is deemed to achieve one of the highest blessings. Because if we feel disheartened by sensual displeasure, it is truly a misery for ourselves.

Luang Por emphasized that this kind of misery does not occur to only just the laymen and laywomen, even the monks and novice monks can also experience it. As they are unable to calm down their mind, their mind will not become still, and this is a misery for them. Luang Por once taught his disciple monks and novice monks that:

"Buddhist monks and novice monks are not entitled to do anything after they are ordained except to keep their mind pure. If their minds are impure, it is not practical. They are externally Buddhist monks and novice monks, but internally, they are not. If they can keep their mind clear and pure, they will be highly respected and worshipped by the public."

If one would ever question if Luang Por could do just like what he said or not, one can consider from his speech and actions when he was criticized by others.

### **Follow Up & Assessment**

Luang Por is such a kind of teacher who always assessed his own teaching. He did not want to cause any waste of resources because when one came to study meditation, one had to invest time and effort. One had to pay for attire, meal, transportation, and spend time on it. The teacher also had to trade off his time for other beneficial deeds. So, Luang Por paid much attention teaching others, and he wanted his students to be very much committed as well. He tried to find ways to explain to his students for better comprehension as well as encouraging them that:

“It is uneasy to attain Dhammakaya, but it is not too difficult. If one follows the teaching... don’t make mistake... not even a bit... if anyone who follows his teaching strictly and still unable to attain Dhammakaya, he challenged them to behead him. Luang Por could know who was eligible to attain Dhammakaya, he would ask such persons to study with him directly. If someone sees a clear sphere or a Buddha image at the seventh base of mind, he would find a meditation teacher to advance the level. He was very strict and severed in his teaching. Thus, the number of people who attained Dhammakaya escalated.

### **Facing With A Controversy**

When Luang Por was alive, he had to encounter with many troubles in propagating Dhammakaya meditation because the method was unfamiliar to people in that time. Other meditation masters did not teach in the same way, and most of them encourage Dhamma study rather than meditation practice. However, monks who were interested in meditation would isolate themselves by living in a tranquil remote area or practice the austerity walk by travelling to forest. These monks were known as forest-monks.

Luang Por was one of the few monks who taught thoroughly and openly. So, he was monitored and became a target for criticism. Especially, the term ‘Dhammakaya’ was unfamiliar to Thai Theravada Buddhists. This term was unknown to them, and they heard it for the first time from Luang Por. Many of them thought that Luang Por made up this term, and they did not even tried to study the Buddhist scripture by themselves in order to seek for the truth. They thought that the Lord Buddha never taught or mentioned about Dhammakaya before. Moreover, they did not want to try practicing Dhammakaya meditation to reveal the truth. They believed that Luang Por founded a new Buddhist cult. Luang Por always said about them that “I am pitiful to these people. They said without knowing anything. How can someone coin the term without a solid origin. Their speech is unwise.” Those who objected Luang Por’s teaching were both monks and laypeople.

Luang Por continued to promote Dhammakaya meditation which he discovered despite of the fact that he was satirized. When somebody questioned him about being criticized negatively, he replied that **“A scented flower needs no perfume since it smells good already. A corpse also needs no waste to reveal its stinky smell. No one can stop it.”**

Luang Por experienced various kinds of troubles and difficulties. He was accused of establishing a new cult. The term Dhammakaya was also satirized to be ‘Asurakaya’ which means the demon. Some even accused him of breaking a monastic code which prohibits monks from expressing the supernatural quality that one does not really have, and they even demanded Luang Por to be disrobed. In deed, this monastic code does not include monks who really have such supernatural quality.

During the Lord Buddha’s lifetime, there was a fully enlightened person who made his supernatural quality known to others by way of showing his supernatural power. His name is Jurapantaka who was asked by his elder brother to disrobe since he was unable to

memorize Dhamma verses. Venerable Jurapantaka felt disheartened that he was unable to attain enlightenment like his elder brother, so he fled from the temple with an effort to disrobe.

Fortunately, the Lord Buddha saw him when he was walking out quietly from his abode, so he asked Venerable Jurapantaka of what had happened. The Lord taught Venerable Jurapantaka that he was not ordained for his brother but for the Lord. The Lord Buddha said that Venerable Jurapantaka should have an audience upon him if he was driven away by his brother, as it would be useless to return to the secular life. Then, the Lord Buddha led Venerable Jurapantaka to his abode. He gave Venerable Jurapantaka a piece of white cloth, and he asked Venerable Jurapantaka to wipe such cloth with his hand and recite the mantra 'Rajo Haranam.' The venerable followed his advice until the white cloth became blemished. Then, Venerable Jurapantaka realized that his body was impermanent since the white cloth became blemished due to his own body. Hence, he continued to meditate and attained enlightenment as well as the supernatural powers later on. Venerable Jurapantaka also gained the four supernormal wisdom.

In the morning, the Lord Buddha went to the residence of Chewakagomarapaj in to order to have a meal, once He received alms, He said that there was one more monk who had not arrived. So, Chewakagomarapaj asked his subordinate to invite the monk.

Venerable Jurapantaka wished to disclose his enlightenment, so he used his mental power to create 1,000 clones of himself. Each clone was doing various thing. The subordinate saw numerous monks, and he did not know which one to be invited, so he returned to inform this to Chewakagomarapaj. Hence, the Lord Buddha recommended him to invite Venerable Jurapantaka. With this advice, the subordinate returned to the monastery again and said to the monks that he wished to invite Venerable Jurapantaka. However, all of 1,001 monks replied that their name was 'Jurapantaka.' This puzzled the subordinate and did not know what to do because if he invited all of them there would not be enough room at the residence. The Lord Buddha told him that there was Venerable Jurapantaka at the monastery, but all of them were Venerable Jurapantaka. With confusion, the subordinate returned to the residence of Chewakagomarapaj again in order to inform the Lord Buddha. When the Lord heard about this, He knew right away that Venerable Jurapantaka wished to disclose his Arahantship, so He advised the subordinate to question the 1,001 monks that who was Venerable Jurapantaka. Then, whoever replied first, he should grab the hand of such monk and the rest would disappear. Therefore, the subordinate returned to the monastery once again and followed the Lord's advice. He was able to find the real Venerable Jurapantaka and brought him to the residence of Chewakagomarapaj. After having meal, the Lord Buddha admired Venerable Jurapantaka among the monks and laypeople by assigning him to deliver the speech of appreciation and blessing. Later on, the Lord endorsed Venerable Jurapantaka to be the outstanding disciple who is superior to

other monks in term of mental power (mental power is the second of the eight superknowledges).

The reason that caused Venerable Jurapantaka to be unwise was because, in one lifetime, he was born in the era of Lord Kassappa Buddha. He was a smart monk who could memorize the Lord Kasappa Buddha's teaching quickly and accurately. So, he disdained a fellow monk who was unwise. The monk was embarrassed, so he stopped studying the Dhamma. This karma resulted Venerable Jurapantaka to be unwise in this lifetime, but due to the merit from ordaining and studying Dhamma in the era of Lord Kassappa Buddha, he was eligible for enlightenment after being disdained first.

The story of Venerable Jurapantaka reminds us not to be arrogant or disdain others who are inferior. Secondly, a good teacher must be able to find the proper way to teach his unwise student who may need special attention. Thirdly, the Lord Buddha did not blame Venerable Jurapantaka for showing his mental power in order to disclose his enlightenment and arahantship. On the other hand, He verified Venerable Jurapantaka to be an outstanding disciple who possessed superb mental power. Lastly, the meditation method that the Lord Buddha recommended to Venerable Jurapantaka was uniquely designed for him, and it was not breathing meditation which many people believe that it is the only method that can lead to real enlightenment.

The meditation method of Venerable Jurapantaka is a good example which shows that there are many possible ways of meditation that can lead to enlightenment. Each method is effective for different persons depending on their preference and accumulated karma. This is also true for Dhammakaya meditation which some people accused Luang Por that he taught the wrong method. When Luang Por heard someone criticized him, he would smile and said "Such person doesn't know yet. I found the truth, but he hasn't. Let him speak or criticize whatever he wishes. I found the truth, so I speak of only the truth." Luang Por was confident in his meditation method, and he was eager to move forward whereas criticism is like an energy drink for him.

His Holiness Somdet Phrawannarat (Tissadhatta Thera) the abbot of Wat Prachetuphon, when he was the chief monk of Bhasicharoen District, who led Luang Por to Wat Paknam, was dissatisfied with Luang Por's meditation teaching. He reproached Luang Por for not keeping his promise, and he ordered Luang Por to stop teaching Dhammakaya meditation. However, Luang Por replied to him that "It is impossible for me to stay still doing like the cripple who can neither make benefit for oneself nor the others." So, the two were unable to get along well.

Although Luang Por was criticized badly, he did not feel disheartened. He was steadfastly faithful in the Lord Buddha and took Him as the role model. So, he followed the path of the Lord with a pure mind in teaching people. So, they could understand the Buddhist principle in eliminating bad deeds, prospering good deeds, and keeping the mind clear. Most people



did not understand how to keep the mind clear, and they thought that it was about keeping the mind joyful and cheerful. In deed, it can be achieved through meditation, especially with the attainment of Dhammakaya.

His Holiness The Supreme Patriarch (Poun Pounnasiri), the abbot of Wat Pra Chetupon, when he was at the rank of Somdet Phrawannarat, had affirmed this in his writing that:

“... When the term Dhammakaya was heard by numerous people, especially the scholars, the [Thai] Sangha community was amazed. Some of them concluded that Luang Por Wat Paknam’s knowledge and practice are going beyond too far, and they believed that it would harm Buddhism if Luang Por continued on like this. But nobody dared to take this issue for judgment because people from all walks of life respect Luang Por who is a master of numerous disciples. In addition, he was capable of governing hundreds of monks and novice monks, and he could manage to provide them with breakfast and lunch throughout his life. Since the discovery of Dhammakaya, Wat Paknam was very much criticized. Some people agreed delightfully, but some disapproved. Some of them accused Wat Paknam badly up to the point that they believed that Luang Por violated the monastic code by expressing the unavailable Dhamma attainment. Luang Por always heard about this but he was not bothered by the nuisance. On the contrary, he was proud of himself to hear that.”

The author (His Holiness The Supreme Patriarch Poun Pounnasiri) used to mention this to Luang Por that he was heavy-hearted about criticism, but Luang Por replied that “I am not such a person who is wisdomless. I know both right and wrong. Why should I commit suicide because of desire. Others criticize me because they do not know the term ‘Dhammakaya,’ where and who he is. They disapprove the righteous ones like us due to their own unknowing. How can their unknowing cross out the truth in Buddhism. If they do so, they will be able to do it temporarily. Soon after, the crystalclear essence of Buddhism will shine, allowing the wise ones to witness by themselves...”

### **Assasination**

It was not just criticism that Luang Por had to encounter, there were also those who tried to assassinate him. His Holiness the Supreme Patriarch Poun Pounnasiri wrote about this issue in his memorandum that:

“... One of the important missions of Luang Por was to teach monks, novice monks, and laypeople. In a year which I cannot remember, there was a crime at Wat Paknam. By that time, Venerable Kamol, one of Luang Por’s favorite disciples, who was good at preaching and meditating, was preaching about meditation to monks where Luang Por was also listening (later on, Luang Por assigned Venerable Kamol to move to Petchburi Province to propagate Dhammakaya meditation. He lived there for 3 – 4 years and pass away.) After preaching, around 8.00 p.m., monks were returning to their residence. By that time, there was a criminal who tried to assassinate Luang Por in front of the Dhamma hall while he was on his way to his abode. The criminal shot him many times, causing his robes to have two

holes. Luang Por's attendant, Mr. Prom, was seriously wounded as he got shot at his mouth. However, it was amazing that Luang Por was not wounded at all. It could be the celestial beings who secured him, resulting him to be safe. If Luang Por passed away by that time, Wat Paknam would not be well-known as it should be."

### **The Preceptor Post**

The preceding stories have shown that Luang Por was supported by the senior monks to become the abbot of Wat Paknam and promoted to the rank of 'Pra-samu' who was one of the cleric subordinates of The Most Venerable Prasakyayuttiwong in 1918, but Luang Por was not posted to be a preceptor yet. As a result, he was unable to ordain anyone. Three years later, he was promoted to the rank of 'PraKruSamanadhamsamathan,' but still not a preceptor.

As a preceptor, he would be able to lead the monastic community in ordaining men to be Buddhist monks. A preceptor has two main responsibilities which are (1) to verify the ordainee who enters ordination and (2) who supervises, teaches, guides, and trains the newly ordained person similar to a father who looks after his child. To become a preceptor, one has to be assigned such post lawfully by the monastic governing body.

It was quite weird that Luang Por was the abbot of Wat Paknam where monks, novice monks, Buddhist nuns, and laypeople lived for almost about a thousand of them. Luang Por was eligible to permit someone to live at his temple if they behave well and comply to his rules of conduct, but he was unable to ordain anyone. If someone were to enter ordination at Wat Paknam, he has to request the abbot of nearby temples to be the preceptor for him. The abbot of Wat Paknam could not ordain anyone because he was assigned to the post of a preceptor.

The situation continued on like this until the year 1947, after he had been the abbot for almost 30 years. His Holiness The Supreme Patriarch Poun Pounnasiri wrote about Luang Por's post as a preceptor that:

"When His Holiness Somdet Phrawannarat (Tissadhattamahathera) was very ill until he was to die, Luang Por Wat Paknam took care of him very well by managing someone to deliver meals from Wat Paknam to His Holiness everyday. Luang Por allocated the budget of 40 Baht per day. At 4.00 am., someone would take a boat to Pak-Klong-Talad and arrived Wat Prachetuphon at dawn. By the time the Bhud-bridge was damaged due to World War, and the road from Wat Paknam was not properly built, and there was no bus commuting from Wat Paknam to Wat Pra Chetuphon. So, the only transportation available was by boat. Luang Por perservered in remunerating His Holiness for many months. The deliverer had to inform Luang Por every day after completing his or her duty.

Luang Por's remuneration upon His Holiness yielded good outcomes to Luang Por as The Most Venerable Prapimoldham (Choy Tanadhatto) the abbot of Wat Mahadhat paid a visit

to His Holiness frequently. One day, in the evening, His Holiness asked the most venerable to assign Luang Por to the post of a preceptor. The Most Venerable Prapimoldham was glad to manage everything per His request. Soon after, Luang Por Wat Paknam was certified to be a preceptor resulting many more men to enter ordination at Wat Paknam.

The Most Venerable Prapimoldham (Choy Tanadhatto) was personally favorable to each other with Luang Por. He was also interested in Luang Por's meditation method and said that Venerable Pra-kru of Wat Paknam was badly criticized but there are still numerous people who visit his temple for meditation practice. Other temples should do the same."

### **Luang Por's Ecclesiastical Rank**

As mentioned earlier that Luang Por had not been assigned the preceptor post for almost 30 years, in addition, he was not promoted to the higher ecclesiastical rank as well. When Luang Por became the abbot of Wat Paknam, he was assigned to be a 'Pra-Samu,' a subordinate of The Most Venerable Prasakyayuttiwong (later on, Somdet Phrawannarat Tissadhattamahathera). When The Most Venerable Prasakyayuttiwong was promoted to the rank of Parajsuthee, Luang Por was automatically promoted to the rank of 'PraKru-Samu.' In 1921, he became a higher level of PraKru, titled PraKruSamanadhamsamathan. Since then, he held the rank of PraKruSamanadhamsamathan for 28 years. Although Luang Por did not receive any promotion in nearly three decades, he did not make any complaint to his governing monk. He continued to practice and propagate Dhamma as usual without feeling discouraged. This is something that should be taken as a role model.

In 1949, two years after he became a preceptor, Luang Por was promoted to the ecclesiastical rank of Prabhavanakosolthera, given the honorific hand fan which had a white background color denoting the order of vipassana master.

Luang Por's promotion was due to the kind support of the governing monastic body, especially the Most Venerable Prapimoldham, the abbot of Wat Mahadhat who was satisfied with Luang Por's wholesome conducts. He kindly supported Luang Por from time to time.

In 1951, Luang Por received an honorific fan in recognition of his knowledge level in pali language

In 1955, Luang Por was promoted again to a higher ecclesiastical rank of Pramongkolrajmuni.

In 1957, he was promoted for one last time to the title of Pramongkolthepmuni.

### **Training Luang Por Lek**

'Luang Por Lek' is the informal name used for addressing the Most Venerable Prabhavanakosolthera (Teera Dhammadaro, Pali Scholar Level 4), whose nickname is Jiak.

When Luang Por Wat Paknam was alive, Luang Por Lek was the vice abbot and the headmaster of Wat Paknam's Dhamma school. In addition, he was also the head of Vipassana school at Wat Paknam. Luang Por Lek was ordained to be a novice monk when he was fourteen year-old. He was strictly and directly trained by Luang Por Wat Paknam in both Dhamma study and meditation practice. When he completed the level four of Pali study, he stopped studying and dedicated himself to meditation until he reached the advanced level of Dhammakaya meditation. When Luang Por Wat Paknam was seriously ill, Luang Por Lek was assigned to instruct meditation and give Buddha amulets to patrons. So, many people called him 'Luang Por Lek' as he was second to Luang Por Wat Paknam. ('Lek' in this place is comparable to a 'junior').

Luang Por Wat Paknam had strictly trained Luang Por Lek by himself since Luang Por Lek was a novice as he knew that Luang Por Lek would be able to be his substitute when he passed away. So, Luang Por Wat Paknam always taught Luang Por Lek personally. Sometimes, when Luang Por Wat Paknam had to go out, he would order Luang Por Lek to continue practicing alone until he returned. Luang Por Wat Paknam also limited his space by drawing a circle around Luang Por Lek with a piece of coal or a pencil and inserted the edge of Luang Por Lek's robe into the narrow space between pieces of wooden floor panels. This is to prevent the novice monk from going elsewhere. Then, Luang Por Wat Paknam left his abode. Many readers may wonder why such things could stop Luang Por Lek, as a novice monk, from going out. However, Luang Por Lek was very much obedient to Luang Por Wat Paknam, so he dared not to leave his seat at all.

When Luang Por Wat Paknam delivered a sermon, it took him around one hour and thirty minutes to two hours. Upon completion, he would return to supervise the meditation practice of Novice Monk Jiak. Luang Por Lek told Ajarn Treetar that Luang Por Wat Paknam used to punish him by whipping due to his laziness in meditation practice, but it was not a violent one. (It was common for Thai people in the past to punish their children by whipping with a stick.)

When Luang Por Lek was young, he loved to enjoy many things like chatting with his friends, entertaining, and reading commentary books and cartoons, but Luang Por Wat Paknam knew that he had little time left, so he did not want to waste time on anything at all. He wished to completely transfer his meditation knowledge to Novice Monk Jiak. So, the novice was expected to do his best in receiving the knowledge and train himself well until gaining expertise.

Finally, Luang Por Lek was able to achieve the superknowledge of Dhammakaya meditation up to the level that Luang Por Wat Paknam could rely on him. He became a very capable person who was diligent, honest, patient, wise, kind, and cheerful. He was promoted to the ecclesiastical rank of PraKruSamanadhamsamathan in 1957, when Luang Por Wat Paknam was still alive. In 1967, he was promoted to the ecclesiastical rank of Prabhavanakosolthera.

The ecclesiastic titles he received were the titles that Luang Por Wat Paknam used to receive. So, he was like a representative of Luang Por Wat Paknam. Unfortunately, Luang Por Lek was not healthy, and he was not able to live a long life. He always said that “I cannot live long... upto 45 year-old, and I will die.” On Wednesday 10 July 1968, which fall on the beginning of Buddhist lent day of such year, he passed away due to heart and intestine disease, when he was 44 year 5 months and 25 days old. The association of Luang Por Wat Paknam’s disciple, chaired by Ajarn Treetar Niamkam, organized a memorial service for him every year on the beginning of Buddhist lent day.

### **Teaching Ordainees to Meditate**

The ordainees in this case mean the persons who have their head shaved and put on white robes, preparing to go through an ordination ceremony. From the aforesaid stories of Luang Por Wat Paknam, we can see that Luang Por was the one who spent his time worthwilely. He did not wish to waste his time on useless thing. Even for ordainees who were to attend the ordination ceremony, Luang Por would teach meditation to them. He said as follows:

“.... When I was a preceptor ordaining others, some of the ordainees could attain by visualizing their own hairs. They looked at their own hairs and visualized the hairs as an object of meditation. Once I told them to do so, they could see their hairs in meditation. I questioned them what their hairs looked like. They explained which direction the root and the tip were pointing to. They could tell the color and the way their hair looked like. So, I told them to still their mind in the middle of the hairs. Soon, the image of their hair changed to a crystal clear sphere around the size of a midday sun or a full moon. By the end of my words, they saw the crystalclear sphere, and I told them to rest their mind in the middle of the sphere which looked like the midday sun or the full moon.”

Every ordaineer knew well that Luang Por would speak clearly in the beginning of the ordination ceremony that:

“... Now, you bring your robe which is the victory flag of the arahant to me. The robe was dyed and sowed according to the Lord Buddha’s permission. As the robes are offered to me amidst the Sangha community altogether with the request for ordination uttered, it is a wholesome and righteous thing to do. For this ordination, you have to cultivate faith or belief or being steadfast in the Buddha, Dhamma, and the Sangha. The Buddha is the Lord of our religion, He kindly granted an ordination ceremony. In order to cultivate faith and belief, you need to know about the virtues of our Lord Buddha first...”

While Luang Por spoke to the ordaineer, he would stare at the ordaineer and explained the Lord Buddha’s wisdom, purity, and compassion. Then, he continued by explaining the contemplation method on bodily organs (skin, teeth, nail, bodily hair, and hair) by asking the ordaineer to repeat after his words. Up to this point, other preceptors would put on the inner-robe for the ordaineer and order the ordaineer to completely put on the robes; however, Luang Por asked the ordaineer if he could remember the shaved hair. Then, he

advised the ordainee to meditate by visualizing the shaved hair. This complies to the contemplation of bodily organs which he asked the ordainee to repeated after him earlier. He asked the ordainee to visualize the hair at the first base of mind and move through other bases respectively until reaching the seventh base in the middle of one's body.

When the visualized image is at the seventh base, Luang Por advised the ordainee further to rest the mind in the middle of the visualized hair. Luang Por would ask if they already saw the image and asked what they saw. If the ordainee told him they he saw the hair, he would tell them to notice which direction is the root and tip. Soon, some of the ordainees told him they he saw a crystal sphere. His mind was wholesome enough for ordination. After such ordainee became a fully ordained Buddhist monk, Luang Por would order him to study the advanced level of meditation with another teacher who already attained Dhammakaya. However, if the ordainee replied that he could see nothing, Luang Por would order him to continue meditating until he attained meditation experience; otherwise, the ordination ceremony would not be continued. Some of them had to meditate for almost two hours before the he proceeded further in the ordination ceremony.

Venerable Sanan Sarasai or Khantiko Bhikkhu, who was ordained by Luang Por, wrote his experience in an ordination ceremony where Luang Por was his preceptor that “a tuft of black hair which I saw earlier started to fade away until it became unnoticeable. There appeared to be a gleaming circle instead. The light glowed softly. In the beginning, it was just a circle that shrinked down and started to expand. It was like this for some time, and it stopped when it was a circle as big as a coin. The size of circle became stable and it shined from its circumference toward the middle. Finally, I saw a crystal clear sphere which was bright like a full moon. I was afraid that the image would disappear, so I paid more attention in focusing my mind longer. The feeling of numbness and pain in my legs disappeared, and I don't know why. Then, Luang Por questioned me if I saw something else. When I replied him that I saw a bright sphere about the size of a big lime, Luang Por said that it's enough for today. You must remember the sphere you see in your meditation. You must be able to see it at all times either when you close or open your eyes. Don't lose the image. This crystal clear sphere is the gateway to Nirvana, and it is the same path of the Lord Buddha. It is the right and direct path, there is no other path. Please remember it, don't let it disappear.”

As a result, monks who were ordained by Luang Por would feel that they are fortunate and honored to have Luang Por as their preceptor because Luang Por paid much attention and effort in teaching meditation to them individually. He was patient enough to wait for his student practicing meditation until seeing the crystal sphere. He was willing to wait no matter for how long without complaining about feeling uncomfortable or tired. He did not scold or rush the ordainee at all. So, everyone who attended the ceremony had to wait for hours. This included the member monks and the laypeople. During waiting, they had to

practice meditation as well. All of this happened in order to allow the new monk to gain meditation experience.

Luang Por assigned those who attained the superknowledge of Dhammakaya to meditate in different shifts throughout 24 hours a day. Each shift took four hours. The advanced meditation session was organized at a place called 'the meditation workshop' whereas Luang Por used the first floor of his abode to be the workshop. This workshop was separated into two zones by a wall, one zone for the monks and the another for the Buddhist nuns. However, there was a channel at the wall which allowed Luang Por to verbally supervise the meditation session.

The term 'meditation workshop' means a place for practicing advanced Dhammakaya meditation under the guidance of Luang Por. The members of meditation workshop were chosen, by Luang Por, from those who attained Dhammakaya. For ones who were chosen, Luang Por would order them to advance their meditation level by acquiring the superknowledge of Dhammakaya at this workshop in order to get ready to serve the very first Lord Buddha with their meditation capability. So, this is not a place for common practitioners. Many people did not know about this fact, so they misunderstood that Luang Por ran a business by establishing a workshop for producing rattan baskets. When Luang Por was alive, there was a man who made rattan baskets for sale in front of the temple. So, the rumor about Luang Por's meditation workshop made many people misunderstood that Luang Por produced rattan baskets at the workshop in order to earn money for feeding all the monks at his temple.

Ones who attend the advanced meditation session at this workshop must be a full time resident of Wat Paknam. For ladies, there were both Buddhist nuns and laywomen. The reason why they have to attend different shifts of meditation session throughout 24 hours was because Luang Por wished them to gain expertise and able to keep up with the profound level of their meditation experience. The superknowledge of Dhammakaya that Luang Por taught was available for research and discovery infinitely. So, the advanced practitioners had to prepare themselves well for the meditation session, similar to athletes who prepare their body well for a game.

Moreover, members of the meditation workshop also helped to relieve people's sufferings by solving their difficulties in life as well as illness, with meditation power. People who visited Wat Paknam would write down the symptoms of their illness or explain about difficulties in their life in a paper form, then the forms were dropped into a prepared box. When Luang Por was alive, this box was opened four times a day when the forms would be distributed among members of the meditation workshop. So, they could work on curing diseases. Some of the patients were about to die as their diseases could not be cured, but their sufferings and pains would be lessened.

## **Becoming a Buddhist Nun**

Master Treetar was one of the members of Luang Por's meditation workshop. By that time, she was only thirteen year old, the youngest member. After she attained Dhammakaya, Luang Por requested her parents, Mr. Duang and Mrs. Poom, to have Treetar ordained as a Buddhist nun at Wat Paknam. During that time, Luang Por would ask all the ladies who lived at Wat Paknam to study and practice meditation to become Buddhist nuns or observe eight precepts because the precepts observance would enhance and promote their meditation practice and good discipline. As a result, Master Treetar did not return to live at home in Bangbor, Samutprakarn Province again, except that she paid visits occasionally.

## **Renaming**

Master Treetar's original name was 'Pin,' but Luang Por renamed her to be 'Treetar.' The new name is weird and smart as it is easy to pronounce and not outdated. It also has a good meaning and does not signify a gender. This name can be used with either a male or a female. If there is no gender title in front, it would be difficult to know whether such person is a male or a female. When Pin knew for the first time that she was renamed, she was not quite delightful because she was unfamiliar with the name 'Treetar' which sounded bold like a man's name. In addition, female's names in that time are usually long and ended with a vowel sound like 'sri' such as 'Banjongsri' or 'Prayounvadi.' So, when Treetar met with her parents, she mentioned to them about her new name. When Luang Por heard about this, he smiled and asked "Don't you like this name? This name is good. There is only one." In that time, there was only one person who used this name. But there could be several people in the modern days, but it all started from Master Treetar. Many people went to ask for permission from Master Treetar to name their descendant as 'Treetar.'

Luang Por managed for Master Treetar to study Buddhism through the Dhamma study curriculum altogether with meditation practice at the workshop. Finally, Master Treetar could complete the advanced level of Dhamma study. In that time, the examinees had to attend the examination at Wat Prachetupon. Luang Por took Master Treetar to Wat Prachetupon by boat. During the examination, Luang Por waited by conversing with other monks at the temple.

Upon completion of the advanced level of Dhamma study, Luang Por had Treetar study highschool with distant learning until she completed grade 9. Luang Por thought that it was enough for a Buddhist nun because he did not wish his students to continue the secular education too far as they would be required to memorize, research, and join activities with many friends. These might affect their meditation level to become inferior.

Most common people try to achieve higher education because they wish to earn more for living. But for Master Treetar who attained superknowledge of Dhammakaya since her early teen, Luang Por wished to spare her time for learning the advanced superknowledge of Dhammakaya meditation. This is because Luang Por knew well that he was running out of



time in his life, so he wished to find the right persons to be his Dhamma heirs. Master Treetar used to mention that she should have had studied medicine, but Luang Por explained to her that she should be diligent in practicing meditation until gaining expertise as it would enable to gain whatever she wished, and even the medical doctors would become her student. Since Master Treetar was still young, she did not quite believe Luang Por, and she also told her friend that she disbelieved him. But as time flies by, it has proven that Luang Por's words are true and beneficial.

Luang Por organized six shifts of advanced meditation session each day. Each shift took four consecutive hours and supervised by a meditation supervisor who would replace Luang Por when he was not present. Master Treetar was also chosen to be a supervisor of the advanced meditation session at the meditation workshop. So, she became the youngest supervisor who was only 14 year old. However, there was no problem with age since Luang Por recognized her, so do others. In addition, age was not considered to be an important factor, but the level of meditation attainment. So, there were some other older people addressed Master Treetar as 'Kru' (Guru or master) eventhough they never studied meditation with Master Treetar.

Presently, the meditation workshop has been relocated to a small hall at the back of the hall where Luang Por's coffin is enshrined. Buddhist nuns who attain Dhammakaya still meditate there 24 hours a day, similar to the time when Luang Por was alive. This practice has been carried on for more than 90 years. When Buddha amulets are built, the space at the entrance of the workshop hall is used for convenience in blessing the amulets at the meditation workshop.

