

**AN ANALYSIS OF PHRA MONGKOL-THEPMUNI'S  
(SODH CANDASARO) BUDDHA DHAMMA PROPAGATION**

by

Mae Chee Amphai Tansomboon

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of  
The Requirement for the Degree of  
Master of Arts  
(Buddhist Studies)

International Master Degree of Arts Programme  
Graduate School  
Mahachulalongkornrajvidyalaya University  
Bangkok, Thailand  
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**THESIS SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE**

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| 2. Phra Srivorayan,            | Member   |
| 3. Dr. Veerachart Nimanong,    | Member   |

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The Graduate School, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, has approved this thesis as a part of education according to its curriculum of the Master of Arts in Buddhist Studies.

.....  
 ( Phramaha Somjin Sammāpaṇṇo )  
 Dean of Graduate School

Thesis Examination Committee: ..... Chairperson  
 ( )

..... Member  
 ( )

..... Member  
 ( )

..... Member  
 ( )

..... Member  
 ( )

Thesis Supervisory Committee:

Phramaha Somjin Sammapaṇṇo	Chairperson
Phra Sivorayan	Member
Dr. Veerachart Nimanong	Member

Thesis Title : An Analysis of Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's  
 : (Sodh Candasaro) Buddha Dhamma Propagation  
 Researcher : Mae Chee Amphai Tansomboon  
 Degree : Master of Arts (Buddhist Studies)  
 Thesis Supervisory Committee  
 : Asst. Prof. Dr. Phramaha Somjin Sammāpañño  
 Pali IX, B.Ed., M.A. (Buddhist Studies), Ph.D  
 (Buddhist Studies)  
 : Phra Sivorayan  
 Pali IX, M.A. (Comparative Religion)  
 : Dr. Veerachart Nimanong  
 Pali VI, B.A. B.Ed., M.A., M.Phil, Ph.D  
 Date of Graduation : April 25, 2005

### *Abstract*

The purpose of this thesis is to critically analyze Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's Buddha Dhamma propagation in relation to Lord Buddha's. It first reviews Lord Buddha's Dhamma propagation of Dhamma by way of meditation teaching as represented in the Pali Canon, and then analyzes Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's against this ideal, examining similarities and differences. The study found that Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni taught directly in accordance with the Buddha's *Dhamma-Vinaya*. His teaching was Right View (*Sammā-ditthi*), not Wrong View (*Miccā-ditthi*) or perversion. Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni only adapted the Buddha's Dhamma propagation to the practical needs and realities of the twentieth century, amidst World Wars I and II.

His teachings reunited the academic (*pariyatti*) and meditation (*paṭipatti*) components of Buddhism, which had been developing on separate tracks (university vs. forest), and renewed the faith and efforts necessary to achieve Nibbāna (*paṭivedha*). He taught an integrated meditation technique, starting with *Samatha* (concentration), followed by *Vipassanā* (insight). He said "To stop is to succeed," both in meditation and in daily life (to avoid creating negative karma / *kamma*). Stopping the mind still (at the center of the body) permits climbing a ladder of increasingly pure spiritual bodies and mental states from the mundane through celestial and Noble State (*Dhammakāya*) to Nibbāna. This was his rediscovery of the *Dhammakāya* meditation technique which had been

long lost to Theravada Buddhism. The method is not detailed in the Tipitaka, but is simply a meditation technique for practicing the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (*Satipatthāna*), which makes sense of the phrase contemplating “body in body, feelings in feelings, mind in mind, and mental objects in mental objects.” The teaching has been verified scientifically by many practitioners in accordance with Lord Buddha’s directive “See for yourself (*paccattam veditabbo viññuhi*).”

Most interviewees noted that Wat Paknam flourished because of people’s faith in Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni. He could answer deep Dhamma questions, taught meditation which produced tangible results, and compassionately helped people with all kinds of daily life problems (reportedly including sickness and lack of rain). He provided housing, food, and education for a large number of monks, novices, nuns and lay followers. Wat Paknam’s Dhamma and Pali studies, meditation training, and support for annual examinations played an important part in upgrading Thai Buddhism. He also initiated propagation of Buddhism abroad, ordaining the first foreign monk and initiating meditation programs in England, the United States, and Japan.

The current impact of Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni’s Buddha-Dhamma propagation is readily visible. People still flock to Wat Paknam. Luang Phor’s picture hangs in many restaurants and businesses. Branch temples throughout Thailand and abroad continue to spread Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni’s Buddha-Dhamma propagation worldwide. His key success was renewing meditation practice in an era emphasizing academics. *Samma Araham* is now an accepted school of meditation in Thailand. Despite some continuing hostility, his Buddha-Dhamma propagation has been successful, because it is based on the Truth, which can be verified in personal meditation practice. Advanced practice enables seeing Heaven and Hell and the Law of Karma, as well as Nibbana. This has a dramatic impact on practitioners, arousing them from the overindulgent consumerism rampant in today’s world, and making them carefully mindful of doing good and avoiding evil. They also spread this personal knowledge to others who, in turn, learn to know, see and be *Dhammakāya*. This is propagation of the Buddha-Dhamma as taught by Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni.

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## List of Abbreviations

### Other Abbreviations:

ed.	Edited by
etc.	etceteral/and others
Ibid.	ibiden/in the same book
i.e.,	that is to say
op.cit.	opere citato / as referred
tr.	translated
vol(s)	volume (s)

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## **Chapter I**

### **Introduction**

#### **1.1 The Background and Significance of the Problem**

In this age of materialistic consumerism, people are seeking comfort with material things and technology. Children are brought up and over influenced by modern high technology and materialism, while adults are attached to the competitive world for survival. People are so focused on the here and now that they tend to discount religious considerations and thoughts of the next life. This is especially noteworthy in Thailand as our culture adopts more technology and customs from the West.

Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni (Sodh Candasaro) was one of the most successful monks famous in propagating Buddha Dhamma in this situation. Perhaps no other Abbot has done more to propagate Thai Buddhism in the 24<sup>th</sup> century up to the contemporary world, reviving the belief of people who had given up. He has contributed a great deal to benefit the Sangha and Buddhism,<sup>1</sup> encouraging nominal Buddhists to study and practice the essence of Dhamma. His Dhamma propagation continues to be successful even today, long after his death. Many devoted followers still have faith in him and are willing to commit their lives to doing something as a token of their appreciation, even among Western – oriented Thai college students.

The purpose of this Thesis is to study Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's Buddha Dhamma propagation in comparison with Lord Buddha's Dhamma propagation, in order to understand how he was so successful. Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni took the Buddha as his 'Great Master'. He followed the Buddha's method of training himself fully first and then teaching others afterwards, applying these Dhamma of Lord

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<sup>1</sup> People's Dhamma Practice Project, **Life, Work and Collections of 63 Sermons**, (Bangkok: Technique 19, B.E. 2527), p.(64).

Buddha in a way suited to life in today's society. He was an outstanding abbot who had his unique and successful way of propagating Buddha Dhamma, always adjusted to each audience. It is important to study his way of propagating Buddha Dhamma how it differed from the Buddha. The major significance of this thesis will be drawing lessons learned for others who are trying to propagate the Buddha's doctrine in this era of religious skepticism.

### 1.1.1 Review of Lord Buddha's Dhamma Propagation

Before going further into Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's method, it is essential to review the Buddha's Dhamma propagation. Lord Buddha was born as prince but adopted the homeless life as his duty (*Chariyavatta*) to humanity. Lord Buddha discovered the real nature of human life as full of suffering. Thereafter, He had a firm determination to seek for the Truth and Deliverance, to help mankind achieve release from suffering<sup>2</sup>. With firm determination, he made the resolution not to rise from his meditation until he had attained enlightenment. He cultivated the perfections (*paramitas*) of his virtues until he attained enlightenment. Lord Buddha realized that His Dhamma was ultimate and perfect. It was difficult for ordinary people who had "much dust in their eyes" to understand. Nevertheless, with his great compassion for helping to release the suffering of mankind, he compared people with different levels of intellect to four types of lotus flowers. Some people who had "just a little dust in their eyes" would be able to understand His Dhamma<sup>3</sup>. These he could teach. The Buddha made a wish to complete 4 duties<sup>4</sup> before his death (*parinibbana*); (1) for his followers to study Dhamma, (2) for his followers to practice according to his teaching, (3) for his followers to propagate and exemplify his Dhamma, (4) for his followers to be able to settle the cases whenever there would be any unjust criticism of the Dhamma.

The Buddha's First Sermon, delivered to the Five Ascetics, is known as the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*. This means "Setting into

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<sup>2</sup> Phra Sunthorn Plamintr, **Basic Buddhism Course**, (Taiwan: The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, 1991), p.16.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 21.

<sup>4</sup> Phra Rajdhamnides (Rabab Ditañño), **The Buddha's Method of Propagating Buddhism**, (Bangkok: Mahamakutra-vidyalaya, B.E. 2540), p. 7.

Motion of the Wheel of Dhamma for the benefit and well-being of mankind, cannot be stopped”<sup>5</sup>. The Buddha chose to teach the Five Ascetics because they used to take care of him for awhile<sup>6</sup> and were the most likely to succeed in using his teachings and witnessing His enlightenment. The Five Ascetics did not believe that the Buddha attained enlightenment at first. They thought He had given up His goal. But, the Buddha reminded them with a very impressive short statement (*Âdesanâ Pâpîhâriya*)<sup>7</sup>: “Bhikkhus, have you ever heard me say that I was enlightenment in the past?”<sup>8</sup> This technique led them to listen to Him, as He was a most reliable person. This incident exemplifies the Buddha’s skill in propagating Dhamma. It enabled him to successfully teach all Five Ascetics to attain enlightenment.

The First Sermon, preached to the Ascetics, was an example of informal style (*Vohara*). The Buddha had the vision to view the past, present and future results of his preaching to the Five Ascetics<sup>9</sup>. He could read Kondañña’s mind (*Ânusasani Pâpîhâriya*), targeted to become His first disciple because he had the potential to attain Dhamma. Lord Buddha also knew the Ascetics’ characteristics (*charita*) and their background<sup>10</sup>. They believed that self-mortification was the way to attainment<sup>11</sup>. The Buddha’s technique was to point out disadvantages of the two extremes of sensual indulgence and self-mortification (of indulgence in sensual pleasure and) that the Ascetics should not follow as they could not help in attaining Dhamma<sup>12</sup>. Then, He preached in formal sermon style (*Desana*) in accordance with their level of intellect<sup>13</sup>. As ascetics, they had high knowledge and experience for understanding the principles of the Middle Path and the Four Noble Truths. As the result, Kondañña was the first one to achieve the “Eye of Truth” (Stream-enterer

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<sup>5</sup> Phra Sunthorn Plamintr, op.cit. p. 22.

<sup>6</sup> Phra Rajdhamnides (Rabab Ditañño), op.cit., p.11.

<sup>7</sup> *Âdesanâ Pâpîhâriya* is the technique of two: short words and action,

<sup>8</sup> Saeng Chandrangam, **Teaching Method of The Buddha**, (Bangkok: Mahamakutraajvidhayala, B.E. 2540), p.36.

<sup>9</sup> Phra Rajdhamnides (Rabab Ditañño), op.cit, p.7.

<sup>10</sup> Anudasesani Technique.

<sup>11</sup> Saeng Chandrangam, op.cit., p. 55.

<sup>12</sup> Phra Sunthorn Plamintr, op.cit., p.22.

<sup>13</sup> Saeng Chandrangam, op.cit., p.54.

level) whilst the other four Ascetics remained attached to the self (*atta*) and could not yet see the Truth<sup>14</sup>. The Buddha next preached the *Anantalakana Sutta*, organizing the teaching in a sequence<sup>15</sup> of suggestions, asking questions (dialectic) and giving the conclusion that Five Aggregates are non-self (*anatta*). This was the Buddha's technique of Dhamma propagation called "the marvel of teaching leading to real practice" (*Anusâsanî Pâḥihâriya*). The Five Ascetics all attained enlightenment and became *Arahanta*. The Five Ascetics' ordination signified the establishment of the Sangha and the completion of the Triple Gem. Different methods were used to teach Yasa's family, the three Kassapa brothers and other disciples, according to their temperament.

The Buddha traveled from place to place, far and wide, teaching his Dhamma to people from all walks of life, without any limitation according to the caste system.<sup>16</sup> His great compassion was extended to all people, with the objective of teaching them Dhamma as their refuge to overcome suffering and become happy. He delegated his first 60 disciples as missionaries to travel widely in different countries for teaching the Dhamma to various people. "Go forth, monks, for the benefit of many, for the happiness of many, out of compassion for the world. Preach to them the Dhamma, which is beautiful in the beginning, beautiful in the middle, and beautiful in the end..."<sup>17</sup> These were the Buddha's actions to propagate the Dhamma for the world's well-being (*Lokattha-cariya*). The Buddha devoted the remainder of His life for forty-five years to setting up the rules of conduct (*Vinâya*) for the Sangha Order to follow and to preaching Dhamma to the people. His happiness was seeing the people achieve contentment and happiness. The Sangha plays the important role of missionary, propagating the Buddha Dhamma and guiding or helping people toward release from suffering.

### **1.1.2 Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's Dhamma Propagation**

The Most Venerable (Chao Khun) Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni" is the Ecclesiastical Title awarded to "Luang Phor Wat Paknam" in 1957

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p.55.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p.66.

<sup>16</sup> Phra Sunthorn Plamintr, op. cit., p. 25.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 25.

(B.E. 2500). ‘Chandasaro Bhikkhu’ was his ordination name. His original name is ‘Sodh Meekaewnoi’. When he was appointed as an Abbot of Wat Paknam, everyone in Wat Paknam called him as ‘Luang Phor’ (means ‘Venerable Father’). He is most widely known as Luang Phor Wat Paknam to most people outside the temple. The title of Chao Khun Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni is seldom referred to because it was his last title. Therefore, this name “Luang Phor Wat Paknam” will be referred to, throughout this thesis.

Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni’s fundamental method of propagating Buddha Dhamma was based on the Buddha’s three components of *Pariyatti*, *Papipatti* and *Papivedha*. Educating monks, novices and lay people was his priority task, seeking to upgrade people intellectually, spiritually and temperamentally<sup>18</sup>. His ideal was cultivating the spiritual values for an individual to be a good person, rather than constructing luxurious dwellings and facilities.<sup>19</sup> His education, therefore, combined scriptural study (*Pariyatti*) and meditation practice (*Papipatti*). Scriptural study and practice must go hand-in-hand to obtain complete personal insight (*Papivedha*) to acquire faith from others. Scriptural study is like a map of knowledge to solve the problem and develop one’s life. But, he emphasized meditation practice called *Vijja Dhammakâya* as a way for a person to cultivate his inner self, mind and spiritual virtues based on *Silâ*, *Samâdhi* and *Paññâ*. Through individual practice, one becomes able to see the Truth for oneself through real experience. The next step was teaching what he learned to others in order to build up belief and faith in people. Then, the propagation of Buddha Dhamma took place. Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni had many techniques for teaching, but most were based on the heart of Buddhism: *Dâna*, *Silâ* and *Bhavâna*, hell and heaven, emphasizing Nibbana (Nirvana) and always *Paramatha* (ultimate) Dhamma<sup>20</sup>.

Most meditation master would not usually preach. Luang Phor Wat Paknam was well known as an experienced meditation master, but he

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<sup>18</sup> Ajahn Tritha Niemkham, *Tritha Told Stories about Laung Phor and Wat Paknam*, (Bangkok: Printing and Charoen Phol Book Covered, 2527), p. 105.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, op.cit., p. 8.

<sup>20</sup> Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen and Wat Paknam Alumni Association P.A.A., *Biography of Luang Phor Wat Paknam and Manual of Abbot*, (Bangkok: Thai Wattana Panich Publishing Company, B.E. 2529), p. 85.

also liked to preach the Dhamma.<sup>21</sup> He was an excellent Meditation Master and also a knowledgeable Dhamma preacher regarding all three *Pariyatti, Paṭipatti and Paṭivedha*<sup>22</sup>. His method of Buddha-Dhamma propagation was very different from that of other Abbots. He used Dhamma preaching to disseminate knowledge obtained from his own experience in meditation. He preached Dhamma by linking it to meditation practice, so that people could understand it and follow it easily. The language he used in preaching was simple yet meaningful, to impress his listeners about the bliss of Dhamma<sup>23</sup>. Usually, he preached Dhamma in a conversational style adapted to each individual audience. He often started with the virtues of the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, translating each and explaining it in detail. This teaching, then, led to meditation practice.

One example of his Dhamma preaching was in the style of giving encouragement (*Samuttijanā*) to Buddhists. He noted that ‘Even after Lord Buddha’s *Parinibbāna*, meditators continue to receive fruit from practicing meditation. Only the lazy person will fail. The word “*Akâliko*” in the Dhamma Virtues confirms that anyone who practices will get results. He encouraged monks not only to recite ‘*Itipi So Bhagavā*’ and commemorate the Buddha virtues, but also to perform the duty of practicing in accordance with Lord Buddha’s teachings. This is the explanation style (*Visajjanā*) of Dhamma propagation<sup>24</sup>.

Although it is already over forty-years since he passed away, people still have faith in him. His coffin has yet to be burnt, so that he can still inspire monks in the temple and other devotees. Many people from all walks of life come to Wat Paknam to pay respect to Luang Phor and to cultivate their spiritual virtues through donation, Dhamma study and meditation practice. Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni’s various projects and the effects of his Dhamma propagation continue to the present time. We shall ask questions such as:

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 79.

<sup>22</sup> People’s Dhamma Practice Project, op. cit., p. 59.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 23.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p. 60.

1. Why and how he taught his technique to people, why and how Scriptural Study (*pariyatti*) was combined with meditation practice (*Papipatti*).

2. What his system of meditation practice was, and how he managed to encourage all of his fellow monks and novices to practice that method.

3. How he administered the temple in order to foster Dhamma propagation.

4. He was admired by the majority of Sangha and lay people, yet at the same time was also criticized severely. With such negative reactions towards him, we shall also have to discover. What tactics he used to maintain his task of Buddha-Dhamma propagation, and cope with the various obstacles.

5. How meditation practice might be able to cure illness.

## **1.2 Objectives of the Study**

1. To review Lord Buddha's propagation of Dhamma by way of meditation teaching as represented in the Pali Canon.

2. To study and evaluate Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's propagation of the Dhamma with that of Lord Buddha.

3. To analyze the impact of Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's Dhamma Propagation on Thai society and abroad, studying the extent of its influence, major positive consequences and any negative effects.

## **1.3 Scope of the Study**

This thesis focuses on Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's methods of Dhamma propagation rather than on the content taught or his life history which have been well studied elsewhere. We cannot, however, do justice to his teachings methods without some consideration of both the content taught and his own biography.

## **1.4 Definitions of the Terms Used in the Thesis**

“Buddha Dhamma” means the Buddha's doctrines which were compiled in the Tipitaka.

“Propagation” means the dissemination or spreading of the Buddha's Dhamma widely.

“Anapanasati” means a meditation technique based on mindfulness of the breath.

“Vipassanâ” means ‘insight’, intuition, introspection or inward vision.

“Dhammakâya” means the supra-mundane body which is of the purest element and is non-compound. It is not subject to the three characteristics of *anicca*, *dukkha*, and *anatta*.<sup>25</sup>

“Samma Araham” means the Enlightened Buddha who is an arahanta.

“Pathama-magga” means the light sphere of Dhamma, the preliminary sign which appears when basic concentration is reached.

“Dhammakâya – Gotrabhû” means Noble State wisdom.

“Dhammakâya – Anâgamî” means Non- Returner.

“Dhammakâya – Arahatta” means Perfect One.

“Dhammakâya – Sotâpanna” means Stream Winner, attainment of the first state of holiness.

“Ekaggatâ” means One-pointedness (as in concentration of mind).

## 1.5 Review of Related Theses

Phramaha Sawai, Chotiko (Tamna), Master’s Thesis “A Critical Study of the Concept of Dhammakaya in Buddhism”, Buddhist Studies, Graduate School, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 2542 (1999).

The purpose of this thesis was to survey, compile and study the similarity and differences of the concept of Dhammakâya based on the Pali Tipitaka, the commentaries (*Atthakathâ*), Mahayana Sutras and the teachings of the Most Venerable Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni (Sodh Candasaro). The research discovered that Dhammakaya was a name of the Buddha who was the center of Dhamma according to the Tipitaka and Commentary of Theravada Buddhism. In the sense of Theravada, Dhammakâya consisted of the nine supramundane states, namely the Four Paths, the Four Fruits and Nibbâna. Nibbâna had three characteristics i.e. *niccam* (permanence), *sukham* (bliss), *anatta* (Non-self), and could be

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<sup>25</sup> Phra Ajahn Maha Sermchai Jayamangalo, **The Heart of Dhammakaya Meditation**, (Bangkok: Dhammakâya Buddhist Foundation, 1997), p.156.

attained by following the Threefold Training. Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni (Sodh Candasaro) defined Dhammakaya as a name of the Buddha and at the same time was one of the many bodies of man. Dhammakaya was considered to be beyond the scope of the three characteristics; it was unconditioned: *niccām* (permanent), *sukham* (blissful), and *atta* (self). This study concluded that Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's interpretation seemed to be his own personal view which was not found in the texts of Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism.

Phra Maha, Santhiti Visudhved, Master's Thesis "The Comparative Study of Theravada and Tibetan Buddhist Meditation Methods: A Case Study at Wat Paknam and Dharmasala (India)", Comparative Religion, Graduate School, Mahidol University, 2543 (2000).

This study discovered that the methodology of Wat Pak Nam included both concentration and insight meditation and taught according to the Theravada Pali Canon and its' commentaries. The teaching was the use of the *Aloka Kasina* together with recollection of the Buddha and mindfulness of breathing in order to refine the mind until attaining jhana (absorption), and then contemplated upon the body in the body onwards from the human body to the refined Dhammakaya body. The insight meditation attained at the Dhammakaya level was to contemplate phenomena according to dhamma.

Charoon Somnoi, Master Thesis "A Teaching of Pervasion (*Vipalasa*) in Buddhism: A case study of a teaching of Dhammakaya Monastery", Comparative Religion, Mahidol University, 2543 (2000).

This research analyzed the teaching of Dhammakaya and the teaching of perversion (*vipalasa*) in Buddhism. Dhammakaya illustrated that Nibbana was the state of *Atta* (self), permanence, stability, immortality and eternity. *Atta* (Self) lived in heaven (*Ayatananibbana*). It was concluded that Dhammakaya's concept of Nibbana was a perversion in Buddhism because it conflicted with the principle of Buddha's teaching that all conditioned things were non-permanent, changing all the time, suffering and non-self. All dhamma is without *Atta*. Therefore, the teaching of the Dhammakaya School that Dhammakaya is a state of permanent happiness and *Atta* was classified as perversion in Buddhism.

Phramaha Samruay Caruvanno (Bunsong), Master's Thesis "A Study on the Effectiveness of Opening and Receiving Information about the Buddha Dhamma, in order to develop the Quality of Life and Society," Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 2542 (1999).

The aims of this study were to find out how effective was the opening and receiving of Dhamma information for development of society and quality of life; including the various factors in relation to it for mental development, having a part in developing the community and bringing this Dhamma information to utilize beneficially for the social development in the future. It was found that the Buddhists proposed to have more locations for meditation practice. Monks should apply Dhamma to modern day of living to be more interesting to people at all levels. Dhamma programs should be promoted on radio and television. The news on monks should be presented more appropriate in order to correct good image. After each section of Dhamma preaching, there should be a section for questions and answers provided for the Buddhists.

Phramaha Thammajariya Khruangthip, Master Thesis "The Role of Luang Phor Wat Paknam Foundation and the Assistance of Social Development", Rural Development Studies, Graduate School, Mahidol University, 2542 (1999).

The purpose of this study was to study the role of Luang Phor Wat Paknam Foundation in promoting social development, Buddhism and Wat Paknam. The interest earned from the capital of this Foundation was used to support and develop temple and the communities according to the objective of the Foundation. The study designated that this foundation had its ideology, format and ideology to promote social development, Buddhism and its own welfare by utilizing the principles appropriately. The fulfillment of Social assistance included: (1) Personnel Administration, (2) Common Resources, (3) Development Assistance, and (4) Evaluation. The Managing Administration was in a family-style. Everyone worked for this foundation based on faith in Luang Phor Wat Paknam and the will to work for Buddhism without expecting anything in return.

Wiroj Nakchatri, Master Thesis "The Belief of Buddhists and Christians in Miracles. A Case Study at Wat Paknam and Jai Samarn Full

Gospel Church”, Comparative Religion, Graduate School, Mahidol University, 2536 (1993).

The purpose of this research was to compare the belief of Buddhists and Christians in miracles. This research summarized that only 14 percent of Buddhists went to Wat Paknam on “Wan Phra”. Only 14.1 percent of Buddhists went to listen to Buddhist teaching, but 50.5 percent went for merit-making. The Buddhists of 50.8 percent believed in Buddha’s miracles and 59 percent believed in Luang Phor Wat Paknam’s miracles, 89.9 percent obtained what they wish by praying to Luang Phor Wat Paknam.

## **1.6 Method of the Study**

The methodology of our study will be summarized in two parts, data and analysis.

### **1.6.1 Data**

This study will be based on documentary research and interviews with knowledgeable disciples. In particular, the following sources will be used. The thesis will analyze the following data:

1.6.1.1 Literature review of original works by Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni from books and tapes cassettes, demonstrating his methods for teaching Dhamma and meditation practicing to monks and lay people, analyzed into scripture study (*pariyatti*), meditation practice (*paṭipatti*), and personal insight (*paṭiveda*).

1.6.1.2 Literature review about Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni by knowledgeable disciples.

1.6.1.3 Interviews with Dhamma teachers and meditation instructors currently propagating Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni’s teachings. Approximately 10-15 people (monks, nuns, and lay people).

1.6.1.4 Examples to elucidate his Dhamma teaching, showing what he emphasized and what methods he taught.

1.6.1.5 Stories, similes and analogies that he used in teaching the application of Buddha Dhamma to daily life.

## **1.6.2 Analysis**

1.6.2.1 Analyzing the similarities and differences in teaching methods of Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's Dhamma propagation and Lord Buddha's Dhamma Propagation.

1.6.2.2 Summarizing the findings of techniques and methods of Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's Dhamma propagation and Lord Buddha's Dhamma propagation side-by-side in table format.

1.6.2.3 Discussion of problems encountered by case study.

1.6.2.4 Facilitating and drawing conclusions, identifying significant results and areas for further research.

## **1.7 Expected Advantages of the Study**

As a result of the study, the following advantages and outcomes can be obtained:

1.7.1 Obtaining clear understanding of the roles of scripture study (*pariyatti*), meditation practice (*paṭipatti*) and personal insight (*pañivedda*) in Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's achievements.

1.7.2 Identifying Lessons learned regarding effective integration of scripture study (*pariyatti*), meditation practice (*paṭipatti*), how to do right and apply both properly to get to personal insight (*pañiveda*) as outcome for propagation of the Buddha Dhamma.

1.7.3 Learning his similes and analogies in order to apply them to real life in cultivating one's own spiritual virtues.

## Chapter II

### Lord Buddha's Propagation of Buddha Dhamma

The essence of Buddha's propagation of Buddha Dhamma is teaching followers to meditate and realize the truth for themselves, raising consciousness through different levels of truth, from Conventional Truth up to Noble Truth (*ariyasacca*). Buddha was a supreme teacher and an exemplar, leading Buddhists to the ultimate goal which he had already experienced through self-practice and self-realization. The Buddha did not keep any secrets regarding the Dhamma from anyone. He did not hide anything away. He was the teacher of all celestial and human beings.

#### 2.1 Method of Teaching

Ajahn Sanith Srisamdaeng summarizes that the teaching method is as important as the content. A teacher may know the content well, but have no skills for relaying the message to the listeners. If so, they will not understand thoroughly.

##### 2.1.1 Teaching Meditation Practice (*Kammaḅbhāna*)

Lord Buddha advised all bhikkhus to take the Dhamma as their refuge. Taking the Dhamma as their refuge meant practicing contemplation of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (*Satipaḅbhāna*).<sup>26</sup> The Buddha also advised all bhikkhus to carefully and earnestly study and associate with the Dhamma that had led to his enlightenment. These Dhamma are: (1) The Four Foundations of Mindfulness (*Satipaḅbhāna*), (2) The Four Aspects of Exertion (*Sammappadhāna*), (3) The Four Pillars of Success (*Iddhipāda*), (4) The Five Faculties (*Indriya*), (5) The

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<sup>26</sup> Prince Vajirañāḁavarorasa, **Life of the Buddha**, (Bangkok: Mahāmakuta Rājavidyālaya Press, B.E. 2538/1995) p.153.

Five Powers (*Bala*), (6) The Seven Constituents of Enlightenment (*Bojjhaṅga*), (7) The Noble Eightfold Path (*Magga*).<sup>27</sup>

The Buddha taught Bhikkhus Morality (*Silâ*), Meditation (*Samâdhi*), and Wisdom (*Pannâ*). “Well-developed by Morality, Meditation is of great benefit and value. Well-developed by Meditation, Wisdom is of great benefit and value. Well-developed by Wisdom, the mind is absolutely delivered from all kinds of subtle Defilements (Sensuality, Clinging to existence and Ignorance.)”<sup>28</sup>

Meditation means concentration (one-pointedness) of the moral mind. It refers to the subjects of meditation, meditation exercises, and the act of meditation. Buddhist meditation is *Kammaḅbhâna* which means the foundation of action or working ground. It is derived from the two words *Kamma* meaning action and *thana* meaning foundation. A synonym is *bhâvana* which means mental development<sup>29</sup> or mental training. There are two kinds of Buddhist meditation (*Kammaḅbhâna*): (1) Tranquility or Calming Meditation (*Samatha Kammaḅbhâna*) or Mental Development (*Samatha Bhâvana*), and (2) Insight Meditation (*Vipassanâ Kammaḅbhâna*) or Intellectual Development (*Vipassanâ Bhâvana*).

Samatha (*Samatha Bhâvana*) means tranquility, serenity or calmness. It is a synonym of “samadhi” which means concentration, one-pointed focus of the mind (*cittakaggatâ*), or mental absorption (*Avikkhepa*).<sup>30</sup> There are forty subjects of meditation for Samatha Meditation. They are:<sup>31</sup> Ten devices (*Kasinas*): (1) Earth, (2) Water, (3) Fire, (4) Air, (5) Blue, (6) Yellow, (7) Red, (8) White, (9) Light and (10) Space. Ten Foul Things (*Asubha*): (11) a swollen corpse, (12) a bruise, (13) a festering corpse, (14) a cut up corpse, (15) a gnawed corpse, (16) a scattered corpse, (17) a hacked up corpse, (18) a bloody corpse, (19) an eaten corpse, (20) a skeleton. Ten Recollections: (21) the Buddha, (22)

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p.158.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p.160.

<sup>29</sup> Mahathera Nyanatiloka, **Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines** by Nyanattiloka (4<sup>th</sup> ed). (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1988), p.184.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p.31.

<sup>31</sup> Pe Maung Tin, tr. **The Path of Purity**, (London: PTS, 1975), p.129.

the Dhamma, (23) the Sangha, (24) morality, (25) liberation, (26) devas, (27) death, (28) parts of the body, (29) respiration; (30) peace. Four Divine States: (31) friendliness, (32) compassion, (33) sympathetic joy, (34) equanimity. The Four Formless Realms: (35) infinity of Space, (36) infinity of consciousness, (37) Nothingness, and (38) Neither perception nor non-perception. One Perception: (39) perception of the disgusting aspects of food, and one Analysis: (40) analysis into the four elements.

Vipassana means “Insight.” It is the intuitive light flashing forth and exposing the truth of impermanency, suffering and the impersonal, insubstantial nature of all the corporeal and mental phenomena of existence. It is insight wisdom (*vipassana-pañña*) that is the decisive liberating factor in Buddhism, but it has to be developed along with the two other Higher Trainings, Morality and Concentration. The culmination of Insight practice leads directly to stages of Holiness.”<sup>32</sup>

Vipassana Bhâvana signifies a mental state which clearly comprehends all physical and mental states according to the three characteristics (*ti-lakkhana*) and the Four Noble Truths. Insight development involves five stages: (1) Discernment of the corporeal (*rûpa*), (2) Discernment of the mental (*Nama*), (3) Contemplation of both (*nama-rûpa*), (4) Viewing both as conditioned (by Dependent Origination, *paticcasamuppada*), and (5) Application of the three characteristics (impermanence, suffering, and non-self) to mind, body, and conditions.<sup>33</sup>

Meditation on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (*Satipabphâna*) is the most comprehensive practical instruction of the Buddha on *Vipassana* meditation. There were four kinds of contemplation: (1) contemplation of the body (*Kâyânupassanâ*), (2) contemplation of the feelings (*Vedanânupassanâ*), (3) Contemplation of mind (*Cittânupassanâ*), and (4) Contemplation of mind-objects (*Dhammânupassanâ*).<sup>34</sup> There are three main factors of practice: (1)

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<sup>32</sup> Mahathera Nyanatiloka, op.cit., p,231.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, p.197.

<sup>34</sup> Bhikkhu Nânamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, **The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha**, A New Translation of the (**Majjhima Nikaya II**), (Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1995), pp.145-151.

Being ardent (*Atapi*), (2) Being Mindful (*Satima*), and (2) Being fully aware (*Sampâjano*).

Phra Ananda Thera and Phra Sariputta Thera explained the Buddha's teaching of four meditation practice methods of *Samatha-vipassana Kammabhâna*. There were (1) contemplation of *Samantha* first and *vipassana* afterwards; (2) contemplation of *vipassana* and lead to *Samantha* later; (3) contemplation of *Samantha* and *Vipassana* together; and (4) *dhammutdajjavikkhitamanus* (trial and error).<sup>35</sup>

Professor P.A. Payutto summarizes the structure of the Buddha's teaching method in five major categories: (1) The qualities of the teacher (personality and virtues), (2) General teaching Principles (content, learners and the teacher), (3) The style of teaching, (4) Methods of teaching, and (5) Tactics of teaching.<sup>36</sup> He emphasizes the Buddha's fundamental philosophy of having good friends (*Kalyânamittatâ*) and wisdom (*Yonisomanasikâra*). And, he shows how the Buddha used his Ten Powers of the Perfect One (*Dasa-balañâna*) to teach various people in accordance with their diverse fortunes, prestige, and faculties.

### 2.1.2 Qualities of the Teacher

It is essential for a good teacher or propagator to have a personality that will impress an audience. The Buddha had the teacher's qualities both in terms of external personality and internal virtues. He possessed a graceful and respectful personality and an impressive voice, as described by Jangi Brahmin. He delivered gentle speeches in an elegant style. His charming character, steady manner, and calm movements always impressed people to come close to him. A young Brahmin student named Uttara was impressed with the Buddha's speech and praised him in the Brahmâyû Sutta, as follows:

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<sup>35</sup> Phra Bhavanavisithikhun (Sermchai Polpatanaritdhi), **Handbook for Tri-Sikkha Practice**, (Rajchaburi: Sahiti Karn Pim Press, B.E. 2547), pp.71-73.

<sup>36</sup> P.A. Payutto, **Buddhist's Teaching Method**, (Bangkok: Sahadhamamik Co., B.E. 2541), p. 28-29 compare Phra Rajdhamnides (Rabab Ditañâno), op.cit., pp.18-19.

The Buddha's voice has eight qualities: being cheerful, clear, gentle, attractive, agreeable, unbreakable, profound and resonant.<sup>37</sup>

When he teaches Dhamma at the monastery, he neither flatters nor berates the audience. He instructs, urges, rouses, and encourages them with talk purely focused on the Dhamma. His speech has eight qualities: it is distinct, intelligible, melodious, audible, ringing, pleasant, deep, and sonorous. His voice is intelligible as far as the audience extends, but does not continue beyond them. When people have been instructed, urged, roused, and encouraged by him, they rise from their seats and depart looking only at him, concerned with nothing else.<sup>38</sup>

The Buddha was endowed with the special virtues of deep wisdom, complete purity and great compassion. Two "Buddha" levels of wisdom -- The Ten Powers of the Perfect One (*Dasapolayana*) and Superior Analytic Insight (*Papisambhidā*) – enabled the Buddha to be successful in spreading his teachings.

The Ten Powers of the Buddha (*Dasabala-ñāna*)<sup>39</sup> are (1) knowledge of each individual's possibilities and impossibilities for understanding Dhamma teachings (*Bhānāphāna-ñāna*) and knowing the relevant content and principles to present, according to each student's capabilities, especially with respect to karmic causes and effects; (2) knowledge of the karmic effects of the various behaviors of human beings (*Kammavipāka-ñāna*); (3) knowledge of how to proceed to achieve desired objectives and goals (*Sabbatthagāminīpaṭipadā-ñāna*), (4) broad knowledge of the world and its many different elements (*Nānādhātu-ñāna*) with the correct view of how to use them as tools for teaching; (5) knowledge of the different temperaments and interests of each person (*Nānādhimuttika-ñāna*); (6) knowledge of the state of the faculties of each person (*indriyaparopariyatta-ñāna*) including differences in intellect, capabilities, readiness to learn and current attainment; (7) knowledge of actual defilements (*Jhānādisañkilesā-ñāna*), cleansed defilements and the current progress of meditators, as well as their concentration ability and meditation attainment; (8) knowledge of

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid, p. 11.

<sup>38</sup> Bhikkhu Ñādamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, op.cit., pp. 748-749.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., pp. 166-167, compare P.A. Payutto, **Buddhist's Teaching Method**, op.cit., pp.14-17.

students' former existences (*Pubbenivâsânussati- ñâna*) for understanding their background and past experiences; (9) knowledge of the decease and rebirth of all beings (*Cutû-papâta-ñâna*) in accordance with kamma (to observe each student's role in the group and understood whether or not these behaviors would cause problems later and to see the causes underlying the problems and to solve problems immediately); and, finally, (10) he had direct knowledge of the extinction of defilements (*Âsavakkhaya- ñâna*).

Lord Buddha's Superior Analytic Insight (*Pap̐sambhidâ*<sup>40</sup>) included insight of consequences (*Attha- Pap̐sambhidâ*), insight of origins (*Dhamma-Pap̐sambhidâ*), insight regarding language (*Nirutti Pap̐sambhidâ*), and insight for successful application in various situations, including ready wit, initiative, and creativity (*Pap̐bhâna Pap̐sambhidâ*). His complete purity was another important factor leading people to have faith in him. He was completely delivered of all bodily, verbally and mental defilements, so no one could criticize him. He did what he did and said what he said in order to set a good example for others to follow and to have confidence in the value of his teachings. He taught people sincerely, without expecting anything in return.

The Buddha's compassion combined love, equanimity and awareness of reality. He acted as a good friend (*Kalyâñamitta*), giving help and advice to all. The Buddha was endowed with the seven qualities of the good friend (*Kalyâñamitta*): (1) He had endearing (*Piyo*) kindness and compassion, creating a familiar, casual atmosphere of trust and closeness. (2) He was firm in adhering to his principles and worthy of respect (*Garu*), inspiring feelings of assurance, refuge and safety. (3) He was worthy of adoration (*Bhâvanîyo*), because he was truly learned and wise, having trained and improved himself. Thus, his followers spoke and thought of him appreciatively, confidently and proudly. (4) He was capable of speaking effectively (*Vattâ*). He knew how to explain things clearly and was a good counselor. (5) He was a patient listener (*Vacanakkhamo*), willing and attentive to questions. He could bear improprieties and criticism without becoming offended. (6) He was capable of expounding deep discourses on profound subjects (*Gambhîrañca katham kattâ*). (7) Finally, he did not waste time or lead

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<sup>40</sup> P.A. Payutto, **Buddhist's Teaching Method**, op.cit., p.18.

people astray (*No capphâne niyojaye*).<sup>41</sup> These characteristics correspond well with the qualities of a good teacher suggested by Professor Saeng Chandrangam: compassion, lack of arrogance, endurance, justice, caution, respectful behavior and knowing the learners' intellect<sup>42</sup>.

