

Biography of Phramongkolthepmuni (Luang Por Wat Paknam)

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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 year 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 Mula, ranging from Sondhi, Nama, Samasa, Tatti, Akayat, and Kitt, followed by Dhammapada until completing two bunches. Thus, students started to study Mangalateepani and Sarasamkaha 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 retinues 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 level 5 graduate), 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 Phradhammatasanatarn, the past abbot of Wat Chanasangram 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 Visudhimagga 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 Phrachetupon, 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 10th 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..." (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..." (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 District by that time, Luang Por was ordered to leave Wat Phrasirattanamahadhatu. 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 (Pyun 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.

Becoming 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 Phratchetupon 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 3rd 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 KromPhrayadamrongrajanupab, 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 – Kromprarajawangbavorn

1875 – Her Royal Highness Princess Arunwadee

1876 – Her Royal Highness Princess Waneerattanakanya

1877 – Her Royal Highness Princess Bussabanbuapan

1919 – Phrayamanopakornnitada

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. Venrable 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 (Pyun 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 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 year, 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]." (an excerpt by H.H. Somdet Phrawannarat (Pyun Punnasiri), The Biography of Phramongkolthepmuni (Luang Por Wat Paknam) and The Power of Dhammakaya Meditaiton, 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 reprovved 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 เปรย 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 ไร้พียง, 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)

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.

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.

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."

Becoming a Certified Preceptor

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 persevered 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 Ecclesiastic Order

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 ecclesiastic 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 Prarajsuthee, 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 ecclesiastic 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 ecclesiastic rank of Pramongkolrajmuni.

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

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.

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 presided 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 25th 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.

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.

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 eight 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, Singburi 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.

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 firm 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 decentralization. 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.

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. Riang Wipatbhumipratate, the director of Navy Hospital. Dr. Riang visited Luang Por both in the morning and evening in order 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 have 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 too 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 47th 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 (1st and 2nd floor) and meditation practice (3rd floor).

In the year 1957 (2500 BE), the royal Thai government was to organize the 25th 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 Opasmadhikhun (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 Phrachatuphon 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 Chaiyaprukmal | 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 Arahang over and over and think of Luang Por, our mind will always be reconnected to him.