Luang Por had set a strict rule that 'Ones who have not attained Dhammakaya are not allowed to enter the meditation workshop, even the full time residents of Wat Paknam. Luang Por has many reasons as follows:

1. Outsiders may cause noise that disturb or annoy the progress of meditation practice. This will cause such persons to be sinful.
2. The superknowledge of Dhammakaya meditation is extraordinarily profound. Ones who have not attained or experienced by themselves may have doubts when they hear the advanced meditation instructions. This may cause them to be puzzled and bewildered, especially when the superknowledge of Dhammakaya is being transferred. It will be dangerous if they tell this to others incorrectly.
3. Luang Por does not want the outsiders to talk about nonsensical things with the advanced Dhammakaya practitioners. This absolutely wastes their time and promotes a wandering mind.

#### **Allowance for the Dhammakaya Superknowledge Practitioners**

Luang Por realized that it is uneasy to train someone to attain the advanced superknowledge of Dhammakaya. Such person needs to accumulate enough meritorious

deeds in the past lifetimes. For the present, both the instructor and the students are required to invest much effort, patience, diligence, and truthfulness.

When Luang Por could train someone to attain Dhammakaya and be willing to become a fulltime resident of Wat Paknam, he would choose whether to forward such person to the meditation workshop. These people were his valuable human resource, so Luang Por tried his best to make them practice meditation at Wat Paknam as long as possible with good convenience. Luang Por had managed to provide them monthly allowance, in addition to the regular amenity. So, the Dhammakaya Superknowledge practitioners would be able to spend money personally as well as making donation. Luang Por did not want them to bother their parents and family members; although, they are from a well-to-do family. Such as in the case of Master Treetar who received food and money from her parents and elder brother who frequently visited her. Luang Por said he was capable of looking after everyone eventhough there would be more people.

Luang Por allocated monthly allowance for all of the Buddhist nuns who meditate at the meditation workshop. The allowance was from Luang Por's personal money. Master Treetar was responsible for withdrawing the allowance for everyone from the treasurer of Wat Paknam, Mr. Prayoon Suentara. This was because Luang Por did not touch and keep money as he observed the monastic code strictly. Then, Master Treetar would distribute money among the Buddhist nuns, starting from the six supervisors namely Master Treetar, Buddhist Nun Pook Muiprasert, Buddhist Nun Yanee Siriwoharn, Ms. Chaluay Sombatsuk, Buddhist Nun Lamai Choowongwut, and Buddhist Nun Tanom Asawai, who received 300 baht each. The rest who were not supervisors received 20 baht each. This allowance is called 'Dhammakaya Allowance.' The amount of allowance had been the same throughout Luang Por's lifetime without any increase. The reason why the allowance for the supervisors and other members are much different is because Luang Por wished to motivate other members to be diligent in meditation practice and become another supervisor.

After Luang Por passed away, on 3 February 1959, Luang Por Lek replaced Mr. Prayoon in keeping the allowance money. The money was enough for about one more month, and Luang Por Lek told Master Treetar about this. Master Treetar said that the allowance payment would be suspended if there was no money to pay, and it was one way to prove everyone's commitment toward Luang Por. However, Master Treetar still worried about having no money to pay for the Dhammakaya allowance, and she wished to earn enough money and continue paying for the allowance similar to the time when Luang Por was alive. Due to gratitude, love and respect upon Luang Por, she was eager to continue Luang Por's every project, so she put an effort in raising fund for Dhammakaya allowance.

It seemed that her thought was known by Luang Por because Ms. Prayoon Nakboontiang, a person who practiced the advanced Dhammakaya superknowledge at the meditation

workshop, had dreamt of Luang Por when he returned home to visit her ill mother. Ms. Prayoon did not know that there was not enough money for Dhammakaya allowance, but she dreamt of Luang Por walking out from his coffin. Luang Por walked to her and spoke with a serious face “Who terminated the Dhammakaya allowance?” She replied “I don’t know, sir.” Then, Luang Por said “Never mind, I will give by myself. The one who manages to do this will receive a red-ribbon award.”

Ms. Prayoon told Master Treetar about her dream when she returned to Wat Paknam. This caused Master Treetar to be brimmed with tears to learn that Luang Por was still concerned about the practice of Dhammakaya superknowledge and wished every practitioners to have a well-being. So, she put extra effort in raising fund for the allowance unlike before as she was afraid that people would criticize her of trying to earn money for her own allowance. This made Master Treetar decided not to receive allowance for herself in order to prevent any criticism. Ms. Prayoon’s dream caused Master Treetar to make up her mind in continuing Luang Por’s mission as she knew well that Luang Por would support her.

Master Treetar, then, raised fund among disciples of Luang Por Wat Paknam and those who were close to her. It was not a requirement, anyone could donate for any amount. However, most people were willing to help, more or less, in order continue Luang Por’s project. There were also monks who donated for Dhammakaya allowance such as Luang Por Lek who donated 10 baht monthly, PraKruYanapreecha donated 20 baht monthly, and Mother Tuam Hutanukrom, the chief of Wat Paknam’s refectory, donated 100 each month. Other monks were PraKruPanyapirat and others.

Master Treetar allocated the received fund to provide allowance to all members of the meditation workshop except herself. Each supervisor no longer received 300 baht as there was not enough money. The maximum allowance was 50 baht. There were also those who received 40 baht, 30 baht, and 20 baht. The minimum amount was 5 baht. Ms. Prayoon Nakboontiang also returned to meditate at the workshop and received 20 baht each month from Master Treetar.

After all of the Dhammakaya superknowledge practitioners received their allowance, Ms. Prayoon Nakboontiang dreamt of Luang Por again. In her dream, Luang Por asked “Have you all got the allowance?” Once Master Treetar learned about this dream, she bowed to Luang Por with respect in order to express her appreciation for Luang Por’s concern and support. She was delightful that Luang Por still looked after everyone at Wat Paknam although he had passed away.

I used to question Master Treetar why Luang Por chose to tell Ms. Prayoon in her dream. How come Luang Por did not tell Master Treetar directly? And what did Luang Por give to Master Treetar as an award? Master Treetar replied that Luang Por did not tell her directly

because he wished to have another person or the third party to witness this. This is something that Luang Por was beware of even when he was alive. For example, when Luang Por ordered the Dhammakaya superknowledge practitioners to attend a memorial service, he acquired as many as three persons in order to invite the spirit of the diseased one. This means that Luang Por wanted someone to be the third party to acknowledge the truth that he supported the Dhammakaya allowance. If he told Master Treetar directly, others would think that Master Treetar made up a story to raise fund.

For the award that Luang Por mentioned to Ms. Prayoon in her dream, it means the happiness, convenience, and success in all of Master Treetar's religious works as Master Treetar has been well supported by fellows. She is also blessed with well being and abundance. All of what she has lived up to are rewarded by Luang Por.

Presently, there are numerous people who donate money to support the Dhammakaya allowance. So, the Buddhist nuns who are practitioners of Dhammakaya superknowledge can have well-being. His Holiness Somdet Phramaharatchamangkhlachan, the present abbot of Wat Paknam, also kindly allocates money for Dhammakaya allowance as much as one million baht for two times. This enables Master Treetar to allocate money for medical care as well. Some of the Dhammakaya superknowledge practitioners do not accept allowance, but they wish to receive only money for medical expenses. When these Buddhist nuns pass away, if they have no relatives who organize the memorial service for them, His Holiness will be glad to be responsible by organizing a memorial service at Wat Paknam for 3 days and organize a cremation ceremony at Wat Apsornsawan. The memorial service and cremation ceremony are carried on by The Most Venerable Rajamangalacariya per the direction of His Holiness. Master Treetar would spend the allowance on making merits such as offering meals to the monks and chanting for the memorial service. If there is a surplus of the contributed money, Master Treetar will donate the amount to establish a trust fund under the name of the deceased person.

Nowadays, Master Treetar does not allocate allowance for herself; although, His Holiness the abbot had requested her to accept the amount. His Holiness kindly asked why she received no allowance like others as she has been one of the Dhammakaya teachers. Master Treetar sincerely thanked His Holiness and explained to him that she still had enough for living, but she wished to continue Luang Por's intention by allocating the allowance for others.

In the present, Master Treetar assigns Ms. Walee Kunaratpanich (the treasurer of Luang Por Wat Paknam's Disciple Association) to be responsible for paying Dhammakaya allowance. The total amount costs more than 60,000 baht each month excluding the medical expenses. As more and more people donate for the allowance, Ms. Walee no longer wishes to keep the amount, so she offered the amount of 5 million baht to His Holiness the abbot, and it is

deposited to the foundation of Wat Paknam. The amount will be withdrawn when the monthly donation is inadequate for the allowance payment only.

Master Treetar said she rejoices in the merit of those who donate for the Dhammakaya allowance. Although the receivers of Dhammakaya allowance are not Buddhist monks, but donors earn much merit because they are the deserved ones who are complete in precepts and Dhamma. In addition, it is a way to support Buddhism and repay to Luang Por Wat Paknam. By the power of this merit, may the donors, who have not attained Dhammakaya superknowledge yet, attain Dhammakaya superknowledge as soon as possible. For those who already attain Dhammakaya superknowledge, may they attain the advanced level even more as well as attaining the Nirvana soon.

### **Mind is the Chief**

The superknowledge of Dhammakaya is a wonderful profound mystery. Ones who have not attained until experiencing by oneself will find it hard to understand and believe. Luang Por always said that “Those who are not faithful [in Dhammakaya meditation] yet may do not wish to support. However, they should not oppose with their thought, speech, and action. Especially, ones who are close to the practitioners of Dhammakaya superknowledge. They should be careful of themselves not to offend, either intentionally or unintentionally as the karmic consequence will be much greater than an action committed against a commoner.”

On the contrary, if one admires and shows respect to the Dhammakaya superknowledge practitioners, one will earn ample merit. This is similar to a person who is close to a bonfire. He will benefit much from the heat if he is careful, on the contrary, if he becomes reckless, the fire may harm himself even though he does not mean to do it.

All human actions are supervised by the mind. Although some people may state that they do something unintentionally, but it is indeed the mind that functions quickly and causes every deed. The mind's functioning can be very fast that even oneself is not aware of. However, it results in thought, speech, and action already. This complies to the Pali verse that “All of the Dhamma are chiefed by the mind. All can be achieved with the mind. When one has an unwholesome mind, one will suffer from his speech and action. It is similar to the [cart] wheels that follow the footprints of the cattle who carry a yoke.”

To clarify the Pali verse, it means that everything is supervised by the mind because if nothing comes to the mind on the first hand, nothing will happen. So, one's mind is the main factor that causes impact. As such, it is named to be the chief of all deeds.

When someone has an impure mind, it will result in him to have bad thought, speech, and actions. The unwholesome thought, speech, and action will result in bad karmic

consequences. This is the reason why it is said that sufferings will follow the one with an impure mind like the cart wheels that follow cattles' footprints.

On the contrary, one who has a well trained mind will bring about happiness. This complies to the pali axiom that "*cittam tanti sukavaham.*"

A well trained mind in this case means that the mind remains wholesome and immuned against impurity. Thus, it can result in only good thought, speech, and action. If the mind is not well trained, one can lose control of the mind at ease when stimulated or manipulated by the external factors or from what one sees, hears, tastes, smells, touches, or thinks. Finally, one is likely to end up committing misdeeds due to such manipulations.

Up to this point, many readers may understand now that every human being has the Dhamma quality within oneself. Luang Por called this Dhamma quality the 'Dhamma sphere' which exists within everyone. This Dhamma sphere can be seen and experienced through meditation practice. Luang Por also explained about the Dhamma within oneself that "... Everyone is doubtful about the Dhamma as this term is used to call this and that. So, one does not really know exactly which Dhamma to acquire. The Dhamma I am talking about is the real Dhamma that you need to focus your mind on. If you still don't see it, keep practicing and you will see when you reach the right mental unification. For those who look for the Dhamma here and there including the forest and jungle, it is because they could not find it. When they found it, they come to realize that it is like their headgear, something they sacrifice their lives in search for but it is within themselves already. The Dhamma is in the middle of oneself. It is just there...."

### **Incarnation**

Luang Por always taught that one should be fully aware of one's own unwholesome thought. If it becomes uncontrollable, the mind will be degraded and experience unhappiness. There will be no good fellow around. After one dies, one will reborn in the unwholesome realms namely the realm of animals, demons, hungry ghost, and hell creatures.

Thus, one needs to take good control of one's mind and get to know it well. Don't let it intimidate us. If we are unaware of it, it will intimidate us. To take control of one's mind, it is necessary to be composed on one's thought, speech, and action. Don't let them wander per manipulations. Perservere in resting the mind still at the center of the body.

Master Treetar has been living at Wat Paknam since she was a thirteen year old girl. Until now, she is eighty-six years old. She has experienced various people and things both in good and bad way. She said if she were to write a novel based on her experience, it would be full

of a variety including excitement, love, sorrow, sadden, jealousy, touchy, and unbelievable truth.

Master Treetar knew some people who thought and spoke badly to Luang Por and the Dhammakaya superknowledge practitioners. Such people had to face with bad karmic consequences late in their lives. One of them got sick restlessly and felt hot so that he had to take out his clothes and shower himself always. Later on, such person died unpeacefully.

Everyone's spirit is subject to rebirth after passing away. If one has committed good deeds, one will reborn to a wholesome realm due to the pure Dhamma quality within. On the contrary, the one who has committed bad deeds will head to the unwholesome realm such as the realm of animals, hungry ghosts, demons, and hell, due to the impure Dhamma quality in himself. This is the result of either merit or sin energy that has been accumulated within oneself. These energies cannot be deleted. So, one has to face with retribution until the energies are used up.

The author would like to exemplify a sermon of Luang Por in order to clarify to all readers and shows how Luang Por is concerned about his students. He does not wish his students to plunge into the unwholesomeness due to ignorance. So, he taught thoroughly and gave easy-to-understand analogies as follow:

"Who will lead you to reborn when your body stops functioning. There remains the refined human body (spirit) that usually works when we dream. Dying is like sleeping and dream because the refined human body leaves the physical body because it no longer works. [When someone die,] the merit sphere in the physical body ceases. It is the same to the Dhamma sphere, *rupa*, *vedana*, *sanna*, *samkara*, and *vinna*. All of them cease. But in the middle of the Dhamma sphere which forms the refined human body, there is another merit sphere. This merit sphere will lead one to reborn, for example, in a high-class family like the monarchy who have abundant properties and subordinates, the billionaires, the wealthy Brahmins, and the wealthy businessmen. If one has more merit energy than the human world can serve, one will reborn in the celestial realms like Catumaharajika, Tavatimsa, Yama, Tusita, Nimmanarati, and Paranimittavasavatti... either one of this."

You may be curious how the merit and sin sphere look like. Luang Por explained as follows:

"... the meritorious state leads a creature to a wholesome realm whereas the sinful state leads a creature to an unwholesome realm. The meritorious state is a clear merit sphere locating in the middle of the Dhamma sphere which forms the human body. The sinful state is a dark sphere locating in the middle of the Dhamma sphere of the human body as well. If the merit sphere is larger, it can lead one to the celestial realm. However, if the sin sphere

is larger, it leads to the hell realm. This is how one's destiny is pre-determined, nobody can change it.

Thus, for a creature to reborn in the unwholesome realm, there is a drawing force. As one did only bad deeds and committed no good deed at all, the deepest hell realm draws such person [like a gravity] after he or she passes away. One cannot go nowhere else as one will be drawn by the sinenergy. For the less severe realms, there are Avejimahatapa hell and such. When one reborn to the animal realms, one is drawn to an animal [womb]. However, if one's mistake is not that bad, one [is drawn] to reborn as a hungry ghost or demon, respectively.

If one committed good deeds and had no bad deeds at all, after one passes away, one will be drawn to reborn in the human womb. For the even better case, one is reborn as a celestial being in a celestial realm, ranging from Catumaharajika, Tavatimsa, Yama, Tusita, Nimmanarati, and Paranimittavasavatti. One will be naturally drawn [to such level] depending on the goodness that one committed. The attraction will draw one to the level that matches oneself... where to live... where to reborn to... There is an attraction [like the gravity force] that [automatically] draws a creature [to a suitable realm]. As we cling to the human realm, we can go nowhere... we are controlled like this, and we are drawn like this always [in the process of reincarnation]. This is the reason why we make merit because the merit [energy earned] can cause us to be drawn to a wholesome realm. So, we don't go to the unwholesome one."

Master Treetar always exemplify individuals along with Luang Por's teachings which show that if someone has a good heart, good behavior, wholesome thought, speech, and action, such one will go to the wholesome realm. On the contrary, if one has a wicked mind and misbehaviors, one will head to the unwholesome realm in the afterlife. There is a story about 'Aunty Pun' who already passed away. Master Treetar said before she told this story, she had apologized and asked for permission from Aunty Pun already.

It is well-known that when Luang Por was alive, he was very strict about Dhammakaya meditation practice. He also provided convenience to the Dhammakaya superknowledge practitioners who meditated at the meditation workshop. Most of them were Buddhist nuns. Luang Por ordered the staffs of refectory to prepare breakfast and lunch for them, so they did not have to worry about meals which may affect their meditation practice. (Luang Por disallowed them to have meal at the workshop, and this rule is still effective up to the present days.)

Therefore, when it was time to have breakfast and lunch, the Dhammakaya superknowledge practitioners would leave the meditation workshop and go to the refectory. When they finished their meals, they returned to the workshop without having to help cooking or



cleaning the dishes. By that time, there was an abode close to the workshop which was a residence for those observed precepts at Wat Paknam. Among them, there was a lady whom Master Treetar called 'Aunty Pun.' One of Aunty Pun's routines was to look at the Dhammakaya superknowledge practitioners walking out from the meditation workshop to have breakfast and lunch.

Instead of having a meritorious mind rejoicing in the merit of the Dhammakaya superknowledge practitioners who renounced their homes and beloved family members as well as their enjoyable secular life to practice meditation at Wat Paknam, Aunty Pun was dissatisfied due to her anger, hatred, and jealousy. Although the Dhammakaya superknowledge practitioners did not cause any trouble to her, but Aunty Pun had ill wills toward them every time she saw them passing by, thinking that they had their meals without having to cook and clean the kitchen utensils and dishes.

Later on, Aunty Pun got sick and passed away, and she requested Venerable PraKruPanyapirat, an assistant to the abbot of Wat Paknam, to organize a memorial service and cremation ceremony for her (The venerable himself passed away on 13 September 1983). The ceremony was organized for Aunty Pun until completion per her wish.

Around three to four years after Aunty Pun passed away, there was an eighteen year old lady from Song Pi Nong District, Suphanburi Province, who went to Wat Paknam for Buddhist nun ordination. Soon after her ordination, one day, the Buddhist nun stood up and cried without any reason as if she was possessed by a ghost. Other Buddhist nuns asked her why she cried, but she did not answer. So, some other Buddhist nuns asked her name and where she was from. After hearing this, the new Buddhist nun replied "My name is Pun." Many Buddhist nuns who were around could remember Aunty Pun, and they said that Pun passed away for a long time already. By then, everyone knew that Aunty Pun possessed the body of the new Buddhist nun. They tried to ask her where she was and how she was doing.

Aunty Pun said she went to the hell realm, and there were many worms dashing into her eyes and mouth. Everyone was surprised to learn that she went to hell because she lived at Wat Paknam to observe precepts. Aunty Pun, in the body of the newly ordained Buddhist nun, explained that she used to gossip and envy the Dhammakaya superknowledge practitioners. The reason why she possessed this newly ordained Buddhist nun was because she wished to request Buddhist Nun Tanyanee Sudket to dedicate merit to her. Buddhist Nun Tanyanee was in the situation, so she dedicated all of her meritorious deeds she had done to the spirit of Aunty Pun, wishing her to have a good afterlife. Then, Aunty Pun rejoiced in her merit and she asked for drinking water. A Buddhist nun brought her a bowl of water which Aunty Pun drank all and passed out.

After the spirit of Aunty Pun left the body of the new Buddhist nun, the new Buddhist nun did not know what happened. Other Buddhist nuns asked her if she knew Aunty Pun before, but she refused because she had never heard this name before. In addition, she just came from Supanburi to live at Wat Paknam for a few days.

The story of Aunty Pun is given to raise the awareness of everyone that whether one believes or disbelieves in Dhammakaya meditation or not, there are many individuals who are capable of practicing and attaining the Dhammakaya superknowledge. The misdeeds that are committed either mentally, verbally, or physically, toward those who really attain the Dhammakaya superknowledge will eventually become sinful deeds that can lead an individual to an unwholesome realm.

### **Precepts Observance**

In order to keep oneself pure, one needs to be well composed on one's thought, speech, and action. Thus, a layman should observe all of the five Buddhist precepts (nīcasīla) regularly. It will be even more beneficial if one observe the eight precepts on every Buddhist observance day (Buddhist Sabbath day) which falls on the full moon day, the new moon day, the quarter waxing moon day, and the quarter waning moon day. Ones who observe precepts will receive immediate good consequences which free ones from sin, harm, revenge and disadvantage. On the contrary, one will be blessed with happiness and good fellows. This complies to Buddhist monks' concluding verses by the end of the ceremony to vow for observing precepts that "Individuals can head to the wholesome realm due to precepts observance. Individuals can be blessed with wealth due to precepts observance. Individuals can attain the Nirvana due to precepts observance."

Luang Por said that it is fine to lose one's wealth, but one must not break the precepts. Precepts observance can bring about wealth because if one has good conducts due to observing precepts, the wealth will be drawn toward such person who does not get involve into any trouble. But the precepts must be completely observed.

Luang Por taught his disciples to practice generosity, observe precepts, and meditate because they are the right methods that can help people to be liberated from their overwhelming sufferings quickly. He compared each person to a chick that is inside an eggshell where the eggshell is 'desire' that clings such person to the cycle of rebirth. Generosity is a practice that can help one to hatch the eggshell, but it is not powerful enough. If one observes precepts, it can help speed up the process as the Buddhist precepts promote the purity of oneself. If a person practice generosity, observe precepts, and practice meditation altogether, he will be empowered and gains much strength to hatch the eggshell in order to liberate himself toward freedom or Nirvana more quickly.

### **Good Consequences of Meditation Practice**

Although some Dhammakaya meditation practitioners are unable to achieve the highest level as taught by Luang Por due to the limitation of a secular life, Luang Por said that they will receive good consequences from practicing meditation such as becoming wise and wisdomful. A wise person is the one who has good wisdom, the more wisdom one has, the wiser one becomes. It is a quality that is pre-determined since one reborn, and this quality is made possible by the accumulated good deeds like meditation practice.

Some people may doubt if it is necessary to practice meditation if one already has a perfect life that is blessed with wealth, beauty, capability, and wisdom. Indeed, these good qualities are brought to a person due to the accumulated merit energy earned from doing good deeds. Therefore, as the merit energy is used up, all of these will depart. This is the reason why there are gain and loss, fame and defame, praise and blame, and happiness and suffering. These are the eight worldly normality which proves the fact that life is impermanent and subject to changes.

If one wishes to have a prosperous and successful life that is both convenient and perfect, one needs to do all of the ten wholesome deeds which comprise of (1) abstain from killing (2) abstain from stealing (3) abstain from sexual misconduct (4) abstain from lying (5) abstain from sarcasting (6) abstaining from speaking rudely (7) abstain from rambling (8) having no greed (9) having no ill will and (10) having ethical and righteous thought. If one wishes to be wise and wisdomful, one must not consume alcohol and narcotic. Moreover, one has to practice meditation in order to purify and beautify one's mind. Meditation is the way to keep one's mind healthy, energetic, and powerful.

### **Curing Diseases with the Superknowledge of Dhammakaya**

As it is described earlier that Luang Por used Dhammakaya meditation to eliviate people's suffering from illness, danger, harm, business, and psychological problems, Luang Por would tell them to practice meditation regularly by resting their mind still at the center of their body, the seventh base of mind, and repeat the mantra 'Samma Arahant' silently. In addition, he ordered the advanced meditators at the meditation workshop to solve people's problems with their meditation power.

Luang Por would order the advanced meditators to find out the karma that caused illness or any form of suffering that occurred to each person. He said "As we know that they turn out to be like this, we have to find out the cause. What is the reason? What did they do? Then, solve problems from the very causes. This complies to the pali teaching that "Everything occurs due to the cause."

Those who requested for help had to fill information into a paper form. They had to specify name, lastname, date of birth (according to both the sun calendar and lunar calendar), birth time, address, and symptom in details. It would be beneficial if they attached a photo of the

person to be cured. It was necessary to learn about the symptom as much as possible because it would enable the curing to be more speedy and efficiently. Luang Por was like an expert medical doctor who was knowledgeable about all diseases. He knew the causes and curing methods as well as the information about the patients in the past lifetimes.

With the power of Dhammakaya meditation, Luang Por was able to advise such individuals about what merit they should make in order to lessen the karmic force. He also knew the spirits or persons who sought revenge from the patients. Although it is impossible to delete the karma completely, but the new merit committed in the present lifetime will act like the extra power for a car engine to run away from the bad karma that is chasing after him. As a result, the bad karmic consequences will be lessened. If such karma is not a severe karma, it can be lessened until expiring and turned to be a forgiven karma. Other than trying to solve the karmic problems, additional merit making can eventually increase the volume of merit energy. So, it is like driving away the waste water with clean water.

The Dhammakaya meditation is powerful, and it is hard to describe all of what it is about. However, it can be proven for someone to witness. Master Treetar is very much careful in telling these stories to people who do not have a chance to learn directly from Luang Por or gain experience from Dhammakaya meditation by themselves because most people would find it unbelievable. So, to tell such stories to these people would be a disadvantage even though they are something real. In this case, Master Treetar does not give permission to publicize the stories, but she tells and explains personally when someone experiences something in the same manner and questions her directly. So, the author has to find stories that have referable individuals and witnesses to be covered in this book; even though, the individuals may already have passed away, but their descendants who may have heard the stories are still alive. Some stories were noted or published before, and Master Treetar permitted the author to cover these stories in this book as they can be useful for those who are studying or experiencing the same problems.

### **A Procession To Pick Up A Spirit**

Ms. Pallika Silpabanlaeng is one of Luang Por's many disciples who attained Dhammakaya. The cause that made her attain Dhammakaya was that, after practicing for about 10 years, she started to feel discouraged, but in early February 1954, Luang Praditpairon (Sorn Silpabanlaeng) who is her father was sick of dysentery and intestine disorder as well as heart disease (which he used to recover but the symptom got worse by then). So, her father's illness was in a bad condition. Her family had managed to find one of the best doctors who graduated abroad to cure him, but he did not get any better.

Ms. Pallika and her older sister, Chin Silpabanlaeng, was confident in the power of the Triple Gem and Luang Por Wat Paknam, so they enshrined her father's personal Buddha statue and a picture of Luang Por Wat Paknam close to his bed. When his symptom got worse,

everyone would remind him to meditate by repeating the mantra Samma Arahang, and this caused the symptom to be improved from time to time.

However, as Luang Praditpairoh's symptom got worse and worse, Ms. Chin Silpabanlaeng had informed Luang Por and requested for the Dhammakaya superknowledge practitioners to cure her father at home. Although Luang Por knew in advance that Luang Praditpairoh would not recover, but Luang Por kindly allowed two Buddhist nuns to cure him at home each day. Luang Por also told Ms. Chin that "Please tell your father to keep meditating; although he does not recover, he will go to the wholesome realm." Her father obeyed Luang Por's words accordingly.

While the Buddhist nuns from Wat Paknam cured diseases for her father, Ms. Pallika also meditated, but with extra perserverance as she thought that it was the only way to cure her father. Ms. Pallika also vowed that "Even if I have to sacrifice my flesh, blod, and life, I am willing to do it as a way to repay my father. If I attain Dhammakaya and my father recovers, I will quit my job and ordain to be a Buddhist nun at Wat Paknam."

Before a meditation session, Ms. Pallika would always make a vow like this. One day, she made a vow not to rouse if she wish was not successful, and she was willing to meditate all day and night without sleeping, eating, and moving. This made Ms. Pallika to see a bright light like a midday sun appearing infront of her. Then, she saw her father's body chopped into pieces. Then, Ms. Pillika told this to Buddhist Nun Rumpa Bhokamshy and Buddhist Nun Chan Jomtong who were meditating to cure her father. The Buddhist nuns replied that Ms. Pallika attained the meditation experience, and they advised her to persevere further. They also taught her to cure her father's disease. Finally, in her meditation insight, Ms. Pallika could reconnect pieces of her father's body successfully. At the same time, her father recovered from illness, and Buddhist Nun Toom had advanced the Dhammakaya superknowledge for Ms. Pallika.

Ms. Pallika wrote about this story that "... I attained the superknowledge of Dhammakaya and was able to cure my father's disease for a few days. I could see with my insight that the clear and pure celestial body was leaving my father's body. So, I informed Buddhist Nun Chan and Buddhist Nun Toom who was meditating to cure the disease. Then, we used the power of Dhammakaya to make the celestial body return to the physical body. It went on like this for many times. So, I was confident that my father would not survive. Luang Por told my sister to advise my dad to keep meditating. When Luang Por came to my house to have a meal, before my father passed away, Luang Por kindly told my father that "Be fine and keep meditating... although you cannot overcome, you will have a good rebirth."

Luang Por's advice had caused my father to gain his consciousness and able to meditate until he passed away. With the power of meditation, before he passed away, I saw with my insight that there was a procession of celestial beings adorned with decoration floating above my father's body. When my father's celestial body left his physical body, the

procession surrounded him and brought him to an accompanying celestial vehicle. Then, the vehicle floated above higher and higher until disappearing. I questioned Buddhist Nun Toom if what I saw was real, and she reaffirmed to me that it was real. So, I was neither disappointed nor regretful that my father passed away because I had witnessed by myself that he had a good afterlife.