### 2.1.3 Four Levels of Potential Learners

The good teacher must know and be concerned about each individual student's different capacities. The Buddha chose proper teaching techniques suitable to individual's temperament (*Carita or Cariyâ*) and adjusted his teaching on the same subject for each particular person. Temperament (*Carita*) can be classified into six types: (1) lustful (*Râga-carita*), (2) hating (*Dosa-carita*), (3) deluded (*Moha-carita*), (4) faithful (*Saddhâ-carita*), (5) intelligent (*Buddhi-carita, Ñâòà*), and (6) speculative (*Vitakka-carita*).<sup>43</sup> Buddha's concern for individual learners was also expressed in his survey of the world with his Dhamma-Eye to identify those capable of learning.

He saws beings with little dust in their eyes, with much dust in their eyes, with acute faculties, with dull faculties, of good dispositions, of bad dispositions, docile, indocile, few seeing fear in sins and the worlds beyond like the lotus flowers.<sup>44</sup>

Thus, he compared four levels of potential learners to four kinds of lotus flowers as follows: (1) A person with quick intuition that enables brief teaching is called (*Ugghapitaññû*), comparable to a few lotuses that are born and grow in the water, but emerge above the surface and will bloom at dawn with the first ray of sunlight. (2) A person who understands after more detailed explanation is called (*Vipacitaññû*), like lotuses born and growing in the water that have reached the surface. These will bloom the following day. (3) A person who can be guided is called (*Neyya*), like lotuses born and growing in the water which remain

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<sup>41</sup> P.A. Payutto, **A Constitution for Living**, (Bangkok: Buddha Dhamma Foundation, B.E. 2542), p.63.

<sup>42</sup> Saeng Chandrangam, op. cit, pp. 22-27.

<sup>43</sup> Saeng Chandrangam, op.cit., pp.52-53.

<sup>44</sup> I.B. Horner, M.A., tr. **The Book of the Discipline, V. 4**, tr. of **Vinaya Pitaka**, (The Great Division: Mahavagga), (Oxford: PTS, 1993), p. 9.

under water, but which could rise to the surface to bloom later. (4) Finally, a person with great learning difficulty is called (*Padaparama*), like lotuses stuck under water which will be eaten by fish and turtles.<sup>45</sup>

The individual's maturity in wisdom (*Ñâòa*) and readiness to learn were also important factors. Buddha also taught by having students do things for themselves. This was effective in developing clear understanding. For example, he taught Chulabandok to meditate sitting on a clean white cloth. The student saw the dirty marks he left on the cloth and realized that this was like his own mind, thus attaining Arahant status. Teaching should proceed as though teacher and student were sharing a mutual search for the facts. The teacher should provide opportunities for the learner to express his ideas and discuss freely. The Buddha used this method often so that learners would have confidence and see reality for themselves. He paid special attention to each person in accordance with his circumstances, and gave assistance as needed. Professor Sanith notes that Buddha's intention was to provide the education needed for each individual to become a Noble Person, with proper knowledge and behavior. The objective was to change behavior, not just concepts. Buddha checked each potential learner's readiness and circumstances with respect to time and place.<sup>46</sup>

#### 2.1.4 Teaching Strategies and Tactics

A good starting point is very important for successful teaching. It arouses the interest that leads to the content that follows. The Buddha always began with interesting introductions. He would not usually direct attention to the content right away. He often carried on conversations with the visiting individuals on topics they were interested in and knew well. Sometimes he inspired the audience with an interesting topic, asking questions, and then explaining to lead them to Dhamma. Sometime, he used a topic that the listener was interested in and knew well throughout the entire conversation, adding Dhamma within the conversation. Buddha always established a pleasant, comfortable atmosphere, showing respect for the learner. Thus, the learner felt proud

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<sup>45</sup> P.A. Payutto, **Buddhist's Teaching Method**, op.cit., p. 36.

<sup>46</sup> Sanith Srisamdaeng, **The Buddhist Method of Teaching**, (Bangkok: Paper Presented in Class, Graduate School, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University), p. 7. (Mineographed).

of himself. His teaching focused on the content, to give knowledge and understanding without insulting anyone. Teachers should teach with respect, truthfully so the learner can see the value and importance of what is being taught. Using polite and gentle language makes it easy to understand and accept. The Buddha was careful to use proper language that was commonly used and easy to understand. Pali was the common language in that area at the Buddha's time.<sup>47</sup>

Buddha advised his disciples to practice the five characteristics of a good teacher (*Dhammadesaka-Dhamma*): (1) Teach step-by-step in proper sequence (*Anupubbikathâ*). He taught in sequence, from easy to difficult, in logical progression. (2) Explain reasons to clarify the main point (*Pariyâyadassâvî*). (3) Teach with loving-kindness in the heart, with the teaching to benefit each listener (*Anudayatâ Pabicca*). (4) Do not aim for material gain (*Anâmisantara*). (5) Speak impartially and gently, staying warm and friendly (*Anupahacca*). Reveal the truth without boasting or insulting others.<sup>48</sup> The Buddha advised Ananda Thera that:

Ananda, preaching to others is not easy. The teacher must maintain five criteria in mind: (1) We will preach in sequence; (2) We will explain with reasons for better understanding; (3) We will preach with loving-kindness; (4) We will not preach for benefit or gain; and (5) We will not preach to show off our superiority.<sup>49</sup>

Analysis of Buddha's teaching, shows that he used four strategic approaches (*Desanâvidhi*): (1) Often the Buddha explained reasons and analyzed so that people could understand clearly and see for themselves (*Sandassanâ*). This style was admired as like giving a light to the people to walk in the dark. (2) Sometimes the Buddha inspired listeners to agree with a fact until they accepted it and put it into practice (*Samâdapanâ*). (3) At other times, he urged his listeners to maintain the interest, endurance and confidence to accomplish what had to be done, without fear of the difficulties or hardships (*Samuttejanâ*). (4) Elsewhere, he created an atmosphere of fun, cheerfulness, joyousness and delight,

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<sup>47</sup> Saeng Chandrangam, op. cit, pp. 50-61.

<sup>48</sup> P.A. Payutto, **A Constitution for Living**, (Bangkok: Sahadhammik Co., B.E. 2542), p.64.

<sup>49</sup> P.A. Payutto, **Buddhist's Teaching Method** op.cit., p.44.

inspiring his listeners with hope and the vision of good results from their practice (*Sampahamsanâ*).<sup>50</sup>

The Buddha also had many specific teaching tactics. Most simply, these fall into four categories: (1) The Conversational Style, was used especially for those who had no faith in Buddhism and no knowledge or understanding of the Dhamma. Here, listeners had a chance to express their ideas to the Buddha joyfully. He would then start asking questions to lead the listener to think and understand Dhamma, eventually gaining faith. The Buddha even urged monks to practice Dhamma conversations. For instance, the *Mangala Sutta* states: “Talking about Dhamma occasionally is a fruitful, auspicious occasion.”<sup>51</sup> (2) The Descriptive or Lecture Style was appropriate for a big meeting with a large number of people and monks who already had basic knowledge, understanding and faith. They listened to Dhamma to seek spiritual tranquility. Each individual felt that the Buddha was talking directly to him personally. (3) The Question and Answer Style was good for people with doubts about the Dhamma. In the Buddha’s time, most audiences were from non-Buddhist sects. Some asked questions to compare his teachings with their own beliefs. Others wanted to test the knowledge of the Buddha. Some asked questions aimed at intimidation or humiliation. The Buddha first considered the type of question and then selected the appropriate method of answering. As illustrated in the *Sangiti Sutta*, the Buddha classified questions by the method of answering into four types: (1) questions to answer directly and promptly; (2) questions to be answered with a question and then answered afterwards; (3) questions requiring analyzing the contents and restraining useless questions (Buddha advised disciples to consider the reason behind each question to in order to teach to the point.); finally, (4) the fourth style was questions which required establishing rules. The Buddha did not establish a lot of rules up front. He set rules after a monk had made a mistake. The Buddha would call upon all bhikkhus to help judge whether or not the monk had really made a mistake. Then, he would point out the bad effects of that particular behavior upon the individual and the community

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<sup>50</sup> Sathienpong Wannapok, **Buddha’s Teaching Method from Pipitaka**, (Bangkok: Petchrungrakarnpim Co., B.E. 2540), p 51.

<sup>51</sup> P.A. Payutto, **Buddhist’s Teaching Method** op.cit., p. 46.

of monks. Finally, he would set up a rule for monks to follow in the future.<sup>52</sup>

A more detailed analysis organizes the Buddha's teaching tactics into ten categories, for teaching easy to difficult subject matter. Advanced Dhamma can be very subtle, deep, and difficult to understand. (1) The Buddha used "Teaching with a Story and Example" to explain matters so that learners could understand easily and clearly. It helped listeners to enjoy and remember the content. There are about 547 Birth Stories (*Jâtaka*) in the Tipitaka. An example illustrated in the *Kûpadanta Sutta* is "A Bloodless Sacrifice." The Brahmin *Kûpadanta* planned a great sacrifice of many wild animals and sought advice from the Buddha. The Buddha told him the birth story (*Jâtaka*) of an ancient king, Mahâvijita, who had great wealth and resources. This king performed bloodless sacrifices with no loss of life to animals. The 'sacrifice' was more profitably aimed at promoting the economic welfare of the people. He offered seedlings for people in the rural areas to plant as well as good livelihood opportunities and living conditions. The people joined the king in giving generously (*Dana*) as their contribution to such bloodless sacrifice. So, the Buddha advised Brahmin *Kûpadanta* to make a less troublesome and more profitable sacrifice by donating to the Sangha and taking Three Gems as his refuge by observing of the Five Precepts.<sup>53</sup>

(2) The Buddha also used "Teaching by Simile or Analogy." He taught his disciples not to cling to anything, using a famous simile comparing his teachings to a raft to be used for crossing to the farther shore and then to be left behind.

This raft was a great help to me. With its aid I have crossed safely over to this side, exerting myself with my hands and feet. It would be good if I beached this raft on the shore, or moored it and left it afloat, and then went on my way wherever it may be<sup>54</sup>.

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., pp. 47-49.

<sup>53</sup> Maurice Walshe, **The Long Discourses of the Buddha**, tr. of the **Dîgha Nikâya**, (Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1996), p. 56; compare U Ko Lay, **Guide to Tipitaka**, (Kuala Lumpur, Majujaya Indah Sdn Bhd, 1991), p. 26; compare Sucheap Punnanuparb, **Tipitaka for People**, (Bangkok: Mahamakuta Rajavidhayalaya Press, B.E. 2539), pp. 301-303.

<sup>54</sup> The Venerable Dr. W. Rahula, op.cit.,p. 12.5

O bhikkhus, I have taught a doctrine similar to a raft – it is for crossing over, and not for carrying (getting hold of). You, O bhikkhus, who understand that the teaching is similar to a raft, should give up even a good things (dhamma); how much more then should you give up evil things (*adhamma*)<sup>55</sup>.

(3) Teaching “Using Audiovisual Aids” was rudimentary. In the Buddha’s time, there were no modern teaching aids. He taught Dhamma to the elderly without using any aids. But, when possible, he used the simple resources available naturally as practical tools for teaching younger learners. For example, the Buddha used water in a vessel as a tool for teaching Râhula in the *Ambalapphikârâhulovâda Sutta*:

“Râhula, do you see this little water left in the water vessel?” The venerable Râhula replied “Yes, venerable sir”. The Buddha said “Even so little, Râhula, are the holy vows of those who are not ashamed to tell a deliberate lie.” Then the Blessed One threw away the little water that was left and asked the venerable Râhula “Râhula, do you see that little water that was thrown away?” “Yes, venerable sir.” “Even so, Râhula, those who are not ashamed to tell a deliberate lie have thrown away their holy vows.” Then the Blessed One turned the water vessel upside down and asked: “Râhula, do you see this vessel turned upside down?” “Yes, venerable sir.” “Even so, Râhula, those who are not ashamed to tell a deliberate lie have turned their holy vows upside down.” “Râhula, do you see this hollow, empty water vessel? Even so, hollow and empty, are the holy vows of those who are not ashamed to tell a deliberate lie.”<sup>56</sup>

(4) The Buddha also taught by “Demonstration with Real Action.” The best teaching is actually doing something to set an example for the others to follow. Buddha taught by giving demonstrations to the learners that they could observe and remember to repeat later on their own. The Buddha always set a good example through his own good

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Bhikkhu Ñâḍamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, op .cit., pp. 523-524.

behavior. A good teacher should train himself to behave properly personally before teaching others.

(5) The Buddha was very proficient at “Teaching with Skillful Use of Words.” He had the nine-fold mastery of verbal teaching (*Navaṅga-satthusâsana*): (i) Discourses (*Sutta*), (ii) Discourses mixed with verses (*Geyya*), (iii) Prose-expositions (*Veyyâkaraṅga*), (iv) Verses (*Gâthâ*), (v) exclamations (joyful utterances, *Udâna*), (vi) “Thus-said” Inspired Discourses (*Itivuttaka*), (vii) Birth-stories (*Jâtaka*), (viii) Marvelous ideas (*Abbhûtadhamma*), and (ix) Questions-and-answers (*Vedalla*).

(6) The Buddha also knew how to “Teach the Right People.” This was very important for Dhamma propagation. He taught the leaders of large, important groups such as the King Bimbisara and the Kassapa brothers to propagate Dhamma rapidly. (7) He Taught at the “Proper Time,” as we have seen from his organized daily schedule. (8) The Buddha exhibited great “Flexibility in Teaching.” The good teacher should teach, like Lord Buddha, for the benefit of the learner, without egoism, prejudice, or pride. He should know when he to be strong, strict and firm, when to be gentle and to compromising. Sometimes Lord Buddha had to use both hard and soft strategies to as appropriate to the circumstances.

(9) Lord Buddha’s “Teaching with Skillful Use of Reward and Punishment” was very subtle. A word of praise was an eagerly sought reward. On some occasions, he praised a particular disciple as a good example in order to provide encouragement and establish an example for the others. The Buddha only established rules after some inappropriate behavior had arisen. He did not give out punishment or use force. In the *Angulimâla Sutta*, King Pasenadi said:

It is wonderful, venerable sir, it is marvelous how the Blessed One tames the untamed, brings peace to the violent, and leads to Nibbana those who have not attained Nibbana. We ourselves could not tame him with force and weapons, yet the Blessed One has tamed him without force or weapons.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Bhikkhu Ñâdamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, op. cit., pp .713-714.

(10) Finally, there is “Teaching via Confronting and Tackling Problems” arise differently each time. Thus, they should be solved tactfully using wit and commonsense. The Buddha often confronted various obstacles and problems, but he had wit to solve problems tactfully in various ways appropriate to each circumstance.

### 2.1.5 Teaching as a Miracle

Lord Buddha reserved the use of actual miracles for a few very special occasions. He said that the greatest miracle was the miracle of plain ordinary teaching in which the learner gains benefit in accordance with his practice. Marvels or miracles (*Pâpîhâriya*) consist of three types: (1) The Marvel of psychic powers (*Iddhi- Pâpîhâriya*), (2) The Marvel of mind-reading (*Âdesanâ- Pâpîhâriya*), and (3) The Marvel of Teaching (*Anusâsanî- Pâpîhâriya*).<sup>58</sup>

Buddha used the Marvel of psychic powers (*Iddhi- Pâpîhâriya*) only with less intellectual learners (*Padaparama*) who had harmful or stubborn characteristics. For example, with the bandit Angulimâla, a fierce murder who chased the Buddha, Buddha used psychic powers to make the bandit unable to follow. He taught the bandit Angulimâla with short simple but very impressive words. “I have stopped, Angulimâla, you stop too.”<sup>59</sup> The result was that Angulimâla was puzzled and was curious to find out what the Buddha meant by ‘stop’. The Buddha said: “Angulimâla, I have stopped forever, I abstain from violence towards living beings; but you have no restraint.”<sup>60</sup> This statement suddenly gave him insight. He surrendered to the Buddha and threw his weapons away. The bandit requested the Buddha to teach the Dhamma and later asked for ordination.

Another case was with Uruvela Kassapa, who was stubborn because he thought he was already enlightened, himself. The Buddha converted Uruvela Kassapa from fire worship and from his belief that he was already an Arahant by demonstrating his superhuman psychic powers

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<sup>58</sup> Saeng Chandrangam, op.cit., p. 29.

<sup>59</sup> Maurice Walshe, op.cit., p.711.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p.711.

(*Iddhi-Pâṇihâriya*).<sup>61</sup> This tactic of teaching by demonstrating miracles was a technique which Lord Buddha reserved for only a few very important occasions. Buddha taught non-verbally (e.g., walking on water). This demonstrated the Buddha's teaching technique of adapting his presentations to each audience.<sup>62</sup> This technique was used with people with abnormal states of mind who were not ready to listen to Dhamma. The Buddha was not in favor to this type of marvel because it could have either good or bad effects. A person with faith might find it good, but someone with no faith might ridicule it.

The Buddha used the Marvel of Mind-Reading (*Ādesanâ-Pâṇihâriya*) to read audience's minds and to teach Dhamma accordance with their needs and capabilities. He also applied this marvel to identify persons of quick intuition (*Ugghapitaññû*) who could understand immediately.

(*Anusâsanî-Pâṇihâriya*) is just normal preaching without using any super powers. This is what the Buddha generally practiced. He called this the most successful and most effective marvel because the learner would receive benefits over time according to his practice. It works especially well with people needing detailed explanations (*Vipacitaññû*) and those who can be guided to achieve benefit over time (*Neyya*). Many listeners initially obtained simple knowledge at the level of dogma (*Dipphi*) and later progressed to supreme knowledge (*Bodhiñâḍa*), rising from ordinary "good friends" (*Kalyâḍa puthujana*) to Noble Disciples (*Arahants*). This was successful because The Buddha taught each individual according to his characteristic behavior (*charita*), background, and intellect. Prior to preaching, he used his Buddha-Eye to identify persons with the potential for achieving the path (*magga*) and fruit (*Phala*) at various levels. He, then, adjusted the content and teaching techniques according to the audience's needs and capabilities.

The Buddha had many methods of teaching. The Buddha's manner of teaching was adapted to each audience's moods and concerns. He answered all questions, including non-verbalized thoughts and cues

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<sup>61</sup> Prince Vajirañḍavarorasa, op. cit., pp. 75-76.

<sup>62</sup> Sathienpong Wannapok, op. cit., p.57; Phrakrukalyanasidhiwat (Smarn Promyu), op. cit., pp.132-133.

from the circumstances.<sup>63</sup> In adapting his teaching, Buddha considered three elements: (1) the content, (2) the learners, and (3) the method of teaching.

## **2.2 The Objective of Lord Buddha's Dhamma Propagation**

The Buddha's main objective was to teach for the benefit and well-being of mankind (*Parahita-papipatti*) and for peace to help them find relief from suffering. He taught the Dhamma which is beautiful in the beginning, in the middle and at the end. He taught all who were teachable – those with a lot of dust in their eyes as well as those with just a little dust. In order to do this, he had to teach himself first and achieve his own excellence (*Attahita-sampatti*) first. He wished not only the economic well-being of all and their well being but also the mental physical well-being, and their well-being both here and hereafter. He emphasized that these could be obtained through righteousness and non-violence.

### **2.2.1 Achieving his Own Excellence (*Attahita-sampatti*)**

The Buddha trained himself to know thoroughly and to become his own refuge. Lord Buddha cultivated perfections (*paramitas*) through exercising three fundamental virtues: charity (*Dâna*), morality (*silâ*) and meditation (*bhavâna*). He gave up his authority, family, property, and luxurious life in the palace to dedicate himself to pursuing the holy life as an ascetic. This dedication was called the “Great Renunciation.”<sup>64</sup> It enabled him to practice higher morality (*silâ*) and meditation (*bhavâna*) and to realize the truth. This took him six years, through many experiences, studying with famous religious teachers and practicing extreme self-mortification. But, these methods did not lead to the extinction of suffering. Finally, he realized that the middle path is the best way to achieve enlightenment. He made a determined resolution not to rise up from his meditation until he had attained enlightenment, even if his flesh and blood dried up. The Great Deceiver (*Marâ*) led an army to attack him and frighten him away. But, the Buddha reminded himself of his thirty perfections (*Paramitas*), and defeated Mara. Buddha had enough

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<sup>63</sup> Peter Marvey, **An Introduction to Buddhism**, p.29.

<sup>64</sup> Phra Sunthorn Plamintr, op.cit., p.16.

confidence in himself to avoid attachment to any temptation of worldly desires.<sup>65</sup>

Buddha practiced meditation until he achieved the self-confidence that “Now I have known”. There are three levels of wisdom (*Ñâòà*), called the three *Vijjâ*. (1) The first is knowing past lives (*Pubbenivâsânussati-ñâòà*). With his refined psychic powers (*Abhiññâ*), Lord Buddha recalled many previous lives. (2) The second (*Cutûpapâta-ñâòà*) is knowledge of the death and birth of all beings in accordance with their accumulation of good or bad deeds (*Kamma*). This is realization of how beings are made different from one another. It is also called the Wisdom of the Divine Eye (*Dibbacakkaya-ñâòà*). (3) The third (*Âsavakkhaya-ñâòà*) is knowledge of the destruction of even the most subtle kind of defilements (*Âsava*).<sup>66</sup> After obtaining this threefold knowledge, the Buddha realized the Four Noble Truths and then contemplated the Law of Dependent Origination (*Papiccasamuppâda*) in both forward and reverse directions, three times. Then, the Buddha understood clearly the causes of suffering and the destruction of these causes. He attained enlightenment.<sup>67</sup> Ajahn Sanith Srisamdaeng<sup>68</sup> advises that all wise teachers should achieve personal excellence first and then teach others afterwards. In this way they will be sure to avoid dishonor.

### 2.2.2 Teaching for the Welfare of Others (*Parahita-papipatti*)

The Buddha propagated the Dhamma in order to be a refuge for others. After attaining enlightenment, he realized that his Dhamma was subtle and difficult to see and comprehend. Only the wise could grasp it. Most men were trapped by passions. Thus, the Buddha hesitated to try to teach the Dhamma to others. He thought it might be too difficult to understand. But, the Buddha’s heart was full of compassion to help

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<sup>65</sup> Sathienpong Wannapok, **Buddha Cariyavatta**, (Bangkok: Amarin Printing Group, B.E. 2531), p.39; compare Prince Vajirañâðavarorasa, **Life of the Buddha**, op.cit., p. 45.

<sup>66</sup> Prince Vajirañâðavarorasa, op. cit., pp. 41-42; compare Phrakrukulayanasidhiwat (Smarn Promyu), **Buddha’s History as of Pathomsompoj**, (Bangkok: Mahachularajavidhayalaya University Press, B.E. 2547), p.85;

<sup>67</sup> I.B. Horner, M.A. tr. **The Book of the Discipline**, op.cit., pp.2-3.

<sup>68</sup> Sanith Srisamdaeng, **The Buddhist Method of Teaching**, (Bangkok: Paper Presented in Class, Graduate School, Mahachulalongkornrajavidhayalaya University), p. 1. (Mineographed).

mankind become freed from suffering. Finally, he decided to propagate his Dhamma. He concluded that there must be some people with just ‘a little dust in the eyes’ who could understand. He compared potential learners with four types lotus plants. Whom should he teach first? He first thought of his two former teachers. They were most capable of understanding his *Dhamma* right away. But, both had passed away. Then, he thought of the five ascetics.<sup>69</sup> He traveled a long way to preach his first sermon to the Five Ascetics. Thus, his initial strategy was to think and plan, identifying capable recipients, and, then, to teach the *Dhamma* that he had discovered himself.

### 2.2.3 Lord Buddha’s Daily Propagation Objectives

Lord Buddha’s propagation objectives become clear by examining his daily routine (*Buddhakicca*). The daily schedule was as follows: (1) In the Morning or first watch (*Purebhatta* or *Papâhamayâma*) from 6:00 to 10:00 a.m., he would go for the alms-round. This provided people with the opportunity to make tremendous merit by donating to the Buddha. (2) In the afternoon (*Pacchâbhatta*), after the meal, he preached Dhamma to the people. (3) In the evening (*Purim*) – he would give advice and answer the questions of the bhikkhus and novices. (4) At night, the middle watch (*Majjhimayâma*), from 10:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m., he would solve the problems of celestial beings. (5) Finally, during the last watch (*Pacchimayâma*) from 2:00-6:00 a.m., he performed three activities: walking (*Cankama*), sleeping, and surveying the world with the “Buddha” (all-knowing) eye to identify those ready to be taught and those who needed help.

## 2.3 Main Dhamma Teachings

The Buddha began by preaching the first sermon (*Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*) to the Five Ascetics. This Sutta was on the Middle Way and the Four Noble Truth. Lord Buddha continued to teach miscellaneous Dhamma to the remaining four ascetics until all obtained the Dhamma Eye. Then, he preached the *Anantalakana Sutta* which was about Five Aggregates are impermanent, suffering and non-self. They all became Aranhanta. Next, the Buddha propagated the

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<sup>69</sup> Sathienpong Wannapok, op. cit., p.47; Prince Vajirañâavarorasa, op. cit., pp. 55-57.

Dhamma to less advanced audiences. He preached to a young man named 'Yasa', his parents and wife, and his 54 friends. This required a new teaching method. He preached the Progressive Sermon (*Anubhuppikathâ*) before presenting the Four Noble Truths. This sermon was designed to purify their minds to be ready for receiving the advanced Dhamma (Paramatha Dhamma). It began by teaching generosity and morality and then pleased the audience by describing the pleasures of heaven that they might be rewarded with. But then, it suddenly turned to showing how temporary all such pleasures are and how they all eventually lead to depression or suffering. Finally, the Progressive Sermon (*Anubhuppikathâ*) extolled the rewards of freeing oneself from attachment to sensual pleasures. This prepared their minds to receive the Four Noble Truth. This was the earliest phase of the Buddha's Dhamma propagation. After that, the Buddha preached the same combination of the Progressive Sermon (*Anubhuppikathâ*) and the Four Noble Truths to a group of thirty young men known as the "*Bhaddavaggiya*". Next, the Buddha preached the Fire Sermon (*Âdittapariyâya Sutta*) to the three brothers of Kassapa family and their one thousand followers. It was about Five Aggregates are burning by the heat of greed, hatred and delusion.

The Buddha had three criteria in teaching Dhamma, which earned him the confidence and respect of his disciples.<sup>70</sup> (1) Sometimes he taught directly, so that the learner would gain a thorough knowledge of the Dhamma. (2) Other times, he taught to help the learner reach the deeper insight into Dhamma that really should be known. This means to realize of the effects resulting from the practice of Dhamma, such as abstaining from unwholesome conduct and cultivating meritorious actions. These are called "Dhamma that should be known." (3) Third, the Buddha sometimes taught to cause the listener to contemplate to see for himself. This is teaching by cause and effect to bring the learner to see and understand clearly on his own. For example, the Buddha might point out the cause of suffering and the cause of happiness for the learner to contemplate (as in the first of the 'Virtues of a Gentleman,' *Sappurisa-dhamma*, which is 'knowing the cause'). The learner should know that the cause of suffering is greed, anger and delusion, and should later come to realize internally the truth of this when he contemplates the matter. A

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<sup>70</sup> C. Maitrichita, **Dhamma Vipakka Manual for Nak Dhamma Tri**, (Liangsieng Chongcharoen Printing, B.E. 2476), p. 25.

further example is provided in “The Honey Ball, *Madhupindika Sutta*.”<sup>71</sup> The Buddha answered a Bhikkhu’s question with a riddle and left without explanation. The Bhikkhus did not understand and sought explanation from the Venerable Mahâ Kaccâna. This approach forces the learner to put in the work to see for himself.

The content of teaching<sup>72</sup> should start with easy subjects and lead to the more difficult. Lord Buddha often began with simple facts from real situations that any person could comprehend from his own experience -- knowing, seeing, hearing and doing, but not blind belief.

The teaching of the Buddha invites you to ‘come and see’, (*ehi-passika*), not to come and believe”<sup>73</sup> ‘See for yourself’ is the essence. The expressions used throughout Buddhist texts to refer to persons who realized the Truth are: ‘The dustless, stainless Eye of Truth (*Dhamma-cakkhu*) has arisen’ or ‘He has seen Truth, attained Truth, and known Truth,’ or ‘He has penetrated the Truth, crossed over doubt, and is without wavering’ or ‘Thus, with right wisdom, he sees it as it is (*yathâ bhûtam*).’ With reference to his own Enlightenment, the Buddha said: ‘The Dhamma-eye arose, knowledge arose, wisdom arose, science arose, and light arose’. It is always seeing with knowledge and wisdom (*ñâṇa-dassana*), not believing through faith.<sup>74</sup>

The essence of Buddha’s teaching is “see for yourself.” Faith should be combined with wisdom to strengthen confidence. This helps a person to practice deeply and realize the truth. The essence of Buddha’s teaching is “come-and-see”, investigate, try it out and see if it works. “In Dhamma, there is no creed and there are no dogmas.”<sup>75</sup> The teaching is the process of rousing learners to gain different levels of knowledge and see different levels of truth, from Conventional Truth, through Empirical

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<sup>71</sup> Bhikkhu Ñâḍamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, op.cit, p. 63, 202.

<sup>72</sup> P.A. Payutto, **Buddhist’s Teaching Method**, p.33-34.

<sup>73</sup> The Venerable Dr. W. Rahula, **What the Buddha Taught**, (Bangkok: Haw Chai Printing Co., Ltd. (B.E. 2542) 1999, p. 9.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, p.9.

<sup>75</sup> Laurence-Khantipalo Mills, **Buddhism Explained**, (Bangkok: O.S. Printing House, 1999), p. 1.

Truth, Metaphysical Truth, and up to the Noble Truth (*ariyasacca*). Effective teaching is based on various factors such as the intellect and attention of the learner; the knowledge, capability and caring of the teacher; and good methods of teaching. The Buddha was an excellent teacher who possessed many qualities of a good teacher. His most outstanding qualities as a teacher were being an unexcelled trainer (*Anuttaro Purisadammasâthi*) and being a teacher of both celestial and human beings (*Satthâ devamanissânam*). The Buddha's simple conversations could change an ordinary person (*puthujjana*) into becoming a Noble (enlightened) person with intuitive insight and supreme enlightenment. With his special qualities, the Buddha spread his teaching widely and became the world's foremost religious teacher<sup>76</sup>

The Buddha focused on core content without digressing to useless matters. He taught showing the causes, effects and reasoning in accordance with the Law of Karma, so that his disciples could understand clearly.<sup>77</sup> He was a practical teacher who taught only useful material, never just showing off what he knew. When the Buddha taught the Bhikkhus while staying in the Simsapa forest in Kosambi, he took a handful of leaves and asked them which are more -- the leaves in his hand or the leaves in the forest. The disciples answered that leaves in the forest were more. The Buddha, then, explained that he taught only useful content, similar to this handful, compared with what he knew. He did not teach like all the leaves in the forest, because that would not be useful, would not be relevant to the spiritual life, and would not lead to Nibbana<sup>78</sup>.

Even so, Bhikkhus, I have told you only a little of what I know. What I have not told you is very much more. Why have I not told you those things? Because that would not be useful... not leading to Nibbana. That is why I have not told you those things.<sup>79</sup>

The Buddha taught only things which were meaningful and useful for each individual. He was very cautious with his speech. He spoke only true and useful matters under appropriate conditions. In the

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<sup>76</sup> Saeng Chandrangam, op.cit., pp. 21-22.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

*Abhayarâkumara Sutta*, he listed six types of truthful speech that he must carefully and appropriately manage in accordance with circumstances.

Speech which the Tathâgata knows to be untrue, incorrect, and unbeneficial, and which is also unwelcome and disagreeable to others, the Tathâgata does not utter.

Speech which the Tathâgata knows to be true and correct but unbeneficial, and which is also unwelcome and disagreeable to others, the Tathâgata does not utter.

Speech which the Tathâgata knows to be true, correct, and beneficial, and which is unwelcome and disagreeable to others, the Tathâgata knows the time to use.

Speech which the Tathâgata knows to be untrue, incorrect but unbeneficial, and which is welcome and agreeable to others, the Tathâgata does not utter.

Speech which the Tathâgata knows to be true and correct but unbeneficial, and which is welcome and agreeable to others, the Tathâgata does not utter.

Speech which the Tathâgata knows to be true, correct, and beneficial, and which is welcome and agreeable to others, the Tathâgata knows the time to use.

Why is that? Because the Tathâgata has compassion for all beings.<sup>80</sup>

## 2.4 Impact

The Buddha's teaching was successful and widespread because he taught with his enlightened knowledge and taught others to see and know for themselves. He taught with clear reasoning, detailing causes and effects. The objective was to teach each listener what was needed for

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<sup>80</sup> Bhikkhu Ñâdamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, op.cit., p. 500.

that listener to accept and practice to attain good results.<sup>81</sup> People had faith in him and his teachings had impact on individuals and on society as a whole.

#### 2.4.1 Early Impact

In the Early period, when the Buddha preached the first sermon (*Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*) to the Five Ascetics, Kondañña (the leader of the ascetics) achieved Stream-enterer Consciousness (called the “Dhamma Eye” or *Sotâpanna*). This confirmed to Lord Buddha that others could understand and attain the Dhamma. Kondañña was the first bhikkhu and Lord Buddha’s witness to the truth of his proclamation of having achieved enlightenment. Lord Buddha continued to teach miscellaneous Dhamma to the remaining four ascetics until all obtained the Dhamma Eye. Then, he preached the *Anattalakana Sutta* to all five ascetics together, and all became Arahants.

Next, the Buddha propagated the Dhamma to a young man named ‘Yasa’, his parents and wife, and his 54 friends. Yasa attained Arahant status and was ordained. His father, mother and wife all obtained the Dhamma eye (Stream-enterer) and became the first lay man and lay women of Buddhism. Yasa’s four closest friends and fifty other friends also became Arahants and were ordained as bhikkhus. The Buddha then had a total of 60 Arahant disciples. He sent them out as missionaries to propagate the Dhamma to people in various countries for the benefit of mankind. This was the earliest phase of the Buddha’s Dhamma propagation.

After that, the Buddha preached the same combination of the Progressive Sermon (*Anubhuppikathâ*) and the Four Noble Truths to a group of thirty young men known as the “*Bhaddavaggiya*”. Some attained the Dhamma eye (Stream-enterer or *Sotâpanna*) and some attained Non-returner (*Anakami*). All were ordained and Lord Buddha sent them out as a second group of missionaries to propagate the Dhamma.<sup>82</sup> Lord Buddha, himself, went as a missionary to Rajagaha, capital of Magadha, the largest

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<sup>81</sup> Sanith Srisamdaeng, **The Buddhist Method of Teaching**, (Bangkok: Paper Presented in Class, Graduate School, Mahachulalongkorn-rajvidhayalaya University), p. 10. (Mineographed),.

<sup>82</sup> Phrakrukalanayasidhiwat (Smarn Promyu), op. cit, p.128.

State. On the way, he sought out three groups of Matted-hair hermits, led by the Kassapa brothers, which totaled 1,000 followers.<sup>83</sup> The Buddha's strategy was to convert these three Kassapa brothers, who had many followers and a widespread reputation.<sup>84</sup> He began with Uruvela Kassapa, the elder brother with the most followers. The three brothers and their one thousand followers were ordained and then became Arahants by listening to the Fire Sermon (*Ādittapariyāya Sutta*). This demonstrated the Buddha's teaching technique of adapting his presentations to each audience.<sup>85</sup>

It was the Buddha's strategy to visit the Great King (*Mahā Rāja*) Bimbisāra at Rajagaha because of the king's previous invitation and his large number of followers (120,000 in his retinue). This great city provided the greatest opportunity for Dhamma propagation. The Buddha noticed the indifference and disrespectful manner of the king's entourage. He knew they doubted whether the Buddha or Kassapa was the master. So, the Buddha asked Venerable Uruvela Kassapa to explain why he gave up fire worship. After the Uruvela Kassapa explained and prostrated himself at the Buddha's feet, declaring that the Buddha was his teacher, their doubt was cleared and they were ready to listen. This demonstrated the Buddha's technique of using one well respected follower to influence many others. The Buddha, then, preached the Progressive Sermon followed by the Four Noble Truths. King Bimbisāra and 110,000 of his entourage attained the Dhamma Eye. The other 10,000 of his retinue also took the Triple-Gems as their refuge.<sup>86</sup>

#### 2.4.2 Individual Impact

The main individual impact of Lord Buddha's Dhamma propagation was the widespread increase in Noble Disciples. As time went on, there were many Arahants and Noble Disciples with advanced meditation skills – both Bhikkhus and Bhikkhunis, all achieving great individual spiritual uplift.

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p.128-129.

<sup>84</sup> Saeng Chandrangam, op. cit, pp. 31-32.

<sup>85</sup> Sathienpong Wannapok, op. cit., p.57; Phrakrukalyanasidhiwat (Smarn Promyu), op. cit., pp.132-133.

<sup>86</sup> Phrakrukalyanasidhiwat (Smarn Promyu), op. cit, pp.136-138;. compare Prince Vajirañāḍavararasa, op. cit., pp. 79-82.

Lord Buddha's deep impact on individual followers in terms of reducing suffering and increasing well-being is well documented in numerous incidents. For example, Bhaddiya Kaligothayabutr Bhikkhu was formerly a king, before ordaining. Other monks heard him muttering "How happy, How happy!" and thought he was reminiscing about being king. Instead, he explained that as king he always lived in fear with security guards all around him. Now, living in the forest with no possessions, he felt completely free and happy. Lord Buddha showed serious truth-seekers like Sariputta Thera and Moggallana Thera the right path, and they became his aides. Sariputta Thera's siblings all ordained, despite their mother's objections. The youngest, Revata Bhikkhu, as a youth, ran away from the wedding designed to keep him from ordaining, and achieved excellence in forest dwelling, including various super powers. Sariputta Thera eventually converted his mother as he was dying, when her deities came to pay respect to him.

Lord Buddha's own royal family ordained in such numbers that his father was hard pressed to find an heir to the throne. His cousin Ananda Thera became his trusted personal aide, finally achieving Arahant status after Lord Buddha's death. When asked to cede the throne to his half-brother Nanda, Lord Buddha decided to confer lasting transcendental treasures instead, and pressured him into ordaining instead of marrying. After a period of adjustment, he attained Arahant status and was recognized as the best at controlling the senses.

Lord Buddha also brought others with more dubious motives to become Arahants. Vakkali (who was infatuated with Lord Buddha's looks) attained Arahant status and recognition for his intense devotion. Pindola Bharadvaja (who just wanted to learn Lord Buddha's secret for knowing rebirths) also attained Arahantship and became well known for his Lion's Roar.

Maha Prajapati Gotami was the Buddha's aunt, who brought him up after his mother passed away. She persistently requested ordination, but Lord Buddha did not allow it. Eventually, she cut her hair and walked with her followers the long distance to Vesali. Ananda sympathized and convinced the Buddha to permit women to be ordained. As a result, she was ordained as the first Bhikkhuni, accepting eight additional conditions. A second lady, Patacara Theri, was extremely unfortunate. She had lost her husband, two sons and a daughter and her

parents and brothers. She was so deep in grief that she became insane. The Buddha recalled her to sanity with soft compassion. She attained Arahantship and ordained as a Bhikkhuni. Eventually, she became recognized as the best in knowledge of the Vinaya.

### **2.4.3 Social Impact**

Lord Buddha's fame spread far and wide. There was no other political philosopher or noble so well known. Kings, guild leaders, ministers, and courtiers came to see and pay their respect to him. So many Sakyan princes became monks that it was hard to find an heir to the throne. Guild leaders like Anathapindika offered alms, including all four requisites. The court physician, Jivaka, became Lord Buddha's personal physician. In consequence, some ordinary people became monks in order to get medical attention from him. So many people ordained that there was some public concern that the Buddha made families childless, increased number of widows and destroyed clans, but the Buddha did not force anyone to become a monk or ask anyone to become a lay devotee. He only explained the truth and asked others to reflect on it.