Many people may disbelieve that meditation practice before passing away can yield such a good consequence, so I would like to explain that, mainly, there are two destinations for one's afterlife. The first is the wholesome realm, if one can recollect the good karma, and the second is the unwholesome realm if one recollects the bad karma. My father had practiced Dhammakaya meditation for more than twenty years, and he also took a strong refuge in the Triple Gem. He had committed good deeds continuously by making merit and practicing generosity. He also taught people how to play Thai music instruments for free. So, fruits of his good deeds altogether with his strong belief in Luang Por's Dhammakaya meditation that made him meditate regularly until his last breath, had enabled him to reborn in a good realm. I knew later on that my father attained meditation experience when he was to pass away due to practicing Luang Por' meditation method. This merit resulted him to enjoy the afterlife..." (an excerpt from The Power of Dhammakaya Meditation by Pallika Silpabanlaeng, Navaka Anusorn 2497, Second Ed., by New monks of Wat Paknam year 2546. Ekpimthai Co., Ltd., page 95)

### **Smoked Ducklings**

Mr. Srith Nivatawong is one of many people who recovered from sinus with the power of Dhammakaya meditation. He had been sick of this disease for years and treated by many expert doctors. He tried every way in order to cure his disease; injection, medication, and spraying. However, they were effective only for a period of time after use. Those who used to have this disease know well how terrible it feels when it is painful and unable to breathe. Mr. Srith was informed that Dhammakaya meditation can cure disease, so he went to meditation with Master Treetar and requested her to examine what karma he did and how he can solve.

While practicing meditation together, Master Treetar examined for Mr. Srith and she saw tens of ducklings with her insight. So, after meditation session, she asked Mr. Srith if he had ever done something to the ducklings. If it is not committed in the present lifetime, it must be from the previous lifetimes. Mr. Srith tried to recall for a long time, and finally he could remember that when he was living at Prayasootorn Alley, Hua Luampong, he used to raise ducklings. One day, there was a heavy rain, and he was afraid that the ducklings would get cold and die, so he placed all the ducklings into a big basket and also placed a lighted lamp inside. Then, he covered the big basket with a gunny sack, hoping that the ducklings would stay warm.

However, in the morning, when Mr. Srith removed the gunny sack, he found that all of the ducklings were dead as they were smoked by the lamp. It was fortunate that the lamp did not burn the basket and all the ducklings. Master Treetar concluded that it was due to this karma that caused Mr. Srith to get sick of sinus; although, he did it with a good will. But his ignorance caused the ducklings to suffer until they died.

After learning about this, Master Treetar advised Mr. Srith to offer alms to the monastic community and practice meditation to dedicate merit to the ducklings as well as asking for forgiveness. She recommended him to practice meditation regularly and notice if he recovered from sinus. After Mr. Srith followed Master Treetar's advices, he could recover from sinus completely.

Master Treetar always gives an idea to meditation practitioners that there are many mystics about Dhammakaya meditation that is beyond imagination of common people. If anyone wishes to discover by oneself, they must be committed in practicing meditation regularly. Do not hesitate and keep doubting if it is real. Do not postpone your opportunity and feel discouraged yet, and one will be rewarded by attaining the truth. Please follow Luang Por's teaching that:

Keep digging if you wish to find water  
Digging deeper as there is none when it is shallow  
The water will flow when your shovel reaches its place

### **The First Series of Buddha Amulet**

During the World War II, when the Japanese army entered Thailand, the Military Mapping Division, led by Luang Samejsamruajkit, had evacuated by moving to the area of the white meditation hall at Wat Paknam. Luang Por made Buddha amulets for the soldiers who came to Wat Paknam and those who bid him a farewell for protecting the kingdom. As a way to bless and secure them, Luang Por made Buddha amulets for them for the first time. There were two models. The first one is the Buddha on a seven storey throne and the second one is the Buddha guarded by a serpent god.

Since Luang Por made the Buddha amulets as a gift for others for the first time, later on, his disciples made Buddha amulets of about the same size as 'Somdet Buddha Amulet' in memorial of Luang Por. However, the Buddha amulets were in 'blessing position,' similar to Buddha amulet series one to four, to be distributed among patrons who donate 2,500 baht for enshrining 100 Buddha amulets inside the base of the main Buddha statue at the white meditation hall from 23 – 25 November 1984, on the occasion of Luang Por's centennial anniversary. The details about molded Buddha amulets will be given later.

## **The Miracle on Buddhist Holy Days**

When Luang Por was alive, on Buddhist holy days when the circumambulation ceremony was organized, Luang Por would invite the Dhammakaya to appear in the sky above the compound of Wat Paknam. The news about this miracle had spreaded verbally, so there were numerous people who joined the circumambulation ceremony at Wat Paknam whereas Luang Por led the procession.

Before the ceremony, Luang Por would describe about the importance of such holy day such as Magha Puja Day and Visakha Puja Day. He taught that, during the circumambulation ceremony, everyone should behave composedly and not to be playful. Participants were advised not to converse or laugh, but keeping their thought, speech, and action contented, as if they were circumambulating of the real Lord Buddha. It was the best to meditate by resting one's mind at the center of one's body, the seventh base of mind, in the middle of the space element sphere. For those who saw a crystalclear sphere, they were advised to rest their mind in the middle of the sphere. If they saw the inner bodies namely the refined human body, the celestial body, the rupa brahma body and the arupa brahma body, either the normal or refined one, they were advised to rest their mind in the middle of the space element sphere of such body that they saw while they circumambulated clockwise three times and repeated the mantra Samma Arahant all the time. After giving these advices, Luang Por led chanting to pay homage to the Triple Gem.

While performing circumambulation, those who followed Luang Por's advice by keeping their mind determined would see a Buddha image in the sky. Different people saw different images in different postures such as a reclining, meditating, and blessing Buddha. They saw either a half or a full image which could be either clear or unclear whereas some people even saw the physical body of the Lord Buddha.

KhunPraDhipParinya (Dhoop Klampasut) wrote about his experience in seeing a Buddha image during circumambulation on a Buddhist holy day that:

"... I heard a Venerable at Wat Pradu saying that people rumored about seeing a Buddha image in the sky while they performed circumambulation at Wat Paknam on Visakha and Magha Puja day. I had interviewed many of them, and they admitted that it was true." (an excerpt from Principles of Samatha & Vipassana Meditation of Pramongkolthepmuni and A Record of PraDhipParinya. Chaleaw Wongpaiboon publishes as a gift in dedication to Luang Por Wat Paknam (Pramongkolthepmuni) and Father Soun, Mother Cheum Sountornyothin, and Commander Suradej Wongpaiboon. 1977, 64 Pages, Page 50.)

Mr. Kul Pongsuwan, a retired officer of Customs Department and a former vicar-general of Wat Paknam, said about this event that:

"... According to a book written by LuangBhumiNatSanit, a close royal page of King Rama VI, he wrote about the miracle story that once before Visakha Puja Day of 1946, I was informed



by Luang Por that he had invited the Lord Buddha to miraculously preside over the circumambulation ceremony on Visakha Puja Day this year.... [after] around 300 people of monks and laypeople almost completed the third round of circumambulation, a layman pointed into the sky and spoke aloud that he saw a Buddha image floating in the sky in order to let people witness by themselves. In the later years, when it was close to Visakha Puja Day, the newspapers would have an article with Luang Por's picture and the story about circumambulation where the Buddha image appeared in the sky. (an excerpt from A publication of Luang Por Wat Paknam's Disciple Association. 13<sup>th</sup> Year, 25 November 1984.)

On the circumambulation day, those who attained the superknowledge of Dhammakaya would not have a chance to join the circumambulation because Luang Por would order all of them to assemble at the meditation workshop at 6.00 pm. although it was not their shift in order to meditate for the Dhammakaya to appear and purify the participants with their meditation power and uncover their sensation, perception, volition, and cognition which would eventually enable them to see the Dhammakaya and have a audience to the Lord Buddha.

Luang Por said about this that "[Practitioners at] Wat Paknam have discovered the real self of Dhammakaya which allows them to visit hell, heaven, and the Nirvana. [It is also possible] to invite the Lord Buddha in Nirvana to be witnessed by humans at Wat Paknam on Magha Puja and Visakha Puja Day."

After the end of the circumambulation ceremony, the practitioners of Dhammakaya superknowledge will be allowed to leave the meditation workshop except those who were responsible for the shift. Luang Por would continue by delivering a sermon in the evening session. Master Treetar said that she really wished to know how many people saw the Dhammakaya, more or less. She would like to prove if her joining with Luang Por to practice the superknowledge of Dhammakaya meditation would allow people to see the Dhammakaya for real. So, after the end of the ceremony, she walked around the Buddhist chapel. When she saw groups of people conversing to each other, she would join them. If they talked about seeing the Lord Buddha, she would interview them in details to check what they saw, how many people saw, and who they were. Once she received the information, she would inform Luang Por later on.

On Magha Puja Day of 1946, after the end of circumambulation ceremony and sermon by Luang Por, Master Treetar left the meditation workshop and walked to sacred ground around the Buddhist chapel as usual. Most of the laypeople were to leave the sacred ground and return to their residence. So, she did as usual by listening to people's conversation. She found that numerous people saw the Dhammakaya. Some people claimed that they saw the Buddha which still appeared in the sky while pointing to the image. Master Treetar looked into the sky toward the direction that the people pointed to, but she saw nothing at all.

Master Treetar felt discouraged that she attained the superknowledge of Dhammakaya and had been assisted Luang Por in the meditation workshop for many years, but she was not able to see the Lord Buddha with her naked eyes. While she was walking away thinking like that, as she glanced toward the Northern sky of Wat Paknam, she saw a big white curtain was being opened, and there appeared a clear and white reclining Buddha image behind the curtain. In the beginning, Master Treetar could see only half of the image. So, she stared at the image to make sure that she really saw the Lord Buddha. The more she stared at the image, the clearer of the image became. Then, she was certain that the image was not the cloud. The Buddha image was of glowing white like the color of the full moon.

Master Treetar, then, made a wish that if she would have an opportunity to support Buddhism throughout her life, may the reclining Buddha appear in full image. Then, she stared at the image, and the image appeared in full. So, she could see that the image of the reclining Buddha was lengthy, around 40 meters. Master Treetar could have an audience upon Him for a considerable period of time, then His image faded away gradually.

Master Treetar emphasized that she was very much delightful until she could not withheld her tears of joy. She also had a goose bump. Even when she told this story to the author, although tens of years have flew by, she still had such feeling. Then, she murmured to Luang Por that she had witnessed by herself. She had an audience to the Lord Buddha by seeing Him with both her naked eyes and insight. She had proved with her naked eyes that Luang Por could use meditation power to make people to see the Dhammakaya [with their naked eyes]. Then, she knelt down on the floor and bowed to the Buddha image. She also asked her friends to look at the Buddha, but her friends could not see anything except the clear sky.

Master Treetar made a wish to the Buddha image like that because, during that time, she was to make a decision whether to disrobe and return to live at her hometown in Bangbor or continue to live at Wat Paknam and assist Luang Por in the meditation workshop. Her witnessing of the Lord Buddha with naked eyes was like a mandate that made her live at Wat Paknam further. Therefore, after she disrobed from being a Buddhist nun due to some reason, she continued to assist Luang Por by practicing the superknowledge of Dhammakaya meditation. Up until the present, it has been more than 70 years.

Normally, after the circumambulation ceremony, Luang Por would deliver a sermon. Upon finishing his sermon and leaving his seat, those who saw the Dhammakaya would tell Luang Por about what the Dhammakaya that they saw with delightfulness. Some of them even cried. Some of them used to have no faith or disbelieve in Luang Por. Some people came because they were convinced by others. Some people came because they wished to prove and witness by themselves. Some of them used to criticize Luang Por badly, but as they witnessed by themselves, they changed their mind completely. Such as in the case of Mr. Sudham Chanklad, the former chief-judge of the Appeals Court and the former chairman of Luang Por Wat Paknam's Disciple Association (1972 –1976).

## **The Core or The Crust?**

“My forefathers are Buddhists who love to make merit, listen to sermon, and converse with monks with interest in the Dhamma. Especially, my father is interested in art and spell as well. My father always took me to make merit at temples, and he also taught me many chanting verse and spells. However, I was like many other children who loved to play and went to bed without any preference in chanting. I had to chant because I was afraid of my father. Although I could not memorize all of them, but I still remember some.

Since my forefathers have been good examples to me, so it forms my habit since my childhood. I love to meet with monks for a conversation, especially the one who is an expert in art, spell, and sacred artifacts. I am interested in this way because my father taught me that, as a man, we have to encounter with many dangers. So, it is necessary to keep some sacred artifacts to prevent ourselves from harm.

Therefore, as I work for the government in country provinces, I looked for monks who had sacred artifacts. This includes holy water sprinkling and cabalistic tattooing. During the period of East Asian War, I had two necklaces full of Buddha and Buddhist monk amulets. Whenever I walked anywhere the amulets banged each other making noise. I guess that if I fell into a canal, I might not survive since the necklaces were heavy.

By that time, I was busy looking for Buddha amulets and cabalistic artifacts, so I did not think of the Dhamma which is essential in Buddhism. I did not know how to live my life in order to benefit from the Dhamma.

Later on, around 1947 or 1948, Ms. Sorn Tansatit who was a nanny of child told me that there was a venerable at Wat Paknam in Bhasicharoen District. His name was Prakru Samanadhamsamathan, and he was very good at Vipassana meditation until he was capable of inviting the Lord Buddha to appear for the people to see. I was amazed that the Lord Buddha had passed away to Nirvana for almost 2,500 years, and how could he come. So, I wished to prove because I did not believe in others' words easily. I had to witness by myself first; otherwise, I would not believe.

Therefore, Ms. Sorn brought me to Wat Paknam in an evening. By that time, Luang Por was not at the temple because he was invited to go somewhere else. So, I walked around the temple and saw numerous monks and novice monks living in small abodes. The chapel and the wall were old, and there were shady trees around the area. The atmosphere was tranquil and gloomy. Since Luang Por was not at the temple, I returned home soon after.

Later on, I went to the temple again. Luang Por was having lunch at an old wooden hall, so I paid respect to him and begged for a sacred artifact or holy water as I usually did to other monks. Luang Por said “Wat Paknam has no spell and holy water. We have only stillness within stillness. Do you want a crust or a core?”

As Luang Por questioned like this, everyone would answer that they wanted the core because it is more durable. But I was doubtful about Luang Por's words that "stillness within stillness." When I was conversing with him, I noticed that he looked outstanding and more respectable than other monks I had met. His words were soft and full of compassion. I became faithful upon him immediately, but I still did not believe about inviting the Lord Buddha to appear [above the crowd]. (I would like to apologize here since I really felt like this by that time. But I believe him now.)

In the afternoon of every Thursday, Luang Por would instruct meditation. The participants had to go through 'Pledging to the Dhamma' ceremony by writing down their names into a registration book which was placed in front of the monks' seat. I remember that Mr. Prayoon Sounthara, who already passed away, would sit there. There was a sequence of number for registration. I can remember vaguely that my number was around a thousand. Later on, the registration book disappeared. So, nobody knows where it is. After registration, the participants paid homage to the Triple Gem with flowers, incense sticks, and candles.

Then, Luang Por would start to give a sermon in explanation to the Dhamma. Finally, he concluded with the story about the meditation that he rediscovered. It is something mystical and profound. Then, he asked everyone to close their eyes, keep their body straight, place their right leg over the left leg, right hand over the left hand, allow the tip of right index finger to touch the left thumb. Then, keep their mind still and rest their mind at the center of the body. Still the mind within the stillness. Stop the mind within the middle of the middle altogether with repeating the mantra 'Samma Arahant' continually.

This meditation method complies to the way that the Lord Buddha attained enlightenment. It is the righteous intuition which Luang Por explains in details in his teaching available in other publications. Nowadays, there is Vipassana meditation instruction according to Luang Por's methodology everyday and every Thursday consistently.

If someone asks what would be the result of this practice, I would say to say that I had followed Luang Por's guideline throughout the meditation session, and when I opened my eyes, I felt relaxed and deeply peaceful. It was something that I never experienced before.

I compare it to studying that if there is silence, and the mind does not wander, it will allow us to focus on a text better. So, we will be able to understand and remember well. This gives rise to wisdom. Thus, we can think of this and that with a clear mind. Luang Por's meditation method is about the same. When the mind becomes peaceful and free from wandering thoughts, we gain wisdom that drives away defilement and desire from the mind little by little until they are completely eradicated. Then, the mind will turn clean, bright, and peaceful. This goes hand in hand with the Lord Buddha's path.

I became fond of meditation practice, so I have tried to meditate since then. Sometimes, I could not achieve the peace of mind since I was overwhelmed by my work load. But

whenever I meditated in front of Luang Por, I would feel peaceful and relaxed. I still continue my effort, but I have not seen the Dhamma sphere as Luang Por taught yet. However, I was still doubtful about Luang Por inviting the Lord Buddha.

On Visakha Puja and Magha Puja Day, Wat Paknam organizes the annual circumambulation ceremony. Payom, my wife, and I have joined the ceremony every year. We never miss it. According to the news that Luang Por Wat Paknam is capable of inviting the Lord Buddha to appear, as it is already wellknown, many people talk about this on the ceremonial day. Some of them saw the Buddha image in standing posture, sitting posture, or reclining posture. The Buddha images are in different size, either big or small. It occurs to be like this every year.

I had accosted an elderly lady who claimed that she saw a Buddha image. She pointed toward the sky and said that a big Buddha image is floating there in the air. I looked toward the sky where she pointed to, but I saw nothing but the sky and the moon. I questioned her again where He was, and she pointed again and said “He is there. The image is clear. Don’t you see?” I replied that I did not see anything, so I asked her if she saw with naked eyes or insight (meaning see with her mind in meditation). She said she saw with her naked eyes.

I tried to stare at the sky, but I could not see. So I dared not to ask any further. I thought in mind that the elderly lady might try promote Luang Por or she was strongly respectful upon him, so she made it up in her mind like that. So, I still disbelieved Luang Por about inviting the Lord Buddha, but I still joined the circumambulation ceremony every time where there were people who saw the Buddha image.

I have joined the ceremony with an effort to witness by myself for three consecutive years. I questioned people and looked into the sky like this, and I had the same thought because I did not see Him. Finally, I stopped asking people as I thought that it was unreal. But I still believed in this somehow. Most of the people who saw the Buddha image were elders who observe precepts at the temple. It is unlikely that they would break their precepts and lie. They might be able to see the Lord Buddha because of their merit. It was not everyone who saw the Buddha. When I thought of myself, I had made merit regularly, more or less depending on my capability, and I hoped that the merit should have had allowed me to see the Lord Buddha.

As I had this thought, in the third year, after completing the circumambulation ceremony, I made a wish in my mind that “I came to this temple to seek for a sacred master who could lead me toward happiness and peacefulness which is the heart of Buddhism. Would there be any way that makes me believe wholeheartedly. In the beginning, I should have witness the miracle of Luang Por according to the rumor first. So, I know if it is true or not. If I can really see the Lord Buddha, I will pledge myself to be a disciple of Luang Por forever.”

After I resolved like this, I went to a sizable stupa behind the chapel and sat at its base alone. (There used to be many stupas around the Buddhist chapel. Later on, the stupas

were removed in order to improve the chapel's landscape) By that time, Luang Por was distributing Buddha amulets inside the chapel. I sat still and kept my mind peaceful without closing my eyes. I could see the full moon in the sky, and I had an absent mind thinking that the elders said there is a rabbit on the moon. By that time I was unaware that there would be anything appearing in the moon disc. Soon after, there was a blurry image appearing on some part of the moon disc. I tried to see the image as I thought that it could be the rabbit. As I stared at the moon disc even more, the blurry image started to get clearer. But it was not the image of a rabbit, instead, I saw an Indian ascetic with a long hair that formed a bun on his head. His face was full of tangling beard and mustache. He put on a robe that was rolled from his left sholder down to his arm. I could see the image down to his chest only. So, I was surprised that I tried to see a rabbit, but how could the image turn into a monk. I thought I had a hallucination due to my mind that tried to imagine an image. So, I faced down and rub my eyes, and I freed myself from all thought. Then, I stared at the image on the moon disc again. I could still see the same image. The more I stared, the clearer of the image. I could see his nose, mouth, and beard clearly. His eyes looked toward me, so I started to feel uneasy, and I gradually had a goose bump as if someone who was haunted by a ghost.

By then, I thought that this could be the image of the Lord Buddha. After I gained confidence, I had a goose bump all over my body, and I was stunned with delightfulness and excitement, thinking that I was fortunate enough to see the Lord Buddha like others. So, it was true that Luang Por Wat Paknam could invite the Lord Buddha to appear.

Thus, I came down from the stupa and knelt down onto the ground in order to bow to the image three times with respect. I was so happy that I met with a Buddhist master who was so sacred. After bowing, I continued to stare at the moon disc waiting to see if there would be any change. The image started to fade away from the moon disc, and there was some blurry image similar to what I could see in the beginning. Then, I was astonished that, indeed, there were two moons in the sky. When I circumambulated, the moon was above in the sky, but the image that I saw was on the moon which was at the horizon. So, I looked up above and found the real moon. As I turned to look at another moon where I saw the Buddha image again, it already disappeared. Hence, I was reaffirmed that the rumor was the truth as Luang Por could invite the Lord Buddha for real. So, I rushed into the Buddhist chapel and bow to Luang Por's lap while having a goose bump. I told him about my thought before and after seeing the Buddha image, and I pledged myself to be his disciple forever. Luang Por smiled and said "Well, it's good that you don't believe in anything easily."

That was all of what Luang Por said. He said nothing else, and I bid him a farewell with delightfulness. I felt that it worthed my effort that I went to maker merit and joined the circumambulation ceremony at Wat Paknam regularly until I could finally witness the real thing by myself. So, I promised to myself not to look for any other masters, and I would be

respectful to Luang Por and take him as my only master throughout my life. With my strong faith in Luang Por, I always go to make merit and practice meditation at Wat Paknam.

I would like to confirm with my honor that the story that I had described really happened to myself, and there was no fabrication or exaggeration about Luang Por's extraordinary marvel at all.

Before I pledged myself to be a disciple of Luang Por Wat Paknam and pay homage to him like the present, I have described already that I was not faithful to Luang Por like this in the beginning. I thought that he was a common Buddhist monk, but as I proved until I could experience by myself, I become sincerely faithful that I am willing to sacrifice my life to him, as a disciple, throughout my life. I will take Luang Por's guidelines into account forever.

Before I end my article, I would like to make a resolution that "May I keep the Dhamma in mind in every lifetime that I reborn to. And May I meet with Buddhism in every lifetime and become a disciple of Luang Por Wat Paknam forever. Also, I would like to dedicate the meritorious deeds that I have done in the past, and present lifetime, as well as what I will do in the future, more or less, to Luang Por Wat Paknam forever."

### **Requesting for Forgiveness**

Another person who had witnessed the miracle on circumambulation day was Mr. Chote Wanikiat, a son of KhunPraSudhamWinijchai. One day, after Luang Por finished delivering his sermon after the circumambulation ceremony, Mr. Chote went to see Luang Por and said "Luang Por, I would like to bow to your feet." Luang Por pointed to the floor in front of him and replied "You can bow here." But Mr. Chote still insisted that "I would like to bow to your feet, sire. Please stretch your feet for me to bow." Finally, Luang Por stretched his feet to the front for Mr. Chote to bow. Mr. Chote explained to Luang Por that his older sister was very much faithful in Luang Por. Her name was Chach Wanikiat. She used to have a skin disease which no doctor could cure. However, Luang Por cured her until she recovered, and she also attained the superknowledge of Dhammakaya. So, Ms. Chach ordained to be a Buddhist nun and practiced the advanced Dhammakaya meditation at the meditation workshop.

When Luang Por cured skin disease for Ms. Chach, she would practice meditation regularly and go to Wat Paknam on every Sunday to offer meals to the monks. Mr. Chote used to wonder why his sister had to go to Wat Paknam since there were some other nearby temples where she could make merit. He misunderstood that she might like a monk at Wat Paknam or Luang Por used his power to gain her favor. Mr. Chote said that he usually criticized Luang Por since he disbelieved in the power of Dhammakaya meditation, and he thought that it was a kind of misleading.

However, on the circumambulation day, Mr. Chote went to Wat Paknam to prove by himself, and he had discovered that Luang Por really had the superknowledge which was

powerful. So, he was regretful for his serious criticizing, so he wished to bow to Luang Por's feet in order to confess and request for forgiveness. After Luang Por heard that, he kindly forgave to Mr. Chote.

Since then, Mr. Chote went to Wat Paknam to make merit regularly, almost everyday, because his house was around Wong Wien Lek, in the area of King Rama I bridge (Thonburi side). After finishing his work each day, Mr. Chote would go to pay respect to Luang Por at Wat Paknam because Luang Por would welcome his guests after he led the monks and novice monks, to chant and meditate as well as delivering a sermon to them. Luang Por's guests were his disciples or visitors who seek for advice and help from him since they encountered with sufferings and troubles in life.

Mr. Chote gave money and a set of crystal ware in a white cloth to a Buddhist nun who helped to prepare sugar cane beverage for him everyday. Mr. Chote would pick up the sugar cane beverage contained in a crystal cup and wrapped with a white cloth to prevent from dust from the Buddhist nun every day. Then, he brought the beverage to Luang Por. To offer the sugar cane beverage, Mr. Chote would place the wrapped crystal cup in front of Luang Por, then he bowed to Luang Por three times and unwrapped the cup. Next, he held the cup and placed it on his head, and he bent his head down in front of Luang Por, so Luang Por could pick the cup conveniently. Mr. Chote offered a cup of sugar cane beverage like this everyday. If there is no sugar cane in such season, he would change to orange juice or other fruit juice instead. At the same time, Mr. Chote practiced meditation until he attained the superknowledge of Dhammakaya as well.

As a Buddhist, we should not believe in something just because it is being told to us. It is necessary for us to ponder on someone or something with our wisdom first, then we should prove or experiment on such thing in order to gain direct experience by ourselves. Hence, this can lead to a further conclusion if it is true or not. In Buddhism, there are still many myths to be studied and proved, and many of them remain unknown to us. We should not judge or criticize the myths without going through a careful consideration and verification first. Otherwise, we may end up having misunderstanding or misperception toward someone or something, and this can cause us to have bad karmas by opposing such person or such thing without really know the truth.

Luang Por always taught that one should not find fault from others. In addition, harming the pure ones can bring about one or more of the ten bad consequences as follows:

1. Encounter severe sufferings
2. Encounter with degeneration
3. Becoming paralyzed, handicapped or die
4. Become seriously ill
5. Having wondering mind
6. Being charged of allegations



7. Bening slandered and defamed
8. Relatives and friends jointly suffer or depart
9. One's properties are in chaos or having one's house burnt down
10. Goto the hell realm in the afterlife

### **An Outstanding Preacher**

Normally, a Buddhist monk who is a meditation master is not wellknown for his teaching since he does not speak much, but Luang Por Wat Paknam was both an outstanding meditation master and a preacher. He usually propagate Dhammakaya meditation by preaching. He was able to preach correctly according to the truth, without misleading interpretation. He also used common language that common people could understand at ease as well as giving analogies and examples for compare and contrast. These made his preaching comprehensible, but full of useful information in term of both doctrine and practice. His teachings were very helpful in fulfilling people with wisdom and understanding, so they could get rid of doubt, similar to a torch that was lighted up in the dark.

Many of Luang Por's sermons were transliterated and published. It was unfortunate that during Luang Por's lifetime, technology was not much advanced and it was costly. Also, there was nobody who was directly responsible for recording his voice during a preaching. Throughout forty years of his post as an abbot, he preached around ten times per month, totally around a hundred times per year. So far, only sixty three records of his sermons were found. It is unfortunate that the younger generation does not have a chance to study all of his sermons.

Luang Por regularly preached on every Sunday and Buddhist observance days at the Buddhist chapel of Wat Paknam. He also trained other monks to be capable of preaching. If some other monks replaced him in preaching, he would sit in the chapel and listen to them. There were also other days which he was invited to preach such as on the occasion of meals offering and memorial services, and Luang Por never refused. It was due to Luang Por's leadership that an abbot must be capable of preaching in order to propagate the Lord Buddha's Samatha & Vipassana meditation practice as well as Dhamma doctrines.

Luang Por was outstanding in preaching, his sermon relied on the Dhamma doctrine. The principle in his preaching was that the preacher had to preach according to the Dhamma doctrine and admire the Dhamma which is taken as the guideline in living. This is true for his every sermon. He did not just speak of anything he could think of, but he had to research from Buddhist scriptures and explain altogether with the Pali wordings as essential evidences of the doctrines, in order to show their origins. Then, the Pali wordings were translated in order to allow the common people to understand without feeling tedious. Luang Por's sermons aimed to promote the practice of meritorious deeds such as generosity, precepts observance, and meditation. He also exemplified the past lifetime

stories of the Lord Buddha and other stories from Dhammapada, so that people could learn moral of each story. So, his sermons were full of both Dhamma theories and personifications.

The objective of Luang Por's preaching was to benefit the individuals, families, and society. Those who listened to Luang Por's sermons would gain both profound knowledge and understanding in Buddhism which enable them to apply to their daily living. Listeners had opportunities to learn the Dhamma in various aspects, and they also had opportunities to practice the Dhamma by themselves. In addition, Luang Por also added the worldly stories because he had experiences in doing business before becoming a Buddhist monk.

The following are some examples of Luang Por's sermon:

"For humans who come to live with us... we know if they are the thief, the bad, or the honest. We know from looking at their eyes. Their eyes can tell if they are honest or dishonest. Just look at the eyes. For the honest ones, their eyes do not avoid your sight. That's for the honest people. If their eyes avoid your sight, they are tricky people. It is unsafe because their eye sight does not match our eye sight. They are deceitful, and we must stay away from them. We must stay away from those whose eye sight does not match our eye sight. For those who get close to us, their eye sight must match our eye sight. If they avoid meeting our eye sight, they may plunder our properties when we make the wrong move. Be careful of them."

Luang Por also taught his disciples to be careful of their spending on consumption that "If you are not contented in your consumption, you will never have enough money. You will spend all of what you earn because you are not contented in your consumption. Having no contentment today... be the same tomorrow... you have to borrow money from others for sure. This is because you are not contented in your consumption. This is horrible! If you eat more than you can digest, you will get sick. And it may even cause you to die, so you have to be careful. Be careful of your food; otherwise, it will cause a bad consequence, more or less."