Initially, when all followers were Arahants, there was little need for rules. As more and more bhikkhus ordained, Lord Buddha gradually detailed the Vinaya rules and penalties, formalizing the Sangha as a social order. He completed the establishment of the four assemblies – Monks, Nuns, Laymen and Laywomen. He also laid down the principles of the Dhamma-Vinaya in detail for people to study from then up until the present time. He established the Sangha organization which has been maintained until the present, and detailed the Vinaya rules for monks and nuns.

The major social impact of Lord Buddha's Dhamma propagation was its revolutionary effect on diminishing the caste system. In his propagation, Lord Buddha never divided mankind into different castes or races, but taught for the good of all. He redefined terms like "Brahman" to signify good actions rather than birth.

As the number of monks increased, they received more and more popular attention. They had distinctive yellow costumes and shaved heads to take away the sense of pride and give them an appearance of humility. They became a tranquil, harmless, non-violent

community with a simple way of life. Everything they had, belonged to the whole Sangha. Even the temple residence also belonged to the Sangha brotherhood. Monks had no attachments or bondage to their families. Strict discipline was established. The Order of the Sangha became established as a social system. This institution, called the “Bhikkhu Brotherhood” (Bhikkhu Sasana), which the Buddha constituted through his supreme wisdom, was a democratic institution.<sup>87</sup> The members, called Sangha, consisted of Bhikkhus and Bhikkhunis.

The Buddha’s teachings have flourished more than 2,500 years, and are still up-to-date, fit at all times, not only just for his era. As Societies become more and more progressive, Buddhism becomes even more suitable for these progressive societies. Buddhism now extends worldwide, spreading peace around the earth. Truth is always true.

## 2.5 Summary

Summing up, the essence of Buddha's teaching is to “see for yourself.” It is something can be challenged to investigate and to "come and see", to try out and to see if it works. The Buddha was a great teacher who had many qualities which he trained himself first before teaching others. He acquired threefold knowledge (*vijja*) consisted of knowledge to know past lives, to know death and rebirth of beings according to their actions (kamma), to know the differences of beings and to destroy defilements. Then, he taught and propagated Dhamma to others as refuge of them. The Buddha's personality and voice impressed the audiences to listen to him always. He had wisdom and ten powers to teach Dhamma effectively. The teaching methods were in various techniques and styles which he adapted to the audiences' moods, and concerns. The general teaching emphasized the content of the teaching, the learner and the teaching method. The content emphasized causation and reasoning.

The Buddha taught in accordance with the level of wisdom and the characteristic of the learners. A good teacher should set five objectives in preaching or teaching, that are the sequence order of easy to difficult subjects, to clarify the main point, to teach with good will and

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<sup>87</sup> Sarada, Weragoda, Ven. Maha Thero. **The Greatest Man Who Ever Lived: The Supreme Buddha.** (Singapore: Singapore Buddhist Meditation Centre, 1998), pg. 168.

loving kindness not for a material gain and to teach according to the principle without boasting oneself nor insulting others. For teaching strategy, it was easy to explain reasons of doing things, to inspire the listeners to agree with the fact, to urge the listeners to have interest and confidence and to create a joyful and friendly atmosphere. The Buddha's teaching mostly can be classified into four styles of conversation, description, answering questions and establishing rules. He used ten tactics to facilitate his teaching more interesting and understanding easily. The Buddha used miracle of psychic power with the less intellectual learner. He could read the audience's mind used the miracle of mind-reading with the quick intuition. But, he used the miracle of teaching most of the time. He advised all Bhikkhus to take Dhamma as their refuge. That was the Four Foundations of Mindfulness through *samatha-vipassana* meditation.

The main individual impact of Lord Buddha's Dhamma propagation was the widespread increase in Noble Disciples, achieving great individual spiritual uplift. The major social impact was its revolutionary effect on diminishing the caste system. The Buddha's teachings have flourished more than 2,500 years, and are still up-to-date. As Societies become more and more progressive, Buddhism becomes even more suitable for these progressive societies. Buddhism now extends worldwide, spreading peace around the earth. Truth is always true.

## Chapter III

### **Buddha-Dhamma Propagation by the Most Venerable Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni**

The Most Venerable Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni (Sodh Candasaro), or Luang Phor Wat Paknam was one of many famous monks who had an important role in Buddha-Dhamma propagation in Thailand from 1916 to 1959 (B.E. 2459-2502). With his efforts and strong determination, he dedicated his life to practicing meditation until he attained the Buddha's high Dhamma known as *Dhammakāya*. He spent 43 years teaching meditation to Buddhists throughout the World War I, II and many other important historical incidents in Thailand. His Dhammakaya method has been taught for nearly 90 years from 1916 (B.E. 2459) to the present. His success in propagating the Buddha-Dhamma should serve as an inspiration to us all.

This chapter will emphasize his three main concepts: (1) Personal Realization, (2) Dhamma Preaching, and (3) Meditation Practice.

### **3.1 Personal Realization**

Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's personal realization consisted of two factors: (1) Achieving for one's own benefit and (2) Teaching others. The two can be described as follows:

#### **3.1.1 To Achieve One's Own Excellence**

##### **3.1.1.1 Early Life**

Luang Phor Wat Paknam<sup>88</sup> was born as just an ordinary man (not a prince), named 'Sodh Meekaewnoi' to a rice-merchant family, in the 24<sup>th</sup> century after the Parinibbana of the Buddha. His lifetime lasted

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<sup>88</sup> See Appendix A for Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni (Luang Phor Wat Paknam's Biography.

throughout five reigns of Ratanakosin Kings. He was born on October 10, 1884 (B.E. 2427), during the reign of King Rama V and died in 1959 (B.E. 2502), in the reign of King Rama IX. Luckily, he was born as a free Thai citizen whilst the slave system still existed.

At the age of 19 years old, he took over his father's business upon his father's death. He had an adventurous life in rice trading escaped from the bandits and looked after his mother and siblings. 'Sodh Meekaewnoi' realized that life is suffering. Everyone has to struggle earning money for survival. But in the end, nobody can take anything with him even the loved ones. Therefore, at age of 19 years, he made the determination to be ordained, following in the Buddha's footsteps seeking serenity and the attainment of Dhamma. He first earned sufficient money for his mother's living. Then, he was ordained in 1906 (B.E. 2449) and pursued his study in scriptures and meditation. With his effort and strong determination, he dedicated his life to practicing meditation until 1917 (B.E. 2460) when he attained the Buddha's high Dhamma known as *Dhammakāya*.

### **3.1.1.2 Ordination and Formal Studies**

Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's first priority task to pursue was to be ordained for deliverance. On July 1906 (B.E. 2449), 'Sodh Meekaewnoi' was ordained at the age of 22 years at Wat Songpeenong, Supanburi province. The Pali ordination name 'Candasaro Bhikkhu' given to him means 'the one with a bright radiance like a moon'. He started to practice meditation the next day after his ordination. He also started to study Pali scriptures earnestly in order to learn the theory underlying meditation. Meditation was his major interest, especially the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta. He wanted to practice meditation to find the truth of deliverance and to eliminate suffering of mankind. He was curious to know the meaning of the text 'avijjā-paccayā' but nobody could translate the scriptures because they only recite them. He was told that he had to go to Bangkok for further study in translation of scriptures. Therefore, he departed Wat Songpeenong to Wat Chetupon (Wat Bodhi), Bangkok aimed for studying Pali in order to translate Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta.

### **3.1.1.3 Studying Scriptures**

Luang Phor Wat Paknam's principle was to train himself first in order to be his own refuge. He trained himself in scriptures study

(*pariyatti*), emphasized on meditation practice (*paṭipatti*) in order to get achievement (*paṭivedha*). Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni earnestly learned scriptures from many schools and at the same time studied meditation with many famous meditation masters.

Education system for monks and novices at that time was in memorizing Suttas in original Pali language. “When these had been committed to memory, the monks would have to memorize the grammar of the scriptures: i.e., the Pali root forms (*Mūlakaccāyana*) from euphonic combination (*sandhi*) onwards. Candasaro Bhikkhu pursued his scriptural studies in the same way, continuing his studies with nouns (*nāma*), secondary derivation (*taddhita*), indeclinables (*ākhayāta*) and primary derivation (*kita*). Scriptures were not in book form, but etched on palm leaves using Khom script. Students didn’t study the Scriptures in order from ‘page one’ onwards but picked chapters at random. Some students studying the Dhammapada started with earlier chapters, some with the later ones. As a result, the more students attending a class, the more bundles of scriptures each had to lug to class. If however, a class had ten students, he would have to bring not only his own scripture-bundles, but those chosen by all his other classmates too! Students attending large classes would be bent double under the weight of scripture bundles.”<sup>89</sup>

Luang Phor Wat Paknam had a difficult time during his study. He carried heavy bundles of scriptures to many schools. In the morning Luang Phor crossed the river from Wat Phra Chetupon (Wat Bodhi) to Wat Arun to study Pali and then came back for lunch at Wat Bodhi. In the afternoon, he went to Wat Mahadhatu. In the evening, some days he went to study at Wat Suthat, Wat Chakkawat, and Wat Sampleum on different days. At night, he studied at Wat Bodhi. He was an earnest student, never absent from classes.

He set his goal to study scriptures just to be proficient in translating the Pali of the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta. Then he would discontinue studying and pursue meditation.<sup>90</sup> Luang Phor made a great effort to study scriptures everyday at many temples. He was a good student. He studied Pali scripture and learned each subject thoroughly.

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<sup>89</sup>Dhammadakya Foundation, **The Life & Times of Luang Phaw Wat Paknam**, (Bangkok: Dharmasarn Co., Ltd., B.E. 2003), pp.33-34.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

Phra Dhammapanyaporn explained that education in the Sukhothai and Ayudhaya reigns set the curriculum as the elementary “tri” level of study plus three years of Mūlakaccana, Advanced Pali Grammar, for translating Suttas. Mūlakaccana is very difficult language for explaining the Tipitaka. It uses very high class language. Examinations were not available every year. One had to request them whenever one was ready.<sup>91</sup>

In the eleventh year of monkhood, he fulfilled all subjects required in his time and was able to teach others. He quit his scripture studies because he had achieved the proficiency in translating scriptures that he aimed for. But, he did not take the government examination to obtain an academic certificate. Academic degrees were not his goal. His main objective was to pursue Vipassana meditation to attain special Buddha-Dhamma<sup>92</sup>. Having higher education in scriptures would put him into monastery activities with more obligations to fulfill. He realized that he would be tied up with more work and responsibilities given to him. It would interfere and block his progress in meditation practice. He did not want to be like Phra Bodhira who was called ‘the empty leaf’ by the Buddha. His educational background was high although he did not get parien (pass exams). He completed all the educational requirements of that era, although they were not high in comparison to the present day. But, he had more knowledge. Phra Rajñānvisidh (Sermchai Polpathanaridhi) acknowledged that Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni was very proficient in Pali. In every sermon, he cited Pali from memory and translated the meaning to the audience very efficiently, just like the monks at Pali level IX today.<sup>93</sup> Thus, in 1951 (B.E. 2494), Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni received an “Honorary Pali Grade Fan” as recognition of his knowledge.

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<sup>91</sup>Interview with Phra Dhammapanyaporn, Secretary of the Pali Institute (Mae Kong Sanam Luang) and Dhamma Missionaries (Dhammadhuta) at Wat Paknam, February 28, 2005. See Appendix D.

<sup>92</sup>Wat Paknam Alumni Association P.A.A., **Navakanusorn 2497**. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, by the Junior Bhikkhus of Wat Paknam, 2546, (Bangkok: Eakpimthai Co., B.E. 2546), p. 17.

<sup>93</sup>Interview with Phra Rajratanavimol (Pyle Pathako), the Secretary of Ecclesiastical School, Wat Paknam, January 22, 2005.. See Appendix D.

### 3.1.1.4 Meditation Practice

At the same time, he studied meditation along with scriptural studies in his spare time. He learned meditation with many meditation masters who were well known. His meditation masters included: (1) Phra Mongkolthipayamuni (Wat Chakravatrajavas, Bangkok), (2) Phra Ajahn Dee (Wat Pratusarn, Supanburi), (3) Phra Ajahn Nong Indasuwanño, (Wat Songpeenong, Supanburi), (4) Luang Phor Neum (Wat Noi, Supanburi), (5) Chao Khun Sangvaranuvong (Aium) (Wat Rajsitharam, Bangkok), (6) Phrakhru Yanwirat (Po) (Wat Bodhi, Bangkok), (7) Phra Ajahn Singha (Wat Lakorndhamma, Bangkok) (8) Phra Ajahn Pluem (Wat Kaoyai, Kanchanaburi). He showed respect for every method he learned, never looking down on any method, even black magic.<sup>94</sup>

There was no record to indicate which methods of meditation practice Luang Phor studied from his first eight meditation masters. Phramaha Montri Khantisaro noted that in those days, Satipatthana and Anapanasati were the common methods for meditation practice. Two methods of practice were common: first, studying with other meditation masters and, second, individual practice. Not many people could do the second, but Luang Phor Wat Paknam did both. At his ordination, the senior examining monk (*kammavācācāriya*) and junior examining monk (*anusāvanācāriya*) were both meditation masters.<sup>95</sup>

He thoroughly learned the meditation methods of Phrakru Yanwirat (Poa), Wat Phrachetupon (Bodhi) and Phra Ajahn Singha (Wat Lakorndham). The two masters recognized him as a capable student and appointed him as meditation teacher for their students. But, Luang Phor Wat Paknam was not yet willing to teach. He still not satisfied with his own meditation knowledge, and wanted to search for more advanced meditation practice.

It was now time to pursue meditation seriously. Therefore, he left Wat Phra Chetupon to spend the rains-retreat at Wat Bangkuvieng, at Bangkok Noi. He had an obligation to the Abbot, Chao Athikarn Chum, who had given him many important documents for studying scripture

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<sup>94</sup> Ajahn Tritha Niemkham, op.cit., p.6.

<sup>95</sup> Interview with Phramaha Montri Khantisaro, Pali Instructor at Wat Paknam. See Appendix D.

such as Dhammapada and Mūlakaccana (high level of Pali Grammar). He intended to preach Dhamma to the monks and novices at that temple as a token of his appreciation to the Abbot.<sup>96</sup> He studied meditation practice from scriptures, especially ‘the Path of Purification’ (*Visuddhimagga*), combined with his own experience with various famous meditation masters. He progressed quickly.

Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni realized the importance of practice meditation that the Buddha had pursued and achieved five Dhamma eyes (see Dhamma-vipaka ‘Tho’). Similarly, he studied scriptures as a map giving knowledge as guideline for practice meditation in order to achieve insight (*pativeḍa*). Luang Phor Wat Paknam’s point of view, a person who contemplates vipassana must contemplate concentration first, because concentration is the foundation for vipassana. Without cultivation of concentration, vipassana cannot be contemplated successfully. He studied at different schools to learn different meditation methods in order to verify his knowledge is correct. He gave respect to every method, even black magic, but whether or not he will use it is another matter. Some schools used him to promote their schools that the venerable Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni studied their methods. He never criticized other methods nor humiliated others for their wrong judgment and criticism. He had compassion towards others. His mode of conduct was that “time will verify the reality.”

### 3.1.1.5 Attaining Dhammakāya (*Attahita-sampatti*)

Luang Phor Wat Paknam trained himself before teaching others. His personal realization of Dhammakaya established the foundation for his successful propagation of the Buddha-Dhamma. In the middle of the Rains-Retreat in September, 1916 (B.E. 2459), Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni realized that he had been ordained for 15 years, had not yet attained the truth that the Buddha had discovered. Therefore, he resolved to really work on practicing meditation<sup>97</sup>. In the evening of the fifteenth day of the tenth month (September), he entered temple (Uposatha) of Wat Bangkuvieng and made firm resolution that:

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<sup>96</sup> Wat Paknam Bhasricharoen and Luang Phor Wat Paknam Alumni Association, **Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni: Luang Phor Wat Paknam’s Biography and Handbook for Abbots**, (Bangkok: Thai Wattanapanich Press Co., B.E. 2529), p.14.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

This time when I sit for meditation, if I cannot see Dhamma that the Buddha wants, I will not rise up from the seat to the death”. Once he made firm determination, then he made a request to the Buddha: “Lord Buddha, please kindly impart to me, at least the easiest Dhamma that Buddha attained at the time of enlightenment. If my Dhamma attainment would cause harm to Buddhism, then please do not give it to me. But, if my Dhamma attainment could be of benefit to Buddhism, then, Buddha, please give it to me. I am willing to be as religious advocate of Buddhism throughout my life<sup>98</sup>.

After that, he started to meditate but, he was distracted by a line of ants crawling on the floor. Then, he dipped his finger into kerosene to draw a circle around him to prevent himself from ants’ disturbance. Through half circle, then, he realized that he just dedicated his life for Dhamma attainment. Why was he still afraid of little ants? Then, he continued his meditation. Around midnight, he visualized the Buddha’s real Dhamma Framework (*Dhammakaya Gotara-bhumi*) and saw the bright Dhamma sphere bright within the seventh position in at the center of the body.<sup>99</sup> He reflected upon the Buddha-Dhamma that he had rediscovered. He was anxious that:

“Dhamma was difficult, deep and subtle, beyond people’s ordinary realization. A person could not get to the heart of meditation by thinking over. He must stop all thinking at one single point. Once the mind stops still, it is extinguished. **‘Once it is extinguished, then it exists. If it is not extinguished, it will not exist’**. Think it over, all of you. This is reality. The essence of meditation is at this point. If it is not just right, a person cannot attain Dhamma.”<sup>100</sup>

Thus, on the fifteenth day of the tenth month of 1916 (B.E. 2459), Luang Phor Wat Paknam (Chao Khun Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni) rediscovered the Buddha’s Vija Dhammakaya approach to meditation

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<sup>98</sup> Wat Paknam Bhasricharoen and Luang Phor Wat Paknam Alumni Association, op.cit. p. 15.

<sup>99</sup> Ajahn Tritha Niemkham, op.cit., p. 7.

<sup>100</sup> Wat Paknam Bhasricharoen and Luang Phor Wat Paknam Alumni Association, op.cit., p. 15.

which had been lost sometime during the first five hundred years after Lord Buddha passed away.

Once he attained Dhammakāya, Luang Phor Wat Paknam contemplated further for quite awhile in order **to be confident of** what he discovered. Then, he continued his meditation as he was afraid that his attainment would disappear. About half an hour later, Wat Bangplama appeared in his vision as though he were there. When it appeared clearly in his meditation, he was conscious. So, he had vision that there must be someone at Wat Bangplama can attain this Dhamma.

### **3.1.2 Teaching Others**

#### **3.1.2.1 Early Propagation at Wat Bangplama**

After receiving Kathina at the end of the rains-retreat, he went to teach at Wat Bangplama for four months. There, three monks (Phra Sangvarn, Phra Baen and Phra Oam) and four lay people attained Dhammakāya. This was the first stage of propagation of the true Dhammakāya which he had rediscovered the Buddha's method.<sup>101</sup> The Buddha's first propagation of his Dhamma was given to the Five Ascetics. The preaching of Phra Dhamthassanathorn, former Sangha Rector of Wat Chana Songkram was the evidence to support Luang Phor's mode of teaching that:

After Luang Phor Wat Paknam had sufficient knowledge in scripture, he studied Vipassana meditation with many masters. Finally, he rediscovered the Vipassana method of Dhammakaya. Luang Phor made the firm resolution to attain Dhamma which the Buddha had discovered. He resolved not to rise up from the meditation practice until he perceived the Truth. He also resolved to serve Buddhism for the rest of his days. His wish was fulfilled. He attained Dhammakaya and taught this Dhamma to people. He resolved to be the Buddha's representative in bringing the light and goodness to people. He was never discouraged or afraid in the face of criticism.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Wat Paknam Bhasricharoen and Luang Phor Wat Paknam Alumni Association, *op.cit.*, p. 15..

<sup>102</sup> Ajahn .Tritha Niemkham, *op.cit.*, p. 59.

### 3.1.2.2 Wat Songpeenong at Supanburi

In his rains-retreat of the thirteenth year, he left Wat Bangplama to Wat Songpeenong, Supanburi with his three monks who attained Dhammakaya. He taught Dhamma to monks and the interested lay people. The objective was to encourage them to have the faith to restore the ruined Buddha Images at Wat Phrasriratana Mahadhatu, Supanburi province. One more monk attained Dhammakaya. He initiated to set up Dhamma School and set up foundation for education at Wat Songpeenong, Supanburi province.<sup>103</sup> He resided at the temple of his meditation master “Dee” who passed away for four months. After that he left for Wat Phra Chetupon, Bangkok for some assignments.<sup>104</sup>

### 3.1.2.3 Getting started at Wat Paknam

In 1916, (B.E. 2461), World War I ended. Then, he was appointed to be Abbot of Wat Paknam<sup>105</sup>, a temple under royal patronage. He could not refuse Somdej Phra Wannarat of Wat Phra Chetupon (Wat Bodhi) who was the monastic governor for Bhasricharoen district. Somdej Phra Wannarat was his teacher who knew Sodh Candasaro Bhikkhu’s capability and wanted to settle him in a secure temple residence. His Excellency explained his reason in selecting Candasaro Bhikkhu as to develop peace among the members of the monastic community.<sup>106</sup> Candasaro Bhikkhu was requested to fulfill this available position, with many conditions put on him. He was to patiently wait for peace to develop within the monastic community, without using strong action or performing miracles or doing anything that might cause offend neighboring temples. It was a challenging task for him. A heavy responsibility was put on him as Abbot to develop an old and deteriorated temple as well as to develop the Vinaya in those misbehaving monks.

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<sup>103</sup> Wat Paknam Bhasricharoen and Luang Phor Wat Paknam Alumni Association, op.cit., p. 65.

<sup>104</sup> People’s Dhamma Practice Project, op. cit., p. 49.

<sup>105</sup> Wat Paknam was an ancient royal temple in the reign of Ayudhhaya. (from the Magazine of the Junior Bhikkhus, year 1954 (2<sup>nd</sup> edition in 2446).

<sup>106</sup> Dhammakaya Foundation, op.cit., p. 51.

Sodh Candasaro Bhikkhu left Wat Phra Chetupon with the title of Acting Abbot of Wat Paknam. The Department of Religious Affairs provided a motor boat to send him to Wat Paknam with honor four monastic attendants. Somdej Phra Wannarat of Wat Phra Chetupon accompanied him to the new temple and offered him the full requisites of an Abbot, giving him the title of Phrakhru Samu Thananukrom.<sup>107</sup>

His first task as new abbot was to invite the whole community of old and new monks for meeting. There were 13 monks at that time. He gave an admonition (*ovada*) to all monks. His strategy was to get them to know each other and to develop mutual understanding within the community. It was his challenge to govern the old temple and misbehaving monks.

I have been sent by the monastic governor of this region to govern this temple and advise all incumbents on their conduct using the Dhamma-Vinaya as my guide. If the temple is to prosper we must depend on our unity and mutual understanding. None of us was born in this temple. We are all newcomers. To come and abide here is like being cast away without knowing who to turn to for refuge because we are all strangers

In coming to stay at Wat Paknam, it is my intention to exemplify the Dhamma-Vinaya in all that I do. It is up to the older monks here to choose whether or not to follow my example. You can join me or you can do whatever you like. It is not my intention to disturb anybody because we all hold that we are responsible for our own actions. If you choose not to join me, then kindly do not impede the efforts of the others. We are independent but we must all help to keep this temple in order. Anybody who comes or goes must take my leave. We will let bygones be bygones because that was before my arrival, before taking up this post, but now that I am here, I have my duties to fulfill.<sup>108</sup>

He was diplomatic and broad-minded. He did not force anyone to follow him. He had the tactic to urge monks and novices to review their duties and responsibilities as to what to do. He planned ahead to

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid., pp. 51-52.

<sup>108</sup> Dhammakaya Foundation, op.cit., p. 52-53.

turn the temple to be a center of propagation. His strategy of propagation was based on temple development in accordance to four suitable things (*Sappaya*). He focused on: (1) Suitable People -- training monks, novices, nuns, and lay disciples to have good behavior (*cariyavatta*) and order (Vinaya). (2) Good hospitality – extending it to all visitors. People who came to the temple should get a good impression, seeing respectful monks, novices, and lay people with morality (*Sila*) and good hospitality. Then, people would have faith in them. There should be Suitable food offered to everyone. (3) Suitable Abodes -- everyone should have good living conditions. The Temple must be clean and tidy, with a peaceful atmosphere. It should provide good surroundings for meditation practice. (4) Suitable Dhamma -- propagating Dhamma to the people would generate the best merit. The wat should provide knowledge to the people with morality (*Sila*) and hospitality. In the evening, monks, novices and lay people listen to Dhamma and practiced meditation. They obtained appropriate Dhamma to apply beneficially to their lives. Once people are happy and receive good results from Dhamma study which are reflected in their lives, they will spread the word to others to come to the temple. He meditated in front of the shrine in the main chapel and made resolution that:

“May any monk who should still come to join this temple come quickly. May any monk who is already here stay all of his life.”<sup>109</sup>

This was like the Buddha’s strategy of propagation when he visited King Bimbisara seeking to gain more disciples. Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni clearly informed monks why he was at Wat Paknam.

#### **3.1.2.4 Making Wat Paknam Flourish**

Luang Phor Wat Paknam was the first Abbot in that reign to initiate various outstanding tasks which were different from other temples. His idea for developing Wat Paknam was different from other temples. Luang Phor Wat Paknam’s idea was cultivating the spiritual values of each individual to be good person, rather than building luxurious facilities. He said:

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<sup>109</sup> Dhammakaya Foundation, op.cit., p. 53.

“Building a man is more difficult than building material facilities. Anyone with money can build buildings. The important thing is to build up the man first”<sup>110</sup>.

Providing education to monks and novices was his priority task, in order to upgrade their status both intellectually and spiritually. He promoted three study criteria: *Pariyatti* (scriptural studies), *Patipatti* (meditation practice) and *Paṭivedha* (realization). He welcomed any monks or novices who wanted to study Dhamma. His objectives were to provide opportunity to them for higher education in order to raise their life status and deliverance. Luang Phor always said that:

“Education can change a student’s life for the better – knowledge is the king’s heritage, accessible to the common man. It brings us benefit for life.”<sup>111</sup>

He set up the first community school for truant children who were running around wildly in the temple district. He provided education free of charge for three hundred children. Luang Phor was concerned that:

“These uneducated children are littering up the country and wrecking this temple in their spare time. They will grow up into hooligans.”<sup>112</sup>

Luang Phor also built the first big school for scripture and meditation studies for the propagation of Buddhism at that time. Luang Phor would send any monk with wisdom and aptitude for study for higher study at other well known temples, especially Wat Benjamabopit. For example, he sent Phra Chueng (the present abbot, Somdej Phramaharajchamangklacarn) to study advanced levels of scripture at Wat Benjamabopit. This was his strategy to give them the opportunity to broaden their knowledge, experience and social relationships with other monks. He was broad-minded and also supported monks who wanted to ordain in the Dhamayutta Nikaya. He had good will towards others that

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<sup>110</sup> Ajahn Tritha Niemkham, op.cit, p.8.

<sup>111</sup> Dhammakaya Foundation, op.cit., p. 33.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

made him happy and satisfied. He said: “If we look at the good side, we will be happy.”<sup>113</sup>

Patipatti: Buddha-Dhamma propagation, especially meditation method of Dhammakaya really started at the time he became Abbot of Wat Paknam.<sup>114</sup> He was successful in turning the temple into the main meditation center in Thailand and the world.

At that time, especially in the Ratanakosin reigns of Rama IV and Rama V, Meditation was not popular. The Thai Sangha and the people would rather study scriptures. Those interested in meditation practice would stay in the forest. Most expert Meditation Masters isolated themselves in the forest to seek tranquility for spiritual cultivation. Some of them had no talent for preaching the Dhamma or teaching meditation to the people. The Most Venerable Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni was the first meditation master in the city in that era, who was capable in both Dhamma preaching and teaching meditation. He also was intelligent and had broad knowledge of Scriptural Studies. “He was an excellent Dhamma Preacher and Meditation Master.”<sup>115</sup> He was expert and tactful in preaching Dhamma and had thorough knowledge in meditation to teach people to understand easily.

Wat Paknam became well known as the place providing knowledge in both scriptural studies and practice. Thus, more and more monks were interested in being ordained there. Luang Phor supported higher education for everyone. Monks, novices, nuns and lay people had could select their own education. Whoever preferred to study Dhamma, Pali scripture or meditation practice, they could do so as they wished. Anyone who did not like to study, but preferred to work could help in the administration work. One thing that Luang Phor did not support was letting time goes by without doing anything useful for the community. The important matter he emphasized was to study. One must truly study

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<sup>113</sup>Wat Paknam Bhasricharoen and Luang Phor Wat Paknam Alumni Association, op.cit., p. 86.

<sup>114</sup>Sophon Chuenchum, **Method of Samadhi and Vipassana Meditation Practice**, “Luang Phor Sodh’s Bibliography”, (Bangkok: A.T.N. Production Co., Ltd., B.E. 2544), p.127.

<sup>115</sup>Administrative Committee, People’s Dhamma Practice Project, **Collection of 9 Sermons, Volume 2**, (Bangkok:Chuenpim Printing Part., B.E. 2522, p. 18).

to have high aptitude and potential. As a result, Wat Paknam was recognized as a training institute in 1947 (B.E. 2490). The education achievement results were high. In 1957 (B.E. 2450), ten years later, there were 552 monks and novices. Of these, 99 monks and novices passed Pali examinations, and 89 passed in Dhamma Studies. There were also 20 nuns and laypeople who passed Dhamma Study exams. One monk attained the highest Ninth Grade of Pali.

Wat Paknam was also the first temple in Thailand to build a dining hall. This was in 1959 (B.E. 2459).<sup>116</sup> Luang Phor provided meals and shelter for all monks and novices. The objective was to provide convenience for them, eliminating the alms-round, so that they could concentrate on studying. A large kitchen was built to cater for a thousand monks, novices, nuns and lay people. This was also a convenience for the lay people offering alms to the monks. They could just donate money for food preparation to the temple. Then, the nuns would prepare the food.

Luang Phor Wat Paknam's reputation for loving-kindness, feeding 400-500 monks and novices without any alms-round, spread far and wide. The number of monks and novices increased from 150 in 1938 (B.E. 2481) to 600. But, this never worried him. He always laughed happily and said he could certainly feed them all. He said:

“When you eat alone, there is never enough to eat. When you eat with many people, there is always plenty of food.”<sup>117</sup>

Phra Dhamthassanathorn, former Sangha Rector, Wat Chana Songkram visited Wat Paknam to find out how Luang Phor managed it<sup>118</sup> and had close contact with Luang Phor Wat Paknam since then.

Luang Phor emphasized that giving (Dana) or offering things to others without expecting anything in return was the best thing anyone could do. Monks or novices received the offer of robes from the Buddhists. They would be wise and gain double merits if they donated

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<sup>116</sup> Dhammakaya Foundation, op.cit., p. 65.

<sup>117</sup> Ajahn Tritha Niemkham, op.cit., p 58.

<sup>118</sup> Wat Paknam Bhasricharoen and Luang Phor Wat Paknam Alumni Association, op.cit., p. 72.

that robes to a person in need. Anyone who donated what he obtained for the benefit of others was a wise man. He would obtain more merit in the future age of Buddhism. If any abbots could behave such, that temple would be flourished. Members of monks increased. This was because the abbot governed the members of monks and novices like father and offspring. He extended his love and care, sharing things to other monks and novices for the well-being and harmony of members. Everyone was happy and gave respect to the abbot, saying:

The Abbot of Wat Paknam always gives whatever he obtains. He never regrets helping anyone who has problems. He treats the monks and novices as his own offspring. He is 71 years old now. From the second year after his ordination, he has always given donations. He just wants to obtain merit. Wherever he is, he gives and teaches others. Many people both inside and outside temple disapproved when I first came to Wat Paknam. They did not know their refuge and were trying to get rid of their own refuge. Who were they going to take as a refuge? I do not fight or run. I do good deeds. I do so to the utmost of my ability. No matter how much I am attacked, I do not fight or run.<sup>119</sup>

With his leadership skill and endurance, Wat Paknam flourished with a rapid increase in the number of monks and novices from 13 to 600. His propagation was based on the basic concepts of giving (*Dāna*), morality (*Silā*), meditation (*Bhavāna*). His teaching principles were based on morality (*Sila*), concentration (*Samādhi*), wisdom (*Paññā*).

“He used his leadership skills of wisdom, caution, strong (vigorous or potency), firm and foresight to decide what is right to do and what to refrain. He proceeded step by step according to morality (*Sila*), concentration (*Samadhi*) and wisdom (*Pañña*) to improve and prosper the temple. He established 5 factors. The first three factors dealt with teaching and developing the person. His objectives were first to improve the behavior of the monks and novices, according to the Sangha Order (Dhamma-Vinaya); second, to provide education in scripture studies and meditation

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<sup>119</sup> Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen and Luang Phor Wat Paknam Alumni Association, **Dhamma Legacy (*Maradok Dhamma*) of Luang Phor Wat Paknam (Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni)**, (Bangkok: Amarin Printing and Publishing Co., B.E. 2539), p. 616-617.

practice, third to propagate and maintain Buddhism, fourth to provide dwellings (*senasana*), fifth to provide meals to monks and novices.<sup>120</sup>

### 3.1.2.5 International Initiatives

Wat Paknam was really flourishing in 1954 (B.E. 2497), when a Professor from London who was proficiency in the *Abhidhamma* and Suttas came to ordain at Wat Paknam. He was especially interested in the Dhammakaya meditation method. At this period, there were many newly ordained monks. The numbers at the wat had increased to 225 monks, 205 novices, 400 Nuns and 50 lay followers.<sup>121</sup>

In his sermon entitled “Difficult Things to Obtain,” Luang Phor taught that True Dhamma is difficult to achieve. Why so? He taught Dhamma on that subject and asked questions to catch their attention. Then, he explained further that True Dhamma (*Saddhamma*) is the Dhamma of restraint, calmness and peacefulness. It is the restraint of sin and unwholesome deeds. Wholesome deeds are restraint of unwholesome deeds. The five, eight, ten or two hundred twenty-seven precepts are, in brief, the True Dhamma. True Dhamma (*Saddhamma*) is the Dhamma that creates the human body. It makes the True Dhamma of animals, hungry ghosts (*petas*) or demons disappear and unable to exist, so that the human can live with bodily, verbally and mental purity. This is the True Dhamma of human beings. He explained that the Dhamma Sphere makes the human body refined. When one enters this Dhamma Sphere which makes this crystal body, one sees the refined crystal body, and continues upward to the refined Arahanta Body. These are the True Dhamma which are not easy to attain, but Luang Phor Wat Paknam had discovered this ultimate Truth (*Saddhamma*) and he could prove it.

He, then cited the example of Phra William, the professor from London who came to be ordained at this temple. “The preceptor taught Phra William to attain Dhammakaya. Phra William would then return to his homeland to propagate this true Dhamma and establish Buddhism in

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<sup>120</sup>People’s Dhamma Practice Project, op.cit., p. (51). .

<sup>121</sup>Sophon Chuenchum, **Method of Samadhi and Vipassana Meditation Practice**, “Luang Phor Sodh’s Bibliography”, (Bangkok: A.T.N. Production Co., Ltd., B.E. 2544), p. 128.

London with a Thai temple. This was important. It would make the Vija Dhammakāya of Wat Paknam become a great asset for Europeans.”<sup>122</sup>

Very soon, I will send another monk to propagate “Dhammakāya” Buddhism in Japan. Do not remain silent. Let us propagate “Dhammakāya” in our homeland. Wherever you are, develop our temples to flourish, so that our people may know the True Buddhism.<sup>123</sup>

### 3.1.2.6 Dhammakaya Propagation

Luang Phor Wat Paknam started to teach and propagate the Dhammakaya meditation technique to people without any restrictions. He was concerned that people should have the Dhamma as their refuge. First, he was concerned about those still suffering due to the defilements of greed, hatred and delusion. He tried every way to urge people to come to the temple for Dhamma study and to cultivate spiritual values. He wanted them to really take the Triple-gem as their refuge, not just having blind faith in Buddhism like their ancestors. He realized that everyone has birth at the beginning, decay and old age in the middle and death or extinction at the end, according to the law of Three Characteristics (Tilakhana) namely impermanence, suffering and Non-self. Towards the end of life, everyone experiences a mixture of both happiness and suffering. No one wants suffering. Everyone struggles to seek refuge in order to get rid of this suffering. A wise man will search for a refuge. But, people with no wisdom seek refuge in material things.

Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni taught Dhammakāya to people to lessen their grief. He proved to people that Dhammakāya can be a real refuge to elevate their spiritual values and to cure people’s illnesses. He did not just speak words; he proved it to people by helping them to be able to see it for themselves, just like a scientist makes experiments.<sup>124</sup> He wanted everyone to practice meditation and learn Dhamma in order to

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<sup>122</sup> Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen and Luang Phor Wat Paknam Alumni Association, **Dhamma Legacy (*Maradok Dhamma*) of Luang Phor Wat Paknam (Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni)**, “The Difficult Things to Obtain”, op.cit., pp. 611-614.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., p. 617.

<sup>124</sup> Ajahn Tritha Niemkham, op.cit., p. 12 .

let go of sensual pleasures and eliminate suffering, to achieve serenity and get the insight to reach Nibbana. That Dhamma is recollection of the Buddha and appreciation of the Buddha's virtue. Then, a person will become bored with all sensual pleasures and this leads to deliverance.<sup>125</sup>

In B.E. 2477, the meditation hall was full of people who came to practice meditation. "Luang Phor taught Dhammakaya meditation to all people at all levels with no restriction according to gender, age, or education. He wanted everyone to practice correctly and attentively. Exerting effort is the key to meditation practice. He said the technique is to search for cause and effect and to always stop within the sphere to clean up and purify one's own Dhamma Element (Dhatu) both externally and internally. He also said not to be reluctant to share this knowledge."<sup>126</sup>

Luang Phor Wat Paknam delegated monks, nuns and lay people who had attained Dhammakaya to assume duties in the Meditation Workshops. During World War II, Luang Phor set a schedule for meditation to help the country and other nations. He organized two teams to take duty the whole twenty-four hours. He divided to four shifts. Each shift covered for six hours. They rotated to take duty throughout twenty-four hours. After W.W.II, the schedule changed to three shifts for four hours per shift. Those who were not on duty would teach Dhamma. Luang Phor instructed and supervised the whole section of meditation during W.W. II. He was concerned about National security.<sup>127</sup> Monks and Nuns were sent to teach Dhamma in different provinces to help people in need.

### 3.1.3 Luang Phor's Daily Activities

Apart from his heavy responsibilities in temple administration, he always sacrificed his time for his private meditation and instructing his disciples who attained Dhammakaya in meditation. He set up his fixed daily schedule to perform all routine duties to govern the community. Every morning and evening, he led bhikkhus and novices to pay homage to the Triple Gems and chant in the Uposatha Hall. He followed by giving a sermon on the Dhamma-Vinaya at each session. On Buddhist

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>126</sup> People's Dhamma Practice Project, op.cit., p. 128.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., pp. (138)-(139).

holidays and Sundays, he preached sermons to the public in the Uposatha Hall. Meditation instruction was conducted both day and night for monks, novices, nuns and lay followers, in a separate room. He taught the advanced level of meditation to those who had attained Dhammakāya. Every Thursday at 2:00 p.m., he taught meditation to the public in the main hall. Monks, novices, nuns and lay people came from different temples and places to learn Dhamma with him. Over the first fifteen years, the cumulative number of people attending his meditation courses was about 40,000 people. He organized a group of knowledgeable monks from other temples to teach Pali and scripture in the Pali Institute, and he supervised these courses. He received guests who had problems twice a day, after the midday meal and in the evening at 7:00 p.m. At night, he supervised the living conditions and well-being of monks, novices and nuns including the overall administration in the temple. Nuns lived in a separate compound within the temple. He checked on the living conditions as well as the behavior of monks, novices, and nuns at night. It was his policy not to accept any invitation outside the wat except very important engagements. He usually asked if he could send other monks to be his representatives for any invitation. His reason was to be present at the temple to do his daily routine work supervising meditation sessions and helping people.