For those who are not rich yet but want to get rich quickly and honestly, the following sermon is a must. One must know how to earn and to spend money. If one does not know how to spend money, one will be enslaved by his money. For anyone who wishes to be freed from poverty, they must read this part and remember well. Then, put into practice and/or teach one's children and descendants. Youths in the present who do not know how to earn money would learn to be thrifty, not to spoil themselves to pull of social fad. So, they will not be overwhelmed with debt. Luang Por taught about a recipe that makes one rich, a sour soup.

"As one earns money, one must spend wisely. If one does not know how to spend wisely, one will become enslaved by money.... Gotta cry until getting old... when one will not be able to earn money due to weakened health. One will cry because of what? You know how

to earn money, but you don't know how to spend. If you know how to earn money and you know how to spend money wisely, you won't be enslaved by money. You will become the boss of your money. How is it like? You earn money since your adolescence, and you remain thrifty.

Have the sour soup. It would be such a waste of money to cook the sour soup with meat. So, be patient as you are still adolescent. As you earn money, you collect your money. Eat the sour soup [without meat]. If you wish to eat sour soup or Tom Yum, you boil water first and put the ingredients. Then, stir it all over. As it is completely cooked, you have it with steamed rice. This is called [meatless] sour soup. Somebody did this already. His name is Lek, and he lives at Ban Pai. This is what he told me. I heard it from him. He is a merchant, and I used to be a merchant too. As we conversed, he said he had [meatless] sour soup. So, I asked him how he cooked it, and he explained to me as I told you. He said he will not buy meat since it is costly, and he wished to save money to improve his financial status. Earning little money and buy chicken and ducks, you will be enslaved for sure. You spend all of the money you earn. This means that you do not know how to spend the money you earn. As you get older, you cannot stop working since you have no more rice in the kitchen. It is because one doesn't know how to spend money."

KhunPraDhipParinya recorded Luang Por's sermon as follows:

"On the first day that I went to see him, it was time to have lunch. I saw people surrounded him. So, I paid respect to him and told him my names. I also told him that I was interested in the Dhamma. And he told me to wait for him first (he pointed to the back). Then, he had his meal quietly. At that time, I saw a Buddhist nun and a layman who supervised people to practice meditation. They all meditated (later on I learned that they were people who asked Luang Por to cure their illness).

After having lunch, Luang Por allowed me to sit close to him. Then, we started to converse. He explained about the Lord Buddha's virtues, one by one. Then, he translated and explained. I listened to his sermon which was, to me, more 'flavorous' than what I have heard from others. Since then, I become fond of his sermon and I tried to seek for opportunities to listen to his sermons when he preached at the Buddhist chapel. Luang Por preached by himself on every Sunday and Buddhist observance day. I was moved by his preaching. Mostly, he preached in term of practice. I felt regretful that Luang Por preached verbally, and whatever we listen to would just disappear. I have a pity for his great effort in delivering the sermon, so I tried to record his sermon. Luang Por agreed, so I recorded his voice. From what I have experienced, most of the monks who practice meditation do not favor preaching. The monks who preach are mostly those who study Dhamma theories. But Luang Por Wat Paknam loves to preach. I learned that he study Dhamma theories earlier. So, I observe his way of preaching. Each sermon is evidenced by certain Pali verses. He would translate [the Pali wordings] one by one and clarify them in term of practice with further details. This is the principle of his preaching. He does not preach just the way he

likes. If he is to raise something, he would refer to an origin of such Dhamma doctrine altogether. (an excerpt from The Principle of Samatha and Vipassana Meditation of Pramongkolthepmuni and Records of PraDhipParinya. Page 52-53)

### **The Sila Sphere**

The Most Venerable PraPiMolDham (Choy Tanadhatto) used to send in invitation letter for Luang Por to deliver a sermon at the chapel of Wat Mahadhat on 7 October 1947. He requested Luang Por to teach about meditation as it was something that he was much interested, and he wished to support and encourage Luang Por's meditation method. On that day, there were numerous monks and novice monks who attended the preaching session, so there was not enough seat for everyone. Many had to sit on the sacred ground of the Buddhist chapel. Also, there were numerous laymen and laywomen.

The preaching was presided over by the Most Venerable PhraPiMolDham. Luang Por had referred to the Pali verse on Sila, Samadhi, Panna, Vimutti, and Vimuttinanadassana, and he explained them as follows:

"... Sila (precept or discipline) can be used as a recollection in meditation. It is categorized as the 24<sup>th</sup> method among the 40 Kammathana meditation methods. Kammathana means the base of action, and Samadhi is a Kammathana which is categorized into the 40 kammathana. Where is Sila? Where is Samadhi? Where is Panna? Wherever Panna is, Vimutti is there. Wherever Vimutti is, Vimuttinanadassana is there.

Sila is a Kammathana because it can be a base of action that purifies action, speech, and thought. The purity of action and speech are cettanasila whereas mental purity is cettasicsila. So, the purity of thought, speech, and action [, altogether,] is the characteristic of Sila. However, it cannot be a base or foundation for Samadhi yet. To be a base for Samadhi, it must be Sila in the Kammathana namely Silanussati or 'regular recollection' of Sila. This can be a base for Samadhi. *Silampi sakkati* means 'studying Sila' whereas *silam rakkati* means 'observing Sila.'

One needs to study Sila in order to keep it pure always. When one's Sila is pure, one can recollect of such Sila regularly. The purity is at the middle of the origination point, at the navel level. The space is about the size of a Bhodi seed. It is called the origination point because when one first enters the womb of one's mother, this point is the base location [of one's spirit and body formation]. It is also the point for mental focus and mental stillness. It is said that when the mind becomes still, the breath eventually stops. The stillness of mind is 'Santi.' The stillness of breath is called 'Aanapa.' So, Santi and Aanapa are the Dhamma that rely on each other...

The breath means inhaling and exhaling. This is something everyone knows well. However, the mind, which is the most crucial of human body and none can be compared of, according to the Pali wordings that "all the Dhamma is first achieved by the mind. The mind is the

chief. Everything is achieved by the mind.” If the mind is unwholesome, one’s action, speech, and thought will be unwholesome. If the mind is wholesome, one’s action, speech, and thought will be wholesome. It is difficult to still the mind. When I say ‘still,’ it means stilling [the mind] at the point of origination. The mind and the point of origination should not be separated.

The mind and the point of origination, when they they unify, the Sila Sphere will appear, about the size of an egg yolk or the midday sun or the full moon. The sphere is clear and pure like a mirror. Then, rest one’s mind still in the middle of the Sila Sphere in every moment until gaining expertise...”

### **Kindling A Fire**

Luang Por compared meditation practice to kindling a fire by telling a story as follows:

“... A hermit was to go into a forest, so he ordered his step child to look after his abode and not to let the fire in his fireplace to die out. He advised his step child to kindle a fire with the kindling sticks in a cylinder in case that the fire dies out. As the hermit left, the step child kept playing until he forgot the fire. When the fire died out, he picked the kindling sticks in the cylinder to check where the fire was. He could not find the fire from the cylinder, so he cut the cylinder into half. As he could not still find fire, he cut into a quarter. He kept cutting the cylinder as he could not find fire. Finally, he placed all the finely cut cylinder into a pounding container and started to pound them, thinking that it would cause fire.

In the evening, the hermit returned to his abode, the child told everything to the hermit. So, the hermit taught the child how to kindle a fire. He asked the child to look for sticks, then he rub the sticks together with consistent force and even more. Finally, the sticks caught fire...”

Luang Por told this story as he aimed to teach his disciples about meditation that it is necessary to practice consistently until one gains good concentration. Then, the Dhamma sphere will appear, similar to kindling a fire. When kindling sticks are rub appropriately, they will catch fire. It is specified in mahasatipattanasutta that “having perseverance, consistent mindfulness, and not to be carried away.”

“Be careful not to have desire [for meditation experience] and not to be regretful [when the meditation experience does not occur], and keep one’s mind indifferent.”

Besides, Luang Por also explained about jana or meditative absorption when the Lord Buddha ignored jana and kasina and focused on anapanasatti. Luang Por preached for about an hour. By the end of his sermon, The Most Venerable PraPimolDham expressed his appreciation that Luang Por gave a good sermon by referring to Pali wordings in the Lord Buddha’s discourse, translated, and explained them well. Since then, The Most Venerable had invited Luang Por to teach meditation to monks, novice monks, laymen, and laywomen

at Wat Mahadhat for several more times. (PraDhipParinya (Dhoop Klampasut) had recorded this sermon and published in a book called “Sila Sphere.” It was first published in 1947 by Mr. Sawad Osatanukroh, the owner of Osothsapha Co., Ltd. On the occasion of Luang Por’s 64<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary. This book is copyrighted by the council of Mahachulalongkorn University.)

### **Luang Por’s Missionaries**

Luang Por wished to propagate Dhammakaya meditation all over Thailand. The one who agreed with Luang Por was The Most Venerable PraPimolDham (Choy Tanadhatto), Pali Scholar Level 9, the abbot of Wat Mahadhat, who was one of the governing monks in that era. The Most Venerable was the one that Luang Por respected him as a teacher, and The Most Venerable also faithful in Luang Por and believed that Luang Por really attained the superknowledge of Dhammakaya. When there was a concern, both of them always sought for advices from each other.

When Luang Por considered that a monk, a novice monk, or a Buddhist nun was capable of propagating Dhammakaya meditation, he would send them to propagate at different temples in various provinces as missionaries. When these missionaries could teach local people to attain Dhammakaya, they would send their students to study and practice meditation with Luang Por in order to achieve the more advanced level. If the missionaries’ students were male, Luang Por would arrange for them to be ordained as Buddhist monks. For female students, they would be ordained as Buddhist nuns. If they did not enter ordination, Luang Por allowed them to practice meditation at Wat Paknam as laypeople whereas he had to find a residence for them.

The propagation of Dhammakaya meditation was a difficult and serious responsibility. The missionaries had to be very determined and sacrificed themselves for the overall benefit. In addition, they had to be patient when they encountered with troubles. However, many monks could achieve their missions successfully by gaining much cooperation from local people who built temples for them such as Wat Khao Pra in Khao Yoi District, Petchburi Province, Wat Kasemcittaram in Uttaradit Province, and Wat Paknamdheparam in Had Yai City, Songkla Province.

In order to promote Dhammakaya Meditation, Luang Por had published a book for practitioners called ‘Towards Path and Fruit of Nirvana.’ (Presently, this book is still available for distribution at the White Meditation Hall of Wat Paknam) He also planned to publish a book titled ‘An Abbot’s Handbook’ to be distributed among abbots of Buddhist temples across Thailand, so the abbots would be able to teach their local laypeople to meditate correctly. However, Luang Por’s project was suspended as The Most Venerable PraPimolDham passed away, resulting Luang Por to lose his prominent supporter.

In 1986, Master Treetar had turned 60 years old, and her disciples had organized a birthday anniversary ceremony for her. So, she continued Luang Por’s projects by raising funds for

establishing Dhamma Study Foundation fund amounting 100,000 baht per fund on behalf of Luang Por Wat Paknam – Pramongkolthepmuni (Sodh Candasaro). The funds were contributed to Dhamma schools both in Bangkok and other provinces, totaling 72 schools in 66 provinces. In addition, she published 'An Abbot's Handbook' for distributing to every abbot of Buddhist temples in Thailand through the chief monk of each province. The Dhamma school scholarship contributors also donated for the cost of publishing amounting 50,000 baht per province, and the total amount spent on this publication was more than 10 million baht.

### **Sending Missionaries Abroad**

Not only the Thai people in every province who were interested in Luang Por's meditation technique, there were also foreigners who wished to study meditation with him. In 1954, Professor William August Perfirst, an English man who was interested in Dhammakaya meditation, had travelled to Thailand to study with Luang Por. There was an interpreter who accompanied him. After a period of Dhamma study and practice, Professor Perfirst had entered an ordination ceremony and dedicated himself to the study and research of Dhammakaya meditation. Luang Por kindly organized an ordination ceremony for him and gave him a monastic name as "Kapilavaddho."

On 8 November 1954, after Venerable Kapilavaddho attained Dhammakaya, he was sent to propagate Buddhism in England as a missionary monk. The fact that more foreigners became interested in Dhammakaya meditation had made Luang Por feel more joyful and encouraged him to spend greater effort in propagating Dhammakaya meditation.

In 1955, Venerable Kapilavaddho had returned to Wat Paknam with three of his students who were previously ordained as novice monks in England. The three novice monks were ordained to be Buddhist monks at Wat Paknam and studied Dhammakaya meditation with Luang Por. Luang Por kindly organized an ordination ceremony for them and gave them the monastic names as Saddhavaddho, Pannavaddho, and Vijjavaddho. Totally, there were four English monks who spent the rain retreat at Wat Paknam, altogether with another interpreter. Luang Por provided convenient accommodation to them in order to ease their meditation practice.

In 1957, Mr. Tako Shimaruji, a Buddhist monk of Nichiren Sect in Japan, was interested in Thai Buddhism and expressed his intention to enter an ordination and study Dhammakaya meditation. However, Luang Por was sick, so he assigned The Most Venerable Pradhammavarodom (later on His Holiness The Supreme Patriarch - Poon Poonnasirimahathera), the abbot of Wat Prachetuphon who was Luang Por's nephew, to be the preceptor for Mr. Tako Shimaruji. Mr. Shimaruji was given the monastic name as Dhammachandho. He stayed at Wat Paknam to meditate for six months. After attaining the superknowledge of Dhammakaya, he returned to Japan to propagate Dhammakaya meditation.

## **Establishing a Temple Kitchen**

### **Inspiration**

When Luang Por first became the abbot of Wat Paknam, he built a kitchen in order to cook foods for all monks and novice monks in the temple. His inspiration came from the time when he first came from Wat Song Phi Nong in Suphan Buri, he stayed at Wat Prachetupon and had alms round in the morning and rushed to study with different teachers in different temples after having his breakfast. Luang Por had to carry his scriptures and took the ferry when he crossed Chaopraya river. Then, he had to rush to return to Wat Prachetupon for having lunch. After lunch, he had to leave the temple to study with other teachers in different temples again. On some days, when his teachers were available, he had to go out to study in the evening. Luang Por was busy like this without having time for self-study on the lessons he learned. He was tired of travelling and had not enough to eat as he could not receive foods when he had alms round on rainy days. However, Luang Por was not discouraged, he still persevered in his study until a merchant lady in the area appreciated his effort and volunteered to provide meals to him everyday.

Luang Por had set a goal that whenever it became affordable for him, he would establish a temple kitchen to provide foods to monks and novice monks, so they would not worry about their meals (In Thailand, monks and novice monks normally need to have alms round to receive donated foods every day). This would enable them to dedicate their time and effort for Dhamma study and meditation practice. It would also be convenient for laypeople who wished to sponsor the meals offering to all of the monastic members by simply notify the vicar-general and donate their money. Then, the temple would manage for their staffs to cook both savory and dessert for breakfast and lunch. The patrons' duty was only to offer the newly prepared nutritious meals to the monks. In addition to treating the monks and novice monks, there would be enough food to treat Buddhist nuns, laypeople, temple staffs and those who had a retreat at Wat Paknam. This would fulfill Luang Por's wish to take good care of his monastic members.

Although Luang Por did not wish his monks and novice monks to face with difficulty in having alms rounds as a kitchen and refectory were established and sponsored by the patrons, the monks and novice monks still receive alms directly from the patrons. In addition, Luang Por wished to spare time of the monastic members for studying and meditating which were more beneficial. Moreover, there were five to six other temples in the nearby area of Wat Paknam, if monks and novice monks of Wat Paknam which were more populous had alms round, it would take away the share of foods that monks and novice monks from other temples would receive. However, Luang Por did not prohibit his monks and novice monks from having an alms round, they could still do so if they wished. Luang Por himself would normally have his meals with other monks and novice monks at the temple's refectory except on some days that he was invited to have meals somewhere else.



For the annual event like ‘The End of Rain Retreat Alms Round,’ Luang Por would lead all the monks and novice monks to have an alms round at Wat Paknam.

### **The More to Share.. The More to Eat**

When the kitchen and refectory were newly established, Luang Por had the Buddhist nuns offer meals to the monks. By that time, the kitchen staffs were chiefed by Mae Peung, and the kitchen was funded by Luang Por’s personal money that laypeople donated to him. Mr. Prayoon Soondara, the vicar-general, said that Luang Por had him sell the gold ornaments of Mrs. Soodjai (Luang Por’s mother) and donated to the temple kitchen’s fund, altogether with her personal money. Luang Por’s disciples and relatives also donated rice and groceries to the kitchen. After establishing the kitchen for a period of time, Luang Por had one of his kins to manage the kitchen. Her name is Tuam Hutanukrom. She managed the kitchen is the chief until Luang Por passed away, then she retired herself due to aging. After that, since 22 October 1959, Maechee Tanyanee Sudket who used to work for the specialty kitchen which cooked foods for Luang Por has become the chief of kitchen as well as the chief of Buddhist nuns at Wat Paknam until the present.

Disciples of Luang Por have sponsored the kitchen fund by donating money to provide meals for the monastic members. By that time, there were not so many sponsors like in the present. Most of them came on holidays. There was no sponsor on some of the weekdays, so Luang Por had to donate his personal money which his disciples donated to him.

In 1939, when Master Treetar was new to Wat Paknam, there were around 150 monks. Since then, the number had increased to 600. Altogether with the number of Buddhist nuns, those who observed precepts and had a retreat at Wat Paknam, the number of monastic members was as many as 1,000. Although there were more people at Wat Paknam, Luang Por still intended to have as many as 1,000 of monks and novice monks who studied Dhamma and practiced meditation at his temple. When someone expressed their concern over this issue, Luang Por would say “The more to share... the more to eat.”

The establishment of the temple kitchen is not an insignificant issue because it requires much of funding. Most people worried on behalf of Luang Por, but Luang Por himself was not worried at all. His Holiness the Supreme Patriarch (Poon Poonnasiri), the abbot of Wat Prachetuphon wrote in his article that:

“The Most Venerable Pramongkolthepmuni was truthful. As he was determined on something, nobody could change his mind. He would make his wishes come true. The providing of meals to 300 – 400 monks at the temple [these days] started from tens to hundreds of monks. He remained indifferent when someone objected him. He kept saying that ‘it is possible to treat them.’ So, he kept treating monks whereas others worried about it. However, when someone talked about providing meals to the monks, the Most Venerable would smile with a cheerful face as it was something favorable to him. Whatever people said, he would not retreat. He always said that “believe in the merit of Buddhism.

We have to keep up... keep up with a cheerful heart.” It is weird that when the rice would be used up in a few days, there would be those who offered rice to the kitchen continually. It had been going on like this. When the [old] rice was to be used up, the [new] rice would come. Luang Por said about this proudly that “Do you see the merit of Buddhism?” I heard that it was due to his insight power that guided him the way. He had used meditation which enabled him to gain an intuition, I guess. This is the reason why he could know the future.” (an excerpt from The Biography of Pramongkolthepmuni, Luang Por Wat Paknam and the power of Dhammakaya meditation by Somdet Phrawannarat (Poon Poonnasiri), Published by Ms. Treetar Niamkham on the occasion of The Most Venerable Bhavanakosolthera (Teera Dhammatarathera)’s cremation ceremony under royal patronage at the crematorium of Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen, Thonburi. 23 March 1969. Page 62)

Luang Por had explained to the patrons who offered meals to the monks that in addition to offering meals to the monastic community as Sanghadhana, they were also distributed among the laypeople who went to make merit at the temple. Luang Por said so because he wished to make the patrons feel delightful in their contribution. In addition, he did not wish the people who ate meals from the kitchen worry or be afraid of sin from consuming temple’s foods without making donation by themselves. More importantly, Luang Por ordered the practitioners of Dhammakaya superknowledge to use their meditation power to bless the foods, so that they were like medicines that cure people’s diseases other than curing their hunger.

When Luang Por preached, he said about the importance of practicing generosity such as the following sermon given on 7 November 1954:

“Generosity practice is the karma that will lead one to reborn in a wealthy family. This is due to the karmic consequence of generosity. Generosity practice causes one to have abundant wealth. The poor’s poverty will also be relieved. The wealth given to others will return to oneself. More or less, all will return. So, generosity or giving is important. A Buddha-to-be can become a Buddha because of generosity. If he does not donate, he will not be able to attain Buddhahood. Therefore, nowadays, Wat Paknam has numerous monks and novice monks because they rely on patrons’ sponsoring. The sponsoring has been going on for 37 years. Keep sponsoring without being afraid. If nobody donates, the abbot will donate by himself. If it is inadequate, he will give all of what is requested; even though, he has to run into debt. He will give as to pursue generosity perfections for the sake of future benefit like this...”

Master Treetar can still remember that, sometimes, Ms. Tuam had informed Luang Por about the running out of rice and groceries. She wished to receive money from Luang Por for buying them, but Luang Por said “they will come soon. You don’t have to buy.” Then, a few hours after that, people came to Wat Paknam to offer rice, sugar, vegetables, and fruits. They came with a fully loaded boat, docking at the temple’s pier.

### **If People Still Eat Rice...**

Luang Por's disciples in the old time know this well. Colonel Muan Kodchawong used to tell this story to other members of Luang Por Wat Paknam's Disciples Association that, once, the temple kitchen was running out of rice. There was only little left which was not enough for cooking on the following day. So, the chief of temple kitchen, Ms. Tuam, went to see Luang Por and informed him that the kitchen was running out of rice. Luang Por replied that 'if people still eat rice, there must be enough rice for people.' He also added that the remaining rice was more than people could eat all, just add water and make rice soup. Around 5 p.m., of the same day, there were folks from other provinces who went to see Luang Por and said that they brought him rice. But Colonel Muan could not remember the amount of rice they offered.

### **Better Offer to the Monastic Community**

Luang Por explained about the consequential merit of offering meals to the monks and novice monks that it would be tremendous because the monastic members were the deserved recipients of alms according to the Pali wordings that "the Sangha community is the chief or principal [deserved recipient] for those who wish to practice generosity" or "the Monastic Community is the top of deserved recipients." If one wishes to earn much merit, one must offer one's alms to the Sangha or monastic community as a whole. One should not offer to a specific individual. It is better to keep one's mind neutral when offering alms, not to favor a specific monk.

Luang Por emphasized that a patron should be wise, not to be fool, because if he offered his alms specifically to an individual monk, the merit received would be lessened. To be wise, one needed to offer as a common property, and one would receive tremendous merit. This is called Sanghadhana. It is the principle of Buddhism as the Lord Buddha's religion can continue on due to the practice of neutrality. Monks and novice monks are required to practice Buddhism in such a way that they remain neutral, not to side with anyone. They laypeople, when they offer alms, they should not favor their associate or fellow. They should make it neutral. This is for the common of Sangha... hitting the right target of merit making.

Ones who offer meals to the monks should understand and follow Luang Por's guideline as it complies to the Pali verse that "laymen and laywomen who are wisdomful and freed from greed, having a faithful mind upon the enlightened persons, the enlightened monks and the monastic community (Sangha). They are steadfast in offering alms. Such offered alms will yield ample results, similar to the ocean which is brimmed with water, because of giving made to the deserved recipients."

### **One of the Watch-List**

When Luang Por was alive, Wat Paknam gained much interest from Thailand's monastic community and Thai people. They were interested and amazed by the instruction and practice of Dhammakaya meditation as well as the curing of disease. They wondered if it was something real or unreal that could attract many people to go to the temple. In addition, Luang Por also established a kitchen to provide two meals to hundreds of people everyday whereas almost a hundred of Buddhist nuns volunteered to cook. This was something that other temples could not achieve except for special occasions. So, Wat Paknam was the very first temple that could do it. None of the Thai Buddhist circle did not know 'Luang Por Wat Paknam,' although, some agreed and some other didn't. The Most Venerable Dhammadassanatorn, the abbot of Wat Chanasongkram, said about Luang Por's establishment of temple kitchen to provide meals to monks and novice monks as follows:

"... He was capable of feeding monks, novice monks, laymen, laywomen, and temple staffs everyday. Although the monks and novice monks did not have an alms round, he could provide food to them. There were individuals who went to offer rice and ingredients to the kitchen, and they were cooked to feed monks, novice monks, laymen, laywomen, and temple staffs. They rely on him. This is something that no other temple in Thailand can achieve this level. He is the most amazing senior monk in Thailand.

I am not sure if he had a spell, an art or something that allowed him to acquire foods to feed monks, novice monks, laymen, laywomen, and temple staffs every single day. It is something amazing. I had asked him once when he was alive about what made him capable of this. He smiled cheerfully and replied confidently that 'Most Venerable, you need not to worry about it. The Dhammakaya made it possible.' This is his answer which he always affirmed..." (Phra Dhammadassanatorn's sermon on the occasion of merit making for Pramongkolthepmuni, Luang Por Wat Paknam, on Wednesday, 25 March 1959 at Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen.)

### **Is Generosity A Must?**

Some people still lack knowledge about why one needs to practice generosity since there are many other good deeds one can do such as observing precepts. One may question why one has to donate. Isn't it enough not to harm or cause difficulty to others? When one sees other people donate a lot, instead of rejoicing in their meritorious deeds, one may even think in a negative way believing that the patrons do it for their fame, being a materialistic person, or causing the monks to misbehave or something alike.

Luang Por always taught his disciples that "Dhanam dheti... Generosity practice: It is necessary for everyone to give. If one does not sacrifice, the benefit will not occur. The benefit occurs only when one gives. Luang Por exemplified a family that the husband had to give money to the wife for household spending. Also, he gave ornaments and honored his wife. In return, a wife respects her husband and provided him and everyone in the family

with meals. Thus, the family would be peaceful. If there is no generosity practice, everyone would quarrel. If a husband and a wife do not give to each other, they will not be able to live together. Thus, if one wish to promote one's family to have many fellows, one should not be greedy.

### **The Karmic Consequences of Giving**

Ones who donate food to monks, novice monks, laymen, and laywomen are said to give the five qualities namely longevity, fine complexion, happiness, energy, and intelligence. In return, they also receive the five qualities they give. So, both the giver and receiver receive the five aforesaid qualities. Luang Por said the five qualities belong to each person in the same way that one's shadow follows oneself. However, one must give without expecting something in return. If one raises a cat to hunt mice or a dog to guard one's house, it is not considered to be a generosity practice. Also, if one provides foods to other people or animals and expects to receive certain benefit in return from them, this is not considered to be generosity practice. On the contrary, if one provides food to others in order to prevent them from starvation, it is a generosity practice. One must give with an honest heart or having a pity upon them, thinking that if we do not give, they will die, and they must rely on us.

This is the same to child rearing, parents should raise them with an expectation for them to grow up healthy and well educated, being able to do some benefits for the nation and never expect the child to take care of them in return. This will be a generosity practice.

The thirteen karmic consequences for giving without expecting something in return are as follows:

1. Giving alms to animals such as dogs, cats, chicken, and birds will yield result as long as 100 lifetimes
2. Giving alms to an immoral person yields result as long as 1,000 lifetimes
3. Giving alms to a moral person yields result as long as 100,000 lifetimes
4. Giving alms to ones who attain meditative absorption when Buddhism is not available yields result as long as 1,000,000,000,000 lifetimes
5. Giving alms to ones who practice vipassana yields result as long as one eon.
6. Giving alms to a hundred people who practice Vipassana or giving a hundred times to a person who practice Vipassana is not comparable to giving made only once to a Sotapanna person.
7. Giving alms to a hundred Sotapanna person or giving a hundred times to a Sotapanna person is not comparable to giving made only once to a Sakadagami person.
8. Giving alms to a hundred Sakadagami person or giving a hundred times to a Sakadagami person is not comparable to giving made only once to anAnagami person.
9. Giving alms to a hundred Anagami person or giving a hundred times to anAnagami person is not comparable to giving made only once to an Arahant person.

10. Giving alms to a hundred Arahant person or giving a hundred times to an Arahant person is not comparable to giving made only once to a Silent Buddha person.
11. Giving alms to a hundred Silent Buddha or giving a hundred times to Silent Buddha is not comparable to giving made only once to a Lord Buddha.
12. Giving alms to a hundred Lord Buddha or giving a hundred times to a Lord Buddha is not comparable to giving made only once to the monastic community which is presided over by the Lord Buddha.
13. Giving alms to the monastic community which is presided over by the Lord Buddha a hundred times is not comparable to giving made only once to the monastic community where the monastic members come from the four or eight direction.

Luang Por said that the merit of ones who practice generosity varies. There are three principles of generosity. There are ten in the *sutta*, four in the *vinaya*, and six in the *paramattha*.

Generosity practice according to the Sutta (discourses) can be classified according to the 10 given items namely food, water, cloth, vehicle, flowers, fragrance, ornament, furniture, shelter, and light.

According to the discipline discourse, the four offerings made to Buddhist monks and novice monks are (1) robes (2) food (3) shelter and (4) medicine.

The practice of giving according to the high Dhamma is classified into six categories according to the six sensations through sight, sound, smell, taste, feeling from touching, and thought. One needs to eliminate or give up the desire in the six sensations in order to prevent them from influencing oneself. As they occur, one needs to contemplate that they are the worldly sensation, not the Dhamma sensation. This means that one has to still one's mind, and it will bring about great wholesomeness as it can lead toward Nirvana. This is called the great giving according to the high Dhamma.

### **A Layman Recognized For His Generosity**

Luang Por always exemplified an individual who dedicated himself for generosity practice until he was admired for his courage in giving and tireless giving because the more he gave, the happier he became. When he saw Buddhist monks and novice monks ate the foods he provided or other people using his alms, he would feel delightful more and more. His name is Anadabindika whose story is as follows:

Anadabindika's real name is 'Sudhatta' which means the one who is well. He was renowned for his generosity. Sudhatta kindly donated his alms to the poor always. Therefore, he was titled 'Anadapindika' which means the one who donates lumps of rice to the underprivileged. He lived in Savatthi City, the Kingdom of Kosol. Anadapindika was very faithful upon the Lord Buddha. He attained the primary level of enlightenment called

Sotapanna. After he met the Lord Buddha, he wished to build a temple in Savatthi for the Lord.