Meditation practice at Wat Paknam has been conducted according to the system and order that Luang Phor Wat Paknam set forth. Luang Phor was always present as chairman of every activity such as chanting. He meditated and supervised all meditation sessions by himself from the beginning through the end of this life, even when he was sick. He never allowed any carelessness by himself or others. Every evening or even at night time, he called monks to do meditation with him under his supervision for one hour or two hours each time. He listened to others' objections, but still continued to devote his time for teaching meditation. Meditation was his primary concern. Before he died, his last words to all disciples, monks, nuns and lay followers was to continue doing their own assigned tasks without any pause:

Continue whatever you are doing, with great effort. Do not give up. Continue to support meals for monks as usual.<sup>128</sup> Carry-on

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<sup>128</sup> Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakayaram, **Samatha-Vipassana Kammatthana (Dhamma Practice on Satipatthana 4)**, (Rajburi: Printing Division of Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakayaram, B.E. 2547, p.41).

doing the work as if I were alive. Never stop meditating. Keep doing good and continue to support the monks.<sup>129</sup>

This was the tradition and system of Wat Paknam. It became a tradition of Wat Paknam as well as in every branch of Wat Paknam to carry on this tradition of studying scripture, meditation practice, and offering food to monks, novices and everyone in the temple.

### 3.1.4 Personal Qualities

The success of a preacher in propagation depends on his personality and talent in preaching to get messages across for the audience to understand easily. Luang Phor Wat Paknam was a virtuous monk who had many qualities and modes of conduct in tackling problems and obstacles throughout his life. Being a truthful person, he strove forward in whatever he viewed as the righteous thing to do, without being afraid of anyone. Luang Phor Wat Paknam had many leadership qualities. He was truthful, vigorous, wise, profound, kind, and just<sup>130</sup>. He was not only a great meditation master, but also a good program developer and administrator<sup>131</sup>.

Luang Phor Wat Paknam was proficient in knowledge (*vijja*), good morality conduct (*carana*), Supernormal powers (*abhiñña*) and excellent virtues. He conducted many activities beneficial to Buddhism.<sup>132</sup> In meditation practice for deliverance, Luang Phor set three levels of extinction namely: extinction by suppression (*vikkhambhana-nirodha*), extinction by substitution of opposites (*Tadanga-nirodha*), and extinction by cutting off (*Samuccheda-nirodha*). Nobody knew what level he was in. But, he had taught for long time that the Dhamma never fades, but the number of people always increases.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Dhammakaya Foundation, op.cit., p. 136.

<sup>130</sup> Luang Phor Wat Paknam Alumni Association, **Navakanusorn 2497**, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition by Wat Paknam's Navaka Group, (Bangkok: Eakpim-Thai Co., B.E. 2546), p. 22.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid, p. 155.

<sup>132</sup> People's Dhamma Practice Project, op. cit., p. (63).

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., p. (64).

Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni had a respectful personality with bright complexion. He possessed internal and external virtues. Internal virtues are firm, and concern about people. He was just, not biased or weak. He was decisive and truthful in whatever he said and must do so. External virtues are graceful, good voice radiance, warmth, sense of humor, laugh while teaching to create friendly and warmth atmosphere. He was wise and good leader who had regulation to follow<sup>134</sup>. For example, (Phra Bhavanakosolthera (Veera Kanuttamo) remarked that when Luang Phor first came to Wat Paknam, without knowing why he was there, Mr. Veera Uttaranathee looked around and saw a respectful monk with bravery, a graceful character, and a good complexion having his meal among the other monks. He thought that this monk must be a virtuous vipassana master. He saw his grace in carrying on a conversation and his ability to answer exceptionally subtle Dhamma, beyond the other monks.<sup>135</sup> Khun Phra Thip Parinya also saw that he was tactful in solving problems and had the proper virtues and mode of life, not oppressing anyone. He was also tidy and provided knowledge to monks, novices, nuns and lay fellows.

An important virtue that Luang Phor emphasized was the unity in the monastic community. He emphasized that everyone in the temple must have conformity and ‘togetherness’ for chanting, listening to sermons, sitting in meditation and even shaving the hair.

The community should conduct all activities with togetherness – that means with community spirit. Anyone with community spirit will never fall on hard times. He will never fall from prosperity. Whatever tradition he practices, he’ll never denigrate others. But, it’s necessary to be able to criticize one’s fellows in the community and accept their criticism of us as well.<sup>136</sup>

Luang Phor was very just. He was not biased, but at the same time his decisions were clear cut and sagacious. He would never go back on his word.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Ajahn Tritha Niemkham, **Tritha Told Stories about Luang Phor and Wat Paknam, (5<sup>th</sup> edition)**, (Bangkok: B.E. 2544), p. 159.

<sup>135</sup> People’s Dhamma Practice Project, op. cit., p. 99.

<sup>136</sup> Dhammakaya Foundation, op. cit., p. 57.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., p. 56.

If any quarrels arose among monks, novices, nuns or lay people, Luang Phor would identify the two key disputants at the heart of it and ask both parties to forgive each other rather than to ask what the problem was about. If both parties could forgive each other, that settled the case, and they could stay at the temple. If both of them could not forgive each other and settle the matter, both were expelled. He wanted conformity and harmony throughout the monastic community.<sup>138</sup>

In terms of purity, he was very strict in Dhamma-Vinaya. He was very cautious and kept his manners, speech and thoughts under control.<sup>139</sup> He did not touch nor keep money. The temple's treasurer would take care of all financial matters for him. He was a truly venerable person (*Pūjanīyapuggala*) who taught others to behave well and was also a good example, himself. He was clean, tidy and friendly, never hurting others verbally. He had Right Speech suitable to his status and beneficial in appropriate circumstances. Whenever someone had suffering and came to consult him, he listened attentively and then advised them with nice speech to console them to feel better. He was not concerned about rewards or respect. Instead, he helped everyone who suffered with his loving-kindness. He taught everyone who attained Dhammakaya to help the suffering people who came for help. Everyone must do his duty pleasantly, patiently and vigorously, without seeking any reward or reverence.<sup>140</sup>

Initially, Luang Phor wanted to isolate himself and seek tranquility in the forest. But, he was very concerned about the people who were suffering due to their defilements, poor livelihood and illnesses without any refuge. If he was concerned with only his own benefit, he would have no chance to help these people from their suffering.<sup>141</sup> He tried every way to lead people to temple for Dhamma study and practice and urged them to take the Triple Gem as their refuge, not just with words, but by doing it himself. People felt gratitude for his compassion, kindness, virtues, and wisdom in eliminating their grief and problems. He helped people to find happiness and peace bodily, verbally and mentally.

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid., p. 57-58.

<sup>139</sup> People's Dhamma Practice Project, op. cit., p. (62).

<sup>140</sup> Ajhan Tritha Niemkham, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, op.cit., 161-162.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

He felt gratitude toward his parents, teachers and many others who gave him support, especially an old lady, who had offered him food every day while he was studying scripture at Wat Chetupon. Luang Phor Wat Paknam gave her a good residence at Wat Paknam. He supported her throughout her life. When Somdej Phra Wannarat was ill, Luang Phor Wat Paknam sent bird nests and food to him every morning as a token of his appreciation of his Upajjaya's support. He even cured Somdej by teaching him the Dhammakaya method. When Luang Phor Wat Paknam was sick, he never complained or showed any pain except when unconscious. Once he was conscious, he could get rid of the pain and maintain himself neutral. He was not picky or demanding about anything he wanted. If he could not get what he wanted, he smiled and accepted that. He took what had been offered to him, but did not eat what was disallowed.

### **3.2 Dhamma Preaching**

Luang Phor Wat Paknam's virtues and wisdom in Dhamma Preaching made him a good model of how to establish oneself righteously prior to teaching others. He dedicated his life for teaching people, following the Buddha's path. He took the Buddha as his Master, not only the teachings of the Buddha, but also his bodily, verbal and mental conduct. He worked for the well-being of mankind to be free from suffering. He set a good model of teaching and propagating the Buddha-Dhamma for others to follow to avoid conflict. Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's technique of Dhamma propagation was based on the three criteria of *pariyatti*, *pattipatti* and *pavedha*, based on morality, concentration and wisdom: (1) Observance of morality (*Sila*) -- bodily, verbally and mentally, (2) listening to sermons and lectures and practicing meditation, and (3) understanding the method of meditation practice

Most people came to Wat Paknam because of their faith in Luang Phor Wat Paknam. Human beings have suffering caused by problems with family, livelihood, business, career, economics, illness, etc. They asked for help from Luang Phor Wat Paknam. With loving-kindness and concern, he extended his help to all, sincerely, like a father looking after his children. He urged people to come to the temple to study Dhamma. He emphasized that listening to preaching and practicing meditation must go together. People from all walks of life came to study Dhamma with him. Thursday was the day for Dhamma study and meditation practice. When their lives improved, they spread the word to

others. Thus, more and more people came to the temple with interest in learning Dhamma so that they, too, could become successful in life.

### 3.2.1 Techniques of Teaching Dhamma

He was a model Meditation Master who preached Dhamma and taught meditation practice at the same time. His method of propagation was to preach Dhamma while linking it to meditation practice. Therefore, people could understand and followed easily.

Dhamma preaching was given to the audience prior to meditation practice in order to give general knowledge of Buddha's teaching. First, he elevated people's minds with Dhamma, to become stable in Dhamma for personal development. The purpose of his Dhamma preaching was to help people gain release from their current suffering and to develop mindfulness and wisdom. Meditation practice can be a real experience for understanding Buddha's teachings by cultivating spiritual virtues. The practitioners applied the theory in action through real practice in order to understand the teaching clearly. This is *pativedha* to get insight through listening and practicing.

The content of his teaching was mainly based on the Buddha's teachings which applied to real life conditions. He always emphasized the Buddha's teachings by referring to the doctrine in the Tipitaka. He had good techniques and methods of propagating Buddha-Dhamma and was able to apply them successfully to the social development in the current era. His main objective was to urge more Buddhists to go to the Temples for listening to Dhamma and cultivating spiritual values for their own sake. He had the sincere intention of helping people get free from their suffering and to reach the ultimate goal of Nirvana.

The style of his preaching Dhamma was colorful and quite different from other preachers. He had many styles of Dhamma preaching. In every sermon, Pali words were cited clearly with explanation. *Sila*, *Samadhi* and wisdom were the highlight of his preaching. Principles of preaching were morality (*Sila*), concentration (*Samadhi*), and wisdom (*pañña*). Phra Parinya, the former judge from Wat Mahadhatu commented that most of his Dhamma preaching was based on scriptures such as giving donations, observing *Sila*, practicing meditation for spiritual cultivation, Hell, Heaven and Nibbana. But he

emphasized strongly *Paramatha* Dhamma<sup>142</sup> which led to Dhammakaya Meditation Practice to be able to see Hell and Heaven. The topics of Sila, Concentration and Wisdom, related to the *Visuddhimagga* scripture were difficult to explain clearly if the preacher was not a meditation master. But, Luang Phor could preach clearly and advised the direct path for practice.<sup>143</sup>

His Dhamma preaching was always in sequence order, linking one subject to the others in the previous sermon. His techniques of preaching was firstly, he cited the Pali words of each sermon, then, he gave the main theme and objectives of that particular sermon that he was going to preach. He caught the attention of the audience by asking questions on the meaning of each key words, analyzed the meaning and gave more explanation on each concept of key words.<sup>144</sup>

When newcomers came to meet him, he would start a conversation based on the Progressive Sermon (*Anupubbikatha*) on giving (*Dana*), morality (*Sila*), heavenly pleasures (*Sagga-katha*), the disadvantages of sensual pleasures (*Kammadinava-katha*), and the benefits of renouncing sensual pleasures (*Nekkhammanisamsa-katha*).

**Giving (*Dana*).** He preached on giving (*Dana*) to encourage people to make offerings. He taught that since we were born into Buddhism, giving or generosity (*Dana*) is common task. Giving (*Dana*) to the wat supports Buddhism. Without this support, Buddhism would not last long. Monks and novices have already given up their wealth seeking deliverance. The lay people play an important role in fostering Buddhism by giving (*Dana*). This giving (*Dana*) is very important. The world can be peaceful and happy, depending on this giving (*Dana*). Without giving, the world will suffer. The monks and novices suffer. Giving means giving happiness to each other. This starts with parents giving happiness to their children. The children also give happiness to their parents in return. Anyone who gives food to monks and novices gives five factors, namely improvement in age, complexion, happiness, strength, and

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<sup>142</sup> Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen and Luang Phor Wat Paknam Alumni Association, op.cit., p. 85.

<sup>143</sup> People's Dhamma Practice Project, op. cit., p. 25.

<sup>144</sup> Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen and Luang Phor Wat Paknam Alumni Association, op.cit., p. 79.

wisdom. He will also receive these five factors in return. This is merit making. The power of good deeds and purity of giving will protect and give prosperity to that person.<sup>145</sup>

Luang Phor always advised people to cultivate merit by giving which is the important foundation of perfection. He used to have difficulty on the alms-round when he was studying at Wat Chetupon. Quite often he did not receive any food for many days in a row. One day, he received a spoonful of rice and a piece of banana. He was starving from having nothing to eat for many days and he was just about to eat when a skinny, hungry dog walked into his room. Luang Phor felt pity and gave the dog half of his food. He made the resolution that if he had good luck in the future, he would nurture monks and novices. This was his great perfection which enabled him to nurture a great number of monks, nuns and lay people in the temple, including the devotees being nurtured up to the present. He was always concerned about the devotees and whether they had financial difficulties. If anyone was short of money, he would tell them to save some money for their family and not to donate too much. Giving could be done in other ways, such as contributing time or strength.

Luang Phor Wat Paknam had ten perfections. The first perfection was giving (*Dana*). Giving can be in education, food, shelter, Dhamma and forgiveness. He always gave to others and never asked anything from anyone. Most people came to offer him money and all necessities whenever he had special functions. Forgiveness is the most meritorious. He was never angry with his enemies.

**Morality (*Sila*).** Luang Phor advised all monks and novices to behave well, according to the Vinaya, and as befits the Dhamma. He cited Pali words with explanation for each word, to benefit to the Dhamma (*Dhamanu Dhampatip Guno*) and move up to a higher level. Never turn back (*Samijipatipanno*). Then, he asked how good a person should behave. Next, he gave the explanation that to behave according to *Silā*, a person observes five precepts for laity, eight precepts for nuns, ten precepts for novices and 227 precepts for monks. He warned them not to be lax about *Silā*, in order to have full concentration (*samadhi*) and effort for one-pointedness to purify the mind and elevate spiritual values.

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<sup>145</sup> People's Dhamma Practice Project, "Pattanutana", op. cit., pp. 599-606.

Finally, he taught them to have wisdom and to contemplate to obtain knowledge (*jhana*).<sup>146</sup>

For lay people, Luang Phor taught them to have firm faith in the Triple Gem, to observe the five precepts purely and strictly, and to be firm in doing good deeds for prosperity in their life, both in the present and the future. He taught them to manage their money effectively, to economize (be thrifty) based on self sufficiency. He understood that earning money for a living was difficult. Therefore, a wise man should utilize his property efficiently in order to survive happily.<sup>147</sup>

First, we have to look at his policy for temple administration, before going on to propagation. Temple administration is one factor of propagation. The leader must be strict regarding duties, morality, and Vinaya rules. Chanting must be conducted to give wisdom. Morality is to destroy defilements, spiritual cultivation is by meditation to gain wisdom. It is fruit (*pativedha*) to gain internal and external knowledge and experience of worldly life. A monk who possessed these complete qualities would gain faith and respect from the people. This drew more and more people to the temple.

Phra Rajyanvisith (Sermchai Polpatanaritdhi) mentioned Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's moral conduct. For the Monastic Disciplinary teachings (*Vinaya*), he actually practiced strictly himself so that others could see and observe how he did it. He had good moral conduct in accordance with the *Dhamma-Vinaya*. This method applies throughout the temple. His technique of propagation was to actually do it himself to set good example for the other monks to follow. As Abbot of Wat Paknam, he set a good example in moral conduct and in good performance of duties, strictly in accordance with the Vinaya. He did not touch money. The monastic treasurer took care of all financial matters.<sup>148</sup>

**The Learner.** His Unique teaching technique was aimed specifically to the minds of the each person in the audience. He reviewed

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<sup>146</sup> People's Dhamma Practice Project, 'The advice (*Ovāda*)', op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>147</sup> Ajahn Tritha Niemkham, op.cit., 113.

<sup>148</sup> Interview with Phra Rajyanvisith (Sermchai Polpatanaritdhi), Abbot of Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakayaram, January 20, 2005. See Appendix D.

the background and characteristics of the listeners so that they could gain clear knowledge. He emphasized on the natural facts of existence. He also focused on attainment of Arahantship and Nirvana.

A good example of teaching morality was about gambling. One man requested for Luang Phor Wat Paknam's kindness to give him the lottery number. Luang Phor kept silent and did not give him his wish. But, this man persistently requested his mercy. He begged for Luang Phor's loving-kindness to give him the lottery number as it would change his life tremendously. Luang Phor could not refuse him any more because his strong expectations. So, Luang Phor wrote something on a piece of paper and gave it to this man. Luang Phor instructed this man not to open it until he got home. He instructed him to wash himself, do some chanting and practice meditation. Then, after his mind was calm and peaceful, he should open the paper. This would change his life a great deal. This man was very happy and left Luang Phor with great hope. He did not allow anyone to get the paper from him. He followed Luang Phor's instructions very obediently. After his meditation practice, he opened the piece of paper with his mind calm. Luang Phor wrote on the paper that "Gambling is bad. It could destroy your life. Your life could descend into wrack and ruin." At first, this man was very disappointed and angry at Luang Phor Wat Paknam, but he realized afterwards that Luang Phor had taught him a valuable lesson. This demonstrates one of Luang Phor's tactics for teaching an immoral person.

Luang Phor compared people's characteristics of gentleness and strength. He said: If anyone is gentle and soft, then he or she must be very soft like cotton. If anyone is strong, then he should be very strong like metal or a diamond. This is the concept of a wise man. The Buddha was very strong and was able to defeat all devils.<sup>149</sup> This teaching implies that an individual has to be gentle and polite to others especially the authorities. At the same time, he must be strong like a diamond to reject defilements or evil influences from other people.

**The Method of Teaching.** He discussed some Dhamma in each sermon and explained the content in detail in a way that was easy to understand and see clearly. He started with theory and gradually taught from the simple to the more difficult subject matter. Then, this would

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<sup>149</sup> Ajahn Tritha Niemkham, op.cit., p. 117.

lead to meditation practice. For example, in the *Ariyathāna Kathā*, he first defined the meaning of the concept for that sermon ‘*Ariyathāna Kathā* means the treasures of the Noble One or the excellent treasures.’ Then, he proceeded to the main content.

The first sermon was The Virtues of The Buddha, The Dhamma and the Sangha. Luang Phor Wat Paknam taught the meaningful subject and explained clearly. The teaching technique was direct to the point. He explained the meaning of each terminology adequately to understand.

He cited “*Namo Tassa Bhakavato*” three times. “Now, I will preach on the virtue of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha for acknowledgment and wisdom gained to all faithful Buddhists in the sequence of Pali mentioned above”. He then, asked questions on terminology and described the meaning of each key word. “What is the meaning of *guṇa*? It means the goodness, the beauty which should be respected. There are nine categories of the Buddha’s virtues, six criteria of the Dhamma’s virtues and the nine aspects of the Sangha’s virtues. Araham means ‘far’. There are two meanings. The first one is far from defilements or deliverance. It is the name that exists at the same time of the Buddha’s enlightenment. The second meaning is far way from defilements which has degree of deliverance. The extinction of defilements in the crude human being body is the greed, hatred and wrong view. Then, he explained the cause and effect of this subject and gave story leading to high level of meditation process.<sup>150</sup>

Luang Phor described the meaning of the Triple Gem and asked questions like why we compare the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha to a gem. He used the analogy of having a gem in the house to make the householder feel happy like a rich man. Other people also are happy whenever they see a gem or diamond somewhere. According to scripture study, the Triple Gem is a real gem or is comparable to a gem in meditation practice. The Triple Gem is a really wonderful gem which is more special than an ordinary gem in the Three Realms. Uneducated Buddhists would regard the Triple-Gem as a Buddha Image in the temple, the Dhamma as in the bookshelf, and the Sangha as the monks in the temple. He used the analogy of comparing this to the heart-wood of a tree. These people can only touch the bark, not the heart-wood of the

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<sup>150</sup> People’s Dhamma Practice Project, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

tree. Educated Buddhists who study the Life of the Buddha would appreciate the meaning of the Triple-Gem as the Buddha (the Enlightened One), the Dhamma (The First Sermon “*Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*”), and the Sangha (The Five Ascetics who were the first Sangha Assembly.<sup>151</sup> We can reach the real Triple – Gem by focusing our mind to the heart of Triple Gems through our refined physically, verbally and mentally at the center of the body.<sup>152</sup>

He taught monks, novices, nuns, and lay people to search for the truth. If everyone has truthfulness, one can achieve everything. He taught people to take virtues of The Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha as their refuge. He advised the audience to contemplate our own body, speech and mental actions whether or not there is any unwholesome deed. If there is nothing wrong, then one should maintain the good deeds always. People seek for refuge without knowing that the real refuge is oneself. He emphasized that ‘self is real refuge’. A person is pure or not pure depending on his own choice. A person should control mind, to purify one’s mind and to have knowledge. Our refuge is the excellent Dhamma. It is common for people to seek for refuge, do not know where to find it. Actually, the real important refuge is oneself not the money and materialism. The Buddha did not teach us to take others as refuge but he told us to take oneself as one’s refuge “*Attahi Attano Nato*”.<sup>153</sup>

The Buddha was our excellent refuge, nothing else. The Dhamma was our excellent refuge, nothing else. The Sangha was our excellent refuge, nothing else. Where is the Buddha? Where is the Dhamma? Where is the Sangha? The Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha are perfect, excellent, and are at the center of the body. Your self is at the center of the body. Then, he taught the audience to draw the Triple-Gem into the center of the body, to concentrate at the 7<sup>th</sup> meditation station within the body.<sup>154</sup>

He preached in the style of asking questions and giving cause and effect. He taught people to be firm in Triple-Gems without being tremble from the Eight Worldly Conditions (*Lokadhamma*) rather to

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid., “Ratanathatyaka-manapanama Katha”, p.47.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., p.51.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., “Saccakiriyakatha”, pp. 388-389.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., pp. 387-390.

establish in the Four Divine State of Mind (*Brahmavihāra*) of loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity. Be respect the true Doctrine (*Saddhamma*) would be the superior. How could he be superior? That was he would not be angry at anyone who abused him nor jealous at anyone. This was called as a superior. Monks should be firm in 227 precepts, and five or eight precepts for the lay people. Once a person is strict in morality, people would respect him because he has Dhamma as a principle, a chief, a core, not tremble. He can extend the age of Buddhism longer.<sup>155</sup>

In his sermon “Island is the refuge”, he inspired the audience to take their own self as their refuge and to take the Dhamma as a refuge by focusing on the Dhamma sphere at the center of the body. This is an island, one’s own real refuge.<sup>156</sup> He urged the monks, novices, nuns, and lay people to know Buddhism – know the truth of the Path and the Fruition. Do not just have blind belief to lead life happily without complications in the community.<sup>157</sup>

He often taught that “all creatures seek a refuge for themselves. As the Five Aggregates are impermanence, one must confront with death, unavoidable. When we are still alive, the aggregates are great burden to take care at all time. All creatures are such in the past, at the present and will be in the future, never end, no free time for being whatever one desires.

His sermon “Five Aggregates are the Heavy Burden”, he taught that everyone has Five Aggregates which are a heavy burden for an individual to take care. It gradually becomes heavier and heavier, starting from the womb until delivery time, then gradually growing up. A person has to take care of his own Five Aggregates. But, he also wants to take on more burdens by having a wife and children. Having a family gives him more responsibilities. This burden causes him suffering. If a person

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid., p. 394.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., p. 68.

sets himself free of these Five Aggregates without attaching to them, he will be happy.<sup>158</sup>

He also preached in the style of asking questions. He asked the meaning of each Dhamma concept and then gave answers and more explanation for each particular concept. Then, he would ask follow-up questions in sequence in order to inspire the audience to think further and would give more Dhamma in detail. Finally, he would clarify differences between two concepts and suggest practicing meditation if anyone really wanted to find out more or get to Nibbana. He urged the audience to really practice in order to know for themselves what Nibbana means. This is the technique of showing the fact and letting the practitioner experience it by himself.<sup>159</sup>

Q. What is the Path (*Magga*)? What is the fruition (*Phala*)? What is Nibbana?

A. Crude Dhamma Body, Crude Sotapatti Body, Crude Sakatdakami Body, Crude Anakami Body, Crude Arahatta body .... These are the Path. The Refined Dhamma Body, Refined Sotapatti Body, Refined Sakatdakami Body, Refined Anakami Body, Refined Arahatta body are the Fruition. Dhamma that makes Arahatta is Nibbana.<sup>160</sup>

The Buddha set himself as example for the monks, novices to follow. In the morning, he led the Sangha for alms-round. Those who have not yet attained enlightenment would continue practicing. Those who attained Dhamma would teach others. Those who cannot practice will try harder.<sup>161</sup>

Q. Where is Nibbāna?

A. He explained that Nibbāna is in the mind. Once the mind is free from defilements, it is Nibbāna. Then he explained in more detail that

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<sup>158</sup> Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen and Luang Phor Wat Paknam Alumni Association, **Dhamma Legacy (Maradok Dhamma) of Luang Phor Wat Paknam (Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni)**, op.cit., pp.124-126.

<sup>159</sup> People's Dhamma Practice Project, op. cit., p. 53.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., p. 453.

there are two kinds of Nibbāna. The first kind is extinction of defilements while life and the Five Aggregates (*Sankhāra*) remain. It is called as *Saupādisesa-nibbāna*. The second kind is the extinction of defilements and aggregates known as *Anupādisesa-nibbāna*. Forty- Five years of Buddha spent time for teaching is *Saupādisesa-nibbāna*. He explained clearly that at the time of Buddha's death (*Mahaparibbāna*) at age of 80 years is *Anupādisesa-nibbāna*, he contemplated Absorptions of the Fine-Material Sphere (*Rūpajhāna*) and the four Absorptions of the Formless Sphere (*Arūpajhāna*) back and forth many times. The matter of Nibbāna was explained continuously in the *Mangala Sutta*, *Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta* and *Athitapariyaya Sutta*.<sup>162</sup>

### 3.2.2 Teaching as a Miracle

#### 3.2.2.1 The Miracle of psychic power (*Iddhi-Pāṭihāriya*)

The Buddha did not allow his disciple to use miracles of psychic power. The Buddha himself used this miracle to tame stubborn people, for instance, with the three *Jatila* (fire worshipping) ascetics who misconceived themselves to be Arahants. They had the Wrong View that they were superior to others. He also used it with Angulimala, who was a fierce murderer, but ultimately became an Arahant.

Like the Buddha, Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni disliked black magic and did not often utilize psychic powers.<sup>163</sup> He did not want people to rely on his psychic powers. He used psychic power only on important occasions. For example, a family came to see him to prove that *Vijja Dhammakāya* can lead to seeing hell and heaven. Otherwise they would not believe. They forced Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni to prove it. In another example, someone asked for sacred objects and holy water from Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni, as is usually requested from other temples. Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni replied: “There is no black magic or holy water in Wat Paknam, only ‘stop within stop’. Do you want the bark or the hardwood core from a tree?”<sup>164</sup> The people, then, wondered what he meant about ‘stop within stop’.

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<sup>162</sup> Ibid., p. 457.

<sup>163</sup> People's Dhamma Practice Project, op. cit., p. (140).

<sup>164</sup> Ajahn Tritha Niemkham, op.cit., p. 47.

### 3.2.2.2 The Miracle of Mind Reading (*Ādesanā-Pāṭihāriya*)

Luang Phor had the ability to read others' minds and knew what they were thinking about while they listened to his sermons and during meditation. Many people found that his preaching was as if he knew the specific questions and answers of each individual. He knew all his disciples' thoughts and feelings.<sup>165</sup> Some evidence can demonstrate his ability:

In 1953 (B.E. 2496), Phra Bhavanakosolthera (Veera Kanuttamo) practiced meditation with Luang Phor Wat Paknam closely for 18 days, he was able to see what he wants to know. But, he had doubt in his mind that whatever he saw was real or just his own imagination. Suddenly, he heard the voice of Luang Phor Wat Paknam said that "If you imagine, you will not be able to see the reality. But you can see through your concentration. It is vipassana meditation, you can see the reality." Then, Luang Phor Wat Paknam taught him the essence of Buddhism that "the Buddha devoted his whole life to protecting Buddhism which shows the reality you can see."<sup>166</sup>

Phra Sangvien shared his experience with encountering Luang Phor's miracle of mind-reading. He was sitting at the back of the Dhamma hall, listened to Luang Phor's sermon. Luang Phor taught that anyone who has a baby girl or baby boy should give them the King's property. Phra Sangvien thought to himself I am very poor, how could I give them property. Luang Phor said that to have baby girl, give her academic degree. This education degree cannot be used up. If you do not give to her, she will depend on you to death. On Luang Phor's birthday, he gave sermon about how the Buddha left his princess to become an ascetic. Phra Sangvien was listening to Luang Phor's preaching and thought to himself that he would leave his wife for ordination. Luang Phor said: "Don't ever think like that. The Buddha was a prince full of wealth. But, we are not rich. You must be responsible to her. Do not leave her. It would be a lack of loving kindness."<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> People's Dhamma Practice Project, op. cit., p. (140).

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., p. (101).

<sup>167</sup> Interview with Phra Sangvien Athivatto, Meditation Master at Wat Paknam, January 7, 2005. See Appendix D.

Even when he was ill, he just rested in his room and still knew what was going on in his temple. One day, he instructed his monks to receive Somdej Punn who came to visit him. He used his miracle of mind-reading and preached directly to the question.

### 3.2.2.3 The Miracle of teaching (*Anusāsanī- Pāṭihāriya*).

Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's technique of preaching was based on the miracle of teaching. Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni did not want Buddhists to become attached to psychic powers, such as sacred amulets. He did not create amulets using magic power. His sacred amulets derived their power from his cultivation of virtues through the Four Foundations of Mindfulness Meditation method for every day throughout the three months of the rains-retreat over many years. He made a resolution and doubled his knowledge to gather these sacred amulets.

“The miracle of amulets was through meditation for the whole three months of rains retreat, not through the black magic.”<sup>168</sup>

Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni said:

I invited the Buddha from Nibbana where there are many Dhammakaya over uncountable centuries to produce these amulets to exist in human beings. The Buddha worked on this task from the beginning until the end of the rains-retreat and said to me that ‘these sacred amulets exist for the first time in the world.’ Then, the Buddha shut his mouth immediately after these words.

If anyone has intention to take this amulet for self protection or to do unwholesome conducts somehow, may the Buddha change their mind to give up the unwholesome deeds and continue doing wholesome deeds. If they do not give up, the Buddha will punish them. Luck and prosperity will be with those who carry and maintain the amulets. The amulets will aid them with success and

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<sup>168</sup> Interview with Phra Rajyanvisith (Sermchai Polpatanaritdhi), the Abbot of Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakayaram, on January 20, 2005.

profit in earnings from business, progress in their career or occupation, gaining rank, and being safe from all enemies.<sup>169</sup>

Some evidence was shown in the book named “Path and Fruit in Detailed, Vol. 2”, Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni made resolution that: “Those people who use Amulet in unwholesome conducts would not be success”.

The major purpose of creating amulet was that he wanted people to take amulet as a mean for contemplation in meditation practice to recognize the virtues of Triple Gems through morality (*silā*), concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*). Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni would give amulets to people after they practiced meditation and reminded them to keep on meditation without neglecting ‘Dhamma’. He taught them to make the effort to refrain from unwholesome deeds and conduct and substitute wholesome deeds bodily, verbally, and mentally. He urged them to purify their minds and have right view through morality (*silā*), concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*). They would receive the good result of happiness, prosperity and peacefulness from their virtues, in accordance with the Buddha’s teaching that “Dhamma always protects those who practice Dhamma”. This was his tactic in propagating Dhamma.

### **3.2.3 Tactics of Teaching**

#### **3.2.3.1 Stories**

He used Birth Stories (*Jatāka*), for example, ‘the Ascetic kills the iguana’ in teaching monks and novices to practice restraint in *Silā* without oppressing anyone. One ascetic was offered a delicious meal from his friend, made from iguana. The ascetic asked his friend what kind of food he offered to him. His friend said it is iguana soup. The Ascetic had one iguana at his house to service him in everything. He wanted to kill this iguana for cooking a meal. The iguana noticed that the ascetic gave him a strange glance. This story taught that a person should know the method to read people as to who can be trusted and who cannot be trusted. He concluded that monks and novices and lay people should

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<sup>169</sup> Ajahn Tritha Niemkham, op.cit., p. 84.

have the weapon of being real monks and honest people who do not oppress anyone.<sup>170</sup>

### 3.2.3.2 Analogy

Luang Phor Wat Paknam preached about physical and mental nutrition. Dhamma is mental nutrition. Various material objects constitute physical nutrition. Then, he started teaching on *samatha* meditation. The basic level starts with observance of morality (*Sila*). Then, concentration arises. We have to be mindful and repeat the words ‘*Samma Araham*’ many times. After that, we have to check and purify our morality completely. *Sila* is the foundation. Like in a physical construction, we need a strong foundation to support a house. Concentration arises when our morality is pure and complete. He used the simile of planting a tree without water. It will not grow. In the same way, concentration requires morality as the base to support knowing Dhamma quickly. Then, an individual will be able to be, to know and see his own physical form and mind. He said that when morality is complete, concentration is pure and at peace, without any wandering. Then, wisdom arises. It is just like a tree that has gotten good fertilizer. It produces good fruit.<sup>171</sup>

Luang Phor emphasized the importance of social harmony, togetherness and unity among monks, novices, nuns and the laity in the temple. Everyone in the temple must do the same monastic daily routine duty and do things together without conflict. For instance, chanting, listening to sermons and shaving the hair for full-moon days. Even he, himself, never missed such routine duties. He was always present as chair person at every function, even if he did not give the sermon himself. If any monks, novices or nuns had their hair shaved on a different day, he would say: “Even their heads aren’t in unison, how can one expect their minds to be?”<sup>172</sup> Or “If there is no unity even in the head, how can the mind be in conformity”. He always taught that:

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<sup>170</sup> People’s Dhamma Practice Project, op. cit., p. 459.

<sup>171</sup> Singhol, **Personnel of the Knowledge Reign, Part 2**, “Luang Phor Krueng Supattho”, (Bangkok: Sukhumvit Press Co., B.E. 2545), pp. 149-150.

<sup>172</sup> Dhammakaya Foundation, op.cit., p. 57.

Doing things together is regarded as having faith in the community”. He explained that: “Anyone who has faith in the community is regarded as a rich, not a poor person. He will not be disliked by any sects. One must look after and remind the other one and go as a group.” He always taught that “conformity to the group will bring happiness, with no conflict or quarrels or separation. The community will be prosperous and without problems. If there is any problem, it can be solved successfully with Dhamma unity.” He used the analogy of birds separated from the group. They will be caught by hunters. If all birds have unity and fly away from the net at the same time, they will be safe.<sup>173</sup>

Then, he linked this Dhamma to the meditation practice of Dhammakaya. He said the members of Wat Paknam should be able to attain Dhammakaya in order to be the same group. Anyone who does not follow the instruction and cannot attain Dhammakaya can be compared to a bird separated from the group. This was his tactic to encourage all monks, novices and nuns to practice meditation. He taught the Sangha to behave well, bodily and verbally, to avoid criticism. They should be cautious in speaking, walking and every gesture. They should avoid disallowed places and avoid female contact.

“Regarding any fault, do not let it spread to anyone else. Do not let even a little dirt splash on the next person.”<sup>174</sup>

### 3.2.3.3 Teaching Aids

Luang Phor Wat Paknam used Teaching Aids for teaching meditation. He was the first meditation master in the nineteenth century to use teaching aids as a tool for teaching meditation. Vija Dhammakāya was such a deep, delicate and subtle subject that it was difficult for people who have no background to understand. But, it is real and can be proven. Therefore, he thought about how to explain it. He took the initiative to make teaching aids for illustrating the method of meditation in an effective manner, so that learners could understand clearly through seeing the real thing from a diagram. It could help them to imagine and

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<sup>173</sup> Ajahn Tritha Niemkham, *op.cit.*, p. 114.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid*, p. 116.

visualize their own mind. These aids could help them to practice effectively.<sup>175</sup>

#### **3.2.3.4 Wording**

The language he used was a simple, native style. For teaching meditation, his language was concise, but contained subtle cues with deep philosophical meaning. For instance, he instructed practitioners to “Keep back the black center.” Meditators would understand that he meant to get rid of unwholesome mind.<sup>176</sup> But, common people who did not meditate with him would not understand. Listeners must use wisdom to contemplate his concise but deeply meaningful statements with personal knowing (*paccatam*).

#### **3.2.3.5 Demonstration through Real Action**

Luang Phor often picked up a few grains of rice that had fallen on the ground. He told monks that the farmers had worked hard for it. We should not waste any of rice. He actual did this, himself, in order to set an example for the other monks to follow. He taught the sick person to really practice meditate with citing words “Samma Araham” which could merging together to cure the illness.<sup>177</sup>

#### **3.2.3.6 Reward and Punishment**

He followed the Buddha’s footsteps in teaching and governing the Sangha. Anyone who made a mistake, broke the regulations or misbehaved would be given a first warning. A second warning would be given for a continuing offence. But, if someone committed an offence for the third time, he would punish them. If they were novices, they would usually be caned by Phra Plagung Chupaña, the supervisor of novices. Sometimes, he punished them by having them sweep the temple or cut dry wood for the kitchen’s fuel. For anyone who did not improve themselves and continued to make a severe mistake would be expelled. This was very rare. At the same time, Luang Phor gave rewards to monks

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<sup>175</sup> See details in Meditation Section, 3.3.1.1. Pure Meditation Practice.

<sup>176</sup> Interview with Mae Chee Yupa Bunnag, Head of District, February 25, 2005. See Appendix D.

<sup>177</sup> Ajahn Tritha Niemkham, *op.cit.*, p. 15.

or novices who passed the Pali examinations. If he did not have any presents available, he would find something for them later on.

Force has to be applied to improve people's virtues. The mind is like water which always tends to seek its own depth. Without effort, the mind's virtue, like water, will fall to the lowest level -- performance of evil deeds. If normal people can develop their minds to the level of Arahant, then effort needs to be made. The mind has to be brought under control until it comes to a standstill. Thus, to govern others, there needs to be rules. There needs to be something to force people to become better. And, there needs to be penalties for breaking the rules."<sup>178</sup>

### **3.2.3.7 Selection of People**

Luang Phor Wat Paknam selected the right person for the right task. He taught the first group of three monks and four lay people at Wat Bangplama. Then, he sent his first disciple who had attained Dhammakaya out to be an abbot. He taught Phra Bhavana Kosolthera (Theera Dhammatharo) all knowledge of the Dhammakaya method. Afterwards, Phra Bhavana Kosolthera (Theera Dhammatharo) became the key person for carrying on all meditation teaching and other functions for Luang Phor. He taught lay people every Thursday afternoon.

He sent any monks or nuns who attained high Dhamma to teach (propagate) the Dhamma at different places. He let anyone who had the potential to preach Dhamma preach it. Luang Phor would be chairman and was present in the temple to listen. Phra Bhavanakosolthera (Veera Kanuttamo) learned meditation closely with Luang Phor. He knew the Japanese language to assist in propagation in Japan. The first foreign monk, named Phra Kabilavutto had the potential to attain Dhamma. Luang Phor taught him Dhammakaya meditation in the temple on his ordination day. He sent Phra Kabilavutto to propagate Dhammakaya in England.