Anadapindika had searched for a suitable plot of land all over the city, and he favored a grove which belonged to Prince Chetta. The grove was neither too near nor far from the villages, and there were various trees and plants as well as birds, rabbits, and deers which made it suitable for monastic practice. Anadapindika thought that the grove was appropriate for building a temple where the Lord Buddha and His disciples could reside. There was also enough space for visiting monks. In the overall, there would be the complete seven factors for well-being namely residence, food, Dhamma, resident, season, temperature, and convenience of one's living. Anadapindika was willing to sacrifice his money for building this temple; even though, he might have had to lose all of his money and became a beggar. This is because of his strong faith in the Lord Buddha.

So, Anadapindika tried to convince Prince Chetta to sell him the grove, but the prince denied. Anadapindika still insisted his intention to buy the land. However, Prince Chetta did not wish to sell, so he said with nuisance that if Anadapindika was able to fill the land surface with money, he would sell the grove at the price of such money.

Although Prince Chetta did not really mean it, but Anadapindika agreed on the condition. So, he ordered his subordinates to bring money to the grove with carts, and arrange money on the land surface. Prince Chetta was surprised that Anadapindika dared to do so, so he refused not to sell the land because he already had more than enough money and he loved his grove so much.

However, Anadapindika did not change his mind because he had a very strong faith in the Lord Buddha. Finally, they had to go to the court for a judgment, and the judge ruled for Prince Chetta to sell his land to Anadapindika according to the condition that he uttered. After winning over the lawsuit, Anadapindika managed to have his subordinates arranging money all over the grove's land surface without being afraid of losing all of his money or becoming poor. Prince Chetta followed up what happened closely as he could not believe his eyes until money was filled and arranged until they almost covered the whole land plot. As there was some space left before the land was completely covered with money, Prince Chetta decided to donate such space for temple construction.

Since Anadapindika was not a selfish person, and he was very generous and kind-hearted, he wished Prince Chetta to take part in the meritorious deed, so Anadapindika named the temple as 'Chettavanna' as a way to honor Prince Chetta who was one of the elites in that time. Although Anadapindika did not name the temple after his own name, people knew that it was the temple he built for the Lord Buddha.

Anadapindika spent 180,000,000 for temple construction and 180,000,000 for land purchase. When the construction was completed, Anadapindika invited the Lord Buddha and His disciples to reside at the temple he built. The Lord Buddha kindly advised

Anadapindika to contribute the temple to the members of Buddhist monastic community in general, both who already arrived and who had not arrived yet. Then, Anadapindika organized a celebration for the new temple by offering alms at the temple everyday for the period of 9 months. This celebration cost him another 180,000,000. Totally, he spent 540,000,000.

Chettavanna was the biggest and the most important temple in the Buddhist history. The total period of time that Lord Buddha resided at this temple was as long as 19 years. At this temple, he had delivered many sermons and discourses covering vinaiya, sutta, and abhidhamma. Later on, Chettavanna had become the center for Buddhist propagation of that era.

After the temple was completely built, Anadapindika visited the temple regularly 2 – 3 times a day. Around noon, he brought foods to temple to be offered as lunch to monks and novice monks as presided over by the Lord Buddha. In the afternoon, he brought liquid cheese, solid cheese, oil, sugar cane beverage, honey and 8 fruit juices and beverages made from mangoes, wa fruit, bananas, seedless bananas, masang fruit, chan fruit, grape, lotus roots, marian plum, and lychee. In the evening, he would bring flowers, garlands, fabrics, and incense to the temple for offerings, and he would listen to sermons. In addition to offering alms to monks at the temple, Anadapindika also provide meals to as many as 2,000 monks at his home. Anadapindika's generosity practice was outstanding that the Lord Buddha admired him to be superior to other laymen in generosity practice.

Some people may misunderstand that it was easy for Anadapindika to donate so much because he was a wealthy person. In fact, there were other laymen who were wealthier than Anadapindika, but they did not have the effort in practicing generosity like Anadapindika. In addition, as Anadapindika practiced generosity, there were certain times when he faced with financial crisis as he lost as much as 360,000,000 since he was cheated in business and a flood took away his buried money.

When Anadapindika became poor, he still continued to practice generosity whilst his offerings were of inferior grade and quality. Thus, Anadapindika became concerned of his lower quality offerings. This made a celestial being who guarded the gate of his house coming to see him and asked him to stop donating. The celestial being explained to him that he donated so much that it caused him to be poor; however, Anadapindika was dissatisfied with the celestial being's words.

In the present days, we can see this kind of people who do not donate by themselves but they feel uncomfortable when they see other people donating. Instead of encouraging those who have a generous heart, they discourage others from helping others with donation. Many may doubt why a celestial being at Anadapindika's house did not support generosity practice. It was because the celestial being did not want the monks to enter the house gate because the celestial being had to come down to the ground when the Lord



Buddha and his disciple monks passed through the gate. However, with dissatisfaction, Anadapindika asked the celestial being to leave his house. The celestial being regretted what he had said, so he sought for help from Indra the king of celestial beings. Indra advised him to help Anadapindika bringing back his cheated and borrowed money, as well as the properties wiped away by flood. The celestial being did so, and he asked for forgiveness from Anadapindika. Finally, Anadabindika became wealthy again, and he allowed the celestial being to continue living at the gate as usual. Later on, Anadapindika led the celestial being to meet with the Lord Buddha where he had a chance to listen to His sermon and attained Sotapanna.

### **Was It A Violation?**

Many people may doubt if Luang Por's establishment of the temple kitchen violated the monastic discipline as monks and novice monks did not have an alms round as usual. In order to explain this, we need to understand first that the four monastic traditions which a monk should observe as taught by the preceptor on the date of his are the principles for Buddhist monastic living. They are (1) having alms rounds (2) using robes made from discarded clothes (3) living under a tree and (4) drinking a medicine made from one's own urine. I would like to explain each of them as follows:

(2) Using robes made from discarded fabrics. The Lord Buddha allowed monks to use discarded fabrics because it was easy to find, and the monks did not have to buy. So, monks would not cause difficulty to anyone as nobody needed the discarded fabrics which can be found from piles of garbage and corpse. In the old days, monks would pick up these discarded fabrics for cleaning first. Then, they sow and dyed the discarded fabrics together in order to create a robe for themselves. Monk's robes are used solely for the purpose of protecting oneself from insects and temperature. So, it does not really matter if the fabric is new or old, and beautiful or unbeautiful.

However, in addition to the discarded clothes, the Lord Buddha also allowed his disciple monks to accept fabric offered by laypeople. These fabrics could be made of cotton, silk, velvet, cambric, and fabric weaved from threads.

(3) Living under a tree. The Lord Buddha allowed this practice because, by that time, it was easy to find trees which were convenient for ascetic practices. To live under a tree, a Buddhist monk does not have to be concerned of shelters. So, one can dedicate oneself to practicing Buddhism. However, if one finds it difficult to live under a tree, the Lord Buddha also allowed other forms of residence such as a shelter, an abode, a shack, a building, a flat roof shelter, a one-sided roof shelter, and a cave.

The Lord Buddha did not blame anyone who did not live under a tree according to the four monastic traditions. This is the reason why, during the Lord Buddha's lifetime, there were many laypeople who built monasteries which housed many abodes and cells for the Lord Buddha and Buddhist monks.

(4) Drinking a medicine made from one's own urine. This is one of the monastic traditions permitted by the Lord Buddha because it was easy to practice by that time. One's own urine can be used to make a medicine for oneself. However, the Lord Buddha also allowed Buddhist monks to accept other forms of medicines such as milk, cheese, oil, honey, and sugar cane beverage (these were used as medicines during the Lord Buddha's lifetime).

Therefore, from the three Buddhist monastic traditions, we find that they were given as the principles with exceptions. If monks do not use discarded fabric, they can accept offered fabric. If they do not live under a tree, they can live at a residence. Also, if they do not drink medicine made from their own urine, they can take other kinds of medicine.

So, we can conclude that having an alms round is a monastic tradition for Buddhist monks, but if laypeople invite monks to have meals at their residence or they offer at the temple, the monks can also accept without violating the monastic conduct as it is a kind of gain that received other than having an alms round.

We can conclude that it is possible for Buddhist monks for not to have an alms round but receive offered meals from the temple's kitchen which is funded by sponsoring laypeople who can donate any amount. In the present days, sponsoring laypeople donate money to the temple's kitchen for providing meals to Buddhist monks and novice monks on the following occasions:

- (1) Making merit for oneself or making merit in dedication to others who already passed away.
- (2) Making merit in dedication to Luang Por as a way to repay him for his helping on any matters.
- (3) Making merit in order to benefit Buddhist monks, novice monks, Buddhist nuns, and laypeople, according to Luang Por's teaching.

### **Manpower from Buddhist Nuns**

Normally, the cooking to provide two meals to hundreds of monks and novice monks each day requires many manpower as well as good management in order to get the works done properly and on time. However, Wat Paknam has never lacked manpower for the kitchen works. There have been enough Buddhist nuns who help cooking foods since the time when Luang Por was alive up until the present days. Some of the Buddhist nuns have worked since Luang Por was still alive, and they are more than 80 years old now. However, they are still willing to continue to work such as in the case Maechee Tanyanee Sudket.

Although some Buddhist nuns disrobed, but there would be new Buddhist nuns who replace them. In addition, there are those who have a retreat at Wat Paknam who also lend their hands. For those who are not good at cooking, they help to clean temple utensils. Everyone dedicate themselves to the kitchen work wholeheartedly with no holiday and no retirement

as well as no salary. So, the Buddhist nuns are the main manpower of Wat Paknam's kitchen.

Maechee Tanyanee Sudket, the head of Buddhist nuns, understands well that Buddhist nuns have no income, but they still need to spend money on necessities. So, she allocates a 500 baht monthly allowance for every Buddhist nun. If one were to employ an honest and diligent chef to cook foods at home, it would be impossible to employ an chef at the cost of 500 baht per month. However, the Buddhist nuns at Wat Paknam are willing to do their work because they do not consider it to be a job. On the other hand, they consider it to be merit making and self cultivation where they invest their energy and effort for the benefit of Buddhism as a whole.

### **Reverend Maechee Tanyanee Sudket**

Maechee Tanyanee Sudket is the head of Buddhist nuns at Wat Paknam. Most people call her 'Pa-Yai' which literally means 'senior aunt.' She was born on 1 October 1928. She was ordained to be a Buddhist nun at Wat Paknam in 1947. In the beginning, she was responsible for cooking Luang Por's foods at the 'special kitchen.' I used to ask her about Luang Por's preference about food, Maechee Tanyanee said Luang Por never expressed his preference about food at all. He ate whatever was offered to him without complaining, and he ate moderately. Some people said that Luang Por used to mention about a recipe called "Moo Chamuang" (cooked pork) several times, but Maechee Tanyanee does not know about this.

After Luang Por passed away on 3 February 1959, and Mother Tuam Hutanukrom, the former chief chef of Wat Paknam kitchen, retired herself at the age of more than 70 years, Maechee Tanyanee had to supervise the whole kitchen since 22 October 1959. She had continued her work until the present days. She never leaves the kitchen and goes out side the temple except in case of sick and being admitted to a hospital. Some people asked her to have a vacation by going abroad or going to other provinces, but she refused. This included the pilgrimage trip to India and Nepal. Everyone knows well that she worries about the kitchen.

Buddhist nuns at Wat Paknam, especially those who work for the kitchen, have considerable work-load and responsibility. They have to wake up at 4 o'clock in order to chant and start to cook food at 5 o'clock in the morning. After breakfast, the cleaning section has to clean all the utensils and clean the kitchen and refectory. The purchasing section has to go to the market to shop for foods and ingredients. Then, they return to the temple to prepare lunch. Foods must be served in a tray to be catered separately set by set at the refectory. During the rain retreat, they might have to prepare as many as 100 sets to cater foods to monks, novice monks, and laypeople. All the meal trays must be catered and arranged on the monks' seats before 11 a.m. when monks and novice monks arrive the refectory.

After Buddhist monks and novice monks have their meals, the Buddhist nuns and kitchen staffs have to collect the meal trays and cater foods to the laypeople who go to the refectory for food offering. The forecast on number of people is important in order to cater enough foods. However, there have always been enough food for everyone. After the laypeople finish their meals, it is time for cleaning both at the kitchen and the refectory. All of the works are completed around 1 p.m.

Buddhist nuns, then, have time to rest until 3 p.m. when they perform the evening chant and practice meditation at the refectory until 4 p.m. Then, they prepare some ingredients for breakfast of the following day until 6 p.m. when they meditate together again at the white meditation hall.

The kitchen of Wat Paknam was established by Luang Por, and he funded the kitchen by himself for as long as 40 years. After Luang Por passed away, the kitchen operation has been continued until the present day for the total period of 93 years.

Some of the Buddhist nuns have to study, in addition to their kitchen work. Buddhist nuns who achieve the advanced level of meditation have to meditate at the meditation workshop for four hours per shift. Some of them study Dhamma while some study both Dhamma and Pali. So, it takes much time and effort to repeat their lessons each day, but they spare time to work for the kitchen.

His Holiness Somdet Phramaharatchamangkhlachan, the abbot of Wat Paknam, admires and rejoices in the merit of Buddhist nuns. He once told me that the kitchen work is a big task that Luang Por initiated, so the disciples like us have to continue his every project. When Luang Por got sick and passed away, many disciples were afraid that Wat Paknam and many projects initiated by Luang Por would not be continued. They thought that hundreds of people who used to live comfortably under Luang Por's direction would leave Wat Paknam as some looked for a new place to live and some returned home.

So, those close disciples like me, Luang Por Lek, The Most Venerable Rajmolee (Narong Thitayano), and Master Treetar started to consult each other that we have to support and continue Luang Por's projects, both in term of Dhamma study and Dhamma practice. But what we were concerned of the most was the temple kitchen which requires much funding for buying foods and ingredients. So, we agreed that we would request for donation from Luang Por's close disciples, so they can become sponsors. We thought that the foods did not have to be too good like chicken and pork, and we estimated the spending of at least 600 baht per day to sustain the kitchen work. Then, we helped to donate as well. We helped hand in hand like this until the present days. I would like to express my appreciation to Maechee Tanyanee who is the wise and capable one. She has supervised and managed the Buddhist nuns to live together with good unity.

### **Foods are Medicines**

Luang Por always wished laypeople to have convenience in making merit at Wat Paknam, so he also provided foods for the laypeople. As a result, they did not have to face with difficulty in bringing foods to the temple by themselves which would eventually add more cost and burden to their living. Luang Por treated his laypeople like guests whom he welcome them well with foods and drinks without discrimination. Although he already passed away, he still wished people to eat foods provided by his temple kitchen, so they can recover from their disease. Master Treetar said about Luang Por's foods that they also work like medicines, and there is a story to affirm this issue as follows:

Mrs. Charoenjit Saibua has a daughter who is 14 year old. She was a diligent girl who studied well. One day, she started to get tired of studying. No matter what her parents tried to do, she refused to go to school, without giving any reason. She said that she did not want to stay home with her parents any longer; even though, none of family members had problem with her. Her parents were not strict about her living as well. Nobody knew why, but she became abnormal. Her parents did not know what to do, and they dared not to scold her since they were afraid that she would run away from home.

A brother of Mrs. Charoenjit, Police Colonel Jate Dhammajari (his rank at that time), was familiar with Master Treetar, so he recommended his sister to request for help from Luang Por at Wat Paknam. So, Mrs. Charoenjit went to Wat Paknam regularly and asked Luang Por to bless her daughter to become normal again. One day, Mrs. Charoenjit dreamed that Luang Por advised her to bring her daughter to eat foods at the temple's refectory. So, Mrs. Charoenjit informed this to Master Treetar as she was afraid that eating temple's food without helping the temple would be sinful. Master Treetar explained to her not to be afraid of such because Luang Por established the kitchen in order to provide convenience to monks, novice monks, Buddhist nuns, and everyone who visits Wat Paknam. Master Treetar also said that Luang Por made a wish for his foods to become medicines that cure people's every disease. So, Mrs. Charoenjit brought her daughter to eat foods at the refectory of Wat Paknam, and finally her daughter became normal again. She started to have interest in studying, and she returned to study at school in the following academic year.

Therefore, for everyone who visits Wat Paknam either for paying respect to Luang Por or practicing meditation, they are allowed to have meals at the refectory whether they donate money to fund the kitchen or not. Nobody needs not to worry that it is something wrong. Please think of it as Luang Por's home that welcomes everyone. His Holiness Somdet Phramaharatchamangkhlachan will also be happy to see many laypeople having meals at the refectory. He will assign the Buddhist nuns to cater foods to everyone.

### **Building Facilities**

When Luang Por first became the abbot of Wat Paknam, the temple was old and deteriorated like an isolated temple, although there were as many as 13 resident Buddhist

monks, as well as other Buddhist nuns and laypeople. So, Luang Por raised fund to renovate Wat Paknam to be in good condition. So, it would be suitable for people to come making merit and studying Dhamma and meditation. This is the duty of an abbot. It was necessary for Luang Por to renovate and repair facilities and buildings at Wat Paknam for the benefit of monks, novice monks, and the local community.

At Wat Paknam, there was a beautiful antique Buddhist scripture cabinet built since Ayudhya era. The height of this cabinet is six meters. Once, His Royal Highness Prince Kromprayadamrongrajanupab visited Wat Paknam as he knew that there is a beautiful cabinet, and he wished to take a look at this cabinet. Actually, it was common for him to visit different temples. When he saw the cabinet, he was very much satisfied, so he asked for the cabinet from Luang Por as he planned to move it to a library. Luang Por said he could not refuse when a royalty asked for something, so he informed the prince that he was glad to offer the cabinet to the prince, but he wished the prince to grant him one thing. The prince agreed to grant Luang Por what he wished. So, Luang Por told him to move the whole cabinet without deassembling its parts because he was afraid that it would not be in good condition after reassembling. After hearing this, the prince became speechless, and he told Luang Por that he would like to leave the cabinet with Luang Por first. Then, he departed. Since then, the cabinet has still been at Wat Paknam.

When Master Treetar was new a resident of Wat Paknam, around 1939, the temple was not well developed like in the present. However, the temple's condition was much better than when Luang Por first moved to Wat Paknam in 1918. Luang Por was capable of developing an almost-isolated temple to be a well developed temple which is wellknown among others as well as developing people and facilities. Luang Por emphasized on developing people more than developing the facilities which were built to provide moderate accommodation to the people. As more people moved in, Luang Por had to build enough place to live for them. The cost of utilities and foods also escalated. It cost more than 1,000 baht to run the kitchen each day, and the cost had increased to 3,000 baht per day while the cost of electricity was more than 2,000 baht per month.

His Holiness Somdet Phramaharatchamangkhlachan told the author about the condition of Wat Paknam when he first moved in around 1940 that Wat Paknam was like an orchard with no road access. There were betel nut trees and coconut trees on orchard beds. The location of Samvechaneemongkoltheppiramit Hall where Luang Por's coffin is located used to be a Thai style wooden abode of Luang Por.

Adjacent to the 'Mongkolchandasara Building' is the former residential building of His Holiness Somdet Phramaharatchamangkhlachan. Formerly, it used to be a Thai style abode. There were two to three other two storey abodes where monks and novice monks lived in lining together forming a u-shape with a central hall. Luang Por would meet his guests at the first floor of this central hall. At the back of this cluster is the 'Central Residence' whereas the 'Southern Residence' is next to the canal. Totally, there were three clusters of residence. There is only one road access to the temple,

next to this road is 'Nekhamma Residence' surrounded by tint fences. There was a Bodhi tree at the front gate. Inside the residence, there were orchard beds full of betel and coconut trees. There were small individual abodes for monks at this residence. To the west of the Nekhamma Residence is Analai residence which is the living place for Buddhist nuns. However, Buddhist monks who studied Dhamma doctrines would stay at the dormitory. Some of the residential buildings were built by monks and novice monks themselves.

There were several grandeur buildings at that time such as 'the white building' which was demolished later on and replaced with the *Vipassana* Meditation Hall (Luang Por used to say that the white building was formerly the center of *Chakkavatti*). Another building is 'Samveganusorn building' (the yellow building) which still lasts until the present. Behind the yellow building, in the area of Mongkolthepmuni Building, Luang Por built three other buildings along the walkway. These buildings were named after the celestial realm level two, three, and four. They are 'Tavatimsa,' the green two storeys building, 'Yamapipob,' the red three storeys building (His Holiness Somdet Phramaharatchamangkhlachan was impressed by the beauty of this building and he admired that it is the most beautiful buildings of Wat Paknam. There is a three tiers roof with five porticos in front and at the back), and 'Tusitnavarat,' a two storeys yellow building. However, most people do not call the buildings' names, but they usually call according to the color of these buildings such as 'the green building' and 'the red building.'

The Thai style wooden monastic residences which were located nearby the BhavananusoenDhamma School Building were also demolished and replaced by ChaoKhunPipatDhamkanee Building and Sawad-LormOsatanukroh Building. In addition, in 1975, the present refectory or 'Sod Pavilion' and the temple kitchen which are located next to the canal was built to replace an old and deteriorated wooden Dhamma hall which was more than one hundred year old.

The temple's Buddha Hall or *uposatha* was built from concrete and painted white all over, surrounded by numerous stupas in different sizes. There were big stupas located at the Northeastern wing and Southeastern wing (smaller in size). To the south of this Buddha Hall, there was a pavilion, and next to this pavilion, there was a morgue which was demolished later on per Luang Por's order since it was no longer used. The morgue was replaced by a small refectory. To the south of the Buddha Hall which is presently the location of VisetDhammakaya Building, Luang Por used to build rows of small individual abodes for monks who studied and practiced meditation.

Other than the Buddha Hall, another sacred place of Wat Paknam is 'The Meditation Workshop.' The Meditation Workshop was a two storeys wooden building (located between the wall and the present Meditation Workshop Pavilion). The upper floor was for monks whereas the downstairs was for Buddhist nuns. When Luang Por gave meditation instruction, everyone in the building would be able to hear his voice.

When Luang Por established a Dhamma school in 1947, he had managed to build many wooden school buildings for *Pali* language and Dhamma study. Thus, there were many more monks and novice monks from Thonburi area who became the monastic members of Wat Paknam. As a result, the number of monks and novice monks exceeded the capacity, and it was necessary to organize the classes in three sessions, e.g. in the morning, afternoon, and evening. Then, Luang Por planned to expand his Dhammaschool by building another spacious three storey concrete building which would provide space for both Dhamma study and meditation practice.

Therefore, Wat Paknam was prosperous in many ways including accommodations, facilities, utilities, education, and meditation instruction and practice. There were more than 600 Buddhist monks and novice monks who were the temple's residents. Altogether with Buddhist nuns, laymen, and laywomen, there were around 1,200 people who lived under Luang Por's guidance.

By that time, there was no road access to Wat Paknam, people had to rely on boat. Boats from everywhere headed towards Wat Paknam. Luang Por had managed to build various facilities which are difficult to estimate their cost since there has been no record. These facilities were built without a fixed budget, and the construction expenditures kept increasing. This is the same to the present. Once they were completed, they temple had more durable and elaborate facilities for its use. Some of the buildings even had no blueprint as they were built by monks and novice monks. Luang Por did not move into the five beautiful buildings he managed to build, but he ordered other monks to move in. For example, he ordered the Most Venerable Srivisudhimolee (presently His Holiness Somdet Phramaharatchamangkhlachan) to live in. Another one was built for Luang PorLek and PrakrupaladNarong (promoted to be Prarajmolee, the abbot of WatRajaoroasaram, later on).

### **Development on Monastic Education**

#### **Knowledge is an Asset**

Luang Por's temple development seems to differ from others in the same era because he gave priority to the development of human resource whereas facility and infrastructure development was secondary. Luang Por believed that if he could develop people well, the rest would make progress consequently. He always said that it was difficult to develop people, but the development of buildings was not quite difficult as anyone who had money was qualified. Most importantly, it was necessary to develop people.

Luang Por's principle in developing people was to educate them the best possible in order to improve their wisdom, spirituality, and emotional quotient. Luang Por taught them to meditate altogether in order to enable them to be wise and virtuous at the same time. He had an axiom about education that "education can better one's life. Ones who are well educated are likely to obtain superior things when comparing to others. Ones who have knowledge are like possessing an asset which bears fruits infinitely."



Once Luang Por was no longer responsible for managing the school for the public, he turned to develop monastic education to be provided to monks and novice monks as he did not wish the monastic members to live without duty. So, he encouraged monks and novice monks to study the Dhamma, except the elder ones or those who aimed to meditate committedly. Therefore, Luang Por allowed his monks and novice monks to study the Buddhist scriptures including Vinaiya, Sutta, and Abhidhamma.

Luang Por believed that monks and novice monks are required to study in order to learn the codes of conduct and the doctrines that allow them to behave in the same manners. As all of them are disciples of the Lord Buddha, they should have the same belief and be knowledgeable. This would enable them to teach people further. Not only the monks and novice monks who were required to study, the Buddhist nuns and laypeople also had to study Dhamma and practice meditation. For Dhamma study, they were required to complete the courses, but for meditation practice, it depended on their capability made possible by accumulated karma.

For Luang Por, monks and novice monks should not study Dhamma only, but they should practice meditation hand in hand in order to fulfill their duty. This complies to the saying that “Dhamma study is a medicine whereas meditation practice is a vaccine.” Luang Por took this into account because he was not merely a renowned meditation master, but also the one who had studied Dhamma doctrine until he mastered.

With such a determination in upgrading people’s life by promoting their education as much as possible, Luang Por had established a Dhamma school for members of the monastic community. In the beginning, he managed to build wooden buildings where few monks were the instructors. As there were more monks and novice monks who got interested in studying, Luang Por expanded his Dhammaschool for more capacity.

In 1947, Wat Paknam became a well-known Dhamma school of Bhasicharoen District in Thonburi Province. The school was directed by PraKruPhipatDhamkanee who was the principal (later on he was promoted to the rank of PraphipatDhamkanee). The school provided non-vocational education, Dhamma study for laypeople, Dhamma study for monks and novice monks, and Pali language up to level 6. There was no instruction for the more advanced level since there was no instructor. For those who wished to study in a higher level, Luang Por would send them to other temples such as WatPrayurawong, WatAnongkaram, WatKalyanamitr, WatPrachetuphon, and WatMahadhatu.

Luang Por did not manage to provide education for members of Wat Paknam only, he also promoted education for monks and novice monks at other temples when PraPimoldham (Choy Tanadhatto, Pali Scholar Level 9) wished to provide education to members of monastic community by establishing a university according to the wish of His Majesty King Rama V who aimed to provide advanced education to monks so they could gain profound understanding and knowledge that would benefit the propagation of Dhamma. The university is known as ‘Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya.’

### **Joining the Establishment of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University**

In the beginning, the monastic order was not ready to fulfill the wish of His Majesty in establishing a university. Until the Most Venerable PraPimoldham had become the abbot of WatMahadhatu, he

planned to establish the university at WatMahadhatu. However, this was a national project that requires much fund and qualified human resources. So, the Most Venerable was quite worried. He had called for a meeting of senior monks to brain storm on fund raising and finding human resources. Although Luang Por was not a Pali scholar in an advanced level or held high monastic rank, but he was also asked to attend the university establishment meeting since he was well known for being a visionary person whose works in education was vital.

Luang Por had contributed a useful idea in raising funds and recruiting capable personnel to run the university. According to Luang Por, the project should be deemed as the responsibility of Thai Sangha as a whole because the institution will produce heirs to the Dhamma who will propagate Buddha's teachings. The education of monks and novice monks will denote the future of Buddhism. So, it is necessary for all senior venerables to support this project as it will comply to the wish of His Majesty the King. Although the construction of university buildings would require much fund, but it is not beyond our capability if the Sangha joins hand in hand. The Most Venerable who is the governing monk had ordered to ask for cooperation from all abbots from every temple to raise Pha Pa fund in order to contribute for the construction of university building. This method will allow the construction and education management to comply to the wish of His Majesty the King.

Luang Por had become a prominent supporter of the Most Venerable PraPimoldham in establishing Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University which is an advanced education institute for Buddhist monks from the very beginning, especially in term of fund raising. This is well-known among disciples of Luang Por. The Most Venerable Udornkanapirak (Kittivuddho) had mentioned this when he gave a sermon on the occasion of memorial service of Prakruprakassamadhikhun at WatMahadhatu on Friday 17 August 1984 at 7.30 pm. Until the present days, the university has been developed at a multiple degree and provides instructions up to Ph.D level whereas its students are both monks and laypeople.

### **Luang Por's Dhamma School**

Luang Por planned to improve the Dhamma school of Wat Paknam to be modern and meet the standard. So, monks and novice monks would not have to travel to other temples to study since transportation was not convenient like the present days. By that time, Wat Paknam was not in a district of Bangkok. It used to be an orchard temple located farther than Plu Market. There was no road access, and the only way to reach Wat Paknam was to travel by boat. However, Wat Paknam was not the same as when Luang Por newly accepted his post as an abbot because he became renowned for his meditation and Dhamma education development altogether. There were more than 600 resident monks whereas monks and novice monks from nearby temples also attended his Dhamma school. Formerly, Luang Por's Dhamma school buildings were built from wood, and they were small. So, their capacity could not serve all the students.

With his vision, Luang Por initiated the project to construct a sizable three storey Dhamma school concrete building. His Holiness the Supreme Patriarch (Poon Poonnasiri) said that Luang Por had talked about this more than 20 years, and he planned to build one more building of the same size if the capacity of the first building is not enough. His Holiness thought that it was impossible as it was just a daydream of Luang Por. So, he did not pay attention to Luang Por's words.

Finally, Luang Por's dream came true as the Dhamma school concrete building was built with the length of 59 meters and 10.5 meters in width. The first and second floor were used as class rooms whereas the third floor was used for meditation practice. This school building can serve as many as 1,000 people. It was designed by Khun Luang Visarn and Colonel Luang Burakamkovit who also supervised the construction. This building cost 2,598,110.39 baht (Two million five hundred ninety eight thousand and one hundred and ten baht thirty nine satang).