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<sup>178</sup> Dhammakaya Foundation, op.cit., p. 56.

### 3.2.3.8 Confrontation and Tackling Problems

Luang Phor had a unique tactic for solving problems. He used the word “stop” both as Abbot of Wat Paknam and also in his meditation teaching technique. As Abbot of Wat Paknam, he had the endurance to cope with the negative criticisms, reactions and insulting words from people and monks in neighbors around the temple who disagreed with his administration and meditation teaching technique.

“A Bhikkhu must never retaliate, or ever run away. That was the only way conquest could be attained.”<sup>179</sup>

This statement was given to monks to warn them not to fight with the detractors or terrorists who gave him trouble several times. “To stop is to succeed” was also a slogan of his Dhammakaya meditation teaching technique.

This word “stop or hold still” has great significant meaning in dept, not only in the meditation view point (Dhamma Life), but it also can be applied to our daily life (worldly life) in order to survive in this complicated society and in this competitive world. Life is so complicated, especially in this competitive world of materialism. People from all walks of life have to encounter the suffering. We all have to search for the way to lessen our suffering, although it is impossible to be totally free from suffering (*dukkha*) in this complicated world. The question is how? No matter how rich a person is, if he has no merit-making, he cannot be happy and rich.

## 3.3 Teaching Meditation Practice

Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni had a unique style integrating Dhamma preaching and meditation practice. His technique was to apply theory of Dhamma (Pariyatti) to real life practice (Patipatti). In every sermon, he preached *Dhamma* as general background for the audience to understand Buddhism and then lead to meditation practice. Luang Phor Wat Paknam’s technique of teaching meditation involved five steps: (1) Giving introduction of general knowledge to know one’s objective why we meditate for. He pointed out the nature of human suffering and the

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<sup>179</sup> T. Magness, **Sama Samadhi**, (Bangkok: Aroon Karn Pim Press), p. 9.

causes of suffering, and then suggested the way to solve problem. (2) Creating a comfortable and friendly atmosphere. (3) Giving Encouragement to everyone to feel that it is not difficult to learn. (4) Explaining the procedure of meditation clearly, easy to follow. (5) Guiding the practitioners do it themselves to be able to see by individual experience with close guidance from him.

First of all, he introduced people to Buddhism. What is the Buddhism? Buddhism means the Buddha's teaching. The Buddha taught all beings in the world to avoid doing evil, to do good deeds and to purify mind. These three teachings were confirmed as the main teaching of every Buddha in the past, the present and the future. This was the reason that all the Buddhists were firm in Buddhism in order to cultivate mind according to the objective of the Buddhism.<sup>180</sup> Style of teaching was in question asking.

Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni referred to the main teaching of the Buddha. Buddhism is the teaching of the Buddha. He aimed directly to the listener's mind. He knew the learner's background and potentiality in attaining Dhamma. He emphasized on the attainment of path and fruition, Arahantship and nirvana. His Teaching style was based on the nature and reality exists naturally.

Luang Phor Wat Paknam's technique of teaching was to explain clearly (*Santhassana*) on the introduction of Buddhism, the duty in Buddhism and explain clearly the essence of Dhamma. Duties of the Buddhists were to study in theory (*Kanthadura*) and meditation practice (*Vipassanadura*). It is necessary for the Buddhists to gain knowledge in scriptures or theory (*Kanthadura*) to get basic knowledge. Meditation practice is the most important factor of the Buddha's teaching as it is the best way for deliverance. He taught the principle of Dhamma for disciples and people to follow for prosperity of their lives.

He inspired the listeners to see and accept the fact and follow it (*Samathapana*). The first basic concept was to know well of oneself why and how we are born, what was all about our dreams when we sleep

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<sup>180</sup> Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni (Sodh Candasaro), **The Path to Magga Phala: The Method for Teaching Samatha-Vipassana Meditation** by Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni", p. 1, (Tape recorder transcribed by Phra Khru Samana Dhamma Sama Dana (Theera Klosuwan), October 23, 2509..

and what is about the wondering mind, thinking of various things, goes many directions. The ‘Mind’ is wandering to different directions, very fast. The reason that we practice meditation is to control our mind to focus at one thing without wondering around to different directions. Through meditation, the ‘Mind’ becomes strong, be able to do many useful things. When the mind is concentrated, the mind is proper for the work”.<sup>181</sup>

Then, he questioned and answered by explaining point by point at each concept of Dhamma leading to the meditation practice. He explained what ‘*Dippakāya*’ is and described the method of getting into this body ‘*Dippakāya*’. The birth of human being derived from the Celestial body (*Dippakāya*). This ‘*Dippakāya*’ is inside our physical form. This physical form is like human form which can be seen with the eyes. When we sleep, we dream that we go to different places, do many things, and see many things. What was this? This is because the body ‘*Dippakāya*’ comes out from our human form while we are sleeping.

There are eighteen successively refined bodies as we delve deeper and deeper inside our human form. These are 1) the Human form, 2) the Refined Human Form, 3) the Celestial Form, 4) the Refined Celestial Form, 5) the Brahman Form, 6) the Refined Brahman Form, 7) the Arūpa Brahman Form, 8) the Refined Arūpa Brahman Form, 9) the Dhammakāya Form, 10) the Refined Dhammakāya Form, 11) the Sotāpanna Form, 12) the Refined Sotāpanna Form, 13) the Sakadāgāmī Form, 14) the Refined Sakadāgāmī Form, 15) the Anāgāmī Form, 16) the Refined Anāgāmī Form, 17) the Arahantta Form, 18) the Refined Arahantta Form. The Pali Canon (Tipitaka) lists eight types of ‘Noble Person’ which are from Sotapanna up to the Arahanta. The lower ones listed here are not ‘Noble Persons’, only steps along the way.

He emphasized the mind of the individual. All Dhammas have mind as their forerunner; have mind as chief; have mind as excellence; are made of mind. (*Manopubbangamā dhammā Manoseṭṭhā manomayā.*) Everything succeed because of the mind. He advised that ‘Oneself is the refuge of oneself’ (*Attahi Attana Nato means the great self is the end of goal of self*). How could we rely on ourselves? First of all, we have to take Dhamma as our refuge. Once we have Dhamma as principle to lead

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<sup>181</sup> Lanna’s Dhamma Group-Kalayanamit, **Dhamakaya**, (Chiangmai: Thipnate Press, B.E. 2540), p. 31.

our lives righteously, we grow mature and strong with virtue. The next, we can extend our helps to others in needed.

### **Samatha-Vipassana Meditation**

At the beginning of his meditation teaching, he gave general information of meditation which consists of *samatha* and *vipassana*. According to the Pali Cannon, cultivation of mind could be obtained from two types of knowledge. That are samatha and vipassana.<sup>182</sup>

Oh! Bhikkhus, there are two types of knowledge (*Deva Me Bhikkave Vijjābhāgiyā*). What are the two types of knowledge? (*Katame Deva*). One is Samatha the calmness and tranquility (*Samatho Ca*). The other one is Vipassana, the knowledge of insight (*Vipassanā Ca*)<sup>183</sup>

Luang Phor explained the meaning of terminology and concept in the content. He asked question that led to the key notes of cause and effect. For example: when *samatha* exists, what does it need? It needs the mind. What does the mind need? The mind needs to be cultivated. When the mind is cultivated, what does it need? It needs to abandon the desire which blind folds the mind. The sensual pleasure would be ceased out through *samatha*, the tranquility and the suppression. The same questions were applied to Vipassana meditation. He then, described the various subjects for cultivation of *samatha* and vipassana.

‘*Samatha*’ means tranquility, serenity and calmness or mental development to have ‘Concentration’. Samatha is cultivated at the fundamental step to train one’s mind to be calm and tranquility in order to cultivate wisdom through vipassana. Samatha can be contemplated through forty devices of concentration namely ten objects (*kasina*), ten impurities (*Asubha*), ten reflection (*Anusati*) and four modes of sublime

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<sup>182</sup> Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni (Sodh Candasaro), **The Path to Magga Phala: The Method of Teaching Samatha-Vipassana Meditation** by Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni”, pp. 1-2, (Tape recording transcribed by Phra Khru Samana Dhamma Sama Dana (Theera Klosuwan), October 23, 2509.

<sup>183</sup> Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni (Sodh Candasaro), **The Path to Magga Phala: The Method of Teaching Samatha Vipassana Meditation**, translation edition B.E. 2545 by Khun Damkerng Jindahra, (Bangkok: Wat Paknam, B.E. 2545), p. 18.

conduct (*Bhramavihara*) and one perception of the loathsomeness of material food (*Āhārepaṭikūlasaññā*), one analysis of the four elements (*Catudhātuvavaṭṭhāna*) and four formless realms (*Arūpā Jhāna*). Vipassana means insight or intellectual development. Vipassana is cultivated at the advanced level in contemplating the Five Hindrances, Five Aggregates according to the Four Noble Truths and The Three Characteristics and Chain of Dependent Origination. Samatha-Vipassana meditation is the cultivation of mind to get wisdom through contemplation of The Foundation of Mindfulness. This consists of contemplation of the body, feelings, mental functions and phenomena (*dhamma*).

Phra Ananda Thera and Phra Sariputta Thera explained the Buddha's teaching of four meditation practice methods of *Samatha-vipassana Kammathana*. These are (1) contemplation of *samatha* first and vipassana afterwards; (2) contemplation of vipassana first, leading to *samatha* later; (3) contemplation of *samatha* and *vipassana* together; and (4) *Dhammutdajjavikkhitamanus* (trial and error).<sup>184</sup> Among these four meditation practice methods, Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni chose the first method: samatha first and then vipassana afterwards, plus the third method samatha-vipassana (both together) for advanced levels.

Vijja Dhammakaya is the combination of samatha and vipassana meditation. In his meditation, Samatha was fundamental tool for advanced level of Vipassana meditation. Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni taught the Samatha-Vipassana method in accordance with The Four Foundations of Mindfulness (*Satipatthana*). Luang Phor Wat Paknam emphasized that Samatha meditation is needed as a tool for advanced vipassana insight. For example: Yasa cremated a corpse and observed the body change from the normal state to the burning state. Arahants cannot attain enlightenment through using the normal eyes, but only through the Dhammakāya eyes.<sup>185</sup>

From the forty concentration devices or subjects, Luang Phor Wat Paknam chose three: (1) The '*aloka kasina*' (light sphere) as an object of visualization, (2) recollection of Lord Buddha's virtues (*buddhānussati*) and (3) mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*). Luang

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<sup>184</sup> Phra Bhavanavisithikhun (Sermchai Polpatanaritdhi), **Handbook for Tri-Sikkha Practice**, (Rajchaburi, Sahiti Karn Pim Press, B.E. 2547), pp.71-73.

<sup>185</sup> People's Dhamma Practice Project, op.cit. pp. 15-16.

Phor Wat Paknam taught a specific method for beginning meditators to bring the light sphere (*aloka-kasina*) to the center of the body. In basic samatha vipassanā practice, two aids are used. The repetitive word or mantra (*parikamma-bhāvanā*), ‘samma araham’ is used. The object of visualization (*parikamma-nimitta*) is a bright, clear, luminous sphere or translucent Buddha Statue. In *bhāvanā* or meditation practice, visualization of the light sphere (*aloka-kasina*) is taught.

From Luang Phor Wat Paknam’s point of view, it is essential to practice samatha method first in order to have firm and stable concentration which becomes the tool for effective vipassana insight. Samatha is the practice to calm our mind through focusing the mind at one-pointedness. Later, practitioners can progress to contemplating vipassana insights. Anyone who practices vipassana first without having stable concentration, he can have wandering mind. The reason is the Five Hindrances (*Nīvaraṇa*) block the progress. Luang Phor Wat Paknam explained that we have to practice Samatha in order to stop our mind to one-pointedness. The mind cannot stop because the mental defilements (*Upakkilesa*) cause the mind unrest.

### **Mental Defilements or Imperfections (*Upakkilesa*)**

Luang Phor Wat Paknam defined that there were eleven kinds of the mental defilements (*Upakkilesa*) which cause the mind wondering around, unrest and blocked the progress of meditation practice. These imperfections were: (1) doubt, (2) inattention, (3) sloth, torpor, and despair, (4) fear, (5) excitement, (6) restlessness of the body or drowsiness, (7) over-exertion or excess-effort, (8) lack of effort or deficiency of energy, (9) desire or longing, (10) restlessness of mind or perception of diversity, and (11) over fixation on a physical or mental object.<sup>186</sup> If any of these mental defilements (*Upakkilesa*) arise in a human’s mind, concentration will decline. Therefore, in practicing meditation, one must have effort and endurance. These two factors are essential to abandon the eleven kinds of mental defilements in order to control our mindfulness. The meditator must use wisdom to eradicate these mental defilements (*Upakkilesa*).

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<sup>186</sup> T. Magness, **Sammā Samādhi, The Method of Right Insight**, (Bangkok: Athorn Karn Pim Press, B.E. 2540). pp. 61-62. Compare Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, **The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha, (Majjhima Nikāya)**, op.cit., p. 1014.

While practicing meditation, one should set one's mind at equanimity (*majjhimāpaṭipadā*), to feel neither too pleasant nor too unpleasant. One should be free from greed (*lopha*), hatred (*moha*), and delusion (*dosa*). One has to purify the mind to be cool and peaceful, to be in the right position with firm concentration. One should concentrate on the 'nimitta' at the center of the body consistently in every posture (sitting, reclining, standing, or walking) without ever quitting or getting discouraged. Then one will attain good results by oneself. This was the *Samathapan* style of teaching, leading the audience to see for themselves and to agree to accept and practice the method accordingly.

Luang Phor reminded everyone to practice regularly, follow up results, and be patient. Then, they will achieve their goal. This is the greatest merit one can perform, as it is the path towards ultimate deliverance. Even if an individual cannot visualize anything, it becomes a good habit for him to gain merit for the next life. He urged everyone to put effort into practicing, as it is the *vijja* to become a real refuge for oneself.

Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni followed the footsteps of the Buddha's teaching technique by reviewing the Buddha's theory of meditation. His teaching based on *sila*, *samadhi* and *pañña*. Only those with unwholesome physical, verbal or mental conduct will obtain bad results. His teachings calmed people's minds. He taught about giving and generosity (*dana*), morality (*sila*), concentration (*samadhi*) and meditation (*bhavana*) and to have firm faith in the Triple-Gem. Any person can achieve prosperity in his own life by practicing meditation.

### 3.3.1 Samatha Meditation

Luang Phor Wat Paknam drew attention to his teaching of samatha meditation using the Vijja Dhammakaya Method. The first step in learning Samatha meditation is to try to stop the mind completely. The restless mind cannot settle into the tranquility of effective samatha meditation practice. The mind must stop still in order to concentrate. Samatha means calmness, tranquility, stopping and stillness. The mind must stop.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni (Sodh Candasaro), **The Path to Magga Phala: The Method of Teaching Samatha Vipassana Meditation**, translation edition B.E. 2545 by Damkerng Jindahra), p. 20.

The focus of Luang Phor Wat Paknam's teaching is 'MIND'. But, what is the mind? Where is it? Why is it? How do we train it? His teaching technique was to explain how the human mind works. The 'mind' is vision, memory, thought and awareness, joined together. The body or form (*rūpa*) is the combination of four elements: earth, water, fire and wind. The mind (*nāma*) is the combination of feelings (*vedāna*), perception (*saññā*), mental processes (*saṅkhāra*), and awareness (*viññana*).<sup>188</sup> Where is the mind? The mind is inside the feeding fluid of the heart at the center of the body. Vision is in the center of the body. Memory is in the center of the mind substance. Thought is in the midst of the consciousness sphere. Awareness is in the mist of the consciousness sphere. These four components of vision, memory, thought and awareness control the whole body. Vision is the starting point of knowing. Memory is the starting point of feelings. Thought is the starting point of mind or *citta*. Awareness is the starting point of Viññana. Concentration allows the mind components – vision, memory, thought, and awareness to come together into oneness or *Ekaggatāramana*, to rest at the center of the body.

Mind is the key element of the human being, nothing else. This is stated in Pali as “*Manopubbangamā dhammā manoseṭṭhā manomayā,*” which means “all phenomena have mind as their forerunner, have mind as leader, have mind as their excellence, and are made up of mind.” If the mind is evil, the action and speech will be evil. If the mind is good, the action and speech will be good. A person has three states of thought: wholesome (*kusala*), unwholesome (*akusala*) and neutral (*apayagata*). These three states of mind influence our actions.

His main teaching emphasized “Mind” and “Stop”. Mind is the forerunner of all thought, action and speech. “When the mind stops still, one-pointed at the center of the body, that is correct *samatha* meditation. To stop is *samatha*. To stop is success, both in the mundane and supramundane realms. It is success in everything.

“For the world to rest in happiness, the mind must stop in harmony with the world. For dhamma (mental phenomena) to rest in happiness, the mind must stop in harmony with the dhamma. To stop is the only real happiness. There is no other happiness than

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<sup>188</sup> Group of Lanna Dhamma Kalayanimitr, Chiangmai **Dhammakaya**, (Chiangmai: Thipnaet Press, B.E. 2540), p. 2.

stopping. To stop is the key. Thus, one must bring the mind to stop still. Once the mind stops, we continue to stop inside of that stopping point. We never back up.”<sup>189</sup>

The style of his teaching is direct to the point, used simple, brief, but forceful language to inspire listeners to think profoundly, along with him. Then he explained in simple language the Buddha’s deep and interesting advice:

The word ‘Stop’ in Dhamma, means that one must stop repeatedly, more and more still, from the beginning up to the Arahant level. If we do not stop, we cannot progress further. In the mundane world, people must be quick and active, always learning and being aware of others’ tactics in order to manage the world successfully. But, in meditation, surprisingly, one must stop in order to progress faster.<sup>190</sup>

He cited the story of the “*Aṅgulimālā Sutta*” in the *Suttanta Nikaya* as an example to support this theory. There was the exposition where the Buddha stopped Angulimala from killing his own mother. Historically, Angulimala, a fierce murderer, ran after the Buddha and called him to stop. “Stop, Ascetic! Stop, Ascetic!” The Buddha turned to speak to him saying “I have already stopped, but you have not yet stopped.” Angulimala did not understand what the Buddha meant, as he saw the Buddha continuing to walk away from him. He was a great murderer. Nobody could run away from him. What the Buddha meant was that the Buddha stopped himself from all defilements, but Angulimala had not yet stopped from killing people. The Buddha had enough loving-kindness to stop him from committing the most severe crime of killing his own mother. If he did so, he would go to hell.<sup>191</sup>

At the end of this sermon, Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni repeated the same content in order to emphasize the importance of the word ‘stop.’

“This word ‘stop’ applies throughout samatha meditation, from the beginning up to the Arahant level. Only this word is valid throughout. This is the essence of the teaching”

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<sup>189</sup> People’s Dhamma Practice Project, op.cit., p. 273.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., p. 285.

<sup>191</sup> Ajahn Tritha Niemkham, op.cit., p. 87.

Luang Phor Wat Paknam urged learners to have courage (*Samuttejanā*), put forth effort, and gain confidence in order to achieve the objective of meditation. He emphasized that stopping the mind is very difficult for the lazy person. But, it is not difficult for a person who applies effort (*virīya*). It is not too easy and not too hard to practice. Everyone has a Dhamma sphere inside oneself which is located at the center of the body. The essence of his technique is to visualize a crystal sphere entering through the seven bases of the mind. The crystal sphere should be pure and becomes even more refined by repeating the words ‘*samma araham*’. Anyone who can stop and concentrate their mind in the right position at the center of the body, without thinking about anything else can attain Dhamma. Whoever attains higher levels of Dhamma can help people who are sick

He inspired his learners with hope and the vision of good results from the practice (*Sampahamsanā*). A person who attains the goal and is able to see for himself is called as ‘*Sanditthigo*.’ It depends on whether or not an individual really wants to practice. Everyone can achieve the goal if he really works for it, because everyone has a Dhamma sphere. This is the nucleus which creates the human form. The Dhamma sphere is a clear, pure sphere about the size of an egg yolk located at the center of the body. Anyone who can stop and concentrate their mind at the right position at the center of the body, without thinking about anything, can attain Dhamma. The key is to stop. This is success.

### 3.3.1.1 Pure Meditation Practice

Every Thursday afternoon, at 2:00 p.m., Luang Phor Wat Paknam came to the meditation hall with his teaching aids to teach meditation to the public. Monks, novices, nuns, men, women and children at various ages from different temples, directions, and distances came to learn meditation from him.

**Samma Araham:** Luang Phor Wat Paknam chose words “Samma Araham” for reciting during meditation practice. He knew the meaning of this word which derived from the Buddha’s virtue. His tactic is to think of the Buddha’s virtue (*Buddhanusati*) which is the Dhamma giving bright, strength, delight and bravery to practice meditation. It protects a person to have mindfulness to commemorate the Buddha’s virtue. Luang Phor reminded everyone to have *Buddhanusati* as temperament. Because the mind always wondering around, never still.

Recalling the Buddha's virtue would calm the mind became peace and stop still.<sup>192</sup> 'Sammā araham,' the words for (*parikamma-bhāvanā*), are derived from two Pali words of 'sammā' and 'araham'. 'Sammā' means Right, Highest or Ultimate. This word 'araham' means the virtue of the Buddha who is far away from passion. He is an 'Arahanta', the Perfected One, the Enlightened One. It stands for 'Sammā Sambhuddho' which means the Buddha's Supreme Right Enlightenment or Wisdom. Also, it was derived from right 'Sammā' in the Noble Eightfold Path; right view (*Sammā-ditthi*) up to right concentration (*Sammā-samadhi*).

This mantra is very important for recitation during the meditation. When the meditator recites this word *Sammā araham*, he recalls the Buddha's virtue and wisdom. Therefore, 'Samma araham' is *Buddhanu-sati* or recollection of the Buddha's virtue. Meditators recite in order to concentrate the mind to destroy all defilements and *samsaracakka*, to purify one's mind, to refrain from all unwholesome deeds in the public and the private. It protects oneself from all kinds of the dangers. It destroys one's egoism (*māna*) and gives full effort for meditation. It helps in extinction of defilements, cycle of rebirth (*Samsara*) and help in cultivation spiritually from all evils. 'Sammā araham' can be divided separately into 5 words of Sam, Ma, A, Ra, ham, which has its own separate meaning. It is an important mantra for aiding people with faith and devotion to attain deep concentration in *bhāvanā* practice.<sup>193</sup>

**Teaching Aids:** Luang Phor Wat Paknam was the first meditator master to use teaching aids for teaching meditation. Vijja Dhammakāya is a deep, delicate and subtle subject. It is difficult for people who have no background, to understand. But, it is real and can be proven. So, he took the initiative to make teaching aids for illustrating the method effectively to an audience with a diagram. This helped them to practice effectively by aiding imagining and visualizing with their minds. His teaching aids were composed of one black board drawing half-side of body diagram indicated seven locations of the mind; one pointer to point at each position of seven bases in the body; one water glass; and one crystal sphere used as object for meditation. Khunphra Tipprinya

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<sup>192</sup> Phramaha Chupong, *Amata Vatha of Luang Phor Wat Paknam*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, (Bangkok: Animate Print and Design Co.), p. (186).

<sup>193</sup> Ajahn Tritha Niemkham, op.cit., pp. 39-44.

recorded Lungphor Wat Paknam's teaching procedure during the meditation session on April 25, 1946 (B.E. 2489).<sup>194</sup>

The black board drew the half side of body with seven positions of the mind. The first position was the nostril aperture. The second position was the eye socket. The third position was the center of the skull/head. The fourth position was the palate terminus. The fifth position was the throat aperture. The sixth position was the center of the body at the naval level. The seventh position was the position of sphere. It was about two finger-widths above the navel. The last position was the most important position of the seventh base. Because, there was a sphere at the center of the body. This sphere consisted of five small spheres. Beside the body diagram, there was a separate drawing of the position of sphere itself which located at the seventh position. This sphere was expanded to show five small spheres appeared inside of this sphere. Each sphere represented basic elements. In front was the water element controlled the fluids in the body. To the right sphere was the earth element controlled solid parts. To the left was the wind element controlled internal movement of gases. At the back was the fire element controlled heat and body's temperament. At the center sphere was the space element controlled the various gaps in the body. In the center of the space element was cognitive element (*vinñāṇa-dhātu*) which controlled consciousness. At this cognitive element was also called as *pathama-magga* sphere. There were four bright, thin and clear lines connected each of the circumferential spheres to the central sphere.<sup>195</sup>

He used a microphone when teaching so that all practitioners could hear clearly. He used simple available and useful sources as his tools for teaching. For example, he rested his black board on the cuspidor while he was demonstrating the path of movement of the mind. A tape recorder was first used in 1953 (B.E. 2496) to record his preaching and meditation teaching, especially on the explanation of the procedure for empowering the amulets. This tape recorder helped him a great deal as he had to explain the empowering procedure to people many times per

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<sup>194</sup> Group of Lanna Dhamma Kalayanimitr, Chiangmai **Dhammakaya**, (Recorded by Khunphra Tipprinya on April 25, B.E. 2489), (Chiangmai: Thipnaet Press, B.E. 2540), p. 30.

<sup>195</sup> Phra Ajahn Maha, Sermchai Jayamanggalo, **The Heart of Dhammakaya Meditation**. (Bangkok: Dhammakaya Buddhist Meditation Foundation, 1997), pp. 64-65.

day. There were two kinds of tape recordings. The first one was the detailed explanation for people who had time listened to him. The other was a brief explanation for people who were in a hurry.<sup>196</sup>

The handbook entitled “The Path to *Magga Phala*” was distributed to all learners as a guide for understanding basic Dhammakaya meditation up to the level of Eighteen Bodies.

### 3.3.1.2 The Pre-Meditation Service

Prior to the meditation practice, Luang Phor Wat Paknam stressed the importance of proceeding to the worship of Triple-Gem procedure. The essence was to purify the mind and to get oneself ready for meditation. It is very important to invite all the Buddhas to support oneself through the meditation. The first step was to light the candle and incense sticks to pay homage to the Triple Gems. Reciting ‘Namo’ three times to pay homage to the Buddha in the past, the present and the future. The next step was to ask for forgiveness and pardon from the Triple-Gem for all offences made physically, verbally and mentally in order to purify one’s mind. The last step was to request for the power of the Triple-Gem, the virtues of teachers, father, mother and power of individual’s accumulated perfections from the past to support oneself in achieving the meditation practice.<sup>197</sup>

The procedure consisted of the following steps<sup>198</sup>:

1. Paying homage to the Triple-gems.
2. Observing Five Precepts.
3. Declaring for adopting the five precepts.
4. Obeisance to the Triple Gems.
5. Requesting for forgiveness.
6. Invitation to all Buddhas, all sacred, all teaching of the Buddha and noble disciples of the Buddha in the past, present, and future to protect oneself while meditating.
7. Making a resolution (*Adhiṭṭhāna*).

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<sup>196</sup> Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen, **Explanation on Amulet of Luang Phor Wat Paknam (Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni)**, (Thonburi: Bangsakae Press, the fifth printing/B.E.2514), pp.1-2.

<sup>197</sup> Tape Recording on Teaching Meditation by Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni.

<sup>198</sup> See Appendix B. for detailed procedure.

After that, he told everyone to sit in front of him for meditation. He gave instruction on how to meditate by showing his teaching aids.

### 3.3.1.3 Basic Vijja Dhammakaya Meditation Practice Method

The basic meditation procedure for focusing the mind at the center of body was as follows. Basic meditation practice emphasized the seven bases (stopping points) along the path to the center of the body. Students learned the path, then they must navigate it with their own minds, focusing the mind to stop still in one-pointedness at the center of the body by visualizing a crystal sphere moving inward to the seventh position. His style of teaching was to explain clearly, directing them to see with their eyes (*santhassana*). He demonstrated sitting in the regular meditation posture, cross-legged, with the right leg resting upon the left, right hand on the left turned up in the lap, and the right index finger just touching the left thumb. The body must be upright, with the mind always fully alert and mindful. Then, take a deep breath and relax the body to feel comfortable.

He showed the audience the blackboard drawing of the body diagram indicating the seven base positions of the mind and explained that meditation required two aids used together: (1) the object of visualization (the crystal sphere, *parikamma-nimitta*) and (2) a mantra or phrase to repeat (*parikamma-bhāvanā* – “*samma araham*”). He used a pointer to illustrate the movement of the crystal sphere step by step from the first position at the nose, along the path to the seventh position at the center of the body.<sup>199</sup> He taught the tricks for getting it right at each position. Students could follow easily.

First, he displayed a crystal sphere for everyone to see and visualize at the nostril (Position 1) – ladies on the left and gentlemen on the right. Focus the mind at the center of this sphere, repeating the words ‘*samma araham*’ three times. Second, gently breathe in, and move the sphere to rest at the eye socket (Position 2) – ladies on the left and gentlemen on the right. Again, recite ‘*sammā araham*’ three times. Third, shift the sphere slowly to rest at the center of the skull level (position 3), level with the eyes. Again, silently repeat the words *sammā araham* three times.

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<sup>199</sup> See Appendix C. for details.

He taught the following trick for moving to the fourth position. Roll the eyes upward without tilting the head, so that your vision will fall backwards and downwards inside. Mentally move the sphere slowly downwards to the back end of the palate. Recite silently *sammā araham* three times. Fifth, mentally move the bright clear sphere slowly and directly downwards to rest at the throat aperture. Repeat the words *sammā araham* to keep the transparent sphere bright and shining. Rest it there. Sixth, slowly move the clear, shining sphere directly downwards while keeping your attention focused at the bright nucleus at the center of the sphere. Bring it to rest at the center of the body, level with the navel. Mentally recite *sammā araham* three times to keep the transparent sphere bright and shiny. Then, rest it there.

Finally, shift the sphere directly upwards about two finger-widths above the navel. This is the seventh position where the mind will continue to rest still. Keep your attention on the bright, clear sphere resting at the center of the body, in the seventh position. Don't stray outside the body. Keep focused inside. Mentally recite the words *sammā araham* continuously, to keep the sphere still and make it brighter and clearer. Concentrate until the sphere shines continuously. Then, focus your mind at the bright center of the sphere, and, then, at the bright center of each successive sphere that emerges. Pay no attention to any external sensations, such as disturbances from mosquitoes or ants. Let your mind go deeper and deeper into the successive centers as you recite *sammā araham* (the *parikamma-bhāvanā*). Don't even follow the breath. Just remain still.

Draw your mind to rest at the center of the center by envisioning a bright sphere. Your mind should rest steadily and continuously at the center of the sphere. Do not try to see by forcing the mind too strongly. Overexerting the mind will cause a shift in your meditation and the mind will not be able to visualize. Do not use your physical eyes to focus on the vision. The practice is only for your mind. Gently train your mind to see the bright, clear, steady sphere continuously. Mentally observe and focus on the brilliant center. Concentrate on the center of each consecutive sphere that emerges from the preceding one. Do not wander to the left, right, front, rear, top or bottom. Always focus on the center of each new sphere which emerges from the bright shining center. Rest the mind there.

He directed practitioners to close their eyelids lightly, not pressing them tightly. Continue to visualize the center of the body simultaneously, even when seeing something else. Just observe whatever comes. Always concentrate in every posture, whether sitting, reclining, standing, walking, or sleeping. Make your mind peaceful and fully alert. He urged students to put effort (*Samuttejanā*) into their meditation practice and stressed that meditation can be practiced everywhere. Meditators must constantly be aware of every movement and posture. Everyone can attain Dhammakaya if he truly practices regularly. Only those who are lazy, cheating, careless or untruthful cannot attain Dhammakaya easily.

He encouraged learners to be joyful and to appreciate the benefits gained (*Sampahangsana*) from practicing meditation. The practitioner can assure results via his own effort. Anyone who really practices, will achieve success sooner or later. Progress also depends on one's previous virtue. He awakened the audience's interest by asking questions and then answering them. "Why can't you do it? You can! How strongly are you dedicated? Dedicate your whole life – even if your fresh and blood dries up."<sup>200</sup> He told them about his own experience during his initial practice when he also devoted his whole life to it. His voice was cheerful and resonant. Then, he directed the practitioners to meditate and gradually lowered his voice towards the end. Then, he remained in silent. He let them meditate by themselves for half an hour. Finally, he ended the session with a blessing "*Sabbe Buddha Palapatta...etc.*"<sup>201</sup>

### 3.3.1.4 The Dhamma Sphere

To stop is to succeed in both the worldly (*lokiya*) and transcendent (*lokuttara*) realms. The meditator could proceed to advanced samatha meditation if he could keep the mind stopped still. Luang Phor Wat Paknam taught advanced meditators separately. Here, the mind components of vision, memory, thought and awareness were drawn to oneness. He taught: rest the mind at the center of the body. The meditator will notice a gradual decrease in response to external stimuli. With proper concentration, the mind will then fall back to the sixth position. Once the

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<sup>200</sup> Tape Recording on Teaching Meditation by Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

mind stops at the right position (called samatha), tranquility exists, and a bright, clear sphere will emerge at the seventh position. The sphere may be the size of an egg yolk. Smaller ones are often like a star in the sky. Large spheres may be as big as the sun or the moon. This is the sphere of *paṭhama-magga*, the preliminary sign of concentration. This is also known as the Dhamma Sphere or *Dhammanupassanā Satipaṭṭhāna* which makes the human body.

Concentrate the mind until it is absolutely translucent and still, at the small bright center of the *paṭhama-magga*. This is the first step towards the path (*magga*), fruit (*phala*), and Nibbāna. Five smaller spheres will appear within this sphere. In front is the *water* element, controlling fluids in the body. To the right is the *earth* element, controlling solid parts. To the back is the *fire* element dealing with the body's temperature and heat. To the left is the *wind* element, controlling internal movements of gases. The center is the space element, controlling the various gaps within the body. At the center of the space element is the cognitive element or *viññāṇa-dhātu* which controls consciousness. Four thin bright, clear lines connect each of the surrounding spheres to the central sphere. Luang Phor explained:

That clear sphere is the beginning of the path (*paṭhama-magga*). It is the path of the Blessed One whereby He attained Nibbana. It is the only path, the straight path; there is no other path. Remember this! Never let it perish from your sight!<sup>202</sup>

### 3.3.1.5 Eighteen Bodies

The contemplation of eighteen bodies is the combination of samatha and vipassana mediation. The meditator must cultivate the mind to attain step by step the *Sila* Sphere, *Samādhi* Sphere, *Paññā* Sphere, *Vimutti* Sphere, and the *Vimutti Ñāna Dassana* (insight) Sphere. When the mind is cultivated further, these five spheres will appear within the *paṭhama-magga* sphere. The instructions are as follows:

1. The Crude Human Body (*Manussakāya*): The Beginning of the Path (*Paṭhama-Magga*) within the Crude Human Body is: (1) Concentrate until the sphere is absolutely translucent and still in the right

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<sup>202</sup> Dhammakaya Foundation, op.cit., p 125.

mode. The center will expand and a new, bright, clear sphere called the *Sila* Sphere will appear. (2) Concentrate further and at the center of the *Sila* Sphere. The center will expand and a new, clear, bright sphere of *samādhi* will appear at the center of *Sila* Sphere. (3) Concentrate further at the center of *Samādhi* Sphere. The center will expand. The new clear and bright Sphere of *Paññā* will appear at the center of the *Samādhi* Sphere. (4) Concentrate further at the center of the *Paññā* Sphere. The center will expand. The new, clear, and bright Sphere of *Vimutti* will appear at the center. (5) Concentrate further at the center of *vimutti sphere*, the center will expand. The new clear and bright *sphere of vimutti Ñāna Dassana* (insight) will appear at the center.

2. The Refined Human Body (*Panīta-Manussakāya*): (1) Concentrate further at the center of *Vimutti Ñāna Dassana* Sphere, the center will expand. A Refined Human Form or *Panīta-Manussakāya* is seen, cross-legged at the center. This Refined Human Form looks like the meditator, but is finer than the ordinary form. It sits in the regular meditation posture, facing in the same direction as the meditator. (Sometimes, a clear, crystal Buddha appears with a crown of budding lotus. This is *Dhammakāya*.) Observe the Refined Human form (*Manussa Kāya Panīta*). Rest the mind at the center of the Dhamma sphere at the center of the Refined Human Body (*Panīta-Manussakāya*) Sphere. When the mind is in the right position, a clear sphere called the Dhamma Sphere (*Dhammanupassanā Satipaṭṭhāna*) will appear. Focus the mind at the center of this Dhamma Sphere. Rest the mind at the center of the sphere. When the mind is in the right position, you will proceed further in the same manner as before through the new spheres of *Silā, Samādhi, Paññā, Vimutti, and Vimutti Ñāna Dassana* (insight).

3-4 Celestial Bodies (*Dibba-kāya*): When the mind rests still at the center of the small bright nucleus of the Insight Sphere (*Vimutti Ñāna Dassana* Sphere), the center expands and the crude Celestial Body (*Dibba-kāya*) arises. Proceed through the spheres of *Dhamma, Sila, Samādhi, Paññā, Vimutti, and Vimutti Ñāna Dassana* (Insight) at the center of this body. The Refined Celestial Body (*Panīta-Dibbakāya*) will arise at the center of the Insight Sphere (*Vimutti Ñāna Dassana* Sphere). Concentrate at the center of the *Panīta-Dibbakāya* until the Dhamma Sphere (*Dhammanupassanā Satipaṭṭhāna*) appears. Continue the same procedure and the *Silā, Samādhi, Paññā, Vimutti, and Vimutti Ñāna Dassana* Spheres appear one after the other.

5-6 Brahman Bodies (*Rūpa-Brahmakāya*): The *Rūpa Brahma-kāya* body will appear at the center of the *Vimutti Ñāna Dassana* Sphere. Concentrate at the center of the *Rūpa-Brahmakāya* until the Spheres of *Dhamma, Silā, Samādhi, Paññā, Vimutti,* and *Vimutti Ñāna Dassana* appear consecutively. The Refined Brahman Body (*Panīta-Rūpa-Brahmakāya*) will appear at the center of the *Vimutti Ñāna Dassana* Sphere. Concentrate at the center of the *Panīta-Rūpa-Brahmakāya* until its spheres of *Dhamma, Silā, Samādhi, Paññā, Vimutti,* and *Vimutti Ñāna Dassana* appear consecutively.

7-8 Formless Brahman Bodies (*Arūpa-Brahmakāya*): The crude Formless Brahman Body (*Arūpa-Brahmakāya*) will appear at the center of the *Vimutti Ñāna Dassana* Sphere. Concentrate at the center of the *Arūpa-Brahmakāya* until the spheres of *Dhamma, Silā, Samādhi, Paññā, Vimutti,* and *Vimutti Ñāna Dassana* appear consecutively. The Refined Formless Brahman Body (*Panīta-Arūpa-Brahmakāya*) will appear at the center of the *Vimutti Ñāna Dassana* Sphere. Concentrate at the center of *Panīta-Arūpa-Brahmakāya* until the spheres of *Dhamma, Silā, Samādhi, Paññā, Vimutti,* and *Vimutti Ñāna Dassana* appear.

9-10 Noble State Wisdom (*Dhammakāya Gotrabhū*): The first Dhammakaya, the crude *Dhammakāya Gotrabhū Hīna*, will appear at the center of the Insight Sphere (*Vimutti Ñāna Dassana* Sphere) of the Refined Formless Brahman Body. Concentrate at the center of the crude *Dhammakāya Gotrabhū* body until the spheres of *Dhamma, Silā, Samādhi, Paññā, Vimutti,* and *Vimutti Ñāna Dassana* appear consecutively. The Refined Dhammakaya Gotrabhu (*Panīta-Dhammakāya-Gotrabhū*) will appear at the center of the *Vimutti Ñāna Dassana* Sphere. Concentrate at the center of the Refined Dhammakaya Gotrabhu until the Spheres of *Dhamma, Silā, Samādhi, Paññā, Vimutti,* and *Vimutti Ñāna Dassana* appear consecutively.

11-12 The Stream-Enterer (*Dhammakāya Sotāpanna*): The crude Stream-Enterer Body (*Dhammakāya Sotāpanna Hīna*) will appear at the center of the *Vimutti Ñāna Dassana* of the refined Gotrabhu Dhammakaya. Concentrate at the center of *Dhammakāya Sotāpanna Hīna* until the spheres of *Dhamma, Silā, Samādhi, Paññā, Vimutti,* and *Vimutti Ñāna Dassana* appear consecutively. The Refined Stream-Enterer Body (*Dhammakāya Sotāpanna Panīta*) will appear at the center of the *Vimutti Ñāna Dassana*. Concentrate at the center of *Dhammakāya Sotāpanna*

*Panīta* until the spheres of *Dhamma*, *Silā*, *Samādhi*, *Paññā*, *Vimutti*, and *Vimutti Ñāna Dassana* appear consecutively.

13-14 The Once-Returner (*Dhammakāya Sakadāgāmi*): The crude Once-Returner Body (*Dhammakāya Sakadāgāmin Hīna*) will appear at the center of the *Vimutti Ñāna Dassana* Sphere of the Refined Stream-Enterer Body. Concentrate at the center of the *Dhammakāya Sakadāgāmin Hīna* body until the spheres of *Dhamma*, *Silā*, *Samādhi*, *Paññā*, *Vimutti*, and *Vimutti Ñāna Dassana* appear consecutively. The Refined Once-Returner Body (*Dhammakāya Sakadāgāmin Panīta*) will appear at the center of the *Vimutti Ñāna Dassana* of the crude body. Concentrate at the center of the refined body (*Dhammakāya Sakadāgāmi Panīta*) until the spheres of *Dhamma*, *Silā*, *Samādhi*, *Paññā*, *Vimutti*, and *Vimutti Ñāna Dassana* appear consecutively.

15-16 The Non-Returner (*Dhammakāya Anāgāmi*): The crude Non-Returner Body (*Dhammakāya Anāgāmin Hīna*) will appear at the center of the *Vimutti Ñāna Dassana* Sphere of the Refined Once-Returner. Concentrate at the center of the crude body (*Dhammakāya Anāgāmin Hīna*) until the spheres of *Dhamma*, *Silā*, *Samādhi*, *Paññā*, *Vimutti*, and *Vimutti Ñāna Dassana* appear consecutively. The Refined Non-Returner Body (*Dhammakāya Anāgāmin Panīta*) will appear at the center of the *Vimutti Ñāna Dassana* Sphere. Concentrate at the center of the refined body (*Dhammakāya Anāgāmin Panīta*) until the spheres of *Dhamma*, *Silā*, *Samādhi*, *Paññā*, *Vimutti*, and *Vimutti Ñāna Dassana* appear consecutively.

17-18 The Arahant (*Dhammakāya Arahatta*): The crude arahant body (*Dhammakāya Arahatta Hīna*) will appear at the center of the (*Vimutti Ñāna Dassana* Sphere of the Refined Non-Returner. Concentrate at the center of *Dhammakāya Arahatta Hīna* until the spheres of *Dhamma*, *Silā*, *Samādhi*, *Paññā*, *Vimutti*, and *Vimutti Ñāna Dassana* appear consecutively. The Refined Arahant Body (*Dhammakāya Arahatta Panīta*) will appear at the center of the *Vimutti Ñāna Dassana* Sphere of the crude body. Concentrate at the center of *Dhammakāya Arahatta Panīta* until the spheres of *Dhamma*, *Satipaṭṭhāna*, *Silā*, *Samādhi*, *Paññā*, *Vimutti*, and *Vimutti Ñāna Dassana* appear consecutively. A refined, clear crystal Buddha with a crown of budding lotus, appears at the center of the body, at the seventh position, sitting in the meditation posture and facing the same direction as the meditator.

The refined crystal Buddha will expand larger and larger just like the aura is radiating, larger than the meditator's body.

### 3.3.2 Vipassana

Vipassana Meditation is wisdom development. The essence of the teaching is contemplation of the Five Aggregates in accordance with the Three Characteristics. The Five Aggregates are corporeality, feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness. These Five Aggregates are impermanent, suffering and non-self. Luang Phor Wat Paknam established a strong base and pattern for meditators' practice. The meditator must refine the practice of cultivating eighteen bodies to establish a firm foundation. The technique is that the meditator purifies the mind and concentrates further until attaining the Dhamma Sphere (*Pathama-magga* Sphere). There are six spheres altogether to be cultivated following in the sequence. These are (1) the *Dhamma* Sphere (*Pathama-Magga* Sphere), (2) Morality Sphere (*Sila*), (3) *Samādhi* Sphere, (4) *Paññā* Sphere, (5) *Vimutti* Sphere, and (6) *Vimutti Ñāna Dassana* Sphere. We have to contemplate these six spheres for each of the eighteen bodies. Each time we must repeat the same procedure of cultivation of these six spheres. The technique is to visualize the bright sphere at the center of each body, starting with the Crude Human Body and continuing up through the Refined Arahant body. Concentration is cultivated to get rid of the Five Hindrances and to attain goodness. The first state of absorption (*pathama-jhana*) starts at this point. When the mind is gentle enough, Vipassana Meditation will develop the wisdom to know correctly and clearly the Truth of *Dhamma*.<sup>203</sup>

Through this morality sphere we can refine physical, verbal and mental deeds more efficiently, on a deeper level than through common morality. This is the pure morality (*sila*) of meditation (*kammatthana*) which can be regarded as higher or purer morality (*Adhisila*). This higher morality (*Adhisila*) goes together with higher mind (*Adhicitta*) and higher wisdom (*Adhipañña*), emancipation (*Vimutti*), and insight (*Vimutti Ñāna Dassana*) or the vision of Truth from emancipation.<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>203</sup>Phra Ajahn Maha, Sermchai Jayamangalo, **The Heart of Dhammakaya Meditation**, op.cit., p. 66.

<sup>204</sup>Ibid.

From Noble-State Wisdom (*Dhammakaya Gotrabhu*) up to the Perfect One (*Dhammakaya Arahatta*) is Vipassana Meditation. Starting from the Crude Human Body (*Manussakaya*) up to the Dhamma Sphere is Samatha Meditation.<sup>205</sup> We cultivate seeing the eighteen bodies both in forward sequence and in reverse order, in order to refine the contemplation of bodies. The more detail seen in contemplation, the more wisdom one attains.

When Noble State Wisdom (*Dhammakāya Gotrabhū*) appears clearly and expands widely, the meditator contemplates his own Five Aggregates. Starting with the crude body, the meditator contemplates gradually upwards to see the corporality, feelings, perception, mental conception and consciousness of each body. We start with the corporality of ourselves and see where it comes from. What is the composition of corporality? See that it is composed of the fire, water, earth, and wind elements. Look at corporality in the present. See how it is getting older. Look at corporality ten years ago. See how corporality appeared at that time. Contemplate that these Five Aggregates are **impermanent**. They are arising and ceasing all the time.<sup>206</sup> Contemplate each body to see that the birth, old age, sickness and death of human beings are **suffering** in accordance with the Four Noble Truths.<sup>207</sup>

Vipassana meditation is cultivated in accordance with The Four Foundations of Mindfulness, by being mindful in contemplating to see the body within the body, feelings within feelings, mental conception within mental conception and phenomena or mental objects (*dhamma*) within phenomena. The meditator cultivates mindfulness according to each of the eighteen bodies. At each body, the meditator contemplates the body within the body and the corresponding feelings within feelings, mental conception within mental conception, and phenomena (*dhamma*) within phenomena. In summary, Dhammakaya meditation is the technique for practicing the Foundation of Mindfulness.

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<sup>205</sup> Tape Recording on Teaching Meditation by Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni.

<sup>206</sup> Tape Recording by Phra Khru Samanadhammasamadana (Sawat Chotipalo).

<sup>207</sup> People's Dhamma Practice Project, op.cit., p. 306.

### 3.3.3 Analysis

The researcher presented the teaching methods at the Buddha's age and at Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's period. The purpose is to see how Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni taught differently or similarly to the Buddha. The researcher then summarized the similarities and differences of the two approaches in a Chart. Table 3.3.3.1 summarizes the similarities observed when Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's Dhamma Propagation is observed against the model of Lord Buddha's approach, and table 3.3.3.2 summarizes differences.

#### 3.3.3.1 Similarities

The two approaches are similar in that: (1) The Buddha and Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni, both renounced secular life to seek the truth as monks. (2) Both studied existing knowledge and meditation techniques with various masters before teaching on their own. (3) Both began with a strong inner determination to achieve personal insight and then succeeded. (4) Both sought and achieved self realization before going out to teach others. (5) Both spent time contemplating their self realization of the Dhamma to attain confidence before teaching others. (6) Both traveled freely to other realms, both in the celestial and netherworld planes. (7) Both began by teaching a small group of well known monks (the Five Ascetics and three monks at Wat Bangplama). (8) Both sent monks out as missionaries to teach abroad. Luang Phor ordained the first foreign monk and initiated meditation practice programs in England, the United States and Japan. (9) Both were not worried by criticism and stood firm without causing conflict. (10) Both taught that the mind is chief and is the means for calming body and speech. (11) Both helped people solve their problems. (12) Both read the minds of their audience and adapted their Dhamma propagation to their needs and level of knowledge. (13) Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni based his samadha-vipassana meditation technique on *kasin*, the three of the forty meditation devices taught by Lord Buddha. (14) Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni also based his samadha-vipassana meditation on Lord Buddha's vipassana meditation to contemplate the three characteristics (impermanence, suffering and non-self) and the Four Noble Truths. (15) Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's meditation technique is a specific technique for direct meditation practice according to Lord Buddha's Four Foundations of Mindfulness.

**Table 3.3.3.1**  
**The Buddha's Method and**  
**Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's Method of Propagation**  
**Similarities**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Lord Buddha</b>	<b>Luang Phor</b>
1.	The Buddha had determination for renunciation	Luang Phor Wat Paknam had the determination to be ordained as monk.
2.	He studied many subjects with many masters. But, he seek for more knowledge through meditation practice until attained enlightenment.	Similar.
3.	He made resolution not to rise up from the seat until attaining enlightenment, even losing fresh and blood.	Similar.
4.	Self realization, one must teach Oneself first then teach others later. To know by oneself.	Similar.
5.	He attained enlightenment, then, teach later.	He trained himself first until attained Dhammakaya, then teach.
6.	He reviewed his knowledge what he attained for seven weeks. He realized that the Dhamma is subtle, deep, delicate and difficult to understand. This gave him bravery to teach.	Similar. He contemplated what he attained to gain self confidence to teach others. He realized that the Dhamma was deep, subtle and difficult to understand. When it exists, then ceased out. Then, it exists and cease out again.
7.	He was a great master of Celestial Beings (Deva) and Human Beings (Manussa)	Similar, but he was not a master. He was well known to the Supreme Being of the Netherland.
8.	He taught Five Ascetics	He taught three monks and four lay people as his first group.

<b>No.</b>	<b>Lord Buddha</b>	<b>Luang Phor</b>
9.	He told the Five Ascetics the reason he came to teach them. He never said that he attained enlightenment before.	Luang Phor told monks in Wat Paknam why he was there.
10.	He sent the first sixty disciples out as missionaries.	He sent his first disciples to teach at other places and was an abbot. He sent his disciples to England and had the first foreign monk as his disciple to propagate to European Countries.
11.	He was not trembled when people against him. He told the Venerable Ananda that no need to move away to other place.	He was firm, not tremble from criticisms and abuse. He said: “Do not fight, nor run away, keep doing good deeds.”
12.	The mind is important. When the mind is calm, the body, verbal and mental are calm.	The mind is the chief of all actions.
13.	Helping people to solve their problems.	Similar.
14.	He always searched and adapted to the needs and level of knowledge of the audience.	Similar.
15.	Method of meditation: Read the practitioner’s mind and adjusted.	Similar.
16.	Meditation consists of 40 devices	Similar. He chose aloka-kasin, Buddhanussati and Anapanasati.
17.	Vipassana to contemplate the three characteristics, and Four Noble Truths.	Similar
18.	Satipatthana –Four Foundation of Mindfulness	Similar.

**Table 3.3.3.2**  
**The Buddha's Method and**  
**Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's Method of Propagation**  
**Differences**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Lord Buddha</b>	<b>Luang Phor</b>
1.	The Buddha was a prince.	Luang Phor Wat Paknam was an ordinary rice merchant.
2.	He had worldly experience of family life.	He had no family but had worldly experience of hardship /struggling in earning money for survival.
3.	He had accumulated ten perfections over many life times.	There is no record of his previous life accumulations, but he also had ten perfections.
4.	He attained enlightenment by himself.	He followed and rediscovered the Buddha's teaching.
5.	He initially aimed at converting important people to be his disciples.	He never influenced anyone to learn his method. People came to him with faith to learn Dhamma from him.
6.	He used the natural resources for his teaching, such as leaves, water pot.	He used teaching aids and microphone/
7.	Eight levels of Noble Person. Four pairs of Sotapanna up to Arahanta both path and fruition.	Eighteen Bodies. Ten defined bodies from Human body up to Gotrabhu plus four pairs of both crude and defined forms of Sotapanna up to Arahanta path and fruition.
8.	He had no amulets at his time.	Amulet was provided as commemoration of the Buddha virtues. It was used as Buddhanusati.

### 3.3.3.2 Differences

The two are different in that: (1) Lord Buddha was born a prince, but Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni was born just an ordinary rice merchant. (2) Lord Buddha had a family and experienced riches, but Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni had no family but experienced hardship of life. (3) Lord Buddha achieved enlightenment on his own, whereas Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni had Lord Buddha's teachings to lead him. (4) Lord Buddha initially propagated Dhamma by seeking out and converting those with large followings, but Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni just waited for people to come to him with faith. (5) Lord Buddha just taught verbally and natural sources without books and modern equipment, but Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni was the first master who used books, teaching aids and a microphone in the twentieth century. (6) Their teaching emphasized on Threefold Learning of morality, concentration and wisdom. (7) Both taught Their presentations differed in that Lord Buddha taught eight levels of Noble Disciples (path and fruit), but Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni taught 18 bodies. In fact, this is only a difference in presentation. The eighteen bodies include the 8 Noble disciple-levels as well as lower-levels taught by Lord Buddha such as Rupa and Arupa levels. (8) Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni used amulets as rewards. Lord Buddha did not use amulets.

### 3.3.3.3 Stop Still

The heart of Luang Phor's teaching is "Stop Still" at the center of the body. This is the base of vision, memory, thought and awareness. Each meditator sits and draws the mind inside to the center of his own body, contemplating the mind and considering its purity with respect to bodily, verbal and mental morality (*sila*). Luang Phor emphasized looking at one's own conduct; no need to look at others. The most important thing is the ability to see one's own bad and good sides clearly. Then, one should contemplate one's mind to detach any defilements or external infatuations (addicting forms, sounds, smells, or flavors). A person purifies his mind by observing morality (*sila*), which leads to the serenity (*samadhi*) needed to see clearly the cause and effect relationship between suffering and unwholesome conduct. First, the meditator stops the mind in the *Dhamma* Sphere at the center of body, to stop all Five Hindrances and all thinking. This purifies the mind to Higher Morality (*Adhisila*), and elevates it to Higher Mind (*Adhicitta*), away from

unwholesome deeds, defilements, and addictions. The meditator becomes a truly objective observer, able to see his own bad and good behavior clearly.

Luang Phor Wat Paknam's motto was "To Stop is to succeed." The word "Stop" or hold still has deep significance, not only from the meditation perspective, but also in daily life. To "stop" means, first, to stop all defilements (greed, hatred and delusion): No cravings, compulsions, addictions or temptations; and no violence, aggression, loathing or hostility; and no myths, deceptions, distortions or prejudices. Stop! Look within the mind and eliminate all defilements! Stop harming others verbally, mentally and physically! This helps to calm the temperament and develop objective mindfulness to deal with conflicts, problems and obstacles. Luang Phor taught: "Don't fight or run, just always continue doing good." This implies that people should not fight to win. Luang Phor's technique in tackling problems was always to compromise with the opposition in order to solve conflicts peacefully. He let the opposition say whatever they wished, but always remained calm. We must conquer our hearts not to be angry, fight or argue with others. We should just look at our own conduct. If we are wrong, then we correct it. If we are right, then we just continue doing good. It is unnecessary to defend ourselves. Time will confirm our goodness naturally. If all people could act this way, the world would be at peace, with no fighting, no competition, and no jealousy; only harmony and happiness. In fact, Luang Phor was criticized severely. Even the Buddha was criticized. Phramaha Montri Khantisaro (See Appendix D) noted that:

"It is common for anyone who becomes popular to be attacked. Luang Vichivothakarn's motto was: 'Do good deeds, but do not do them prominently. This could be dangerous.'"

Luang Phor Wat Paknam explained the meaning of *Araham* as follows: "The mind is clear and purified because the mind is stopped still. Therefore, there is only one mental object existing in the mind. The mind holds that object still. This is the way to know it clearly and directly. This is the foundation for attaining enlightenment and happiness, and for neutralizing suffering. Happiness is the fruition of wholesome conduct. Anyone who performs unwholesome deeds will receive suffering. One must search deeply for the cause of each particular unwholesome act. Often the cause is greed, due to an unpure mind. Why? Because he is not following the teachings of the Buddha.

He behaves immorally. Why? Because he does not know the proper morality (*sila*) or does not pay attention to it. Why? Because he doesn't read or listen to the teachings (*Dhamma*). Finally, Luang Phor concluded that the Buddha taught cause and effect in detail, and taught people to practice meditation to get rid of the cause of suffering and to know the cause of happiness, as well as the path leading to the extinction of all causes (*Nirodha*).

Luang Phor Wat Paknam's language was simple and concise, but the meaning was subtle. Anyone who thinks over what he said can understand his Dhamma and apply it to his own real life situation. During the teaching session, Luang Phor spoke quite fast, because he thought and contemplated very fast. Learners must listen attentively and be alert to follow him. For the meditation part, he taught slowly and clearly. While teaching meditation, he taught with his eyes closed, from inside the body. He could read the minds of the audience to know what they were thinking and needed to hear.

Beginners usually could not understand him at first, because they had never heard this method before. Initially, they could not do the eighteen bodies. However, after listening to his explanation attentively and thinking about it, they understood and were able to follow.<sup>208</sup>

He taught the same thing, but different meditators or listeners perceived it differently, according to the maturity of their wisdom. He knew each individual's potential for receiving knowledge, depending on their progress.<sup>209</sup>

### 3.3.4 Conclusion

Luang Phor Wat Paknam was very different from the other monks of his era. At first, like the Buddha, he was hesitant to teach *Dhamma* because it was very difficult, subtle, delicate and deep. However, he realized that there would be some who could attain

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<sup>208</sup>Tape recording of the method of teaching meditation by Phrakhrū Samanadhammasamadan (Sawat Chotipalo),.

<sup>209</sup>Interview with Phra Rajyanvisith (Sermchai Polpatanaritdhi), Abbot of Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakayaram, January 20, 2005. See Appendix D.

*Dhamma*. His original aim was to seek tranquility in the forest. But, his second thought was concern for the people who were careless and indulgent, deeply engrossed in the sensual pleasures and delusions of this worldly life. He had the strength to teach *Dhamma* to the people, while other meditation masters sought for tranquility in the forest. At that time, people in society had no interest in meditation. He was the first Abbot to bravely turn his temple into a meditation training center, without any fear of anyone.

He taught Dhammakāya to all kinds of people. People from all walks of life came to him for help with all kinds of problems. Everyone has personal suffering, ranging from private or health problems, through family problems, to business, career, or professional problems. He sincerely helped each of them, without expecting anything in return. His main objective was to teach Buddhists to be secure in Triple-Gem. He urged people to seek higher education and spiritual development to upgrade their status in society. He provided education in both scriptural *Dhamma* studies and meditation practice. He, also, provided food and lodging for the monks, novices, nuns and lay devotees. His teaching of Dhammakaya and his provision of education and food inspired more and more monks, novices and lay people to come to Wat Paknam. It became widely known that he could alleviate severe health and personal problems and taught a method that could lead to seeing hell and heaven. Vija Dhammakāya became famous throughout Thailand and abroad.

## **Chapter IV**

### **The Impact of Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's Propagation On Thai Society**

In this Chapter will review the long term impacts of Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's Buddha-Dhamma propagation which have been carried on until today, long after his death. This chapter covers four sections, working from specific and direct impacts up to indirect impacts and finally concluding with an overall evaluation. Section 4.1 details direct impacts at Wat Paknam. Section 4.2 reviews other direct impacts, i.e., branches of Wat Paknam in Thailand and abroad, Wat Luang Phor Sodh and Wat Phra Dhammakaya. Section 4.3 considers the indirect impacts which are more difficult to evaluate, but also more widespread i.e. charitable works, spiritual development, other indirect impacts and problems. Finally, Section 4.4 attempts to make an overall evaluation of the impact of Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's Buddha-Dhamma propagation by summarizing the major impacts and indicating problems.

Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's ideal of propagation was different from that of others. He emphasized three aspects: education, good monastic conduct, and dwelling construction. Providing education and meditation practice were his first priority tasks. He had objective to build a man to be good person rather than building dwelling facilities. From his view point, developing people was more difficult to do than creating material facilities. The second priority was to develop the Vinaya and monastic moral conduct of monks and novices. He also encouraged people to study Dhamma and practice meditation. There were many people came from different places to Wat Paknam for Dhamma study and meditation practice especially on Thursday. People from all walks of life came to him for help in their problems of sickness, business, professions, education, death, etc. The third priority was the construction of dwelling to provide suitable residence for monks and novices for better living condition. Wat Paknam flourished with a rapid increase of number of monks and novices from thirteen to six hundred.

Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni dedicated his life to Dhamma propagation throughout the world. His propagation has spread out widely and became very popular to Thai people and foreigners. The Impacts of his propagation had affects on the Sangha community as a whole after Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's death. The authorities in the Thai Sangha community were worried about the future prospect of Wat Paknam. The reason was because the reputation of Wat Paknam's education and meditation practice were so high level. Most people always admired and gave comment on Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's high capability in having the temple flourish in every aspect, no other temple could compete. Especially, both Chao Khun Phramaha Boddhivongsachara, Wat Anongarama, the Head of Division of Thonburi Province that governed Paknam at that time, and Somdej Phra Wannarat, the Chairman of Sangha, who resided at Wat Bencamabopit and later became the Supreme Patriarch, expressed their sincere regret on Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's death along with Chao Khun Dhammavarodom<sup>210</sup>, the Abbot of Wat Phra Chetupon. They both admired Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni who contributed a great deal to Buddhism. It was difficult to find someone like him who could administer the temple and teach both Pariyatti and Patipatti monks in conformity and unity. They were worried about the status of the temple.

#### **4.1 Direct Impact at Wat Paknam**

Upon the death of Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni on February 3, 1959 (B.E. 2502), immediate concerns were the continuation of the temple administration and the meditation teaching. With great appreciation to his competent aides and well-trained monks, novices, nuns and lay disciples, all went smoothly. Chao Khun Dhammavarodom (Punn Punnasiri), the Abbot of Wat Phra Chetupon, was appointed as Acting Abbot of Wat Paknam on February 4, 2502 right after Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's death.<sup>211</sup> His major concerns were the members in the temple, daily meals for monks and novices, and the cost of the funeral ceremony. He found that members of Wat Paknam performed their own

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<sup>210</sup> Chao Khun Dhammavarodom, the Abbot of Wat Phra Chetupon was the nephew of Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni. Later on, he was promoted to be Somdej Phra Wannarat of Wat Phra Chetupon. People called him "Somdej Pa". He was the author of this article "Power of Dhammakaya", part I".

<sup>211</sup> Ajahn Tritha Niemkham, op.cit., p.133.

duties and helped each others to carry on every function as before.<sup>212</sup> This was because of Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's teaching and his last word given to everyone to continue their own duties after his death. Chao Khun Dhammavarodom assumed the position of Abbot of Wat Paknam from 1959-1965 (B.E. 2502-2508).<sup>213</sup> The major projects of Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni were continued by his disciples in accordance to his plan. Key personnel were appointed to assume various responsibilities and positions.

Propagation of the Dhammakāya method was conducted by Phra Bhavanakosolthera (Theera Klosuwan) who was appointed as Meditation Master. In 1965 (B.E. 2508), he was also appointed as Head Professor of scriptural studies (Pariyatti). He assumed all duties of Luang Phor Wat Paknam, and extended his cooperation and kindness to all. He was respected as "Luang Phor Lek".<sup>214</sup> Phra Bhavanakosolthera (Veera Kanuttamo) began practicing meditation with Luang Phor Wat Paknam in 1953 (B.E. 2496). The more progress he gained through meditation practice, the more faith he had in Luang Phor Wat Paknam. He experienced happiness and peace and realized that 'real happiness is in our mind'. Once the mind stops, tranquility arises. Once tranquility exists, happiness arises. The Buddha said: "No other happiness is greater than stopping still." He learnt the advanced level of meditation (*Kammatthana*) with Luang Phor Wat Paknam and attained Dhammakaya. He was ordained in 1954 (B.E. 2497) and became a key personal in propagating Dhammakaya inside and outside Thailand. He was appointed as Deputy Abbot and Master of the Vipassana Meditation Section up to the present.<sup>215</sup>

#### 4.1.1 Ecclesiastical School

The most important direct impact of Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's Dhamma propagation has been his extensive preaching, integrating meditation practice with scriptural studies. This was established in the Ecclesiastical School which continues today. The Ecclesiastical School

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<sup>212</sup> Wat Paknam and Wat Paknam's Alumini Association, op. cit., pp. 109-110.

<sup>213</sup> Ajahn Tritha Niemkham, op.cit, p.133.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid, p. 134.

<sup>215</sup> People's Dhamma Practice Project, op. cit., pp.99-100.

named “*Phra Pariyatti Dhamma Bhavananuson*” was built in 1950 (B.E. 2493), to provide education both in Pali scriptural studies and Dhamma Studies to monks, novices, nuns, lay people. The Prime Minister, Joampol P. Pibulsongkram laid the foundation stone. It was a three storied building with nice decorations and complete modern technical equipment and fans, and bathrooms on each floor. There were many classrooms for one thousand students and a big library. The construction cost was about two millions five hundreds ninety eight thousand Baht.<sup>216</sup>

The first and second floors were used for Pali and Dhamma Studies. The third floor was for meditation study. The school was finished in 1954 (B.E. 2497), Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni established the course of study according to the curriculum (Syllabus) for Buddhist Education of the Sangha. Luang Phor Wat Paknam was the owner of this Ecclesiastical school. For task of meditation practice (*Vipassanādhura*), he taught and supervised all mediation practice by himself.

For the burden of studying scriptures (*Ganthadhura*) he appointed Phra Srivisudhimoli (The Venerable Chueng Vorapunyo, Pali IX, the present Abbot) to be the Head Professor in 1955-1965 (B.E. 2498-2508). After Luang Phor Wat Paknam passed away, Phra Dhammavorodom was appointed to be the Acting Abbot until 1965 (B.E. 2508). Then, Phra Srivisudhimoli (Chueng Vorapunyo, P. IX) became the present Abbot in 1965 (B.E. 2508). Phra Bhavana Kosolthera (Theera Dhammatharo, Pali IV) or Luang Phor Lek assumed the position of the Head of instructor from 1965-1968 (B.E. 2508-2511). After Luang Phor Lek died, Phra Meethevaraphorn (Vichien Anomakuno) took over the position of Head Instructor from 1968 (B.E. 2511) until the present.<sup>217</sup>

The Courses of the Buddhist Study were divided into two categories i.e., the course of study in the vernacular (*Nak Dhamma*) and the Pali language (*Pali or Parien Course*). The Course of Study in the Vernacular ‘Nak Dhamma’ is assigned specially for monks and novices. There are three levels of ‘Nak Dhamma’ namely elementary ‘Tri’ level, intermediate ‘*Tho*’, and advance level ‘*Eak*’. These are the fundamental requirements of Sangha’s education. Dhamma Studies for lay people is

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<sup>216</sup> Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen and Wat Paknam Alumni Association, op. cit., p. 70.

<sup>217</sup> Ajahn Tritha Niemkham, op. cit., p. 199.

called as ‘Dhamma Sueksa’. There are three levels, the same as ‘Nak Dhamma’. The curriculum is the same, except the disciplinary order (*Vinaya*) course is required only for the monks and novices not for the lay people. In the last three years, the curriculum have changed that the lay people have to take the course of action (*Kammapatha*) in substitution of the disciplinary order (*Vinaya*) course. Pali Language Course is also called as Pali or Parien Dhamma Course (*Pariyatti*) has been provided as basic requirement for monks and novices. There are nine grades which divided into three levels of the elementary, intermediate and advanced levels. Each level covers three years consecutively.

Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni planned a grand celebration for opening the new school, having five hundred monks chant “*Cang*”. Unfortunately, he was ill and passed away before the opening celebration could take place. The school was finished for teaching and studying as he wished to serve his word “Be good not only the words but do good deeds as said.” The thirteenth of May, 1959 (B.E. 2502) was his hundred day’s funeral. His disciples and followers organized five hundred monks to chant “*Cang*” to fulfill his wishes.<sup>218</sup>

This Ecclesiastical School was very useful for the Sangha. The Sangha moved the examination center for Nak Dhamma to Wat Paknam permanently. Initially, the examination center would be rotated to different temples depended on the instruction of the Governor. It was inconvenient because some places were too far for journey. Wat Paknam, therefore, became the only one examination center in Bhasicharoen district, Thonburi ever since that time. It was convenient for all students to travel to take the examination every year. Monks and novices also had meals in Wat Paknam before taking examination.<sup>219</sup>

In the old days, Pali scriptural studies Institutions (*Pariyutti schools*) were very rare and difficult to find. More monks and novices wanted to come to Wat Paknam which provided Pali studies, meditation

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<sup>218</sup> Somdej Phra Ariyavongsakatayana (Punn Punnasiri), “Biography of Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni (Luang Phor Wat Paknam) and the Power of Dhammakaya”, in **Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni**, (Bangkok: Wat Paknam Alumni Association, 1969 / B.E. 2512), p. 8.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid, p.9.

practice, and meals.<sup>220</sup> Luang Phor was very kind and welcomed everyone who came to the temple for further study. He never denied anyone. The amount of monks and novices increased from seventeen to a hundred and later to about five to six hundred monks and novices. The residence was not large enough but they were willing to share together in the crowded space. It was a warm atmosphere just like father and children.<sup>221</sup> This fulfilled his resolution in the Uposatha when he first came to Wat Paknam. “May any monks who have not yet arrived, please come, and may those who are already here, stay and live happily.” He always assured people who were concerned that he could nurture all these monks and novices, no matter how much the number increased. He was happy that many came, and said “Now, you can really see the virtue of Buddhism.”<sup>222</sup> Before this school building was built, Monks and novices had to study Pali grades V-IX at other temples such as Wat Bencamabopit and Wat Sam Phraya. When the school was finished, the higher level of Pali courses were offered to monks and novices at Wat Paknam.

In 1954 (B.E. 2497), there were two hundred twenty-five bhikkhus, two hundred and five novices, four hundred nuns and fifty lay followers studying in the Ecclesiastical School.<sup>223</sup> In 1957, (B.E. 2500), indicated that the first monk passed the highest Pali examination, Pali IX. The statistic showed that there were five hundred fifty-two monks and novices during the rains-retreat. There were ninety-nine candidates who passed Pali examinations, eighty-nine for Nak Dhamma, and twenty for Dhamma Sueksa. In 1958 (B.E. 2501), there were five hundred sixty-two monks and novices during the rain-retreat. There were ninety-one candidates passed Pali examination, eighty-four for Nak Dhamma, and seven for Dhamma Sueksa.<sup>224</sup> In 1961 (B.E. 2504) there were two Pali

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<sup>220</sup>Interview with Phramaha Montri Khantisaro, Pali Instructor, Wat Paknam and Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakayaram, and Former Instructor at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya, January 2, 2005. See Appendix D.

<sup>221</sup>Singhol, Yook Ton, in **Vijja, Part II**, “Phrakhru Samutkavee (Luang Phor Chamlong Aseko Netaranyom of Samutsongkram,” (Bangkok: Sukhumvit Printing Co., 2002 / B.E. 2545), p. 156.

<sup>222</sup>Somdej Phra Ariyavongsakatayana (Punn Punnasiri), op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>223</sup>Luang Phor Wat Paknam Alumini Association, **Navakanusorn Journal**, 1954 / BE 2497, (Bangkok: Eakpimthai Co., 2003 / B.E. 2546), p.285.

<sup>224</sup>Wat Paknam, **Dhamma Sermons and Explanations of the Gift Amulets**, (Published for the Second Anniversary of Chao Khun Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni’s Funeral, 1961 / B.E. 2504), pp. 63-64.

scholars monks who passed the examination of Pali IX The number of monks and novices obtained Pali grade IX increased gradually. In 1983 (B.E. 2526), Wat Paknam was appraised to be an outstanding Pali school. From 1957-1992 (B.E. 2500 – 2535), there were twenty-nine monks and novices who obtained Pali IX. There were also some nuns who studied Pali. In 1992 (B.E. 2535), there was a nun passed examination, Pali IX. This was a major accomplishment of Luang Phor Wat Paknam.

Luang Phor gave rewards to monks and novices who passed Pali examinations. Some times, he had inadequate robes for giving as presents that he had to give them later on. Following Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's pattern, the Venerable Somdej Phramaharajchamangklacarn, the present Abbot of Wat Paknam has also given reward every year to monks and novices of Wat Paknam who passed the Pali IX examination. There are two levels of awards. Monks and novices pass the examination of Pali grade 1 to 8, will receive robes. Whoever obtain Pali grade IX, will receive a computer as an honorary award.<sup>225</sup>

Thus, this school became a center of studying Nak Dhamma, Dhamma Sueksa, Pali Study, and issuing examinations for the junior bhikkhus (*Navaka*), Nak Dhamma, and Pali grades III, V, and VI. It was a center for planning examinations, and issuing I.D. Cards. Wat Bavornnives is the center for grading 'Nak Dhamma' examination.<sup>226</sup>

Somdej Phramaharajchamangklacarn assumed the title of 'The Head of Northern Division, *Mae Kong Pali Sanamlueng* and the Deputy of Dhamma-messenger division *Mae Kong Dhammadūta*. Wat Paknam became a center of issuing Pali examination called as 'Mae Kong Pali Sanam Luang'. Examinations were issued and distributed to Wat Samphraya for grading. An office to administer the propagation of Buddhism was located at the Metta Buddhi Building. Training programs for monks to become Dhamma-messengers (*Dhammadūta*) were established. After the training session, they assumed their duty to propagate Dhamma in various places. There were also training programs

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<sup>225</sup> Interview with Phra Rajratanavimol (Pyle Pathako), Secretary of the Ecclesiastical School, Wat Paknam, January 22, 2005.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid.

for preceptors (*Upajjhāya*).<sup>227</sup> Initially, these training programs were held at the Thai Building. Due to the increased number of participants from forty to one hundred monks, the Metta Buddhi Building was built to handle this large amount of participants.<sup>228</sup> Mae Kong Pali Sanamluang is the division for issuing and checking the Pali examinations of the monks and novices all over Thailand. The Dhamma-messenger Division (*Dhammadūta*) is the Division of Buddhism Promotion, designed to create more efficient monks for social development and for the propagation of Buddhism.<sup>229</sup>

#### 4.1.2 Dhamma and Meditation Propagation

The trademark of Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's Legacy is emphasis on meditation practice integrated into Dhamma study and daily life. This was most evident in his sermons ending with meditation practice. It was also strikingly emphasized in his Handbook for Abbots which integrated advanced meditation instruction with mundane administrative practices. Although, the Ecclesiastical School focuses on academic study and the Meditation Hall focuses on Samatha-Vipassana practice, these two drives are innately integrated throughout.

In term of books or treatises, Luang Phor Wat Paknam had no time for writing. He devoted his time to practicing advanced meditation and teaching meditation to his disciples. His disciples extended their help to compile two major meditation handbooks. They compiled the meditation knowledge and techniques, learnt from Luang Phor Wat Paknam, for him to edit prior to printing. The first handbook was "The Path to Magga Phala." It taught the basic meditation practice, and was compiled by Khun Phra Tipprinya. The second handbook was "A Handbook for Abbots." It taught advanced meditation and was compiled by Khun Chaluey Sombatsuk in 1949 (B.E. 2492). But, there was an evident showed that Luang Phor Wat Paknam wrote a manual

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<sup>227</sup>Interview with Phra Dhammapanyaporn, Secretary to the Mae Kong Pali Sanam Luang, February 28, 2005.

<sup>228</sup>Phramaha Thammajariya Khruangthip, **The Role of the Luang Phor Wat Paknam Foundation in Social Development Assistance**, (Thesis, Mahidol University, 1999 / B.E. 2542), p. 89.

<sup>229</sup>Ibid, p. 90, and interviews with Phra Dhammapanyaporn and Phra Rajratanavimol (Pyle Pathako) on January 22, 2005.

“Preliminary Path and Fruition (Eighteen Bodies)” for his disciples. He taught Detailed Path and Fruition to those attained Dhammakaya. Phramaha Chan, V compiled this ‘Detailed Path and Fruition’ in 1938 (B.E. 2481) but did not published. Until 1974 (B.E. 2517), Khun Sermchai Pholpattanaridthi and Khun Cuengcan Burakamkovit published it.<sup>230</sup>

During the life time of Luang Phor Wat Paknam, the manual of “The Path to Magga Phala” was distributed to all meditators at the Thursday Meditation Session. This manual covered the preliminary procedure of chanting and meditation practice, up to the eighteen bodies. The second manual, the Handbook for Abbots, was available for advanced meditators. Since Luang Phor’s passing, there have been many added channels of Dhamma propagation.

#### **4.1.2.1 The Monthly Periodic Journal “Mongkol Sarn”**

The Monthly Periodic Journal “Mongkol Sarn” was compilation of various articles in Dhamma which initiated by Phra Bhavanakosolthera (Theera Dhammaro) or Luang Phor Lek in 1964 (B.E. 2507). The reason of having this journal was because of the shortage of financial after Luang Phor Wat Paknam passed away. Luang Phor Lek tried to gather memberships to raise funds for food offered to monks and novices and other expenses in the temple.<sup>231</sup>

#### **4.1.2.2 A Handbook for Abbots by Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni**

The Handbook for Abbots by Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni is a compilation of Luang Phor Wat Paknam’s advanced meditation teachings. Khun Chaluey Sombatissuk, his disciple compiled all meditation teachings for Luang Phor to edit. His sermons were meditation teachings in the advanced level of the Threefold Knowledge (*Vijja Sam*): (1) remembering past lives (*Pubbenivāsānussati-ñāṇa*), (2) knowledge of the decease and rebirth of beings, and (3) knowledge for the destruction of mental intoxication (*Āsavakhaya-ñāṇa*) and achieving Ayatana Nibbana.

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<sup>230</sup> Wat Paknam, **The Vijja Magga and Phala of The Most Venerable Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni Detailed, Part I.**, (Bangkok: First Edition, 1964 / B.E. 2517, p. 1.

<sup>231</sup> Interview with Phra Rajratanavimol (Pyle Pathako), Secretary of the Ecclesiastical School, Wat Paknam, January 22, 2005.