When Luang Por's students heard about this project, they were worried as they knew that Luang Por had no reserve for his spending for more than a thousand full time residents of his temple. In addition, there was also expenditure from establishing and running the temple's kitchen and refectory as well as utility expenses and maintenance of infrastructure. Luang Por was the only one who was responsible. Moreover, Luang Por also planned to increase the number of his resident monks and novice monks to 1,000 people. The value of two million baht money in 1947 was an ample amount.

Not so long after Luang Por arrived Wat Paknam to become an abbot, he made a resolution in the Buddha hall (Uposatha) that "May the present resident monks live peacefully, and may the future resident monks arrive soon." Thus, Luang Por never refused anyone who took him as a refuge. He was happy to have many monks and novice monks at his temple. Some people worried that there were too many monks and novice monks at Wat Paknam, and they suggested Luang Por to limit the number in order to decrease the expenditure. However, Luang Por would laugh and reply "Don't you see the goodness of Buddhism?" He never said that "I can't bear it," but he only said "It's bearable."

### **Luang Por's Routine**

Besides to lack of fund to construct the school building, Luang Por's disciples did not see him struggling to raise fund at all. Luang Por remained to stay at Wat Paknam and perform his routines as usual. His routines were as follows:

- Supervise monks and novice monks to chant in the Buddha hall in the morning and evening and give them sermons everyday.
- Give sermons to the public on Buddhist observance days and Sundays. If someone replaced him in delivering the sermons, Luang Por would preside the ceremony.
- Allowing the public to meet him in order to ask for help or advices or ask questions twice a day, during and after having lunch and at 5.00 pm.
- Instruct meditation to the public at the Dhamma hall every Thursday from 2.00 pm to 3.00 pm.
- Other than this, Luang Por would monitor the living of his temple residents, practice meditation, teach and supervise those who meditated at the meditation workshop in order to enable them to achieve the superior level. (the meditation workshop was a two storey wood building with a wall that separated monks from Buddhist nuns. However, when Luang Por spoke or gave instruction, his voice could be heard all over.)

Luang Por did not appreciate going out. He would leave his temple when it was necessary only such as when he received unavoidable invitations. Especially, he would not stay overnight elsewhere

since he already made a vow that no matter who invited him he would not stay overnight outside his temple. Some people questioned him why he made such vow. Luang Por replied that he worried about his work. Some readers may doubt what kind of work he worried about. Actually, it was about the instruction and supervision of advanced meditation practice at the meditation workshop. Luang Por did not want the practitioners to make mistake, other than what he taught.

Luang Por wished everyone of his resident monks to be knowledgeable in both Dhamma doctrines and meditation practice, so they can apply such knowledge for their own and social benefits. For any of the monks who completed the highest level of pali education (level 6) at Wat Paknam and wished to further his study, Luang Por would bring them to other temple where advanced pali education was provided. For monks who passed examination at different levels, Luang Por would admire them whether they were present or not and gave them reward.

One day, Venerable Prakru Vichiandhammagovit, the former abbot of Wat Kuhasawan and Venerable Prakru Preechayatkij, the former abbot of Wat Silamool, Banglane District, Nakornpathom Province (they already passed away) had made an appointment with eight other monks to meet Luang Por in order to question him about the fund raising for the construction of School Building as they saw that Luang Por had purchased many foundation piles and placed them near the construction site. All of the ten monks volunteered to help Luang Por raised fund by travelling to different places to deliver sermons in other provinces where there were many disciples of Luang Por. Then, they would make donation envelopes for laypeople who wished to contribute for the sermons. Then, the monks would bring the donation envelopes to the templewarden.

Luang Por listened to the monks' plan to raise fund until the end. Then, he thanked them for their helpfulness, but he said they should continue to study as their duty was to study. He wished them to complete the highest pali level which was level nine. Then, they would be able to teach at Dhamma school of Wat Paknam. Luang Por concluded that he would stay at Wat Paknam and raise fund to build the Dhamma school. "It's possible. I can provide meals to all the monks. How can't I be able to build the school building? If you intend to deliver sermons to raise fund, you would not be able to raise a million if you deliver sermons until the rest of your life."

### **Placing the Foundation Stone**

Luang Por had invited His Excellency Supreme General Por Piboonsongkram, the prime minister of Thailand, and his wife, High Lady La-Eiad Piboonsongkram, to lay the foundation stone of the Dhamma School building at 9.20 am on Thursday, 2 February 1950, which fell on the full moon day of the third lunar month (Magha Puja Day). Luang Por could raise all the required fund for construction of the school building within four years without any delay. The construction was completed in 1954 but the interior was not fully finished yet. So, the school was opened for teaching and examination in 1955. It was one of the most beautiful and biggest Dhamma school of that time. The building was finished with furniture, electricity system, and electric fan. This school building is a vital evidence that Luang Por's words came true, and it was not just a day dream.

Once the construction was completed, Luang Por planned to celebrate by organizing a grand merit making event in 1957 when the government organized the 25<sup>th</sup> centennial anniversary of Buddhist era. Luang Por planned to invite 2,500 monks to chant, have meals, and receive offerings of sustenance and necessities. Luang Por told His Holiness the Supreme Patriarch (Poon Poonnasiri)

about this project with delight that he would have a chance to organize a grand meritorious activity. However, in 1956, Luang Por became ill until he was not able to run the project.

### **Naming and Inaugurating the Dhamma School**

His Holiness the Supreme Patriarch (Poon Poonnasiri), the abbot of Wat Prachetuphon, when he was at the monastic rank of Pra Dhammawarodom, had named the school building as 'Bhavananusondh Dhamma School.' He was the one who presided the inauguration ceremony after many years of teaching and studying. His Holiness Somdet Phramaharatchamangkhlachan (Chuang Varapanyo, Pali Scholar Level 9), when he was at the monastic rank of Phrasrivisuddhimolee, assistant to the acting abbot of Wat Paknam and the headmaster of Wat Paknam Dhamma School, had given a verbal report during the ceremony as follows:

Respectable The Most Venerable Pra Dhammawarodom,

On this auspicious occasion, Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen, Thonburi Province, organizes the inauguration ceremony for the Bhavananusondh Dhamma School which The Most Venerable Phramongkolthepmuni (Luang Por Wat Paknam) and the faithful public had joined to build in order to provide a place for studying Dhamma to people. The name 'Bhavananusondh' was given by The Most Venerable Phra Dhammawarodom, the head monk of facility department and the abbot of Wat Phrachetuphon and the acting abbot of Wat Paknam, as a blessing to this school.

The foundation stone of Bhavananusondh school building was laid on Thursday, 2 February 1950. There are two stairways on both sides. The construction of this building was fully completed in 1955. The construction cost as much as 2,598,110.39 baht (two million five hundred ninety eight one hundred and ten baht and thirty nine satang).

Now, it is an auspicious moment, I would like to humbly invite The Most Venerable Pra Dhammawarodom who presided the ceremony to open the name sign of Bhavananusondh school building for the benefit of people's education.

Respectfully yours,

***Phrasrivisuddhimolee***

Assistant to the Acting Abbot

This school building does not function only as the place for teaching and studying Dhamma, but it also offers room for annual examination of monks and novice monks in Bhasicharoen and Nong Khaem District, on both Dhamma and pali education. In addition to their convenience in transportation, they are also catered with breakfast and lunch. Presently, there are as many as 100 students in pali study department. The highest level is pali level 8, and there are less than 100 students for Dhamma study department.

In 2008, the Dhamma school of Wat Paknam ranked the first in both pali and Dhamma study department. The school received an honorific plaque from Wat Pra Dhammakaya altogether with scholarship. The Bureau of Buddhism also offered a plaque and scholarship for its numerous examinees who passed the examination. Also, the temple received the royal scholarship for the same reason.

### **Creating the Buddha Amulets Series 1**

Some readers may doubt how could Luang Por raise fund for the construction of his Dhamma school which cost more than two million baht. According to the value of Thai currency in 1950 when a bowl of noodle cost 0.25 baht only (In 2013, a bowl of noodle in Thailand costs around 30 baht, so the cost of construction is the equivalent of approximately 300 million baht in present currency value).

When Luang Por's disciples learned about his project to build a Dhamma school for monks and novice monks, they donated their money, more or less, without any soliciting, but they gained understanding after listening to Luang Por's sermon that "The sacrifice of material wealth in order to build this Dhamma school means to build a real property for Buddhism. We can say that it is a Buddhist property. Ones who build a Buddhist property will be wealthy without any draw back. They sacrifice their wealth per their faith, it will bring permanent wealth to the donators. The karmic consequences will bear fruits in the future for innumerable lifetimes without any draw back, either in the human world or celestial world. The consequences of merit will bear fruits in this sensual realm causing ones to be very wealthy."

In return to the donation money given by contributors, Luang Por tried to give them something. He foresaw that Buddhism is the true refuge for humans although some people may think that money, children, and spouses are their refuge who can take care of them when they get old. However, they belong to us only temporarily. We cannot take them with us even though we die together with them.

### **One is One's Own Refuge**

Humans of any race, religion, and nationality who study the Lord Buddha's teachings will discover the truth of nature, either living beings or non-living beings. They will be able to see their past which is the cause of the present, and they will see how to correct their future. There is a reason for everything. It depends on oneself whether one can make oneself as one's own refuge or not. Luang Por always said that "... one is one's own refuge, not anything else. Dhamma is something one can hold on to... Dhamma is the refuge. The Lord Buddha is an excellent refuge, as well as the Dhamma. The Sangha is also an excellent refuge. As we meet with Buddhism, we have to make ourselves attain the Buddha Gem, Dhamma Gem, and Sangha Gem. The Buddha Gem is the Dhammakaya. Dhamma Gem is the Dhamma sphere that forms the Dhammakaya. Sangha Gem is the mental sphere of Dhammakaya. If we do not know these three Gems, we cannot rely on ourselves although we believe in Buddhism. If we make ourselves attain the Buddha Gem, Dhamma Gem, and Sangha Gem, we will be able to rely on ourselves. We will be able to solve illness and harms. We can make things sacred. If we cannot attain, we will never really experience Buddhism although we practice Buddhism for innumerable lifetimes. This is similar to a cowboy who never tastes milk. After he raises the cows, he brings them back to their place in the evening and takes the wage only. He never tries the cows' milk. The cows' owner takes all the milk. There are five flavors of milk. Leaving the milk to ferment and become sour, this is yogurt. Heating and condensing the yogurt liquid, this is called condensed milk. Heating the condensed milk further until it hardens, this is called a cheese. Frying the cheese, it turns into cheese oil. The flavor of milk, yogurt, heated condensed milk (tastes like grape sugar), cheese, and cheese oil, are the five flavors of milk. Luang Por said that the ones who believe in Buddhism but have not attained the real self of Buddhism, are like the cowboys who raise cows for wage...."

### **As A Gift**

Luang Por thought that nothing was better than giving Buddha amulets to the laypeople who supported Buddhism because each Buddha amulet represents the Lord Buddha. A Buddha amulet can also lead one to attain the Buddha Gem, Dhamma Gem, and Sangha Gem. Thus, he ordered his disciples to make the first series of his Buddha amulets in 1950, totaling 84,000 pieces which equals to the number of Dhammakhanda in the Tripitaka Buddhist scripture. In that year, Luang Por held the monastic title of Prabhavanakosolthera. He assigned Master Treetar to create the first nine Buddha amulets, then other Buddhist nuns who attained Dhammakaya continued to make the rest under the supervision of Master Treetar until completion.

Each Buddha amulet was in rectangle shape. The Lord Buddha is in blessing gesture. At the back of each Buddha amulet, the word 'Dhammakhanda' is engraved in Cambodian language. [Cambodian language used to be the sacred language of Buddhist scriptures in ancient Thai civilization.] Luang Por named his amulet as 'the gift amulet.' The Buddha amulets were given to contributors who donated at least 25 baht for the construction of the Dhamma school.

The constituents of Luang Por's Buddha amulets were dried jasmine flowers and Luang Por's hairs. After producing the amulets, they were contained in crates and blessed by the power of Dhammakaya meditation at the meditation workshop throughout the period of three month Buddhist lent, starting from the new moon day of the eighth month until the full moon day of the eleventh month. Then, Luang Por framed the amulets with aluminum, so the receivers would be able to hang on their necklace immediately. There was also an attached slip explaining how to worship and make resolutions to the Buddha amulets. The amulets were given to patrons for the first time in the eleventh lunar month of 1950, at Wat Paknam's Buddha hall on the occasion of his birthday anniversary.

People may believe that each Buddha amulet is an image of the Lord Buddha, so it should be sacred in itself already, and there is no need for a ceremony to bless them. Luang Por explained that whether a Buddha amulet is big or small, they are non-living being. However, after blessing them [with Dhammakaya meditation], they can become alive.

### **Luang Por Also Donated**

Luang Por was an honest person, either to others or himself, whether another party is present or not. He was even honest in his thoughts which were unknown to others. He did not take it for granted. For the giving of Buddha amulets which he ordered to produce, he knew that his Buddha amulets were sacred, he also had to donate money to the temple when he wished to give such amulets to others as presents. To him, it was not a personal matter. He always said that if he took the amulets without donating money, it would mean that he cheated the temple.

### **Only One for Each Person**

No matter how much an individual donated to the temple, Luang Por gave him or her only one Buddha amulet. The reason was that he gave as a gift, and the receiver had to take the Buddha amulet from him directly. Nobody can take the Buddha amulet on others' behalf. When someone lost the Buddha amulet, Luang Por refused to give a new one except that he could not remember or

such person lied to him when he asked. For some people, Luang Por could remember that they took the Buddha amulets already, so he told them not to take the amulets again.

Master Treetar said that she once saw an individual who was to offer 10,000 baht to Luang Por in order to support the construction of the Dhamma school, but such person wished to receive numerous Buddha amulets for sharing to family and fellows. When such person knew that he would receive only one Buddha amulet, he turned to donate less than 10,000 baht. Master Treetar did not know how much he donated exactly because she did not ask the templewarden. However, Luang Por was not the one who received money. He was responsible for giving the Buddha amulets only whereas the templewarden received money from donator. The donator would receive a coupon from the templewarden, so they could exchange the coupon for a Buddha amulet.

This did not mean that Luang Por was unkind for giving only one Buddha amulet to each person, disallowing anyone to receive an amulet on others' behalf, and refusing to give a new Buddha amulet to those who lost it. Some people might feel dissatisfied and criticized Luang Por that he was unjust. His Holiness the Supreme Patriarch (Poon Poonasirimahathera), the late abbot of Wat Prachetuphon, a nephew of Luang Por Wat Paknam, had opined about this that "Luang Por's one man one amulet policy made it so sacred. I myself used to receive an amulet from Luang Por, and I gave the amulet to a baby boy whose parents requested me to name him. One day, I went to Luang Por to ask for another amulet, but he refused. He said that only one amulet per person only. Later on, I tried to ask him for another amulet again, but Luang Por remained silent. So, I was certain that he would not give me."

At one time, I told Luang Por that I wished to spare the amulets with me when I traveled to distant cities. So, I would be able to give to anyone who wanted them. Luang Por replied that it should not be like that because our amulets were of good quality. Anyone who wished to receive had to come to Wat Paknam by himself. Otherwise, it would be like fake Buddha amulets, and it won't gain good reputation. Luang Por added that "Don't worry. Making 84,000 amulets twice would not be enough. And it became true just like what Luang Por said."

The Most Venerable Pra Dhammasinghaburacariya (Charun Dhittadhammo), the abbot of Wat Ampawan in Promburi District, Singhburi Province, who used to study meditation with Luang Por in 1950 had questioned Luang Por why he gave only one amulet per person.

"... Venerable Luang Por, you set up a rule that whoever donates 25 baht will receive an amulet, and no one can receive the amulet on others' behalf. Some people donated 100 baht wishing to receive more amulets for their family members at home. If so, we will earn more money, and the school will be completed more quickly." Luang Por remained silent. In the evening, he explained that "Do you know? For those who donate a hundred or two hundred baht in order to receive more Buddha amulets for their family members, there are both advantage and disadvantage. The advantage is we earn money. Do you know the disadvantage? If you do not know the disadvantage, let me tell you.

If people receive numerous Buddha amulets for sharing to their family members and neighbors, the receivers of Buddha amulet will not know Wat Paknam and Luang Por Sod. So, they will not pay attention, and the Buddha amulets may be left uncared. If an individual comes to receive the amulet by oneself, he or she knows Luang Por Sod, this makes it sacred. If such person does not know how



Luang Por Sod looks like or does not know Wat Paknam, he may even throw away the Buddha amulet. This is the disadvantage.”

The Most Venerable Charun continued that Luang Por had a technique in giving the gift Buddha amulet that Luang Por would look at the face of the receiver first if he or she was a disciple who respected in him or not, this would make the amulet sacred. Otherwise, it would be useless for those who received the amulet.

The amulets can become sacred and powerful if the receiver is faithful and respectful. If one receives an amulet and does not experience the sacredness of such amulet even though one wishes to, one needs to change one’s attitude. For Wat Paknam, the temple has produced the Buddha amulets up to series nine. This excludes many other special series of Buddha amulets on special occasions.

### **How to be Blessed by A Buddha Amulet**

After receiving a Buddha amulet from Luang Por, he recommended the receiver not to place the amulet on the altar at home. Luang Por suggested each Buddha amulet owner to bring the amulet with oneself wherever one went to. So, the Buddha amulet could secure him. However, there is a method in inviting the Buddha amulet before putting on the necklace where the Buddha amulet is hung. Although the Buddha amulet owner did not receive the amulet directly from Luang Por or the amulet is not of series one, the owner should follow Luang Por’s suggestion. This is the same to Buddha amulets from all series. To invite the amulet to accompany oneself, one has to make a wish.

Before Luang Por gave amulets to the receivers, he would explain the meditation method in order to visualize a Buddha amulet at the center of one’s body. For those who follow his guideline, the Buddha will be enshrined inside their body even though they lost the Buddha amulets. The method is similar to meditation method, but the meditation object is changed from a crystal clear sphere to the Buddha amulet. According to the ‘Explanation on Gift Buddha Amulet of Pramongkolthepmuni (Sodh Candasaro), Luang Por Wat Paknam in Bangkok, page 5 – 7, Luang Por explained the method on how to reconnect one’s mind to a Buddha amulet as follows:

“.. Please take out the package and look at the Buddha amulet with your naked eyes until you can remember well. Then, picture the image of Buddha amulet in your mind for further sacredness. For ladies, picture the image of Buddha amulet at your left nostril. For gentlemen, picture the image at the right nostril. [Move the pictured image from base to base until reaching the middle of your body.] Locate the pictured image at the center of your body. Imagine that there are two threads. The first one stretches from the navel to the back. The second one stretches from the right to the left. At the intersection of two threads, there is a transcendental Dhamma sphere which forms the human body. Next, continue to picture the image of your Buddha amulet in the middle of the sphere, the Buddha amulet should face to the same direction as your own body. This is the first step.

Secondly, the ladies should move their mind from base to base, starting from the left nostril, and right nostril for the gentlemen. Then, settle your mind in the middle of the pictured Buddha amulet. Your mind will reach an infinite number of Lord Buddhas. This method is stipulated by the Lord Buddhas in order to allow humans to reconnect their minds to the Nirvana. It is similar to devices

that can send signal from one country to another country. Such devices can transmit voice back and forth. The devices are both a transmitter and receiver. Still your mind in the middle of the pictured Buddha amulet. Still your mind there. Then, recollect the purity of the Lord Buddhas. Keep your mind still and repeat the pali mantra 'Samma Arahang... Samma Arahang... Samma Arahang.' Keep your mind still further until it unifies. At the right mental unification, the mind becomes still in the middle of the pictured Buddha amulet. As the mind becomes still, it complies to the Lord Buddha's teaching.

The stillness of mind is the Lord Buddha's teaching. When he went to teach Angulimala, after Angulimala became less aggressive to him, Angulimala yelled "Standstill, monk!... Standstill!" Then, the Lord Buddha turned to Angulimala and said "I am already still, but you are not." This is the stillness that he meant. Once your mind becomes still, it complies to the Lord Buddha's teaching. It reaches the target of Buddhism. Being still mentally in the middle of the Buddha... in the middle of the middle... deeper and deeper... not to the above, below, right or left, but in the middle of the middle only until one's mind becomes superbly refined. Then, one will see the Lord Buddha whether one opens or closes one's eyes. The merit energy earned from building a temple or a Buddhist hall is not comparable to the merit energy earned from keeping one's mind still until seeing the Lord Buddha in meditation. The merit energy earned from building a temple is just a meritorious deed of the sensual realm.

The stilled mind in the middle of the pictured Buddha amulet is a mind in meditation. It is a great merit which is superior. Keep your mind still in the middle of the clear Buddha image and deepen your mind into the middle of the middle without retreating. Don't make it slip, deepening your mind further into the middle of the middle. At the right mental unification, the clear Buddha image will change his size and color [automatically]. He will turn crystalclear, about the same size as your body or bigger. You will find yourself in the middle of the Buddha image. Recollect the purity of the Buddha image. If you can attain the crystal Buddha image like this, you reach the core of Buddhism.

Further into the middle of the crystalclear Buddha image. The crystalclear Buddha image will become purer and bigger. You will gain expertise in doing this. The Buddha image will radiate His radiance. Follow my guidelines accordingly until you see the crystalclear Buddha image clearly. This will be wonderful and magnificent..."

### **How To Make Wishes**

Once you know how to enshrine [the celestial part of] a Buddha amulet inside your body, you can make wishes with the Buddha amulet further which will come true sooner or later. You should do so before leaving your home to work or prior to doing any business or work, at least once a day, or one more time before going to bed. If you always do this and reconnect your mind at all times, your wishes will come true quickly. For those who do not make wishes, they will be blessed for happiness and prosperity. Luang Por had published the explanation on how to reconnect one's mind to the Buddha amulet and make wishes. The explanation slip was enclosed into each Buddha amulet package. Luang Por's explanation is as follows:

"Please bring your mind to become still in the middle of your body. First, pay homage to the sacred Triple Gem, there is no such other comparable sacred thing. Then look at your Buddha amulet until you can remember and visualize or picture the image of your Buddha amulet in the middle of your

body, at the center of yourself. Then, repeat the mantra 'Samma Arahang... Samma Arahang... Samma Arahang...' Picture the image in your mind clearly as if you were seeing with your naked eyes. The more you visualize, the clearer of the image. However, it is not to see with your naked eyes, but to see with your celestial eyes [or your mind]. (Your body that you see in your dream is one of the celestial bodies.)

Once you can clearly see the image, make sure you see the image at all time irrespective of your gesture. If you can do this, the Buddha amulet will bless you. After that, He will turn his own image to be larger or smaller or to be of different colors such as white, silver, quicksilver, golden, yellow, crystalclear, emerald green, like a diamond, or like a mirror.

When you can see the image like this in your mind, keep your mind indifferent as it is the power of Buddha amulet that blesses you. You have to respect and recollect Him all the time. To do so, it is to worship Him in practice. It is a superior type of worship where no other worship is comparable. Up to this point, the Buddha amulet will fully turn himself into a beautiful and flawless crystalclear Buddha image. He will be seated [in cross-legged meditation posture] at the center of your body, facing outward to the same direction as your body. The center of your body is the place where He is enshrined. Your mind should remain still at the center of the Buddha image, similar to the way you still your mind in the middle of your human body when we meditate.

After you attain the Lord Buddha like this, no matter what [good things] you wish for, you can request the Lord Buddha directly to fulfill your wishes. Your wishes will come true sooner or later or immediately. Once you gain expertise in reconnecting your mind to the Lord Buddha [through the Buddha amulet you own], when you travel, either on land, in the water, in the air, or by any other way, or when there is a happening in the present, you can request the Lord Buddha to help you immediately. If you work as a government officer, you can request for a trouble-free work that does not distract those who supervise you. If you do business, you can request for good business. If you do farming or any other works, you can request for a fruitful outcome. If you travel by any mean of transportation, you can wish for safety and prosperity at all time. May all of you who donate for the construction fund [of the Dhamma school] be successful, and may all of your wishes come true."

### **The Miracle Power of Buddha Amulets Series 1**

Many of those who received the Buddha amulets series 1 had experienced with the miracle power. Some of them informed their experiences to Luang Por. Luang Por himself said about the miracle power and sacredness of his Buddha amulets series 1 as follows:

"... all of you had supported Buddhism. Buddhism received donation from you, so there is something given in return which is a sacred thing. None has every found such a sacred thing. It could be true or hard to estimate. I myself had invited the Lord Buddhas in Nirvana, there were numerous Dhammakaya. We invited the Lord Buddhas in an uncountable number of Nirvana to bless these Buddha amulets."

Those who attain Dhammakaya in the human world also joined to work on such task. They did the same as the Lord Buddhas did. The Lords managed by themselves, starting from the beginning of Buddhist lent until the end of Buddhist lent day. They did not stop even for a single second. They blessed the amulets to be sacred. At dawn of the end of Buddhist lent day, our wish in blessing the

Buddha amulets was fulfilled. The foremost Lord Buddha uttered **“It is the first time on earth that such sacred things occur.”** Then, He remained silent. After He uttered like this, we calculated how sacred the amulets are, but it was incalculable.

I myself started to give these amulets to contributors on the 6<sup>th</sup> waning moon day which is my own birthday. After I gave these amulets, there have been many miracle happenings due to the Buddha amulets. For example, Mrs. Kheao Bangpai, she is around 80 year old. After she received the Buddha amulet, she placed it on the top of her mosquito net. At night, the Buddha amulet radiated his aura all over the house. Everyone was surprised for some time. Then, the radiance faded away gradually until she found the brightness on the top of her mosquito net. So, she realized that she placed the Buddha amulet there, and the brightness came out from the amulet.

In the morning of the following day, Mrs. Kheao came to see me saying that there was brightness at her house because of the Buddha amulet who radiated. In the beginning, she did not know what the cause was, but later on the brightness was at the Buddha amulet, so she came to realize. On the day when Mrs. Kheao came to receive the Buddha amulet, she had illness. But since that only one night... when she came to inform me... it seemed like she had an aura. She looked different from before. She said the Buddha amulet was amazing as it could change her so much. That's not all. There are many others who received the Buddha amulets.

There was a girl who was not fully thirteen year old yet. She received a Buddha amulet from Wat Paknam. She lived on Tok Road. As she got home, the Buddha amulet floated away into the air. She saw the Buddha amulet floated into the praying room of a house in her neighborhood. She followed the Buddha amulet and wished to enter the praying room of such house. But the owner refused saying that no other was allowed to enter. So, they argued, and the girl cried. Then, the owner said if she wished to enter she had to inform her mother first. So, the girl told her mother, and she was finally allowed to get into the praying room. She found her Buddha amulet on the altar of the praying room. The house owner admitted that the amulet did not belong to him. So, he gave back to the girl. It is so amazing that a material object like this could fly.

Moreover, the Buddha amulet could talk, not only just radiating. He could talk. There was a navy. On the 29<sup>th</sup>, the navy had dinner together at the Military Signal Section. After dinner, the navy had their guns back. Then, the Buddha amulet which was at the chest of a navy said that “leave your gun and do not stay here.” The navy did so, but he did not know where to go. The Buddha amulet replied “go to Wat Chang (Wat Arunrajavararam). When he got to Wat Chang, the temple was surrounded. He guessed that he would get shot as the temple was surrounded. But the Buddha amulet told him to hide away in a concealed place. So, the navy followed the Buddha amulet's guidance. He followed what the Buddha amulet said accordingly by going here and there. Finally, he could flee.

When the situation turned to normal, he went to see his commander. Then, he was assigned to the post of a royal adjutant due to vacancy. After taking his post for nine days, he came to see me to inform what happened to him. When I saw him, I asked “Where have you been?” He said “Luang Por, please let me bow to your feet.” “What's going on? Tell me.” I questioned. Then, he explained his happenings.

Different people experienced with the miracle power of the Buddha amulets in different ways. Some people experience the miracle power soon after they received the amulet, some had to wait for a longer time. Some did not experience the miracle power until years had passed by or until the Buddha amulets were passed on to their descendants as inheritances. Some people did better in their business, won the lottery, or experience with financial gains. Some of them were saved from accidents where many people died.

By that time, Thailand sent its soldiers to join the Korean war. Many soldiers came to see Luang Por before their departure in order to receive the Buddha amulet and blessed by Luang Por. Luang Por said as follows:

“... During the Korean war, there were British, American, and Western soldiers who were conversing together. There were also some Thai soldiers. Then, a bomb dropped there. Everyone died except a Thai soldier who had the Buddha amulet. He received a medal. This is the miracle power of the Buddha amulet. One of the amulet owners climbed a coconut tree and fell down. He laid down for a while and rose to climb the coconut tree again. Nothing was wrong with him.”

### **Protecting Oneself & One's Fellows**

The Bangkok Times newspaper had included many articles about the miracle power of Buddha amulets produced by Wat Paknam, even after Luang Por passed away. So, many people who were interested in the Buddha amulets looked for Luang Por's Buddha amulets series 1. This resulted the price to increase continually. Some samples of the articles are as follows:

“... in order to present the story about courage of Thai soldiers in the Korean war and the sacredness of Thai art... once, I went to see the Most Venerable Pramongkolthepmuni (Sodh), the abbot of Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen in Thonburi who was well-known as Luang Por Wat Paknam, in order to ask him about the renowned Buddha amulets which he produced for giving to people as gifts as there were Thai soldiers who could amazingly survive from the battle ground of the Korean war. Each of these soldiers has a Buddha amulet from Luang Por Wat Paknam on their necklace all alike.

As I arrived Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen in Thonburi, in the area of Talad Plu market, it was time for Luang Por to have lunch at the refectory. So, I waited for him amidst several people who came to see Luang Por. While I was waiting, I saw a letter which was written by the lance corporal Vasana Arkomwattana from the 21<sup>st</sup> mixed division, mailed directly from the battle field of Korean War. I think that this letter should be publicized for the public to know. The letter content is as follows:

... since I received a white Buddha amulet and now that I am joining the Korean war. I am well secured. As I have been a Buddha amulet collector for years, I have never seen such a high performance Buddha amulet. Whatever I wish, I made resolutions according to the methodology, and my wishes came true. This is such a wonderful Buddha amulet, and there is no superior refuge. I used to have financial difficulty, but since I received this Buddha amulet from you, my financial status has improved and I never face with scarcity.