These are the actual practices of the Buddha from ancient times. Following them, many Buddhists have attained the real Dhamma, even today.<sup>232</sup>

Phra Dhamtheerajmahamuni acknowledged that it was Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's strong intention to provide the principles of Sangha Administration to all in authorities within the Sangha, from Abbots on up. Therefore, he compiled a handbook entitled, "Handbook for Abbots." Khun Chaluey Sombatsuk was the editor, under Luang Phor's supervision. This book has been contributed to all temples in Thailand. It was not concerned with administration of Sangha's activities, but rather the administration of the mind for Sangha leaders, in accordance with the Buddha's admonition: "Monks! Practice meditation. When the mind is concentrated, it will gain the insight of the truth." As meditation is the essence of Buddhism. It is duty of every Buddhist to practice according to the Buddha's two assignments, scripture study and meditation practice. The Buddha attained enlightenment through the devotion of spiritual cultivation after thorough study in scripture as a fundamental guideline. Luang Phor discussed this objective with the Sangha authorities at that time and was approved to proceed with this project. Unfortunately, Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni passed away. Therefore, it remained an important task for the present abbot, Phra Dhamtheerajmahamuni and the Luang Phor Wat Paknam Alumni Association to carry on Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's plan. This book had been distributed to all abbots over Thailand.<sup>233</sup>

#### **4.1.2.3 Path, Phala and Nibbana**

This handbook details the techniques of Dhammkāya meditation practice. It is augmented by several tape cassettes in meditation practice. These include:

1. Samatha Meditation explained in detail step by step how to proceed with meditation practice.
2. Vipassana Satipatthana technique until attaining Dhammakaya – illustration of the Buddha's technique.

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<sup>232</sup>People's Dhamma Practice Project, op. cit., p.f (n).

<sup>233</sup>Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen and the Wat Paknam Alumni Association (P.A.A.), op. cit., p. 8.

3. Dhamma Sermons approximately 63 sermons. Many of them had been deleted to use the tape cassettes for other use.
4. Booklet on “The Path to Magga and Phala.”
5. A Handbook for Abbots.
6. Vijja Magga, Phala Detailed, Part 1.
7. Vijja Magga, Phala Detailed, Part 2.
8. Ovada (Sermons) – teaching given to all disciples (Recorded by Mrs. Chalam Usuparat.

#### **4.1.2.4 Biography, Work and Sermons**

First Edition was compiled by disciples of Luang Phor Wat Paknam after his death. It was published by The Project of Dhamma Practice for People, Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen joined with Buddha Bhavana Vijja Dhammakāya, Wat Saraketvoravihara in 1984 (B.E. 2527).

This book was the compilation of 63 outstanding sermons, on the occasion of 100 years of Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni. It was divided into 5 sections: (1) “A Brief Biography of Luang Phor Wat Paknam” composed by Luang Phor Wat Paknam himself and other important disciples, Somdej Phra Ariyavongsakatajhana, The Prime Patriarch Punn Punnasiri Mahathera and Phra Bhavana Kosolthera (Veera Kanutamo); (2) “The Amulets” described the sacred value of the amulets. Ajahn Mongkolputta illustrated how to treat these amulets correctly by practicing morality (*Sila*), concentration (*Samadhi*) and wisdom (*Pañña*); (3) “Dhammakāya,” the heart of the meditation teaching of Luang Phor, from the fundamental stage until getting insight to know and see the ultimate truth; (4) The Basic of Samatha-vipassana mediation technique taught by Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni recorded and the Manual for Abbots; (5) Dhamma Preaching composed of 63 sermons which Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni preached to people and disciples in various occasions during his time. It is difficult to find as it is subtle. It can be used for study in order to apply to daily life. Phra Pipattdhamakani was the one who recorded Luang Phor’s preaching in tape cassettes. Phra Bhavanakosolthera (Veera Kanutamo) transcribed the tapes.

#### **4.1.2.5 Dhamma Talks and Meditation Practice**

Dhamma Talks and Meditation Practice were held on radio program, T.V. Channel 9 in the early period after Luang Phor passed

away. Publications, video cassettes, and tape cassettes on Buddhist Meditation Teaching were available for interested and practiced persons.

#### **4.1.2.6 The Basic Samatha-Vipassana Meditation Technique**

The Basic of Samatha-Vipassana Meditation Technique taught by Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni was recorded by Phra Bhavana Kosolthera (Theera Dhammaro) at the time Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni taught people on every Thursday. This method has been used until today. It was compiled from the tape record of Luang Phor Wat Paknam's teaching.

#### **4.1.2.7 Dhamma Legacy of Luang Phor Wat Paknam**

The Most Venerable Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni" published by Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen and Luang Phor Wat Paknam Alumni Association P.A.A. (Bangkok: Amarin Printing and Publishing Co., Ltd., October B.E. 2537). This book is a compilation of Luang Phor Wat Paknam's 62 sermons by Phramaha Chupong Suchutiko, Pali IX. The essence of this book is the method of meditation teaching "Dhammakāya" which Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni illustrated more or less in each sermon. The purpose is to be used for study and practice properly.

All Dhamma preaching and meditation teachings especially the Vijja Dhammakaya, of Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni were compiled in this book as valuable legacy preserved for future reference of the next generation.<sup>234</sup> Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's preaching was general sermons. The most special part in each sermon was based on teaching Vijja Dhammkaya method. All sermons explained the essence and subtleness of the Pali texts.<sup>235</sup>

#### **4.1.2.8 Meditation**

Phra Bhavana Kosolthera (Theera Klosuwan or Dhammatharo) took the role of meditation teaching as Head Meditation Master. In B.E. 2508, he was also appointed Head Professor of academic education

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<sup>234</sup> Wat Paknam, **Moradok Dhamma (Dhamma Legacy) of Luang Phor Wat Paknam (Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni)**, (Bangkok: Amarin Printing and Publishing Co., 1994 / B.E. 2537), p.37.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid, p.56.

(pariyatti). He was referred to as ‘Luang Phor Lek’ who assumed all responsibilities of Luang Phor Wat Paknam.<sup>236</sup>

The Meditation session on Thursday at 2:00 p.m., Luang Phor Wat Paknam usually taught Vija Dhammakaya meditation to the public. When he was ill, he appointed Phra Bhavana Kosol Thera (Theera Dhammatharo) or ‘Luang Phor Lek’ to teach meditation on his behalf. Phra Bhavana Kosol Thera (Theera Dhammatharo) assumed this duty until he died. Phra Bhavana Kosol Thera (Veera Kanuttamo) took place of this duty up until the present.<sup>237</sup>

Every Thursday, there is meditation session held at 2:00-3:00 p.m. at ‘Sangvechane Mongkolthep Niramitra Hall’. Tape recordings of Luang Phor Wat Paknam’s teachings and chanting are played for people to follow. The nuns who have attained Dhammakaya will meditate among themselves at 4:00-5:00 p.m. at Bavornthepmuni Building.<sup>238</sup> Meditation work for helping people is still carried on from Luang Phor Wat Paknam’s time up to the present. It was Luang Phor’s objective to help out people in suffering. Nuns have taken duties on meditation to cure illness and other problems of people. These were Dhamma and meditation propagation manuals, tapes, and meditation activities offered to the Buddhists. There was also a meditation hall for public to practice meditation daily.

#### **4.1.3 Meditation Practice Hall for Public**

Originally, meditation practice was held at the third floor of the Ecclesiastical School. It was not convenience to practice meditation when the number of students increased, especially the examination time. Later, Chao Khun Rajmoli (the former name of the present Abbot) restored the “White Building” for meditation practice.<sup>239</sup>

The Meditation Practice Hall was built in 1974-1978 (B.E. 2517-2521) for the public to practice meditation. It was originally located at the center of Wat Paknam. Khun Ying Prayat Pathpongsavisudha-

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<sup>236</sup> Ajahn Tritha Niemkham, op. cit., p. 134.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid, p. 175.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid., p. 139.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid., p. 134.

thipadee and her daughter, Miss Voranee Sunthornvej contributed over six million Baht for its construction. It was painted white as a symbolic of purity. There is a huge Buddha statue at the center of the second floor. The objective was to use this hall as a meditation and propagation center for the spreading of Buddhism worldwide.<sup>240</sup>

The current time schedule for daily meditation practice offers two sessions, 8:00- 9:30 a.m. and 6:00-7:30 p.m. On weekends, there are four sessions: 8:00-9:30 a.m., 10:00-11:30 a.m., 1:00-2:00 p.m., and 6:00-7:30 p.m. At each section, it takes one and half hours, except on the weekend afternoon, which takes only one hour. The Dhamma preacher gives a Dhamma talk for half an hour, and then there is a half hour meditation practice. There will be one extra session at 5:00-6:00 p.m. during the rain-retreat or special training course session. The moderator turns on the tape of chanting and meditation teaching of Luang Phor Wat Paknam. Also, there are meditation masters, both monks and nuns to supervise the meditation practice. Many moderators, Dhamma preachers and meditation masters take turns.<sup>241</sup> Around 1979 (B.E. 2522), there was one section on Sunday at 2:00 p.m. at Mom Arb Hall, Wat Dhatuthong.<sup>242</sup>

This Meditation Center is the most sacred place for meditation. Luang Phor Wat Paknam said that this was center of Lord Buddha's Treasurer (Chakrapatr). Meditators should show respect to the Buddha in this place by being well groomed and acting respectfully. They should have pure morality based on observing five or eight precepts strictly without fail.

Luang Phor always taught that doing things properly would give oneself a cheerful, brave, confident, a good feeling without timidity. This is because we are doing good deeds. He taught his disciples to be very refined and delicate in every posture - sitting, standing, walking, talking, and thinking. These are the characteristics of a Noble person that we should train ourselves to follow for a better future life. Meditators should set three criteria for objectives - to have the true intention to meditate, to

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<sup>240</sup> Ibid., p. 192.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid., p. 138.

<sup>242</sup> People's Dhamma Practice Project and Wat Paknam, **Collection of 9 Sermons by Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni (Part II)**, (Bangkok: Chuenpim, B.E. 2522), p. 30.

carry out that intention, and to purify the mind. Luang Phor said that making merit is like taking a picture to record everything we usually do automatically, bodily, verbally and mentally. Every action must be recorded without discarding it. This record must be in accordance with each individual's kamma in order to nourish our lives. The Buddha said that all creatures will be rewarded in accordance with their actions (Kamma). Whether it is good or bad action, it will give a corresponding result.<sup>243</sup> Meditation is the important merit that Luang Phor Wat Paknam emphasized. The other merit that Luang Phor encouraged the Buddhists to do was the giving food to the Sangha.

#### 4.1.4 Kitchen and Food Center for Public Offering Food

Suitable Food (*Sappaya*) is an important factor for education and meditation practice. Luang Phor Wat Paknam saw the insufficient alms round of monks and novices. There are many temples around Wat Paknam. Luang Phor Wat Paknam was concerned about the alms-round difficulties and the heavy burden for the neighborhood lay people.<sup>244</sup> He used to have alms-round difficulty when he studied at Wat Phra Chetupon. Often, he did not receive any food. One day, he received a spoonful of rice and a piece of banana from alms-round. A starving dog came to him for food. He offered half of his food to that hungry dog. He made a wish that he would never be starving again. The next day, he received a lot of food and had to share it with others. This was the result of his merit from giving the food to the starving dog. From that incident, he made resolution that he would set a kitchen to offer food for monks and novices in future whenever he got an opportunity. Thus, Luang Phor Wat Paknam solved the problem by taking it as his own responsibility to nurture monks, novices, nuns, and meditators. He used his own money buying food. Rice was offered by his family and sometimes by his disciples.

Luang Phor Wat Paknam set up kitchen to provide food for monks, novices from 1916 B.E. 2459 until now. He built up a big alms

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<sup>243</sup> Ajahn Tritha Niemkham, op. cit., p. 138.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid., p. 62.

hall for five hundred monks and novices to have two meals daily.<sup>245</sup> This was the fruition of his giving perfection (*Dāna Paramitas*); he could nurture everyone in Wat Paknam and the devotees. His objective was to provide convenience for monks and novices so that they would not need to be worried about the alms-round and would have more time for study. Luang Phor wanted them to really study hard for their own accomplishment. It was also a convenience for devotees offering food to monks and novices. They just informed their wish to be a host for offering food, and then donated money to the monastery treasurer for food. Nuns would prepare food for the devotees to offer to monks and novices everyday.<sup>246</sup>

In the past, devotees had to take turns to be the host of the meals in the morning and lunch. Sometimes there was a little argument over being the host for a certain day. Luang Phor solved this problem by having many hosts joined together for offering food to monks and novices as a whole, not specifically. Luang Phor Wat Paknam explained the fruition of offering food to the Sangha as a whole not specifically. This was called as offering dedicated to the Sangha (*Saṅghadāna*). The devotees would gain tremendous merit from this offering. Luang Phor Wat Paknam taught people to give without expecting anything in return. The giving should come from pure good will, not aiming for any advantage. The result would bring pure and delicate fruition, happiness, and virtue to the devotees. He taught people who had no money to give through energy and strength by working for something. This was the merit gained from putting effort on something. He also suggested joining with good people in making merit so that we have good friends and good company in the next life.<sup>247</sup>

Luang Phor Wat Paknam explained to the devotees that they did not only offer food to monks and novices, but also to the public for all people who came to the temple. He wanted the devotees to be delighted with their offering and those people who did not donate would not be worried. He offered food to those who came from long distant, to the poor people and to the sick people to be recovered. He provided

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<sup>245</sup> Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen and Luang Phor Wat Paknam's Alumni Association, op. cit., p. 85.

<sup>246</sup> Ajahn Tritha Niemkham, op. cit., p. 55.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid., p.56-57.

convenience and sufficient food to everyone who came to Wat Paknam. Sometime, he provided residence for sick people and transportation fare to go back when they are recovered.<sup>248</sup>

According to Luang Phor's suggestion, the devotees have realized and experienced the benefit of giving. Every day, there were many devotees coming to offer food to the monks and novices on various occasions. They came to offer food on their birthdays, on wedding days, to dedicate merit to ancestors, on death days, and many other occasions. Nuns, lay followers, people who come for meditation and other devotees also are invited to have meal after the monks. Some devotees order ready-made food to monks which save a lot of work for the nuns. On special occasions, there are many good cooks from various food shops cooking for monks and novices. They help lessen heavy load of the nuns. Suitable Food (Food Sappaya) and suitable Dhamma (Dhamma Sappaya) have been offered to monks and novices. Suitable dwelling (Senasana Sappaya) was also offered to monks, novices, nuns and lay follower.

#### **4.1.5 Construction and Public Utilities Development**

During Luang Phor Wat Paknam's life time, he restored many dwellings and buildings for monks and novices to live. He built many small wooden Kutis next to the temple for meditating monks to reside and practice privately.<sup>249</sup> In B.E. 2490, Luang Phor built many wooden buildings for Pali and Dhamma Studies. A large school for scriptural studies and meditation practice was built in B.E. 2493. Other buildings included the Mongkol Chanthasorn Building and Bavorn Thepmuni (Luang Phor's residence). In addition, he dug a water well and built a reservoir and constructed a road, fence and dwelling for monks and novices.<sup>250</sup>

After Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni had already passed away, everyone continued to ask his approval for important things such as restoration of the Uposatha. The Buddha Image was not allowed to be

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<sup>248</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid., p. 121.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid., pp.122-124.

restored or moved backwards. If anyone did not believe, there would be some vision warning that the project would not be successful.<sup>251</sup>

#### **4.1.5.1 Restoration of Uposatha**

In 1960-1962 (B.E. 2503-2505), the Uposatha was restored. Wat Paknam was an old temple of the Ayudhaya period. In the reign of King Rama III, this temple was restored once. In the rainy season, the rain leaked from the roof. The roof must be repaired and the structure of temple needed to be strengthened. The cost of restoration was quite high about one million. Somdej Phra Sangharaja (Punn Punnasiri) worried about the available funds. Somdej Punn Punnasiri instructed Luang Phor Lek and Ajahn Tritha to ask for approval from Luang Phor Wat Paknam. In meditation, Luang Phor agreed and set the date for restoration. He instructed Somdej Punn Punnasiri to make the first hit at the center of the wall. But, Luang Phor Wat Paknam did not allow him to move the Buddha Statue. Because the Buddha Statue was over a hundred or a thousand years old, it is very sacred that could not be moved from the original position. Two shrines called as (Somdej Vihara) in front of the Uposatha including Vihara were also restored.

#### **4.1.5.2 Sangvechanee Mongkol Chandasaro Hall**

In 1962-1964 (B.E. 2505-2507), Sangvechanee Mongkol Chandasaro Hall was constructed to replace the old wooden residence of Luang Phor Wat Paknam. It was built for installation of Luang Phor Wat Paknam's coffin. It was two storied building more convenient for people to pay respect Luang Phor here than the third floor of the Ecclesiastical School. Because so many monks and novices studied Dhamma and Pali at the Ecclesiastical School, it was too noisy for meditation. A statue the actual size of Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni was built by Professor Silp Peerasri on the second floor of this hall. At present, this Sangvechanee Mongkol Chandasaro Hall is an important place for many kinds of merit-making activities, i.e., for Luang Phor Wat Paknam, for relatives who passed away, for marriages, birthdays and meditation practice on Thursdays led by Phra Bhavana Kosol Thera (Veera Kanuttamo). In addition, there were many constructions of residences for monks, novices,

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<sup>251</sup> Ibid., p. 154.

and nuns. There were many constructions for roads, parking lot, retaining dam and many more.

#### **4.1.5.3 Road**

An important task completed according to Luang Phor Wat Paknam's foresight was the road leading to Wat Paknam. The road was constructed in 1997 (B.E. 2540) and named "Phra Rajamagkolprasasna." In the old days, there was no road. Transportation was by water and walking path. In the temple, there were narrow walking paths. Luang Phor constructed a big road at the middle of Wat Paknam beside Uposatha and Nekhamma building. Luang Phor had the vision that in the future, Wat Paknam would flourish with a road coming to the Wat. Nobody believed him. But, two years after his death, the devotees could drive cars into Wat Paknam.<sup>252</sup> There were many devotees contributed money for its construction because they wanted to come to Wat Paknam conveniently.

#### **4.1.5.4 Land**

An important project was the purchase of Wat Paknam's land from people in the neighborhood. People came to establish permanent residences on the land of Wat Paknam. Over a long period of time, this land belonged to people legally. Wat Paknam had to buy the lands back from people at a high price. These lands were purchased for construction of parking lot and the road leading to Wat Paknam. The devotees had faith in Luang Phor Wat Paknam and wanted to see Wat Paknam expand and flourish, so they contributed money for buying land.

#### **4.1.5.5 Visedh Dhammakaya Building**

In B.E. 2522, Visedh Dhammakaya Building was built. The first floor is the Library 'Mongkolsiri, the second floor is Museum (M.S.J.). The third floor is the residence of senior monk and the novices.

In addition, Tipitaka Hall and Sodh Karn Parien Hall (100 Years Hall) were built in the Thai style; Sodh Karn Parien Hall was built as the meal hall for monks and novices.

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<sup>252</sup> Ajahn Tritha Niemkham, op. cit., p. 73.

#### 4.1.5.6 Marble Tipitaka at Buddhamonthon

The most important construction project of Wat Paknam was the Marble Tipitaka at Buddhamonthon. In 1989-1998 (B.E. 2532-2541), the Marbles Tipitaka engraved with the Pali scriptures was built at Buddhamonthon, Nakorn Pathom. There were in the total of one thousand four hundred eighteen pieces (or seven hundred and nine pieces twin) of the marble engraved with the Tipitaka. Each was 1.10 meters in width and 2.00 meters in height. The Phramaha Vihara was built with concrete and iron in Thai architecture style as the place to show these Marble Tipitaka. The Phramaha Vihara was built in 5,824 square meters with a big Stupa named “Phra Chedi Phramaharajchamangklacarn” located at the middle of the Vihara. Inside the Stupa, there were relics of the Buddha and his disciples, Phra Sariputta Thera, Phra Moggalana Thera, Phra Sivalee Thera, and Wat Paknam’s Amulets. There were nine small stupas surrounded this main Stupa. Within the main stupa, there was a statue of Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni (Luang Phor Wat Paknam). This Mahavihara was located on the island behind the main big graceful Buddha Statue named “Phra Srisakayadosapolaññā” of Buddhamonthon. The construction value of these Mahavihara and the Marble Tipitaka was two hundred million Baht.<sup>253</sup>

In 1989 (B.E. 2532), Phra Dhammapaññābodee, (the former title of the present abbot, Venerable Somdej Phramaharajchamangklacarn), together with Luang Phor Wat Paknam Alumni Association (P.A.A.) and disciples of Luang Phor Wat Paknam proposed for authorization from the King to build this marble Tipitaka as a permanent preservation of Buddhism. The objectives of constructing this Phramaha Vihara and Marble Tipitaka were to pay respect to the Buddha, Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni and to celebrate the sixty years birthday of the King Bhumipol Adulyadej in B.E. 2530.

Somdej Phrabarom Orasadhiraj, The Prince presented as a chairman on behalf of The King for this opening ceremony on December 1998 (B.E. 2541). This Phramaha Vihara and Marble Tipitaka at Buddhamonthon is a center for international Buddhists. It is now one of the most inspiring centers for Buddhist visitors to Thailand. Wat Paknam has given away to the Government, the Religious Department.

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<sup>253</sup> Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen, **The Brief Tipitaka (Phra Traipidok Sangkepe)**, (Bangkok: Athorn Prining Co., Ltd, B.E. 2541.), p. 9.

#### 4.1.5.7 The Hundred Years National Park at Buddha-Monthon

Luang Phor Wat Paknam supported the idea of Prime Minister P. Piboonsongkram to construct Buddhamonthon. In 1984 (B.E. 2527), Chao Khun Dhammadhirarajmahamuni (former name of the present Abbot) agreed with idea of Ajahn Tritha Niemkham to plant trees in the Buddhamonthon National Park as a hundred years commemoration of Luang Phor Wat Paknam. One hundred and eight kinds of trees, which appeared in the Buddha's history, were planted on this land of five rai. The objectives were to celebrate King Bhumiboladulyadeth's birthday in 1987 (B.E. 2530) and to educate the youth. This is called as "Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's (Luang Phor Wat Paknam) Hundred Years National Park".<sup>254</sup>

#### 4.1.5.8 Other Important Constructions

Other Important Constructions were included (1) Emergency Building named "Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni, Luang Phor Wat Paknam at Somdej Phra Sangaraja (Punn Punnasiri) Hospital, Supanburi Province. (2) Sodh Anusorn 1 Building (Convalescence Building for ill monks) at Wat Kao Phra, Petchburi Priovince. (3) Sodh Anusorn 2 Building (Ecclesiastical School) at Wat Payapoo, Nan Province. (4) The Standing Buddha Statue at Wat Thatoan, Mae Aye, Chiangmai. (5) Phramaha Dhatu Chedi Phrabuddhadhamma Prakas and Phra Buddhadhamma Mongkol, at Wat Buddhathidraj, Amphur Betong, Yala Province.

As we can see that there have been much construction of dwellings and many important religious treasures. The cost of construction was very high. The total amount of construction and restoration during Luang Phor Wat Paknam's life time was over four million Baht<sup>255</sup> in the late 24<sup>th</sup> century. After Luang Phor Wat Paknam's passing, the present abbot, Somdej Phramaharajchamangklaearn has carried on Luang Phor Wat Paknam's projects of construction and restoration. The total amount of construction cost was many hundred million Baht. This money was donated by devotees in appreciation of Luang Phor Wat Paknam. They willingly assisted in every project Wat Paknam organized.<sup>256</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> Ajahn Tritha Niemkham, op. cit., p. 166.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid., p. 123.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid., p. 159.

#### 4.1.6 Luang Phor Wat Paknam Foundation

When Luang Phor Wat Paknam was alive, there were many faithful devotees who donated money to set up ‘fund’. The purpose was to use interest earned for covering expenses in various monastic activities. Luang Phor Wat Paknam had objectives of supporting monks and novices to have sufficient food, to have higher education and meditation practice of Vijja Dhammakāya. After Luang Phor Wat Paknam passed away, these faithful devotees still continue their donation to this fund. Phra Dhammatheeraraj Mahamuni, (the former name of the present Abbot) authorized to set up the foundation to carry on this fund.<sup>257</sup>

Luang Phor Wat Paknam Foundation was established as ‘Foundation’ in 1981 (B.E. 2524). The abbreviation of the foundation was M.S.J. The symbol of this foundation was a castle in a circle with the abbreviation at the center of the castle. The objectives were to use the interest from the capital for supporting meals, education in scripture, Vijja Dhammakaya meditation propagation, restoration and construction, merit-making, temple maintenance, community services but not involve with politics. The first initial registered capital was in the amount of 7,311,433 million Baht. A Committee of nine members was appointed to manage and administer the foundation activities.<sup>258</sup> The Most Venerable Somdej Phramaha Rajmankaljarn, the Abbot, has been the Chairman since the first year. Ajahn Tritha Niemkham has been one of the members, along with four more senior monks, the head of the nuns, and three lay people.

The Committee selected qualified members to work for efficiency. All members must have faith, earnestness, responsibility, knowledge, capability, experience and devotion, without expecting anything in return.<sup>259</sup> The General Annual Meeting has been held in March every year to report financial status, other concerned matters and activities. Regulations and conditions have been established in accordance with the law. Each year, the Committee issues “The Annual

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<sup>257</sup> Ibid., p. 159.

<sup>258</sup> Luang Phor Wat Paknam Foundation, **Luang Phor Wat Paknam Foundation: Report of Activities, Financial Status and the Name of the Funds for the Year 2546.** (Bangkok: Athorn Printing Co., 1993 / B.E. 2546.), p. 22-23.

<sup>259</sup> Phramaha Thammajariya Khruangthip, op. cit., p. 61.

Report of the Luang Phor Wat Paknam Foundation” to report the financial status of the foundation, the religious and social development activities, and the names of the funds, together with the amount of current donations to each fund.<sup>260</sup>

The thesis of Phramaha Thammajariya Khruangthip states that The Most Venerable Somdej Phramaharajchamangklacarn, the present Abbot of Wat Paknam, has carried on management in accordance with Luang Phor Wat Paknam’s objectives. The committee members are all prestigious monks, nuns and lay disciples of Luang Phor Wat Paknam, who work voluntarily, faithfully devoted to his work.

They are people who have faith in Luang Phor Wat Paknam’s virtues and are following in the Buddha’s footsteps to attain Vijja Dhammakāya for themselves and to teach it to others. The important factor is that people have faith in Luang Phor Wat Paknam and want to contribute funds to support his objectives. Every day, devotees increase their funds or set up new funds for their relatives, or even for Luang Phor Wat Paknam. As of the end of December 2003 (B.E. 2546), total funds were 20,334 different funds.<sup>261</sup>

According to feedback from the interviews by Phramaha Thammajariya Khruangthip, most interviewees responded that most of the devotees feel delight and rapture to devote money for meals, education, supporting Vijja Dhammkaya and other aids to Buddhism. Because Wat Paknam uses the interest in accordance to the objectives of Luang Phor Wat Paknam. People are confidence that the Association has utilized the money effectively to serve Luang Phor’s objectives. People see the performance of the respected committee and the Annual Report of financial status and activities. They get information from others. They have more faith to donate money to this Association and introduce other people to donate money.<sup>262</sup>

The number of funds increased rapidly and are sufficient for Wat Paknam’s expenses. The Most Venerable Somdej Phramaha Rajchamangklacarn has the objective to promote education of youth. The

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<sup>260</sup> Luang Phor Wat Paknam Foundation, op. cit., p.27.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid, p. 146.

<sup>262</sup> Phramaha Thammajariya Khruangthip, op.cit., p. 67.

Most Venerable Somdej provides scholarship to students who have good performance in their study, possess good behaviour but lack of fund to study. Scholarships are offered to three different levels, five universities, sixty primary schools and twenty four secondary schools.

#### **4.1.7 Luang Phor Wat Paknam Alumni Association**

In 1959 (B.E. 2502), many associations brought flowers and garlands to pay respect to Luang Phor Wat Paknam's funeral. Phra Bhavana Kosolthera (Theera Klosuwan) and Chao Khun Rajmoli had ideas that Luang Phor Wat Paknam had many disciples all over Thailand and abroad. It was good for all disciples joined together as an association to conduct merit-making for Luang Phor Wat Paknam's funeral. It was an expression of gratitude to Luang Phor Wat Paknam and to enhance Luang Phor's reputation. Also, it could be benefit to maintain Buddhism. Phra Bhavana Kosolthera (Theera Klosuwan) tried every way to establish an alumni association. He was the key person to gather all disciples of Luang Por Wat Paknam. At that time, he was the Head of Instructor both in scriptural studies and meditation practice.<sup>263</sup>

Luang Phor Wat Paknam Alumni Association (M.S.J.) was successfully established with the Ministry of Education in 1971 (B.E. 2514) and was legally registered with Police Department in 1972 (B.E. 2515). The abbreviation of (M.S.J.) was derived from the name of Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni (Sodh Candasaro). The English name was Luang Phor Wat Paknam Alumni Association (P.A.A.). The objectives were to support all activities of Buddhism both in Thailand and abroad; to propagate Dhammakaya Meditation Method; to promote the Dhamma Unity and to support and conduct merit activities without involving politics.<sup>264</sup>

The members are of two types, honorary members and ordinary members. The honorary members are the reputable persons who are invited to be member. The ordinary members are the disciples who apply to be member of the Alumini Association in accordance to the law. The membership fee was twenty-five Baht per year and two hundred Baht for life membership. The membership fees are used as capital for interest

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<sup>263</sup> Ajahn Tritha Niemkham, op.cit., p. 160.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid., p. 161.

earning. The interest earned will be used for the Association's expenditures and for cultivation of merit. The Executive Committee is composed of chairman, vice chairman, secretary, registration officer, public relation, librarian, moderator, receptionist, propagator, etc. Ajahn Tritha Niemkham has been a Chairman of this association. The Annual General Meeting was held on the third of February every year because it was Luang Phor Wat Paknam's death. In 1984 (B.E. 2527), there was eight hundred ninety three members in total.<sup>265</sup> There are many disciples who are active devotees but are not interested in having their names listed in the Association. Some disciples do not know about this association.

It is remarkable that the committee members devoted to work voluntarily as a token of appreciation to Luang Phor Wat Paknam. There have been many activities organized by this Association on the ground of unity and cooperation of disciples. The Association not only conducted merit in Wat Paknam, but also extended helps to other temples in Thailand and abroad. The Association also conducted merit for other temples.

There have been many activities organized by the Association:

- (1) The Monthly General Meeting is arranged among the members to report the outcome of the meeting and other various activities of the association including all the movement of the members ie., the death of the members.
- (2) The Association joins as the co-host for chanting Abhidhama in the funeral of life-members, monks, novices in Wat Paknam and other prestige monks of other temples.
- (3) The Association has organized the Royal Kathina in the name of the King, to leave robes offerings (Pha Pa) for the sangha, the other merit-making in various important religious occasions and the performing and dedicating merit to Luang Phor Wat Paknam on Thai New Year and on the third of February.
- (4) To build the Buddha images and Luang Phor Wat Paknam's images for contribution to various temples abroad and in Thailand that requested for. This is for the propagation of Buddhism and Vijja Dhammakāya.
- (5) The Association also provided scholarship yearly to the students who obtain good grade in school. The scholarship has been given on the third of February each year as a commemoration of the death of Luang Phor Wat Paknam. Scholarships were offered to two monks who passed Pali

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<sup>265</sup> Ibid.

IX and further their studies in India (Phramaha Montree and Phramaha Pranom).<sup>266</sup>

#### 4.1.8 Amulets

The great impact of propagation upon Thai society was Amulet. Wat Paknam produced many Amulets to serve different purposes. The first lot of amulets was manufactured in 1950 (B.E. 2493) on Luang Phor Wat Paknam's Birthday. The second lot was produced in 1951 (B.E. 2494), and distributed all out in B.E. 2505. The third lot was created in 1956 (B.E. 2499) and distributed all out in B.E. 2514. The fourth lot was produced by the disciples to raise funds for education and temple maintenance. The fifth lot was created for 100 years Birthday celebration of Luang Phor Wat Paknam. The sixth lot was made to raise funds for construction of Tipitaka Hall and engraved marble Tipitaka at Salaya, Buddhamonthon, Nakorpathom. The seventh lot was produced to raise funds for construction of the Buddhist library at Buddhamonthon.

Luang Phor Wat Paknam's purpose of producing the amulets was to give them as a present to the devotees who contributed money for construction of the Ecclesiastical School for Monks, novices to obtain high levels of education.<sup>267</sup> He never asked for contribution from his disciples. But, people know his objective with respectful to him, they wanted him succeed in building for Pali study and meditation practice. Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni gave only one amulet to each individual directly, no matter how much money they contributed. Nobody can receive on behalf of others and cannot get the second one if the first amulet got lost. Even though the amulet got lost, but the Buddha is still with that person always.

Luang Phor Wat Paknam's tactic of producing amulets was to use amulets as a spiritual refuge for the owner and as commemoration of the Buddha's virtue. It was not for magic purpose. He told incidents about many people who experienced the power of amulets. Luang Phor Wat Paknam described the power of Amulets and told the incidents occurred to his disciples that:

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<sup>266</sup> Ajahn Tritha Niemkham, *op.cit.*, pp. 162-163.

<sup>267</sup> *Ibid.*, p.67.

I even cannot count how much sacred they are. Upon giving to people on my birthday, the amulets showed their sacred to my disciples.... So, I know the sacred of amulet from her and from many others more who came to tell me about their sacred amulet received from me.

An old lady at age of 80 years, named Mrs. Kiew Bangpai received one amulet from me. She put it over her bed (mosquitos net). At night, she was frighten with the amulet shone its aura sparkling over the room for awhile and dimmed down to one spot over her bed at the position of amulet. She knew right away that the aura came from the amulet. She came to me early morning to tell me about the incident. Her complexion was brighter than the day she received amulet from me due to her sickness. She felt that the sacred amulet turned the bad to good.

There was a little girl at age of 13 years old received an amulet from me. At the time she got home, the Buddha Amulet floated away from her. She saw the amulet floated in the air and got into one lady's house. This girl followed the amulet into this house in order to take her amulet back. But, the house owner did not allow the girl to go into her room. It was an argument. So, the lady told the girl to take her mother here as witness. They went into the room and found the amulet inside the glass cover of The Buddha Image. The lady owner denied that the amulet was not belong to her and returned to the girl. This is a miraculous incident. Nevertheless, the amulet does not only radiate aura and float away, but also can speak.

A sailor attended the dinner meeting held in his division on the twenty-ninth. After the dinner, weapons were distributed to all sailors. Suddenly, a voice from the amulet he had in his pocket, told him to throw away that gun and escape. He was alarm, did not know where to go to. The voice told him to go toward Wat Arunrajvararam. He was afraid to be shot because that area was surrounded by the oppositors (did not know who they are). The amulet told him to hide somewhere safe. He followed the amulet every step that the amulet directed him to each place until he could escape from that situation. After the settlement, he reported to his authorities and was appointed as Aide-De-Camp A.D.C. to His Majesty the King. The ninth day of his receiving prosperity of

rank and wealth (good, fortune), he came to me to pay respect at my foot. He told me all incident he encountered.<sup>268</sup>

The Bangkok Times Newspaper, (the sixth year, the week no. 280, dated Monday, 23th May, B.E. 2503) presented news about a miracle of the sacred of Amulets that:

At the World War I and the Indochina War, Thai soldiers participated in the war. Their reputation of bravery and capability were spread widely that they had small built but had miracle. They were shot but got up and continued fighting. The oppositors were afraid of Thai soldiers, were not dare to fight with. Therefore, they called Thai soldiers as “ghost soldiers’ unkillable. And again, in the Korean War, The Nations requested Thai soldiers to join in this war. These ghost soldiers were sent to this war. It was unbelievable that all those Thai soldiers were safe from various incidents. They all had Amulet on their necks. A letter was sent from the soldier named Vasana Akomwattana at Korean War to Luang Phor Wat Paknam. He expressed his appreciation to Lauing Phor who gave amulet to him and his team could safe their lives.....etc.<sup>269</sup>

This Newspaper reported the miracle of amulet that Thai soldiers experienced themselves and saved their lives from many various incidents in the war. The result was a huge number of people come to get more Amulet for protection. Wat Paknam became even more popular.

## **4.2 Other Direct Impacts in Thailand and Abroad**

Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni had the plan to spread Vija Dhammakāya over the world. His first plan was to propagate Vija Dhammakāya to Europe and Japan. He sent his first foreign disciple, Kapilavadho Bhikkhu (Professor Dr. William August Purfurst) who was ordained in 1954 (B.E. 2497) to do propagation work in London, England. Later on, he brought with him three English scholars to be ordained with Luang Phor Wat Paknam named Saddhāvadho Bhikkhu, Paññāvadho Bhikkhu and Vijjāvadho Bhikkhu. Luang Phor offered them good

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<sup>268</sup> Ajahn Tritha Niemkham, op.cit., p. 84.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid, pp. 89-90.

hospitality and provided a separate building with all convenience including sufficient food.<sup>270</sup>

In 1954 (B.E. 2497), a group of Japanese Bhikkhus Minister led by the Supreme Patriarch Takashina came to visit Wat Paknam. They were interested in Dhammakāya meditation method which was different from ‘Soto’ sect. Phra Veera Uttaranathi (the former name of Chao Khun Bhavanakosolthera) was invited to teach them Dhammakāya meditation method. The Secretary to the Supreme Patriarch wanted to know where his father was after he passed away long time ago. Phra Veera Uttaranathi taught him the way. The last, the Secretary to the Supreme Patriarch opened his eyes with tearful and said that “He was never happy just like attaining Nirvana amongst the Buddha’s disciples a moment ago”. They assured that they would follow Dhammakāya meditation method in the future.<sup>271</sup>

In 1957 (B.E. 2500), a Japanese ascetic of Nijiren sect, named Mr. Thako Chimaruji was interested in Dhammakaya. He was ordained and named as Dhammachandho Bhikkhu. He resided at Wat Pakam over the rains-retreat for 6 months. He attained Dhammakaya and went back to propagate Dhammakaya in Japan. Luang Phor Wat Paknam consulted the Prime Minister, P. Piboonsongkram for having the Buddha and constructing Thai temple at London. Unfortunately, Luang Phor Wat Paknam was ill and passed away before his plan was accomplished.<sup>272</sup>

The reputation of the sacred Dhammakāya is spreading out worldwide. Branch monasteries of Luang Phor Wat Paknam’s lineage are flourishing widely both in Thailand and throughout Asian and Western countries. In 1984 (B.E. 2527), there were 11 foreign bhikkhus from various countries resided at Wat Paknam. They were one from Scotland, one from Vietnam, two from Nepal, six from Sri Lanka, and one from Bangladesh.<sup>273</sup>

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<sup>270</sup>Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni, *Dhammkaya*, p. 25.

<sup>271</sup>Sermchai Polpatanaritdhi, *The Path to Attaining Merit and the Sermons of Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni (Luang Phor Wat Paknam)*, (Bangkok: Chuenpim, 1974 / B.E. 2517), pp.16-17.

<sup>272</sup>Ajahn Tritha Niemkham, op. cit., p. 55.

<sup>273</sup>Ibid., p.89.

## **4.2.1 Branches in Thailand**

During Luang Phor Wat Paknam's life time, there were many Meditation Practice Centers over Thailand. One of them was called as Luang Phor Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen Meditation Center, Had Yai, Songkhla. Many monks and nuns have established their own monasteries or Dhamma Practice Centers in various provinces in Thailand. All disciples have carried on Luang Phor's intention to spread Dhammakaya method to help people all over Thailand and abroad.

### **4.2.1.1 Other Branches**

Wat Paknam's Branches and Dhamma Practice Centers include (1) Wat Khao Phra, Kao Yoy district, Petchburi Province; (2) Wat Kasemcittaram, Uttaradit Province; (3) Wat Paknamdebaram, Had Yai, Songkhla Province; (4) Wat Pah Charoen Dhammakāya, at Pathumratana District, Roi-ed Province; (5) Wat Somboon Dhammakayaram, Pichit Province; (6) Wat Suan Lamyai, Muang District, Lampoon Province; (7) Samnak Patipatti Dhamma Mongkol Dhammakayaram, Mae Sai District, Chiang Rai; and (8) Samnak Patipatti Dhamma Thanom at Aung Thong province, near Wat Thongkung. Ajahn Mae Chee Thanom Arsavai initiated this Vipassana Center in 1959 (B.E. 2502). She was one of the very capable disciples of Luang Phor Wat Paknam. Many other nuns also have their own meditation practice centers, but there are no records of these centers.