I would like to tell you, the monastic members, and laypeople about my situation in the war. By that time, the Thai soldiers engaged in a turmoil battle. The opponent's artillery bullet had hit the bullet's warehouse resulting those who stayed in the area to evacuate as the diesel tanks was on fire

and burst its flame until the sky was brighten. Guns and metal tools and equipment melt down in the fire. By that time, a soldier had left his Buddha amulet in a pack.

Late in the morning, the fire started to stop and the soldier rushed to the spot where he left the amulet, he found his Buddha amulet which was wrapped in a handkerchief and hung to a metal pole. This amazed many soldiers because the fire was so strong that it melted down even metal, but it could not harm the Buddha amulet wrapped in a handkerchief. Inside the handkerchief, there were many Buddha amulets from different Buddhist masters. All of them deformed and melted down except the Buddha amulet from Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen. Wat Paknam's Buddha amulet was the only one that survived and left unharmed, even the amulet's frame. The news had spread all over our company, and we found that there are only two soldiers who have a Buddha amulet from Wat Paknam which are I myself and my friend whose amulet was under fire.

Another story is, one day, I had to transport some weapons to the top of a mountain. The spot where I stood to have a conversation was the very spot where the bomb was dropped. By the power of your amulet, I felt peculiar and moved my weapons away from the spot immediately. Around fourteen minutes afterward, a bomb was dropped onto the spot where I stood.

In addition, once, my vehicle fell down from a cliff. Many soldiers died and got injured, but I could survive by jumping out from such vehicle. Sometimes, there were snow and fog that caused me to get lost while doing my duty. It was helpless. So, I placed my hands in a prayer position and thought of you, around an hour after that the fog faded away rapidly, so I could return to my military base.

There are many other stories which I have not included in this letter since I have to shoot in the battle field almost every single day. But I could return with a victory every time. The enemy's weapons could not harm even my skin. So, I would like to inform you about this. My friends and I had tried by ourselves. Sometimes, the enemy shot us badly. If we do not have a chance to focus our mind at the center of the body and repeat the mantra, we recollect Luang Por. This could secure myself and even my friends...

When Luang Por Wat Paknam came down from the refectory after having his lunch, I had a conversation with him about his renowned Buddha amulets. Luang Por said that he produced the 84,000 Buddha amulets in order to give to his faithful followers for the sake of their prosperity.

In addition, it is for the building of the Dhamma school which cost around two million baht. The Religion Office provided only 5,000 baht, so the rest comes from the giving of Buddha amulets to donors. So far, he could raise more than one million baht. He believed that his project will come to a completion soon. Regarding the sacredness of his Buddha amulets, Luang Por said that the amulets are sacred in many ways. Ones who have the Buddha amulets will have a prosperous life and safety as the amulets were produced with the right methodology.

Other than the miracle power of Wat Paknam's Buddha amulets experienced by lance corporal Vasana Arkomwattana from the 21<sup>st</sup> mixed division during the Korean war, Luang Por's other disciples, both monks and laypeople, whom I conversed with on that day, had also experienced the miracle power of Wat Paknam's Buddha amulets in several ways. One of them had travelled by plane. On the way, the plane crashed and caused every passenger to die except the one who has

Wat Paknam's Buddha amulet. Some of them experienced with prosperity in their lives by winning lottery.

One of Luang Por's disciples said that Wat Paknam's Buddha amulets are powerful in term of both gain and beloved. Luang Por himself has proved that he never face with scarcity, and he is well beloved. This is a common phenomena at Wat Paknam as Luang Por and his disciple monks do not have to go out for alms round for many decades already because his faithful disciples would line up to donate for treating meals to the monks every single day.

Moreover, there are people who bring groceries and ingredients to the Buddhist nuns and lay staffs for cooking at the kitchen, totally more than a hundred of them. The electricity and water work bills are also sponsored by donators every month.

Luang Por Wat Paknam is an expert in vipassana meditation, so his temple is a renowned and dominant vipassana school which is well recognized by people from all walks of life including VIPs who are members of the government. They invite Luang Por and his monks to join different ceremonies always.

Luang Por's curing of disease is also weird. He does not rely on medication or holy water, but the patients are required to fill the form to report their symptoms as well as their names and birthday. The forms will be passed on to Luang Por everyday for one week. For patients who live in other provinces and are unable to visit Wat Paknam, they can mail their letter to Luang Por. The forms and letters will be read by vipassana meditators at Wat Paknam who cure the patients' disease with meditation power. It has proved that Luang Por's method of curing disease has helped many patients to recover..." (An article from Bangkok Times, Year 6, Week 280, Monday, 23 May 1960)

Luang Por said that if an army general has one of his Buddha amulets, the subordinates would also be safeguarded.

The news about the miracle power of Luang Por's Buddha amulet series one had spread and became the headlines of many newspapers, especially the ones that emphasized on sacredness of Buddhist masters and Buddhist amulets. People wished to receive an amulet from Luang Por, so they went to Wat Paknam. People came by bus and by boat from almost every province. Some came from abroad.

Due to his popularity, the head of the 21<sup>st</sup> mixed division invited Luang Por to have meal and chant at his work place, and he requested Luang Por to give the Buddha amulets there. Afternoon session:

The more popular the Buddha amulets became, the more workload Luang Por had. He had to give Buddha amulets to donators by himself, and this took many hours a day. Luang Por started to give Buddha amulets series one when he was 66 year old. He continued to do so until he became very ill. Hence, the role was taken over by Luang Por Lek. Luang Por did not do it because he wished to have good reputation or earn money, but he did it with kindness. Luang Por thought that many people sacrificed their time and spent money to travel to Wat Paknam, he knew that most people wished to see him and received blessing from him. People would be disappointed if they travel afar to Wat Paknam but missed the opportunity to meet him. And they did not know when they would have a chance to go to Wat Paknam again. Luang Por was a very committed person, and he prefers the committed ones. He had no worry and never showed his exhaustion.

Luang Por's brief schedule to give away Buddha amulets was as follows:

Morning session: After having breakfast

Afternoon session: From one o'clock to three o'clock (in case that there were numerous people)

Evening session: After evening chanting until at night (until there is nobody left in line at the Buddha Hall)

Venerable Pra Kru Samuh Charoen had to arrange the line for those who waited to receive the Buddha amulets. They would meet Luang Por as a group. There were monks who assisted the process in lining up and managed the group to enter and leave the Buddha Hall, so there would be not puzzlement. When the Buddha Hall was overcrowded, the doors would be closed until a number of people leave the Buddha Hall from the back doors, and the front doors would be opened again. Some people, even strong men who waited in front of the Buddha Hall, had passed out. But nobody gave up. Some of them did not just want to receive an amulet, but they wished to seek for advice and guidance from Luang Por. So, it took longer time.

During the years when Luang Por gave Buddha amulets to donators, Wat Paknam was crowded. Many people went to Wat Paknam as if there were a festival. This made many merchants around the temple got rich, such as those who sold Kao Larm (Bamboo shaft stuffed with sweet rice). The Kao Larm merchants made very good business, and they could sell numerous bamboo shafts each day. The bamboo shafts were grilled next to the Buddha hall, and it was known to the public that whoever went to Wat Paknam to receive a Buddha amulet had to buy Kao Larm and Kao Tang (deep fried crispy rice). Whereas Kao Larm could be bought from merchants, people could buy Kao Tang from Buddhist nuns who worked for the temple kitchen.

In the old days, rice was steamed with a big metal pan as there was no sizable electric rice cooker as the present days. Everyday, there were remains of rice on the pan surface. The Buddhist nuns who worked for the kitchen would scratch the remains of rice and dried it with sunlight. Then, the dried rice was fried to make Kao Tang.

Nobody knew that the merry of Wat Paknam when Luang Por gave Buddha amulets had brought about both loss and gain. As some people gain from this opportunity, Luang Por himself was the one who lost his strength as he had to use much energy and effort in meeting people and explained how to reconnect their mind to the Buddha amulet. He had to do it over and over for thousands of time as he explained to each person one by one. Especially, on Buddhist holy day like Visakha puja day, there were about 1,500 people who went to receive Buddha amulets. This excluded the children.

In addition to meeting with those who went to receive an amulet from him, Luang Por still carried on his routine including meditation practice, chanting, teaching monks and novice monks, and giving sermons as usual. His workload increased accordingly with his age. The older he got, the more respect people had upon him.

In 1953, Luang Por's disciples led by Mr. Kul Pongsuwan, had bought an audio player/recorder for Wat Paknam in order to reduce Luang Por's workload. Thus, Luang Por's voice was recorded into two versions namely the full version and brief version. The full version explains all the details about how to reconnect one's mind to the Buddha amulet. This version takes about an hour. Another



version is brief version. This is suitable for those who had little time and needed to return to their place earlier. This is mostly for those who went to receive Buddha amulets in the morning or evening. The explanation takes about only fifteen minutes. Mr. Kul had said about this issue as follows:

“I have pondered that Luang Por has to work hard in giving Buddha amulets to donators in order to raise fund for the construction of Dhamma school which cost millions. He had to bless every single person and explain the recollection methodology to each receiver personally before he gave them. It normally takes almost two hours. So, I persuaded senior monks, disciples, and laypeople [of Wat Paknam] to buy an audio player/recorder. By that time there was only one brand, Revier, from the United States. The device cost about 10,000 baht. The audio tape cost around 120 baht each. We bought the audio tapes for about 5,000 baht. They are very helpful in reducing Luang Por’s effort in teaching people and giving Buddha amulets. We also had opportunities to record Luang Por’s sermons every time.

Later on, the audio player/recorder was used to record lectures of teaching monks who taught Dhamma to monks and novice monks. The recorded lectures were played in order to repeat lessons prior to examination. I learned later on that many more monks and novice monks had passed the examination [due to the device].

Luang Por was very much satisfied with the audio player/recorder. He said that it was very good as it lessened his responsibility partially. Although it could not fully take away all of his responsibility, but it was helpful in such a way that he did not have to speak everything by himself. Otherwise, he would become more exhausted as it took longer time.

For readers who are people of the new generation and do not know Luang Por, they should put his teachings into practice in order to gain the intellect and become wise. So, it is worthwhile to be born as a human who meets with Buddhism. This will make one to be truly wisdomful. If you do not believe in others’ saying, you should experiment on it by practicing and waiting to see the outcome before concluding that it is impossible. This is similar to the scientists who experiment on their subjects such as medicine. Sometimes, the experiment can take such a long time like two decades before they can get a solid outcome. However, that is not the end of the experiment as they can research further in order to discover something better and gain better understanding.

### **Buddha Amulets Series 2 and 3**

In 1951, after Luang Por had given a half of all the Buddha amulets series 1 to donators, he ordered for the production of Buddha amulets series 2 amounting 84,000 pieces. He assigned Master Treetar to supervise the Buddhist nuns at the meditation workshop to press the Buddha amulets similar to series 1. Then, the amulets were blessed with Dhammakaya meditation power at the meditation workshop. The amulets series 2 were given to donators right after all of the Buddha amulets series 1 became out of stock. In 1956, there was only a half of Buddha amulet series 2 left. However, Luang Por became ill and was unable to give Buddha amulet to donators by himself any more.

Hence, he assigned Luang Por Lek (Teera Dhammadaro, Pali Scholar Level 4, Advanced Level of Dhamma Study) to replace him in giving Buddha amulets. Luang Por Lek was the only one who was

assigned to do this duty because Luang Por Wat Paknam had transferred his Dhammakaya meditation knowledge to Luang Por Lek since Luang Por Lek was a novice monk. Luang Por Wat Paknam had Luang Por Lek cure others' diseases as well as teaching and propagating Dhammakaya meditation on his behalf with good results. Luang Por Wat Paknam had ordered Luang Por Lek to produce Buddha amulets series 3 amounting 84,000 pieces, in the same manner as series 1 and 2. Luang Por Lek was assisted by Prakru Palad Narong Dhitayano (later on he was promoted to the rank of the most venerable Rajmolee) and Pramaha Tanom Khemiko. Master Treetar was assigned to supervise the pressing of Buddha amulets again.

In the beginning, the Buddha amulets series 3 were pressed from the old molds. After pressing about 20,000 pieces, Luang Por Lek suspended the Buddha amulets production temporarily since the molds became thin. So, this lot of Buddha amulets is called 'shallow-sunken.' Then, the molds were fixed and the production process continued. This lot is called 'deep-sunken.' Totally, about 100,000 pieces were pressed. They were more than what was required by Luang Por since there were more components left.

It is amazing that when the Buddha amulets series 3 were produced, Luang Por was sick and he did not supervise the process by himself. However, Luang Por could know that the number of Buddha amulets had exceeded the number he ordered. So, one day, he asked Master Treetar to meet him and told her to stop pressing the Buddha amulets.

All of the Buddha amulets were brought into the meditation workshop for blessing with Dhammakaya meditation prior to the beginning of Buddhist lent in 1956. So, there were three series of Wat Paknam's gift Buddha amulets formally produced when Luang Por was alive.

### **Blessing the Buddha Amulets**

Luang Por's Buddha amulets became renowned and popular not only among amulet collectors but for people from all walks of life. Some people would like to know how Luang Por blessed his Buddha amulets.

Actually, Luang Por's Buddha amulets, starting from series 1 and all other special series, which were produced since World War II, were produced per Luang Por's order. So, Wat Paknam's Buddha amulets were not antiques discovered from time capsules buried in a sacred place. Luang Por assigned Master Treetar to supervise the Buddhist nuns who attained and did not attain Dhammakaya to press the Buddha amulets with molds. The Buddha amulets were made from dried jasmine and Luang Por's hairs. At the back of each amulet, there is a Cambodian language indicating 'Dhammakhanda.' Each Buddha amulet is pressed and dried completely, before it is placed into crates and carried into the meditation workshop for blessing. Luang Por said that the Buddha amulets either big or small as a tamarine leaf are non-living thing, but after blessing for sacredness, they become living being.

The Buddha amulets series 1 amounting 84,000 pieces were blessed with Dhammakaya meditation power from the first wanning moon day of the 8<sup>th</sup> lunar month until the full moon day of the 11<sup>th</sup> lunar month (throughout the Buddhist lent period). Luang Por brought out the Buddha amulets series 1 for giving to donators who contributed for the construction of Dhamma school building on

the sixth wanning moon day of the 11<sup>th</sup> month year 1950 on the occasion of his birthday, at the Buddha hall of Wat Paknam.

The production of the Buddha amulets series 2 commenced in 1951, amounting 84,000 pieces, after Luang Por gave about a half of all of Buddha amulets series 1 to donators (around 40,000 pieces). The Buddha amulets series 2 were made from the mixture of Buddha amulets series 1 and blessed with Dhammakaya meditation power at the meditation workshop for four years. In 1954, when the Buddha amulet series 1 became out of stock, the Buddha amulets series 2 were given to donators. This series became out of stock in 1962.

The Buddha amulets series 3 were first produced in 1956, amounting more than 100,000 pieces. The production commenced after Luang Por gave about a half of all the Buddha amulets series 2 (around 40,000 pieces). This series was made from the mixtures of Buddha amulets series 1 and series 2. All the amulets series 3 were blessed with Dhammakaya meditation power at the meditation workshop for 6 years. They were given to donators for the first time in 1962 and became out of stock on 5 August 1971.

### **Memorabilia and Medals**

Luang Por ordered for the production of memorabilia and medals to be given to people who went to Wat Paknam to congratulate him on the occasion that he was promoted to the monastic rank of Prabhavanakosolthera on 1 February 1950. There were also handkerchiefs with a picture of Luang Por. There are wordings that say “Celebrating the Monastic Rank of Prabhavanakosolthera.” Below Luang Por’s picture, there are wordings that say “Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen Thonburi, 1 February 1950.”

When Luang Por was promoted to the rank of Pramongkolrajmune on 5 December 1955, he ordered for the production of lockets with his picture from Japan as memorabilia.

### **Birthday Symbol Medal**

Prakru Pipatdhammakanee produced Luang Por’s birthday symbol medal on the occasion that he was promoted to the monastic rank of Prakru Pipatdhammakanee on 5 December 1956. This medal is in rectangle shape. On one side, there is a symbol of Luang Por’s birthday (Thai numbers on a circle chart) with a wording below that says “The Birthday symbol of Pramongkolrajmune, Luang Por Wat Paknam.” At the back, there is a symbol of the seventh base of mind. Above this symbol, there is a wording that says “Samma Arahang.” Below this symbol, there is a wording that says “The enigma symbol of Dhammakaya Year 1956.” This medal is called the birthday symbol medal. They were available in copper medals and golden medals.

### **Year 1957 Medal**

When Luang Por was promoted to the monastic rank of Pramongkolthepmuni on 5 December 1957, he ordered for the production of silver and copper amulet oval medals as memorabilia. One side is the image of Luang Por with the wording “Pramongkolthepmuni” below. At the back of the amulet, there are wordings that say “Luang Por Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen Thonburi 5 December 1957.” In the middle, there is a Cambodian language that says “Samma Arahang.”

## **Meals Offering Medal**

Luang Por ordered for the production of this medal in year 1958 in order to give to laypeople who donated for meals offering at Wat Paknam. The medal is in oval shape. They were available in silver and copper. In front of the medal, there is a picture of Luang Por with the wording “Pramongkolthepmuni” on the top. At the back of this medal, there is a symbol of the seventh base of mind with the Cambodian language which says “Samma Arahang.” Above this symbol, the wording says “A memorabilia for offering meal.” Below the symbol, the wording says “Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen Thonburi.”

Every series of lockets and medals were blessed with Dhammakaya meditation power at the meditation workshop before they were given to donators, similar to the Buddha amulets series 1 to 3.

## **Luang Por’s Management**

Luang Por was a capable management, and he had not to go through any management seminar or training. Luang Por practiced the Dhamma, and his management was very much influenced by the Lord Buddha’s Dhamma. He followed the Lord Buddha in his management. This complied to the Lord Buddha’s saying that “The Dhamma which I have delivered will be the chief for all of you after I pass away.” (Dhiga Nigaya. Maha Nigaya 10/177/140) Luang Por’s governing system was ‘Dhammocracy,’ he dared to think and do things that coincided righteously to the Dhamma. Luang Por exemplified by himself. His Holiness Poon had mentioned about this quality of Luang Por that “Luang Por Wat Paknam was firmed in the Dhamma. He was very strict, and it was hard to find someone like him. He was honest toward the monastic disciplines either when he was with others or by himself.”

Luang Por aimed to mainly benefit the overall. As everyone gained knowledge and understanding, knowing how to find true happiness, they would adapt themselves to live together happily. Those who followed Luang Por’s guidance would live in peace, but ones who ignored would not benefit from it.

Monks and novice monks at Wat Paknam were not allowed to live passively. They were required to study either the Dhamma doctrine or meditation, except the very senior or unhealthy monks who were allowed to meditate at the abodes. After completing their education, monks had to become teachers or take some responsibility. This was a way to decentralize. The routine of monks and novice monks at Wat Paknam was as follows:

6.00 am	Having breakfast at the refectory
6.45 am	Morning chanting and listening to Luang Por’s sermon at the Buddha hall
8.00 am	Studying Pali language
11.00 am	Having lunch at the refectory
1.00 pm	Studying Dhamma doctrine
5.00 pm	Evening chanting at the Buddha hall

6.00 pm            Practicing meditation

On Buddhist observance days, after morning chanting, monks and novice monks were required to listen to sermons altogether with the Buddhist nuns, laymen, and laywomen. On the full moon Buddhist observance day, monks had to listen to the reciting of monastic disciplines regulated by the Lord Buddha. Then, they were required to listen to Luang Por's homily.

### **Sharing Responsibility**

It is not easy to govern numerous monks, novice monks, nuns, and laypeople to live together peacefully, happily, and in good union, as well as preventing them from quarrel, fighting, and disputes. It is necessary for a leader to be wise, visionary, profound, mandatory, and just. Most importantly, such person must possess the Dhamma. Luang Por was qualified without the need to study from elsewhere. In addition, he was capable of teaching or cultivating these qualities to others. This complies to the teaching in a Jataka Buddhist story that "One will be able to govern his group effectively if he is wise and capable."

Although Luang Por was capable of governing his monastic community by himself, he was willing to share his responsibilities to others. So, his disciples were responsible for different tasks under his supervision.

### **The Studying of Dhamma Doctrine**

Master Treetar became a member of monastic community at Wat Paknam for the first time in 1939. By that time, there were approximately 150 resident monks and novice monks altogether. Luang Por had assigned Pra Maha Tonghor and Pra Kru Samu Yoy to supervise the education of monks and novice monks. Later on, Luang Por expanded his school to serve the increasing number of student monks and novice monks. Then, he appointed Pra Kru Pipatdhammakanee to be headmaster and instructor of his school. Pra Kru Panyapirat was also one of the instructors.

When Luang Por built the Bhavananusondh school building and commenced the teaching and studying in 1955, the position of headmaster was assigned to Venerable Pra Maha Chuang Varapunyo (Pali Scholar Level 9) who was responsible for the education of resident monks, novice monks and Buddhist nuns at the Dhamma school until 1965.

### **Governing Resident Monks, Novice Monks, and Lay Staffs**

Luang Por set up many rules for his disciples to live together peacefully and equally. Any monk who wished to stay overnight elsewhere had to ask for permission from Luang Por. This was not to limit one's freedom or govern as a dictatorship, but it was to honor each other. It was like family members living together, if a child wished to stay overnight somewhere else, he or she needed to ask for permission from parents first. Because, when there is any problems occurring, the leader of the family has to be responsible. Even for the senior who wished to leave Wat Paknam to go somewhere else, they were required to notify their subordinates or closed ones. So, when somebody wished to meet them when they were not present, the guests could be informed properly.

Everyone was required to do things in good union without violating rules, regulations, good manner, and good conduct. They had to respect each other. This was the same to novice monks. Luang Por appointed Venerable Pra Kru Pipatdhammakanee to supervise and look after the novice monks. For lay staffs, when Master Treetar first became a resident of Wat Paknam, Luang Por assigned Pra Kru Panyapirat to supervise them as well. Later on, Pra Kru Palad Narong Thitiyano (Pali Scholar Level 4) replaced him.

### **Governing the Buddhist Nuns**

When Luang Por was alive, there were hundreds of Buddhist nuns who were residents of Wat Paknam. The Buddhist nuns can be classified into three groups as follows:

1. Buddhist nuns who attained Dhammakaya (Maechee Dhammakaya) lived at the meditation workshop. Luang Por managed them to live in a place like a dormitory. They were close to Luang Por because Luang Por had to supervise them directly in continuing the superknowledge of Dhammakaya meditation. He did not wish the Maechee Dhammakaya to go outside because they had to meditate during their shifts and what they experienced from outside was likely to affect their concentration in meditation. They were allowed to go out to have breakfast, lunch, or to study at the Dhamma school. If they wished to go out for other purposes, they had to ask for permission from Luang Por directly.
2. Buddhist nuns who worked for the temple kitchen. They were responsible for cooking and catering the monastic members of Wat Paknam under the leadership of Mother Tuam Hutanukrom who was the chief of Wat Paknam's kitchen. In the beginning, Mother Tuam was ordained to be a Buddhist nun, but later on she quit her nunnery and continued to supervise the kitchen. She was on her post until Luang Por passed away. On the 21<sup>st</sup> of October 1959, Mother Tuam retired due to aging. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October 1959, Maechee Tanyanee Sudket became the new chief of the kitchen and the chief of Wat Paknam's Buddhist nuns.
3. Buddhist nuns at Analai Residence. They neither helped cooking at the kitchen nor catering meals to residents of Wat Paknam. Also, they were not members of the meditation workshop. These Buddhist nuns cooked for themselves. The head of Analai Buddhist nuns was Maechee Kai Chaipanich. After she passed away, she was succeeded by Maechee Pim Jabtanom.

Luang Por had assigned Buddhist nuns who attained Dhammakaya to take turn in teaching and training Buddhist nuns at Analai Residence and Buddhist nuns who worked for the kitchen. Master Treetar was one of the teaching Buddhist nuns. There was also Maechee Chaluay Sombatsuk who was assigned to teach Buddhist nuns at Analai Residence. Both Master Treetar and Maechee Chaluay completed their advanced Dhamma study. In teaching, the teacher had to write names, career, and place of birth of every trainee Buddhist nun. Before evening chant, the teacher had to call up names and check if anyone was absent. Luang Por always questioned the teaching Buddhist nuns about this name check list.

When Master Nun Treetar was assigned to do this duty for the first time, she was only 21 years old. In the beginning, she informed Luang Por that she was not qualified to teach other Buddhist nuns because they were much older and very few of them were younger or about the same age. By that time, most people who became Buddhist nuns were senior citizens. People always believed that

young women who became Buddhist nuns were those who had problems in life and not so many Buddhist nuns really wished to learn and prosper in the Dhamma. During Luang Por's lifetime, all Buddhist nuns were required to shave their head in order to put on the nun's robes.

By the way, Luang Por did not agree with Master Treetar. He said "You better go. Although you are still young, but you have to go teach them as I let you do it. I know that you can do it." So, Master Treetar fail to negotiate with Luang Por.

In training the Buddhist nuns, Master Treetar managed to interview with five Buddhist nuns at a time. She asked them about their objectives in becoming Buddhist nuns at Wat Paknam. She also asked whether they knew the priority issue of Wat Paknam and Luang Por's responsibilities, etc. During some Buddhist lent, they would be as many as 200 Buddhist nuns who went to work for the temple kitchen. However, from the interview, Master Treetar learned that only 20% of them knew and understood about the practice of generosity, precept observance, and meditation.

Buddhist nuns who were senior citizens had much strong faith and respect upon Luang Por, and they tried to obey his guidance accordingly. Some of them said that they arrived Wat Paknam too late as they got old already before they knew about such a capable and knowledgeable teacher like Luang Por. So, they were not healthy enough to study Dhamma and practice meditation with Luang Por. When it was close to the end of Buddhist lent, Master Treetar would conclude the result of her teaching and interviewing, then she would make a report to Luang Por.

### **Luang Por's Governing Principles**

#### **Father and Children**

Luang Por governed his disciple monks, novice monks, Buddhist nuns, and laypeople at Wat Paknam in such a way that a father would do to his children. He equally gave them love, goodwill, sincerity, and sacrifice dedicatedly to everyone as if they were his real children. So, everyone received love and compassion from Luang Por. However, if anyone behaved in such a way that lessened Luang Por's trust, it was like he is decreasing his own regard.

Parents are like gods for their children, and Luang Por was about the same. He practiced the four virtues of Brahma gods which are compassion, mercy, empathetic joy, and equanimity. With these virtues, Luang Por governed his disciples like what a father would do to children. The following homily of Luang Por reaffirms this fact:

"... as the abbot who is the chief of monks at Wat Paknam... if the abbot shares to all monks and novice monks who lack something, the abbot is willing to give. The electricity expense at Wat Paknam is around 2,000 baht per month, but the abbot supports the electricity expense every month. Monks and novice monks do not have to pay. It is paid for them. Robes are also given for free to them. So, offering made to the abbot means giving to all. Since I was ordained, I set the determination in my heart that I won't sell robes, but I will give them for free. If someone requests for robes, I will give. But if someone wishes to buy, I won't sell. I give all to monks and novice monks. Laypeople make wishes with their robes as they expect to receive merit in Buddhism, and the receiver is in need. Robes are merely objects, after they are dyed, the owner who is faithful in Buddhism offers them to the monks. It is the remain that is given to the monks whereas the owner takes the essence [or merit].

If the receiving monk is a fool, he places his robes in a cabinet where it is bitten by mice and cockroaches. However, if the receiving monk is wise enough, he keeps the robes for giving away to other monks and novice monks in order to earn merit as well. So, he gives the remain and takes the essence which is merit. This is called triple wise. If the receiving monk wishes to get new robes, he keeps only what is necessary for himself. The wise one would give the rest to others. Someone like this would prolong Buddhism further.

If an abbot can practice like this, no matter which temple he governs, it will be prosperous. There will be numerous monks and novice monks similar to parents who give away things to their children. This is the same to Wat Paknam, the governor of Wat Paknam or the abbot, when he receives something, he thinks of his disciple monks and novice monks like his own children. So, he has no greed. If anyone is in need, he is willing to give. To do so, numerous monks and novice monks live comfortably, similar to living with their parents. Parents love their children so much like their precious. If they know that the abbot takes good care of their children who become monks and novice monks, they would be faithful and respectful. What people are afraid of is that the things that they offered are used for other purposes [other than for the practice of Buddhism].”

It is uneasy to govern numerous people since some people are obedient whereas some other are not. The disobedient people could not keep their secret thinking that Luang Por did not know their actions. Luang Por prefers those who speak the truth. He did not want anyone to conceal anything upon him. He wishes to know the truth from them in order to solve problems correctly. However, Luang Por knew everything about everyone whether they speak the truth or not. He said he had ‘a book of record.’ When Master Treetar was still young she really believed that Luang Por had a book of record that contains information about everyone. However, it is not actually the case.

Although Luang Por was very strict and well disciplined, he joked sometimes and foresaw the world according to the truth with good attitude. We can see this from his Dhamma lecture or when he taught members of his monastic community. He always talked lively and laughed a bit. He also added jataka stories spoken with casual language like a father telling a fairy tale to his children before going to bed. So, his teaching was not boring and it was essential. This made his audiences amused even though they were reproached.

Once, Luang Por was invited to chair a blessing chanting ceremony on the occasion of merit making at a lay person’s house. There were eight monks who attended the ceremony. When Luang Por led chanting, some monks could chant along while some monks could chant only some of the verses. However, there was one verse that seven of the monks could not chant. There was only Pra Kru Vichiandhammagovit who could chant along that verse. You may imagine how it would be when eight monks chant together but only two monks could really remember the chanting verse. So, Luang Por knew that they were lazy to memorize the chanting verse because Luang Por could remember all the chanting verses in the first year of his ordination.

After chanting, the pay person offered drinks in a tray by sending to the chief monk first. However, Luang Por did not pick only one glass, he took the whole tray and picked one glass for Venerable Pra KLru Vichiandhammagovit, passing many monks who sat before him. Luang Por said ‘Chian, both of us are tired and deserve the drink.”



Master Treetar also experienced by herself. Once, after she disrobed from nunnery, she wished to curl her hairs. So, she asked for permission from Luang Por to go to a salon. She did not think that Luang Por would be interested. After she returned, her friend informed her that Luang Por wished to meet her. So, she went to see Luang Por thinking that he might ask her to do something. However, Luang Por asked her about her hair curling. He asked how much she paid. She said 150 baht. Luang Por said 'it's nice but expensive.' So, Master Treetar felt encouraged because she was afraid that Luang Por would think that she overspent her money. However, Luang Por continued "I think the hair on my legs is more beautiful because it is naturally curl. I don't have to pay money for curling it." Luang Por's words absolutely muted Master Treetar.

### **Consistent Compassion**

Luang Por always had love and compassion upon others. He always wished others to be well and happy equally. He did not discriminate among his disciples. He usually taught his disciples to be compassionate and never look down upon each other. If someone looked down toward others, Luang Por would expect him to improve himself. Someone looked down when meeting with inferior people. Thus, he or she spoke rudely to those people. Luang Por said that such person was like an abode to be destroyed by fire of hatred, and this fire would spread all over. So, when meeting with the superior ones, we should love and be kindful as well as wishing them happiness. This is the same when meeting with people in the same status or inferior.

### **Helpfulness**

His Holiness the Supreme Patriarch (Poon Poonasirimahathera), the late abbot of Wat Prachetupon, had written about Luang Por as follows:

"... Luang Por was always kindful and helpful towards others. He never refused anyone who was in trouble. He supported such person appropriately. However, Luang Por disliked a liar. If he found out that someone lied to him, he would claim that such person was a 'fake' person who lied even to him. So, such person ran out of goodness. Once, there was a senior who went to study meditation at Wat Paknam. He was very faithful and achieved some meditation experience. He returned home to bid a farewell to his wife and children in order to further his meditation study. Then, he went back to Wat Paknam and brought a dried fish to Luang Por as a souvenir. He told Luang Por that it was all he had due to poverty. Luang Por laughed happily and said that the senior was already rich since he gave away all of what he had. When the Lord Buddha received an offering from a servant, the merit resulted the servant to become a wealthy person later. The senior's fish was more valuable than the servant's offering, it was very much a meritorious deed that he offered it. After their conversation, the senior finally requested Luang Por to sponsor his ordination since he was too poor to buy robes and monastic sustenance. Luang Por agreed to help him per his wish." (Biography of Phramongkolthepmuni, Luang Por Wat Paknam and the power of Dhammakaya by Somdet Phrawannarat (Poon Poonnasiri), Published as a memorabilia on the occasion of cremation ceremony under royal patronage for the Most Venerable Phrabhavanakosolthera (Theera Dhammado) by Ms. Treetar Niamkham, at the crematorium of Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen, Thonburi, 23 March 1969, page 21.)

Luang Por had an effort in teaching his disciples to be helpful toward others. He exemplified Venerable Bhahiyatarujeeriya that the venerable listened to the teaching of Lord Buddha and

attained arahantship altogether with the four supernatural powers. Then, the venerable requested the Lord Buddha for ordination. The Lord, then, told him to obtain robes and an alms bowl first. Normally, those who were ordained by the Lord Buddha directly would have robes and an alms bowl appearing for them with the power of merit they accumulated in the past. However, venerable Bhahiyatarujeeriya did not have the merit from offering robes and alms bowl. So, he the robes and alms bowl did not appear to him automatically when he requested for ordination from the Lord Buddha although he already attained arahantship. While the venerable was walking around looking for robes and alms bowl, he was butt by a cow and eventually died. So, he did not have a chance to become a monk. When the Lord Buddha was on his way back from alms round, he saw the corpse of Venerable Bhahiyatarujeeriya at a garbage pile. So, the Lord assigned his disciple monks to cremate the body and enshrine the relics at a stupa. The Lord also admired Venerable Bhahiyatarujeeriya to be excellent in prompt enlightenment.

O! Bhikkhu! Bhahiyatarujeeriya excels all other monks in term of prompt enlightenment.

Venerable Bhahiyatarujeeriya did not have instant robes and alms bowl for ordination like other monks who were ordained directly by the Lord Buddha because in his past lifetime he was ordained for 20,000 years but he never donated robes to any monk or novice monk because he believed that the offerings he received were for his consumption only.

Luang Por gave away robes and sustenance to other monks and novice monks as usual. Sometimes he had to owe them for such giving as he ran out of robes and monastic sustenance. However, he promised to the requestor that he would give them when he had such thing.

**If one wishes to be good, we should give to the one and never be afraid of wasting money.**

Luang Por's giving included food, cloth, medicine, and shelter. When Luang Por was alive, there were ill people from everywhere who seek for refuge from Luang Por. Although there was not bed room for them, Luang Por allowed them to live at downstairs of monks' abodes. He was willing to help those who suffered with Dhammakaya meditation. Prior to receiving medicine, Luang Por would have the ill person to make vows to observe precepts first. Then, they would have to meditate. Luang Por said it was fine if they did not recover because he did not deceive them. Other doctors did not accept these patients. They did not lose anything. It was like an opportunity for them to make merit by observing precepts and practicing meditation.

### **Having Empathetic Joy**

In the year that more resident monks and novice monks of Wat Paknam could pass Pali examination, Luang Por would be joyful and happy for his disciples who were successful. He would organize a congratulatory ceremony for them. In addition, Luang Por ordered Master Treetar to buy good quality ramie fabric of which he used to make robes and offered to each of the monks and novice monks who passed the Pali examination. Luang Por also invited monks to chant the blessing verse. In addition, he informed the parents of each monks and novice monks about this good news as well as inviting them to join the congratulatory ceremony. Sometimes, Luang Por provided rewards in the form of scholarship and good quality offerings which he received from others. He always kept the offerings and gave them to monks who novice monks who studied well in order to encourage them to study further until achieving Pali study level nine which was the highest level. By that time,

education institutes did not accept monks to study in college, so monks and novice monks had to study Pali and Dhamma doctrine.

In the past, Wat Paknam Dhamma School did not offer Pali study up to the ninth level. Resident monks and novice monks of Wat Paknam who wished to study Pali level nine had to be transferred to another temple like Wat Phrachetuphon, Wat Mahadhat, and Wat Benjamaborpit. Luang Por would put effort in applying his resident monks and novice monks to other temples' Dhamma schools by himself, similar to a father who would accompany his children when applying to an educational institute. His Holiness Somdet Phramaharatchamangkalachan said about his experience that, in the beginning, he planned to continue his study at Wat Prachetuphon as he knew Venerable Phon who was a resident monk there. Venerable Phon accompanied him to apply directly to The Most Venerable Sudhammuni of the Southern residence. The Most Venerable kindly accepted him and managed to reserve a room for him which was adjacent to Venerable Phon's room. After that, His Holiness went to bid a farewell to Luang Por that he would further his Pali study at Wat Phrachetuphon. But Luang Por told him to study at Wat Benjamaborphit instead. Normally, Luang Por did not like to go out even when laypeople invited him to preside the merit making at their homes. Luang Por always asked them if he could manage to have another monk replacing him. However, Luang Por gave priority to the study of his disciples. So, Luang Por accompanied His Holiness Somdet Phramaharatchamangkalachan to apply with His Holiness Somdet Prawannarat of Wat Benjamaborpit (who became the Supreme Patriarch later on) by himself. Luang Por did not explain to His Holiness Somdet Phramaharatchamangkalachan why he chose Wat Benjamaborpit, but His Holiness thought that Luang Por might knew that there was something special about it.

### **Having Equanimity**

Luang Por kept his mind indifferent and neutral against prejudice and bias, either bias from favor, disfavor, fear, or anger. There were many people who criticized, gossiped, and blamed him. They talked about Luang Por in the negative ways since Luang Por started to propagate Dhammakaya meditation. Some people disliked the term Dhammakaya, and they teased Luang Por about this term. However, Luang Por reacted by smiling and responded gently by saying that "What a pity. They speak like the unwise. If there is no origin, how could someone coin this term. It is the fool's words."

Luang Por was also criticized about his refectory that catered foods to monks and novice monks and the numerous Buddhist nuns who resided at his temple. In addition, he was also criticized about the Buddhist nuns who meditated with him at the meditation workshop. Luang Por was willing to listen to these criticism mindfully. He remained calm either when someone praised or criticized him. Even though Luang Por was not authorized to become a preceptor for 30 years, he did not complain. Also, it did not matter for him as he was not promoted to a higher monastic rank for 28 years. He did not give any opinion about these issues, but he continued to be responsible for his duty as much as possible while remaining neutral and righteous aiming to maximize the benefit for Buddhism.

Luang Por said that in order to remain happy everywhere, one must not open one's mind, eyes, and ears to receive information all the time, either good or bad. In addition, one should keep oneself low profile by not being too concerned when one is disdained or insulted by others. It is better to let go somehow. To do so, one practices equanimity. Luang Por did not just teach others, but he could do it by himself as an example.

Luang Por was not picky about his meal. Nobody knew what he liked to eat because he never expressed his personal favor or disfavor about food. He accepted whatever was offered to him. He never complaint about the taste of his food, and he consumed moderately each day, approximately 18 spoons for each meal. Some disciples encouraged Luang Por to eat more, but Luang Por said he had to spare some room for water.

On some day, the temple kitchen cooked damp rice, Luang Por would mention that there was too much water, but the rice was soft. Sometime, the rice was not well cooked, he would say that the kitchen used to much heat. He did not discourage others with his words. He also taught his disciple monks to be content in their eating and not to be too picky about food. If the food was tasteless, he suggested to add something salty. If the food was too salty, he recommended to add the tasteless food. After mixing, the food taste would be appropriate, and there was no need to request others to add ingredients.

When Luang Por's Buddha amulets became popular, numerous people headed to Wat Paknam. Some people accused Luang Por of mixing bones of dead people into the Buddha amulets even though there was no permanent crematorium at Wat Paknam. Unfortunately, some people believed so, and they threw the Buddha amulet away thinking that Luang Por used dark art. After they learned about the news that many people experienced good things from Luang Por's Buddha amulets, they felt regretful for believing in the rumor.

### **Careful Monitoring**

Although Luang Por sacrificed his time and effort for the instruction and propagation of Dhammakaya meditation and decentralized his power and responsibilities, he never ignored his task in teaching and training his disciples who were residents of Wat Paknam. Luang Por thought that it was a duty of an abbot which was not transferable. As a result, Luang Por walked around his temple in order to monitor the happenings every evening. He noticed for both those who came in and went out and watched for burglars. Luang Por sacrificed his time and convenience for the overall benefit. Although he should have had rest, but he chose to walk around his temple every single day even when it rained. He said there were two types of people who liked the raining time, they were the misbehaving people and those who loved to commit sexual misconduct.

One another point is that Luang Por wished to monitor the living and conduct of his disciple monks, novice monks, Buddhist nuns, and everyone who were residents of his temple. He wished to know if there was anyone who left the temple for outgoing or entertaining. Also, he wished to see those who were studying or practicing meditation. Luang Por would examine every room. He would be pleased to see those who study Dhamma in a room where the light was on. So, Luang Por knew everything without the need to rely on others. When he knew that a particular monk or novice monk was diligent in studying, he would have such person meeting him later on where he took the opportunity to ask about such person's well being and offer to provide any necessities if such person was in need. However, if he saw a room where the light was on and heard people conversing about nonsensical things, he would knock the door warning them to go to bed.

It was well-known among the disciples that Luang Por was a thrifty person, but he was not stingy. He spent on whatever was necessary only, especially for water and electricity, since he was a

contented person. During day time, he would order to turn off the main switch in order to prevent anyone from using electric light.

Venerable Prakru Dhammagovit, the late abbot of Wat Kuhasawan, used to be a close attendant of Luang Por. He said, one day Luang Por walked around the temple for monitoring as usual. When he arrived a room of two monks, he saw that the light was on and the monks were conversing. Then, Luang Por knocked the door to warn them to go to bed. However, one of the monks yelled out that “Go further first. I will dedicate merit to you tomorrow.” Luang Por did not reply, and he left the spot.

In the morning of the following day, after monks and novice monks did the morning chanting, it was time for Luang Por to give a homily. Normally, he would talk about what he saw from monitoring the temple and taught his disciples. Those who violated rules and regulations would feel uncomfortable. Luang Por spoke in such a way that the wrongdoer would know by himself. That morning, Luang Por said “Nowadays, monks are very good at dedicating merit. They can do so even to their preceptor who is alive.” (Merit dedication is normally practiced for the diseased one) This is not a serious issue, so Luang Por spoke in such a way that sounded like a joke. However, if it was about violation of monastic rules and regulations, he would ask such person to meet him personally. So, he could discuss with the wrongdoer and ordered the wrongdoer to leave his temple without embarrassing him or her. As a result, some people simply left Wat Paknam quietly. It was known among other disciples that such person might seriously violate the regulations.

Luang Por usually changed his way of monitoring, and this made his disciples unaware of the monitoring. Sometimes, he stood at a dark corner pretending to smoke and did not put on the full set of his robes. It was to disguise himself. Sometimes, he found that novice monks applied liquid power to their faces giving an excuse that they wanted to cure pimples. Luang Por had to teach them not to do so since it violated one of the precepts.

One day, Luang Por passed by a Buddhist nun’s abode, and she had her layperson friend staying over with her that night. The Buddhist nun conversed with her friend joyfully until late at night. Luang Por saw that the light was on, so he looked through the window and found that the Buddhist nun was trying her friend’s cloth in front of the mirror and giggled happily. So, Luang Por threw a brick into her house in order to warn that it was known by the third party. The first brick was not responded, and Luang Por had to throw as many as three bricks. Finally, the Buddhist nun walked out to take a look, but she found nobody. So, she yelled “Who threw bricks to my abode? Why do you have to do this? I will inform Luang Por.”

In the morning of the following day, the Buddhist nun went to see Luang Por requesting him to look for the one who threw bricks into her abode. Then, Luang Por asked “What were you doing? It was late at night, why didn’t you turn off light and go to bed?” The Buddhist nun dared not to reply as she knew that she did something wrong. So, she made several excuses. Luang Por had to interview her until she confessed. Luang Por told her that he was the one who threw bricks into her abode, and he taught her not to do such thing again although she was in her own abode since it made her mind unpeaceful. He taught her to behave well in every moment.

### **Becoming Ill**

Since Luang Por became an abbot of Wat Paknam in 1918, he had to work hard on his responsibilities in developing human resources, temple facilities, education management, the propagation of Dhammakaya meditation, the establishment and operation of temple's kitchen, the maintenance and renovation of temple facilities, instructing Dhammakaya meditation, advising and helping those who sought for help, and the giving of Buddha amulets.

Luang Por dedicated his life and time for the propagation of Buddhism and lessening fellow humans' sufferings. He followed the Lord Buddha's path with great commitment until he had little time to rest. Thus, Luang Por's health had been deteriorated. In March 1956, Luang Por became ill.

In the beginning of his illness, Luang Por received direct treatment from Dr. Rieng Wipatbhumi-pratate, the director of Navy Hospital. Dr. Rieng visited Luang Por both in the morning and evening in order to to diagnose Luang Por's symptom. In addition, the doctor invited other specialist doctors to diagnose Luang Por for specific disease for symptom such as the lung and the heart symptom. Many medical professors who were top doctors of Thailand were invited to diagnose Luang Por, but he did not recover. It simply became stable or worse.

Luang Por's illness became worse until he needed to had a surgery at Siriraj Hospital due to hernia during the Buddhist lent period. However, Luang Por did not wish to break the monastic rule that Buddhist monks are required to live at a monastery throughout the Buddhist lent period. So, he left the hospital and returned to Wat Paknam. Moreover, Luang Por was admitted to the Sangha Hospital two more times.

The two merit making events that Luang Por aimed to organize were the celebration of the new Dhamma school building and the cremation ceremony of his mother, Soodjai Meekaewnoi, who passed away since 20 March 1941.

### **Showing His Gratitude to His Mother**

Luang Por knew well that he would not recover from his illness. So, he rushed to cremate his mother's body on 28 December 1956. On the cremation day, Luang Por distributed a publication that includes his two sermons with the following preface:

"On the occasion of the cremation ceremony of Mrs. Soodjai Meekaewnoi, my mother, I wish to publish a book in memorial of my parent. I also wish to decorate my mother's body beautifully according to the tradition. However, my wish is not fulfilled as I have been ill for many months, and my body gets deteriorated more and more. I have been thinking of my mother's body, and I wished to complete the cremation ceremony in order to be free from worry. So, I rush to organize it urgently as there was only 19 days left. It was to soon, and I was unable to prepare everything well as I wished. However, I urge to complete this cremation ceremony the best I can do per the availability of time.

This book titled 'Discourses on Different Subjects' which you are reading now includes my own discourses delivered in 1953. I found that they are appropriate and deserved publishing for distribution among interested persons because all creatures are in search for their refuge. The physical bodies are impermanent and unstable, everyone will have to die. This is unavoidable, and

when we are alive, we take the burden on our physical bodies. Creatures had been like this in the past, and they are the same in the present. They will not be different in the future. This is something that is endless, and there is no free time that we can be like whatever we wish for. So, the two discourses are published with the hope that when readers realize in the condition of their physical bodies, they would urge to seek for the true refuge which they can hold on to when are on their death bed. As I manage to publish these discourses, I did not have time to examine the manuscripts thoroughly. Although I wish to publish more discourses that I delivered, I am unable to do so due to the timing which I stated earlier. Now that my worry about the cremation of my mother's body has ceased. The meritorious deeds that I have committed today will be the tokens of gratitude for my parents. May the merit destine my mother to experience with prosperity in her afterlife." (an excerpt from 'Discourses on Different Subjects,' Katanyookatavedhitadhammanusorn of Luang Por Watkanm, published by Luang Por Wat Paknam's alumni association on the occasion of the 47<sup>th</sup> memorial service merit making dedicated to The Most Venerable Phramongkolthepmuni (Luang Por Wat Paknam) on 3 February 2006.

### **The Celebration of Bhavananusondh Dhamma School Building**

Another project which Luang Por wished to accomplish is to organize a grand ceremony to celebrate the Buhavananusondh Dhamma School Building which Luang Por was proud of. During that time, there was no other temple that could build a 3 storey Dhamma school building as big as Luang Por did. Luang Por planned to make the school a center for both Dhamma study (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floor) and meditation practice (3<sup>rd</sup> floor).

In the year 1957 (2500 BE), the royal Thai government was to organize the 25<sup>th</sup> century of Buddhism, so Luang Por planned to celebrate the school building in the same year by inviting 2,500 Buddhist monks to chant and receive the offering of meals as well as monastic sustenance. However, Luang Por's disease prevented him from doing so.

### **Encountering Illness**

Although Luang Por's body was overwhelmed by illness, his heart remained steadfast. I did not skip any of his routines. Luang Por continued to teach people, practice meditation, and give Buddha amulets to laypeople as usual. In the evening, he would ask monks to practice meditation close to him for one to two hours. At night, he would instruct those who attained advanced Dhammakaya meditation. Even though some people objected, Luang Por was willing to listen to their opinion, but he still continued his routines because he knew that he did not have much time left.

Later on, when Luang Por became seriously ill, he transferred his responsibilities on instructing meditation and giving Buddha amulets to Venerable Phrakru Samanadhamsamatan (Teera Kloruwan) or Luang Por Lek. Despite of his physical weakness, Luang Por had mental strength. I did not want to make himself a burden for others. Although he was sick, he tried to rise, sit, stand, and walk as well as taking a shower by himself. When he became very ill until he could not rise by himself, he allowed others to assist him. Luang Por was not picky about his meal, and he never complained about his foods. He ate whatever was offered to him. It was his sister who prohibited him from eating some kind of food as she was afraid that they would affect his symptom. Luang Por obeyed and remained indifferent. However, he showed dissatisfaction only to those who did not go to meditate with him.

### **Promoted to the rank of Phramongkolthepmuni**

After Luang Por became ill for about one year, he was promoted to the monastic rank of Phramongkolthepmuni in 1957. Although he was unwell, he tried to overcome his illness and strive to join the honorific fan offering ceremony at the grand palace until completion.

### **I Will Not Recover and There is No Cure**

Luang Por used to mention about his symptom to His Holiness the Supreme Patriarch (Poon Poonnasiri), when His Holiness was at the rank of the Most Venerable Phra Dhamwarodom, that “I will not recover from my illness this time. There is no medicine to cure because the medicines I have cannot reach the disease. It is like being blocked by a stone panel. So, the medicine cannot pass through to cure the disease. My karma prevents it. This cannot be solved.” Luang Por said this without worry as he remained calm as usual.

With his close disciples, Luang Por said that his disease was beyond the doctor’s capability, and nobody could cure. However, Luang Por still gave opportunities to his disciples to show their gratitude. He was willing to be diagnosed by doctors that his disciples brought to him.

While Luang Por was ill, he was attended by monks and novice monks 24 hours a day. Each shift took two hours, and the attendant monks and novice monks had to write down thoroughly a report about Luang Por’s symptom, so that the doctors who provided medical treatment to Luang Por would know Luang Por’s symptom.

The attendant monks who took turn to look after Luang Por included Luang Por Lek, Phradhammarattanakorn (Sahgad), Phrakru Palad Tanom, Phramaha Ind, Phra Pair, Phra Noree, Phrakru Opassmadhikhun (Supab), Phrasasanakij (when he was a novice monk), Phramaha Mani, and others.

### **Prepare a Seat for Dhammadilok**

His Holiness the Supreme Patriarch (Poon Poonnasiri) wrote a story about Luang Por when he was ill as follows:

“... I tried to visit Luang Por regularly, but sometimes I had to visit him occasionally depending on his symptom. If I was informed that his symptom became worse, I would visit him without notifying my schedule to anyone. Sometimes, I went in the morning, sometimes in the afternoon or in the evening. So, I could observe if the Buddhist monks and novice monks were attentive in looking after Luang Por. I was informed that they took turn in different shifts every day, and another group went to meditate with Luang Por.

One day, when I arrived Luang Por’s residence, a monk of that shift informed me that Luang Por was waiting for me. I replied “I never informed anyone about my visit. Did you lie to Luang Por that I would visit him today?” The monk said that he did not know about it, but Luang Por ordered him to prepare a seat for me by saying that “Prepare a seat for Dhammadilok, he will come.” Luang Por said like this, and it came true. He never made even single false prophecy. If I didn’t visit him for quite a time, he would say that “Dhammadilok of Wat Bhodi was away.”



When Luang Por became seriously ill, he ordered Luang Por Lek to replace him in instructing and propagating meditation as well as giving Buddha amulets. He ordered everyone to continue everything including the catering of meals to the monks as if he were present. Luang Por ordered his disciples to preserve his body after he passed away. He said “the dead will feed the living.”

### **Luang Por Passed Away**

It had been three years since Luang Por started to get ill until he passed away. It was the time that made his disciples feel worried. Everyone kept waiting to hear the news about Luang Por's symptom. Many disciples meditated and dedicated the merit to Luang Por, wishing him to recover. However, the final day had come. It was not the day that his disciples waited for, but nobody could avoid it. On 3 February 1959, Luang Por passed away peacefully. His Holiness the Supreme Patriarch (Poon Poonnasiri) wrote about the situation as follows:

“... By the end of January and the beginning of February 1959, I had to supervise the grading of Dhamma examination of region 7 for the academic year 1958. I had to supervise the grading in 8 provinces. Upon my work completion on 1 February 1959, I planned to have a vacation for a couple of days and visit different temples in the area. However, I recalled of the Most Venerable Phramongkolthepmuni, so I traveled back to Bangkok immediately. On 2 February, I arrived Wat Phrachetuphon by car at 6.00 pm.

In the morning of 3 February, I received a telephone call from Wat Paknam informing that Luang Por's symptom was in a serious condition, and I was asked to visit him immediately. I arrived Wat Paknam around 1.00 pm. I paid respect to Luang Por and found that he gasped for breath. Wat Paknam had invited Luang Por's personal doctor, but he was not present. Luang Por was unconscious but he kept gasping for breath. Lady Cholakhanpinij went to visit him, and she helped inviting another doctor to examine Luang Por, but the doctor said it was too late since Luang Por already had a stroke. The doctor did not provide any further treatment, but he recommended to wrap ices with a piece of cloth and place it on Luang Por's head.

By that time, Luang Por's room was crowded by his disciple monks and novice monks. They looked at Luang Por hopelessly, some of them were brimmed with tears. The doctor said Luang Por would be able to live for another 24 hours. After the doctor returned, Luang Por's body was surrounded by his disciples. I thought that he was unconscious at all. Luang Por had his eyes closed, and he gasped more frequently until he lost his breath. His spirit had left his deteriorated body peacefully as a meditation practitioner would do on 3 February 1959 at 3.05 pm.

I could hear people crying all over Luang Por's room. Although some of them had no tears, but their faces seemed to express dishearteness. Once everyone was certain that Luang Por passed away completely, they rang every bell and beat every drum in the temple to notify everyone that Luang Por had passed to the afterlife.

Soon after, Luang Por's residence was overcrowded with monks, novice monks, laymen, and laywomen who went to pay him respect with their eyes brimmed with tears. Some of them sobbed, closing their face with their hands. Nobody was talking anything, there were only sobbing and crying as if it was no other refuge for them to the rest of their lives.

To me, it was like Luang Por was helpful about his passing away because he passed away at 3.05 pm, and this allowed his disciples to have time to manage his body. It was very convenient when contacting and assigning anything about Luang Por's body, everything was accomplished at ease as if Luang Por provided convenience for them. Everything was ready and available just in time. If Luang Por passed away at night or early in the morning, it would cause troubles to them.

That night, we organized the ceremonial bathing for Luang Por and printed invitation cards as well as preparing the place for enshrining Luang Por's body properly. We could get everything we wished for. Then, there was publicizing through radio and newspapers. In the following days, Buddhist monks, novice monks, laymen, laywomen, and folks in the nearby area or other distant areas had the opportunity to rinse Luang Por's hand. The temple managed for 3 – 4 people to rinse Luang Por's hand at a time. It took about two hours until completion. Then, Luang Por's head was shaved and his robes were changed. After that his body was injected the chemical substance for preservation.

I ordered them to collect Luang Por's hairs for mixing with Buddha amulet constituents. But I think I was too late as all of them were taken away by his disciples, not even a single hairline left. Moreover, Luang Por's personal things like handkerchiefs, robes, both new and old, were torn and shared among his disciples that night. There was not a single piece left. It is good that there is no need to clear up. Those who could not get any said that they would wait for Luang Por's remains after cremation. After we cleaned Luang Por's body, we relocated his body to the third floor of the new school building. So, other people could pay respect by rinsing his hand.

That night, Buddhist monks and novice monks had to work until the morning of the following day because they had to clean the temple and prepare chairs and mats busily. Nobody complained for being tired, they were willing to do it. They bowed to Luang Por with respect, and they joined hand in hand to accomplish their works. On the following day, 4 February 1959, the paying respect by rinsing Luang Por's hand commenced as soon as seven o'clock in the morning. People kept coming continuously. Finally, Luang Por's body was placed in a coffin at 5.00 pm. Hundreds of people came too late to rinse his hand. His Holiness the Sangha Nayaka had presided over the ceremony to rinse Luang Por's hand with water offered by His Majesty the King. His Holiness also presided over the rest of the ceremony.

Luang Por's body was placed inside a coffin presented to him by His Majesty the King as a way to honor him. The beautifully decorated coffin was placed at the eastern wing of the Dhamma school building. Every night, there was a chanting memorial service dedicated to Luang Por according to the tradition. There were hundreds of guests. The ceremony was sponsored by a contributor everyday since 4 February 1959 onward.

The chanting memorial service in dedication of Luang Por continued on until June 1959. There were contributors who sponsored the service each night. On some days, there were as many as two sponsors. In addition, there were delivery of sermons on some weeks. On some occasions, all resident monks and novice monks were invited to chant in dedication to Luang Por.

The Most Venerable Phramongkolthepmuni was born in 1884 and passed away in 1959 at the age of 75 year old. He had been in monkhood for 53 years. Throughout his life as a monk, he used to reside at:

- |    |                    |                       |
|----|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. | Wat Song Pee Nong  | Suphanburi Province   |
| 2. | Wat Phrachetuphon  | Bangkok               |
| 3. | Wat Chaiyaprukmalā | Thonburi              |
| 4. | Wat Bode           | Nonthaburi            |
| 5. | Wat Paknam         | Bhasicharoen, Bangkok |

The life of the Most Venerable Phramongkolthepmuni had come to an end. It coincides to the truth as taught by the Lord Buddha that “Rupang chiratam majjanam namgotaratam na chirati.”

(An excerpt from ‘Biography of Phramongkolthepmuni (Luang Por Wat Paknam) and the power of Dhammakaya Meditation’ authored by His Holiness Somdet Phrawannarat. Published by Treetar Niamkham as a memorabilia on the occasion of the cremation ceremony of Phrabhavanakosolthera.)

Luang Por had performed his duty perfectly and elegantly. He fulfilled his own vow that he would ordain and remain in the monkhood to the rest of his life and perform the duty of the attorney for Buddhism. It had been 53 years that he was active as the general of a Dhamma army who waved the Dhamma wheel flag of the Lord Buddha in the heart of people aiming to enable them to attain the Lord Buddha’s Dhamma. Luang Por urged everyone to realize that this human world is not our permanent home, but it is simply a place where we pass by to pursue perfections.

Luang Por was like a father, a mother, a teacher, a master, and a virtuous spiritual fellow to his disciples either those who were close or not close to him. For disciples both in the past and in the present, known or unknown to Luang Por, he has extended his compassion to all directions reaching his disciples who respect him and have faith in Buddhism, blessing them to behave well according to the Lord Buddha’s teachings as well as Luang Por’s teachings.

Although his disciples cannot see him alive again, but everyone still be able to see his transcendental Dhamma body or Dhammakaya if they persevere in practicing meditation according to Luang Por’s teachings. Despite of the fact that Luang Por already passed away, he still supports, secures, and protects, his disciples to live their lives righteously. He never abandons his disciples, and he still looks after everyone. Simply meditate by repeating the mantra Samma Arahāṅ over and over and think of Luang Por, our mind will always be reconnected to him as Ajarn Treetar once said “simply repeating the mantra Samma Arhang in our mind, and Luang Por Wat Paknam will know.”