### **4.2.1.2 Nuns' Suan Kaew Meditation Practice Center**

The Meditation Practice Center for Nuns named "Samnak Patipatti Dhamma Suan Kaew," was established in 1983 (B.E. 2526) on land of one hundred twenty-three rai at Jombueng, Rajchaburi Province. The nun named "Ajahn Mae Chee Varncai Jukorn is the head of this meditation center. Her objectives in setting up this center are to provide education and meditation practice. She has organized many religious activities on the important religious occasions all year round.

The important function is the spiritual development session called as 'renunciation practice' (Nekkhamma Patipatti) which organized every year on the important religious days i.e., New Year, Makabucha Day, Visakha Day, Asalaha Day, Thai New Year, the National Mother

Day and the National Father Day. The length of practice will be three days, seven days and ten days depending on the occasion.

In 1991 (B.E. 2534), she established the foundation named as “Ajahn Mae Chee Varncai Jukorn Foundation. The capital interest earned will be used in charitable work to promote Buddhism, to aid the welfare of the communities and to support the young students who have good performance in school but lack of money.

In 1996 (B.E. 2539), The Sunday Buddhist School was established to promote the ethics and moral education for the youth. The Buddhist curriculum of Dhamma Sueksa is provided for the youth. There are the study course and examination available for three levels of the elementary “Tri,” secondary “Tho” and the advanced “Eak” levels. There are thousand of students applied for examination each year. From 1997-2003 (B.E. 2540-2546), seven years, there have been over two thousand students received training and education.<sup>274</sup>

Ajahn Mae Chee Varncai Jukorn has objectives to teach the youth to be good children of the parents, be a good citizen of the Thai society. She wants to teach the youth to have good behavior, moral conduct, and virtues. She teaches the youth to have Buddhism in their heart to be their refuge. The important virtues are to be honest, to have gratitude and devotion.<sup>275</sup>

#### **4.2.2 Branches Abroad**

In 1982 (B.E. 2525), Chao Khun Dhammatheeraj Mahamuni delegated Phrakhru Samanadhamma Samadana (Phramaha Sawad Chotipālo), Assistant Abbot and the Associate Professor of Vipassana of Wat Paknam, to teach Vijja Dhammakāya meditation practice at Wat Thai, Los Angeles, California, United States. This was the first propagation in a Western country following Luang Phor Wat Paknam’s death. In 1984 (B.E. 2527), Thai people in Philadelphia, U.S.A. who had faith in studying the Vijja Dhammakāya meditation method requested a Vipassana Meditation Master to reside there and teach the Vijja

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<sup>274</sup> Ajahn Mae Chee Varncai Jukorn, **Sangvechaneesathan, Stupa Parinibbana, Suan Kaew Meditation Practice Center**, p.37.

<sup>275</sup> Interview with Ajahn Mae Chee Varncai Jukorn, the Meditation Master of Suan Kaew Dhamma Practice Center, January 12, 2005.

Dhammakāya meditation method at Philadelphia. Chao Khun Dhammatheeraraj Mahamuni appointed Phrakhru Samana Dhammasamadhana (Phramaha Sawat Chotipalo), an Assistant Abbot and Associated Professor of Vipassana of Wat Paknam and Phramaha Pairoj Patthako to assume duty of teaching Vija Dhammakāya meditation in Philadelphia, U.S.A.

These two meditation masters had to reside temporarily at Wat Vachiradhammapatheep, New York, because there was no available residence for setting up a meditation center in Philadelphia. During the rains-retreat of 1984, Phra Visudhisombodhi, the abbot of Wat Vachiradhammapatheep, New York, set up a meditation teaching program. Phrakhru Samana Dhammasamadhana and Phramaha Pairoj Patthako were the meditation masters to lead that meditation practice program. The teaching schedule was set at 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. daily. The additional session was on weekend at 3:00-5:00 p.m. Many Buddhists came for meditation practice. They named meditation practice group the ‘Dhamma Bhavana Group’

#### **4.2.2.1 Wat Mongkolthepmunee USA**

In 1984 (B.E. 2527), the first branch of Wat Paknam was registered as a Non-profit Organization in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. The legal registered name was “Mongkolthepmunee Buddhist Temple.” It was referred to as Wat Mongkolthepmunee (Sodh Chandasaro). Wat Mongkolthepmunee was legally established in 1986. The Most Venerable Phra Dhammapaññābadee (the former name of the present Abbot) officially opened this temple on May, 1986 (B.E. 2529). Phramaha Pairoj Patthako was the first Abbot.<sup>276</sup> The objectives were to propagate Buddhism and Vija Dhammakāya widely for world peace.

#### **4.2.2.2 Wat Paknam Japan**

In 1996 (B.E. 2539), Wat Paknam-Japan, was established at Narantha, Chiba-Ken, Japan. This temple was the second branches in abroad. The Most Venerable Somdej Phramaharajchamangklacarn appointed Phrakhru Sudham-mapimon (Sahast Sudhammo) as an Abbot and Phrakhru Nithesdhammakij (Somporn Voravutto) to Wat Paknam-

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<sup>276</sup> Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen, **Phra Rattanamethee**, (Bangkok: Athorn Printing, B.E. 2545), p. 41.

Japan. There was a private foundation named as “Thai-Japanese Friendship” established.

Ninety percent of the people who come to the temple on weekends are Thai. This helps creating spiritual refuge for them because Thai people never see Thai temple in Japan. Another five percent are Japanese. Five percent more are from Sri Lanka, Nepal, and elsewhere. They come for merit-making, donation for temple maintenance, for meals offering to monks. For meditation practice, a tape recording of Luang Phor Wat Paknam’s meditation teaching is used with translation for foreigners.<sup>277</sup>

It should be admitted that Buddhists tend to overlook the value of Buddhism, especially meditation practice. Vice versa, foreigners seem to appreciate the value of the Buddha’s teaching and meditation practice. This is because Buddhism is based on reality, natural facts, and reason. According to the comment made by Phrakhru Vinaithorn (Somporn Voravutto) that Thai people still attach to the religious tradition. They are happy coming to temple on religious days for celebration. I realize that they have not yet appreciated the value of meditation because their lives are still attached to materialism. They are busy and under stress, adjusting themselves to survive in the modern technology world of Japan. Whilst the foreigners are more stable in their life condition, so they are more ready to seek for inner peace. Thus, they have much more interest in meditation practice than the Thai people.

#### **4.2.2.3 Wat Paknam New Zealand**

In 2002 (B.E. 2545), Wat Paknam-NZ was established at Tauranga, New Zealand. The Most Venerable Somdej Phramaharajchamangklacarn, the present Abbot of Wat Paknam, appointed Phrakru Thammathon (Phadungpong Soikham) as an Abbot of Wat Paknam NZ., Tauranga, New Zealand.<sup>278</sup>

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<sup>277</sup> Interview with Phrakhru Vinaithorn (Somporn Voravutto), the Assistant to the Abbot of Wat Thepleela and the Secretary of Bangkok sub-district. (The Most Venerable Somdej Phramaharajamangkalacarn sent him to Japan.)

<sup>278</sup> Interview with Phrakhru Dhammathorn, (Phadungpong Soikham), the Abbot of Wat Paknam New Zealand, January 24, 2005.

Objectives are to promote the activities and education in Buddhism. Many foreigners are interested to practice meditation. Thai people have less interest than the foreigners in meditation practice. They come to the temple for merit-making, to strengthen their spiritual virtues. The Abbot and his assistant monks teach *Vijja Dhammakāya* to new meditators who have no preference and no previous meditation method. Those who have their own meditation method receive assistance and convenience in their own practice.

The Most Venerable Somdej Phramaharajchamangklacarn is broad-minded on an international level. He welcomes all religions to join the activities in the temple. His propagation principle is to enable practitioners to follow Buddhist principles, without forcing anyone to practice the *Dhammkaya* meditation method. The Abbot and his team try to adjust the attitudes of people to join the temple's activities and traditions. People join together on weekends to chant and practice meditation for one or two hours. They can offer food to the monks, and a Dhamma talk is presented. The obstacle is the language barrier, especially Buddhist terminology. The Abbot needs monks who can communicate with foreigners and explain Buddhism to them more efficiently.<sup>279</sup>

### **4.2.3 Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakāyaram**

Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakāyaram was established in 1991 (B.E. 2534) at Damnern Saduek, Rajchaburi province. Phra Rajyanvisith (Sermchai Jayamangalo) is the first abbot who was appointed by the Chief Provincial Monk in B.E. 2534.

Phra Rajyanvisith (Sermchai Polpatanaritdhi) received a Master's Degree in Public administration from Thammasart University (honors), Social Research Training Course from Institute of Social Research, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, U.S.A., passed Pali Studies level VI, and all three Dhamma Studies exams. Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakāyaram is proceeded according to the *Dhammakaya* Buddhist Meditation Institute chaired by Somdej Phra Buddhachara (Giew Uppāseno), Wat Saraket as chairman and Somdej Phramaha RajamangalAjahn (Chueng Vorapuñño), Wat Paknam as Deputy Chairman.

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<sup>279</sup> Ibid.

The purposes of establishing The Institute of Buddhist Meditation Vijja Dhammakāya are three factors:-

(1) For creating Buddha within the heart of oneself and others in order to live happily and peacefully.

(2) For creating knowledgeable Meditation Masters and Moderators with good manners and duties as good examples for others. To be a refuge for people who have suffering. To extend the life time (long life, longevity) of Buddhism.

(3) For protection and maintaining Dhamma Practice of Four Foundations of Mindfulness (Satipatthana) according to Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's practice.<sup>280</sup>

The first training course of Meditation practice opened for monks was held during February 23 to March 9, 1982 (B.E. 2525). At that time, there was neither building nor construction in the temple. However, training courses were continued up until now. Many training courses are provided each year for government institutions, private sector organizations, schools, and monks.

Many educational projects in Dhamma and Pali studies and meditation practice are held for monks and novices. The School of Pariyatti Dhamma and Pali for Rajburi Province was established in 1999 (B.E. 2542). Every Sunday, there is a Meditation Practice session opened for the public. A bus is provided free from Wat Saraket, Bangkok, for people interested in meditation practice. The bus leaves Wat Saraket at 7:30 a.m. and arrives at Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakāyaram at 9:15 a.m. Buddhists can observe Five or Eight Precepts, chant, listen to Dhamma preaching, and practice meditation.

There are broadcasts of Dhamma Preaching and Meditation teaching on radio and television channel 9 on the second Wednesday of every month from 8:00 to 9:00 a.m., and on HCTV channel 15, on Buddhist holy days, also from 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. Besides, there are many program of Dhamma Preaching and Meditation Practice on radio at many stations in the middle part, eastern, northern-east, northern and southern part of Thailand.

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<sup>280</sup> Phrakru Baitika Walter Uttamapañño, "The Institute of Buddhist Meditation Vijja Dhammakāya", retrieved on January 23, 2005, <[http://www.concentration.org/\\_intro.html](http://www.concentration.org/_intro.html)>

#### 4.2.4 Wat Phra Dhammakaya

After the passing of Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni, Mae Chee Candra Kohn-nok-yoong who was Luang Phor Wat Paknam's leading disciple, taught Dhammakāya in her house called as 'Dhamma Prasit house' at Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen. Initially, she gathered a pioneer group of her disciples to set up the meditation center called as Buddha Cakra Meditation Practice Center "Suen Buddha-cakra Patipatti-Dhamma". Khun Chaiboon Suthipol was her pioneer leading disciple. He graduated from Kasetsart University. In 1969 (B.E. 2512) he was ordained at Wat Paknam named as 'Dhammajayo bhikkhu'.

In 1970 (B.E. 2513), the Dhammakaya Foundation was established on the land of 196 rai at Klong Sam, Pathumthani Rangsit Province. The pioneer group of Buddha Chakra Meditation Practice Center set their wishes to build temple to be a good temple', a clean, peaceful atmosphere suitable for meditation practice, to have good moral conducts monks, 'to build a man to be a real man' with virtues, and full of responsibilities of oneself, community, society and nation.<sup>281</sup>

In 1977 (B.E. 2520), H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn on behalf of H.M. the King laid the foundation stone of the temple of Wat Phra Dhammkaya. The Suen Buddha-cakra Patipatti-Dhamma meditation center has changed the name to "Wat Phra Dhammkaya". The Abbot of Wat Phra Dhammkaya is Phrarajbhavanavisudh (Venerable Dhammajayo) from the 1970 to the present. The Vice-Abbot is Phrabhavanaviriyakhun (Venerable Dattajeevo).<sup>282</sup>

The objectives of Wat Phra Dhammkaya are to preserve and extend the age of Buddhism, to train and propagate Vijja Dhammakaya to monks, novices and lay people, to produce more meditation masters, to be

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<sup>281</sup> Sujitra Phoolpipat, "The Role of Wat Phra Dhammakaya in the Present Society", **MA.Thesis**, (Bangkok: Department of Fine Arts, Kerg University, 1996 / B.E. 2539), p. 37.

<sup>282</sup> Dhammakaya Foundation, **World Peace through Inner Peace**, (Bangkok: Dokbia Publishing, 1999 / B.E. 2542), p. 18.

a center of the Buddha's teaching research and to be a good model of temple.<sup>283</sup>

The technique of propagation of Vija Dhammkaya at Wat Phra Dhammkaya uses modernized high technology. There are many religious activities all year round. More than thousand people go there for meditation practice every Sunday and special religious days. The Dhamma propagation has spread all over Thailand and abroad. At the present, there is a very popular Dhamma program called "Dao Dhamma" on DMC Channel of Wat Phra Dhammakaya. Almost every house turn on this program listening to the Dhamma talk on the law of kamma. This is a good technique to teach people to be aware of the result of kamma.

### 4.3 Indirect Impact

Luang Phor Wat Paknam extended his loving-kindness and help to everyone. Phra Rajyanvisith (Sermchai Polpatanaritdhi) commented that Luang Phor did not only offer four necessity and education both scriptural studies and meditation practice to monks and novices who were in need, but he also rendered his help for the public. His public aids were different from others. Luang Phor helped curing all illness and solving all kinds of problems for people. For example, farmers had difficulty in their harvest because of the lack of rain. They came to Luang Phor for help. Luang Phor taught them to observe five precepts and practice meditation to obtain merit then he also help them to get more rain.<sup>284</sup> Ajahn Mae Chee Varncai advised that people from all walks of life came to Luang Phor Wat Paknam for help in their suffering. He taught them to realize that their suffering was caused by their own actions (*kamma*) Everything has cause and effect. He taught them to cultivate themselves to be "a refuge for themselves." A person must help oneself first and extended his help to other when he had strength.<sup>285</sup> Khun Cintana Osodh expressed that Luang Phor Wat Paknam was just like a father of everyone who helped changing miserable life for the better life on the path of

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<sup>283</sup>Sujitra Phoolpipat, "The Role of Phra Dhammakaya in the Present Society", **M.A.Thesis**, (Bangkok: Department of Fine Arts, Kerg University, 1996 / B.E. 2539), p. 39.

<sup>284</sup>Interview with Phra Rajyanvisith (Sermchai Polpatanaritdhi), the Abbot of Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakayaram, January 20, 2005.

<sup>285</sup>Interview with Ajahn Mae Chee Varncai Jukorn, the Meditation Master of Samnak Patipatti Dhamma Suankaew on January 12, 2005.

morality.<sup>286</sup> Mae Chee Yupa commented that people had faith in Luang Phor Wat Paknam because of his sincere help and teaching given to them to extinct suffering. Thus, they come to Wat Paknam to pay respect to Luang Phor Wat Paknam frequently whenever they could.<sup>287</sup> They expressed their appreciation and gratitude to Luang Phor Wat Paknam in different manners and various activities.

#### **4.3.1 Charitable Works and Scholarships**

People donated money to Wat Paknam in various forms to maintain Wat Paknam as a token of appreciation to Luang Phor Wat Paknam. These contributed funds aid many charitable projects for the community. The Most Venerable Somdej Phramaharajchamangklacarn, the present Abbot of Wat Paknam, has done many charitable works and offered many Scholarships to the Public Community. Scholarships come from many sources such as the Luang Phor Wat Paknam Foundation and Luang Phor Wat Paknam Alumni Association.

Luang Phor Wat Paknam Alumni Association also provided scholarship yearly to the students who obtain good grade in school. The scholarship has been given on the third of February each year as a commemoration of the death of Luang Phor Wat Paknam. Scholarships were offered to two scholars who passed Pali IX and further their studies in India (Phramaha Montree and Phramaha Pranom).

The interest earned from the capital of Luang Phor Wat Paknam Foundation, the Most Venerable Somdej Phramaharajchamangklacarn has another objective to promote education to the youth. Somdej offers scholarships to students who have good performance in their study and good behavior, but lack the funds to study. There are more than hundred scholarships which utilizing the interest earned from the foundation each year. Scholarships are offered to three different levels, universities, secondary schools and primary schools. In 2004 (B.E. 2547), ten scholarships were offered to five Universities at the value of ten thousand Baht each fund. Twenty-four Secondary Schools received ten two-thousand baht scholarships each. Sixty Primary Schools were given ten

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<sup>286</sup> Interview with Khun Chintana Osodh, Thai Medicine Doctor, March 1, 2005.

<sup>287</sup> Interview with Mae Chee Yupa Nakbun on February 25, 2005.

scholarships each school for the value of one thousand Baht for each fund. On June 1, 2004 (B.E. 2547) all students came to Wat Paknam to receive scholarships from the Most Venerable Somdej Phramaharajmangalacarn.<sup>288</sup> Scholarships also offered to various Pali Institutes all over Thailand.

Luang Phor Wat Paknam did not only support education in Wat Paknam, but also to the community. In the past, Phra Pimondhamma (Choy Thandattathera) planned to promote education for monks and novice at the level of University. Luang Phor Wat Paknam agreed with this plan, because he always encouraged monks and novices to pursue higher education. Luang Phor successfully extended his help in initiating fund raising to construct the Mahachularajavidhayalaya University.<sup>289</sup> The Luang Phor Wat Paknam Alumni Association always supports the Mahachulalongkornrajavidhayalaya University in various activities. The Association offers food to support every functions held by the University, such as the Graduation Ceremony at Buddhamonthon. Somdej Phramaharajchamangklacarn, the Abbot of Wat Paknam contributed money to Mahachulalongkornrajavidhayalaya University for construction of the library at Wang Noi.

#### **4.3.2 Kathina**

Luang Phor Wat Paknam received the first Royal Kathina given from the King in 1955 (B.E. 2498). The disciples requested from the King. This merit started from two years after Luang Phor Wat Paknam passed away in 1961 (B.E. 2504) to the present. In 1961 (B.E. 2504) Ajarn Tritha Niumkham took the initiative of contacting Luang Phor's disciples to perform this important merit. Many faithful disciples were willing to donate money as a token of appreciation to their respectful and beloved Luang Phor Wat Paknam. In 1972 (B.E. 2515), Luang Phor Wat Paknam alumni Association had established. Ajahn Tritha Niemkham took this merit as the important function of the Association. She felt that a Kathina of the King to confer to the Royal temple should be splendid. All disciples should join hands to organize this auspicious function with a more successful base of unity and conformity.

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<sup>288</sup> Luang Phor Wat Paknam Foundation, op.cit., p.154.

<sup>289</sup> Ajahn Tritha Niemkham, op.cit., p. 79.

It is amazing that there has always been a long waiting list of contributors in advance each year. In the year 2004 (B.E. 2547), there was a list of prime contributors up to the year 2257 (B.E. 2800) two hundred fifty-three years from now. This really shows that old and new disciples have much faith and respect in Luang Phor Wat Paknam.

#### **4.3.3 Abhidhamma Chanting**

Although, Luang Phor Wat Paknam passed away 46 years, people still arrange chanting for him every day. There are many sessions of chanting every day. Especially, on weekends and public holidays, chanting schedule is very tight from morning until evening at 8:00 p.m.<sup>290</sup> The researcher have observed that quite often, many devotees joined together at the same session because there is no available time. Each session takes half an hour. People have faith in Luang Phor Wat Paknam's compassion extended helps to all. Whenever they accomplished in whatever they requested for, they arranged chanting as a token of appreciation to Luang Phor Wat Paknam.

#### **4.3.4 Impact on Spiritual Development**

On the major religious days and the King's and the Queen's birthday, Wat Paknam arranged to have three days training for renunciation session. The research of Phramaha Samruay Caruvanno (Bunsong) found that most of Buddhists came to Wat Paknam for spiritual development through listening to sermons and meditation practice on weekend and special religious occasions. They spread the news about the Dhamma and benefit gained from one person to the others. People come to Wat Paknam more and more. They come to Wat Paknam for spiritual development not only on the special occasions, but also at anytime at their convenience all year round. When they experience the state of peace and happiness through meditation practice, they come often and introduce more people to Wat Paknam for spiritual development. This is the indirect propagation through the real individual's experience.

#### **4.3.5 Other Indirect Impacts**

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<sup>290</sup> Ajahn Tritha Niemkham, op.cit., p. 128.

There are many other merits initiated and performed by Luang Phor Wat Paknam's disciples as an expression of their appreciation to Luang Phor.

#### **4.3.5.1 The Junior Magazine “Navakanusorn”**

The Junior Magazine was first initiated in 1954 (B.E. 2497) by the group of the junior monks who ordained during that rains-retreat at Wat Paknam.

#### **4.3.5.2 Novice Commemoration Day “Sammaneras Anusorn”**

Novice Commemoration Day “Sammaneras Anusorn” was first set up by the group of novices at Wat Paknam. The purpose was to raise fund for chanting Abhidhamma to Luang Phor Wat Paknam's funeral as an expression of their gratitude to Luang Phor Wat Paknam. From then onwards, there were bhikkhus commemoration day and nun commemoration day in Wat Paknam. Wat Paknam was the first temple in Thailand that organized these commemoration days.<sup>291</sup>

#### **4.3.5.3 Blood Contributions**

Another merit-making activity which has been carried out from the past until the present is blood donation. Phrakhru Mongkolbhavananusith initiated this donation at Wat Paknam in order to obtain more donations from devotees and to save trips for monks and novices. The result is that the number of contributors gradually increased each year. Phrakhru Mongkolbhavana-nusith had to increase one more day to serve the devotees' purpose. The schedule is set for every three months. The Red Cross also supports other services in addition to the blood donation, i.e., donation of eyes and organs of the body. The Red Cross has collected a large volume of blood each period that can be used to help people everywhere.<sup>292</sup> Wat Paknam has become a center providing convenience to all devotees. The devotees like to donate at

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<sup>291</sup> Interview with Phra Rajratnavimol, the Secretary of the Ecclesiastical School, Wat Paknam, January 22, 2005.

<sup>292</sup> Interview with Phrakhru Mongkolbhavananusith. (Chai Kittisaro), Meditation Master, Wat Paknam, February, 20, 2005. (See Appendix D.)

Wat Paknam because they can pay respect to Luang Phor Wat Paknam and do more other donations at one center.

#### 4.3.6 Problems and Obstacles

At the initial stage of assuming the position of Abbot, Luang Phor Wat Paknam confronted many problems. His first Advice (Ovāda) given to the old and new monks of Wat Paknam at his first meeting seemed to be conceit in the eyes of the others. But, Luang Phor pretended not to know their reactions and did not have any disputes with anyone. Instead, he quickly disciplined monks and novices, but only his followers and new comers. He opened the meditation teaching and disciplinary training course for monks, novices, nuns and lay followers every day. Most people came from long distances and other sub-districts. His good deeds started sparkling and the trouble seemed to be only a shadow.<sup>293</sup>

The neighborhoods had no faith in him. Nobody came to Wat Paknam. The neighborhoods were dissatisfied that many people from rural areas came to Wat Paknam for merit-making and donation. They were envious that Luang Phor was too prosperous and accused him of being offside on his knowledge.<sup>294</sup>

In those times, education for monks was in the form of scripture studies (Pariyatti) not meditation practice. Most monks who were interested in meditation practice would isolate themselves for serenity in the forest and rural areas. Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni was the first monk who was brave enough to turn Wat Paknam into a meditation teaching center in the heart of the city. Therefore, he was on the spot for people to keep eyes on him and attack him.

Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's propagation of the "Vijja Dhammakaya" meditation method became popular and flourished throughout the country and spread to foreign countries. At the same time, this method was opposed and disagreed with by groups of monks and lay

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<sup>293</sup> Somdej Phra Ariyavongsakatayana (Punn Punnasiri Mahathera), **Dhammakaya**, p. 18.

<sup>294</sup> Singhol, **Personnel in the Early Reign (Puggol Yook Tuon Vijja)**, A Celebration Title for Phrakhru Mongkolpatthanagun. Wat Boad (Bon), (Bangkok: Sukhumvit Press, 2002 / B.E. 2545), p.36.

people because no one had taught it before. Luang Phor Wat Paknam had motto that:

“ A flower has its aroma for all to smell. There’s no need for me to add any perfume to make it smell better. A corpse doesn’t need me to add any putrescence to make its odor offensive. There’s no way to hide the smell”<sup>295</sup>.

This implied that he had good moral conduct following the footsteps of the Buddha. He didn’t need to do more than that. He dedicated himself until he attained Dhammakaya and sincerely taught people to seek for deliverance. His reputation spread without any boasting by himself. Vice versa, those who misbehaved, could not hide their immoral deeds. Their unwholesome conduct would be exposed by itself.

The concept of Dhammakāya and his meditation practice was quite irritable to those who disagreed with him.<sup>296</sup> The word “Dhammakāya” was very strange to people, nobody was interest in this name. Some people thought that Luang Phor Wat Paknam was strange to make it up for his own teaching technique. “Dhammakāya” was castigated by those who had evil intentions to depreciate Wat Paknam’s reputation. It was also a hot issue for controversial discussion and criticism widely as practicing superhuman powers (*Uttramanusayadhamma*) which is severe breach of the discipline (*Vinaya*). Some people put him down by saying that anyone wanted to become a demon (*Asurakāya*), should learn Dhammakāya at Wat Paknam. These criticisms were attempts to destroy his reputation. These rumors came to him. He smiled and accepted these criticism without any reaction. Luang Phor showed pity for those with no education. These were the words of silly people.<sup>297</sup> Some said that he was insane. Some said that he deceived people. Some said that this method was incorrect. It was not in the Pali Canon and did not lead to deliverance. No one defended for him. Luang Phor said that:

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<sup>295</sup> Dhammakaya Foundation, op.cit., p. 64.

<sup>296</sup> Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen and Luang Phor Wat Paknam Alumni Association, op. cit., p. 71.

<sup>297</sup> Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen, op.cit, p. 19.

“This superficial matter should not be frightening. Dhammakāya is real. The real thing will promote Wat Paknam to be eminent, no less than others. You all wait and see.”<sup>298</sup>

He listened to the rumors, but was not disturbed. He was never angry at the detractors even though he was criticized severely many times. Instead, he smiled and forgave them. He always excused them that they did not know the truth. They had never discovered the reality like he had. He said that:

“I found the truth but they did not find the truth. They do not know but they thought they know. They are satisfied to make criticism, let them be. I found the truth, so I speak the truth.”<sup>299</sup>.

These criticisms were like medicine to give him more strength to strive forward in whatever he did. He continued doing the righteous things with firm determination to help people from their suffering.

However, he was not worried by the obstacles he confronted. He firmly took the Buddha as his refuge and his model to follow. He had determination to spread this Dhammakaya meditation method all over Thailand and overseas.<sup>300</sup>

In term of Luang Phor Wat Paknam’s prophetic vision, many people tried to challenge him to test his ability of knowing future events. The Venerable Punn Punnasiri did not know Luang Phor Wat Paknam’s prophecy vision and did not believe in Dhammkaya. One day, Somdej Pa, the Venerable Punn Punnasiri had a meal with Luang Phor Wat Paknam at Wat Paknam. There were many devotees who came offering food to monks and novices. One merchant came to ask Luang Phor whether or not anyone would contribute money to construct house for meditation (*Kammathana kuti*) today. The Venerable Punn Punnasiri thought to himself that this question should not be asked in public. He was shocked when Luang Phor answered promptly that “There might be two or three kutis!”. Somdej Pa was afraid that Luang Phor would lose face if no one offered any. Right after Luang Phor’s blessing, there was a

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<sup>298</sup> Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen, op.cit., p. 19.

<sup>299</sup> Ajahn Tritha Niemkham ,op.cit., p.20.

<sup>300</sup> Ibid.

group of devotees who came to contribute money to Luang Phor. They had faith when they saw Luang Phor's small meditation kutis and wanted to donate for the construction of two or three small meditation residences at around three or four hundred Baht per kuti. Luang Phor told the person who had asked the question that someone had offered to build meditation kutis and pointed to these devotees. That person paid respect to Luang Phor and said that this was more than seeing with the eyes.

Some groups commented that Luang Phor had sacred speech. Some groups commented that he knew future events. Somdej "Pa" (The Venerable Punn Punnasiri) praised Luang Phor for his keen forecast and commented that it was risky to answer that way. Luang Phor answered that he was a straightforward person. He just said what he knew. A person who was secure in Dhamma would not fear questions with hidden motives. Luang Phor said that:

"Don't be silly. How could Buddhism be fake? The Dhamma of the Buddha is the Truth. Dhammakāya would never mislead anyone."<sup>301</sup>

Luang Phor Wat Paknam did not receive sufficient support from the Sangha authorities. He was appointed Abbot in 1916 (B.E. 2459), but it took him over twenty years to be appointed "Preceptor." Luang Phor, himself, was not concerned much as he devoted himself to teaching Dhammkaya. But his disciples were concerned that their offspring could not be ordained with Luang Phor.

The Sangha authorities at that time were worried that Luang Phor Wat Paknam's knowledge and meditation practice was over the limit and would be dangerous for Buddhism. But, no one raised this issue as he was a meditation master who had many disciples and was very respectful to people at all levels. He had the capability to govern many hundreds of monks as well as support their meals throughout the year over his life time. Some groups were proud of him. Some groups were worried. Some groups took severely attacked him. Luang Phor

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<sup>301</sup> Wat Paknam, op.cit., p. 21.

heard of these criticisms often without any worry. Instead, he was proud to hear them.<sup>302</sup>

Many lay people and monks were sent by the government and Sangha to test Luang Phor's knowledge, mode of conduct, and teaching. Phra Thipparinya was one person who heard all the rumors spread around about Luang Phor's teaching. He came to observe the temple and Luang Phor Wat Paknam, but could not see anything wrong. Eventually, all had to accept Luang Phor Wat Paknam with strong faith. They came and saw for themselves the real method to testify that Luang Phor was pure and virtue. His method of teaching followed the Buddha's teaching principles. This researcher understands Luang Phor's mode of conduct as being that he would not waste his valuable time to argue with anyone. He did not need to be defensive. Luang Phor's attitude was graceful. He did not want to create friction (bad kamma) with anyone. He cut short all small arguments so that they would not expand to become a big issue which could cause hatred. For the virtuous person would understand his conduct and teachings well. Those who were against him would later realize their mistake on their own and feel guilty. He did not want to put down anyone. For those objectors who did not realize their immoral conduct, they created their own kamma. Therefore, Luang Phor who understood well of the 'law of kamma', would not harm his virtue by having any reaction toward the detractors. He continued to cultivate himself spiritually through meditation practice discovery of more reality and teaching people. This is the meaning of 'stop' in his sense. It means to stop all bad conduct which could lead to defilements and create kamma. This is expressed in his motto: "Do not fight nor run, keep doing good deeds."

The Venerable Punn Punnasiri, Luang Phor's nephew expressed his concern with Luang Phor Wat Paknam. Luang Phor Wat Paknam said that:

A person like me is not unwise. I know what is bad and see what is good. Why will I kill myself because of desire? Some people do not even know the word "Dhammakāya." Other people use their ignorance to abuse me for having determination and behaving

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<sup>302</sup>Duang Dhamma, **The Method of Dhammakāya Practice: Luang Phor Wat Paknam, Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni (Sodh Candasaro)**, (Bangkok: Bandalsarn Printing), p 89.

properly. When a person who does not know blames me, how could his ignorance abolish the Buddha's Dhamma? May be it could obscure it, this is just only temporarily, but not for long. Soon, the sphere of Buddhism will be sparkling for the wise person to see with his own eyes. What they criticize is the result of our practice. This proves that the Wat Paknam community does not just eat and sleep. This is the center that is strict in meditation practice. Their criticism will propagate the fame of our temple, better than publicity in a newspaper, because their speech is their own action. We do not hire anyone to publicize us. When they speak negatively, there must be someone else to speak positively. We should not be worried, because the Dhammakāya of Buddhism is real, not fake. Dhammakāya will appear as reality to the person who attains Dhamma. I am not worried about this matter. I believe in the virtue of Buddhism.<sup>303</sup>

When Luang Phor Wat Paknam became more popular, a crime happened to him. Phra Kamol, one of Luang Phor Wat Paknam's most admirable disciples. He preached Dhamma relating to the Kammathana one night. About 8:00 p.m., when Luang Phor was going back to his residence after listening to Phra Kamol's preaching, a criminal shot at Luang Phor. His robe had a hole but he was not injured. The layman named 'Prom' who looked after him, was shot severely in his cheek, but was still alive. Luang Phor was saved by a miracle.<sup>304</sup>

In another incident, culprits were sent to attack Luang Phor in his residence. Luang Phor told his disciples not to fight with the culprits.

“A Bhikkhu must never retaliate or run. That is the only way victory can be attained.”<sup>305</sup> “A Bhikkhu will not fight nor run, but just stop ourselves.”<sup>306</sup>

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<sup>303</sup>Navakanusorn 2520: **Biography of Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni (Luang Phor Wat Paknam) and Dhammakāya Power**, (Bangkok: Thailand Printing, 1977 / B.E. 2520), p. 69.

<sup>304</sup>Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen and the Luang Phor Wat Paknam Alumini Association, op.cit, p. 69.

<sup>305</sup>T. Magness, **Sama Samadhi**, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>306</sup>Somdej Phra Ariyavongsakatayana (Punn Punnasiri Mahathera), op. cit., p.25.

When the culprits heard Luang Phor's words, they left all their weapons behind and escaped.

The word "stop" was used by Luang Phor in his life at Wat Paknam. He had the endurance to cope with negative criticism, reactions, and insulting words from people and monks who disagreed with his administration and meditation teaching technique. It became a slogan for his Dhammakaya meditation teaching technique, "To stop is to succeed."

His attitude towards negative criticism was very positive and constructive. He confronted all problems with mindfulness, right understanding, and right thought. He never blamed anyone nor felt hatred towards anyone. Sincerity and positive thinking were Luang Phor's attitude towards everyone. One of his outstanding virtues was truthfulness. He disliked lying. Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni was never angry with unknown enemies, even though he was shot at and harmed numerous times. He was never worried or discouraged.

His tactic in tackling problems was to compromise with his reverence in order to solve conflicts peacefully. He maintained his virtue and good mode of conduct without harming anyone bodily, verbally, or mentally.

### **Positive Effect**

There were also many people who admired him. Chao Khun Pimoldhamma (Choy Thanthata) of Wat Mahadhatu commented that despite negative rumors, many people came to practice meditation at Wat Paknam. Other temples should follow his example.<sup>307</sup>

His attainment of Dhammakāya by himself was well known among the Sangha in that reign. The preaching of Phra Dhammadassanathorn, former Sangha Director General, Wat Chanasonkram on Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's funeral dated March 25, 1959 (B.E. 2502) was the evidence to support Luang Phor's mode of teaching.

"When The Most Venerable had sufficient knowledge from scripture studies, he accumulated knowledge of meditation practice

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<sup>307</sup> Wat Paknam, **Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni**, op.cit., p.89.

from various meditation schools. He selected the best method called Dhammakāya, which he uses until now. He was the first to rediscover and teach Dhammakāya technique. He not only taught others, but also he practiced by himself until he attained Dhammakāya. Then he taught what he knew from experience. The Most Venerable told us that on the day he rediscovered Dhammakāya, he meditated in the Uposatha with strong determination. He was willing to die if he could not succeed in vipassana meditation. It was just like when the Buddha made the resolution under the Bodhi tree, not to rise up from his seat if he could not attain enlightenment, even if he lost his flesh and blood. The Most Venerable made the same resolution. Once he attained Dhammakāya, he never stopped teaching Dhammakāya to people. He devoted himself to be the representative of the Buddha to bring light and goodness to all people. He did not ever give up even though he confronted severe criticism from some groups.<sup>308</sup>

Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni had proficient knowledge in scripture studies. If he had taken examination in translating Pali at the time of the education system changed, he could obtain ‘Maha Parien’. But, he did not translate Pali, because he had the objective of learning scriptural studies for deliverance and for teaching people correctly and guiding meditation practice properly. He did not seek to obtain academic degrees for wealth or prosperity. His knowledge was in the level of Parien 3-4-5. Once he had sufficient knowledge in scriptures, then he accumulated knowledge in Vipassana Meditation.<sup>309</sup>

Phra Rajyanvisith (Sermchai Polpatanaritdhi) shared his experience that Chao Khun Phra Dhammadhirarajmahamuni commented on Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni’s knowledge could teach Pali level VII. His close disciples would notice his good moral conduct and knowledge. Phra Dhammapanyaporn also advised that the curriculum for bhikkhus’ study in the old days was Advanced Grammar (*mūlakaccana*) which was important subject for translating Pali efficiently. Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni was very proficient in Pali. In every sermon, Luang Phor Wat

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<sup>308</sup> Ajarn Tritha Niemkham, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>309</sup> Ibid, pp. 78-79.

Paknam cited Pali by heart and translated efficiently, just like a monk at Pali Level IX.<sup>310</sup>

The Sangha authorities had a confidential meeting among the senior Theras and Meditation Masters regarding Luang Phor Wat Paknam's superhuman powers (*Uttaramanusayadhamma*). Most of them had the opinion that he was breaking the disciplinary rules (Vinaya). But, one respectful thera disagreed. He noted that showing super powers (*Uttaramanusayadhamma*) implies attainment of the supreme dhamma of Buddhism. When a person attained this high dhamma, he could cross the stream of defilements which distort people's minds (sensual pleasure, state of existence, attachment to the wrong view and ignorance) and attain Nirvana. For a person to attain this supreme Dhamma as *Uttaramanusayadhamma*, he must have high virtue, right effort, and advanced attainment in theory, practice, moral conduct, truthfulness, and loving-kindness. He must also be brave and dedicated. This thera concluded that Luang Phor Wat Paknam was a meditation master who was brave in teaching without fear. He would act in accordance with his own firm knowledge of the truth. He must have purity of mind to know and see clearly. Even the Buddha, before announcing his enlightenment to the Five Ascetics, told the Five Ascetics that "When his insight (*Ñāṇadassana*) was not yet pure, he did not declare his enlightenment attainment to the ascetics, devas and human beings, the world of devas, the world of evil, the world of Brahma."<sup>311</sup>

An article about the reputation of Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni was written by Pol. Tor. Jor. Nueng Arkuputta (rank in the old day) in the book named "Somdej Phrabuddhachara" (Toe Brahmarangsri) by Chanchai. This article was about an Amulet of Somdej Phrabuddhachara" (Toe Brahmarangsri) which Pol. Tor. Jor. Nueng Arkuputta requested many famous meditation masters to check whether it is the Amulet of Somdej 'Toe'. All of them replied that they never seen this Amulet but it

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<sup>310</sup> Interviews with Phra Rajyanvisith (Sermchai Polpatanaritdhi), the Abbot of Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakayaram, on January 20, 2005, and Phra Dhammapaññāporn, the Secretary to the Mae Kong Pali Sanamlueng, on February 28, 2005.

<sup>311</sup> Somdej Phra Wannarat (Punn Punnasiri), in **Navakanusorn Journal 1977 / BE 2520, "Biography of Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni (Luang Phor Wat Paknam) and the Power of Dhammakāya,"** (Bangkok: Thailand Printing, 1977 / B.E. 2520), p. 71.

was Somdej Toe's pattern. He brought this Amulet to Chao Khun Bhavana Kosolthera (former title of Luang Phor Wat Paknam) to check the origin of this Amulet. Chao Khun Bhavana Kosolthera (former title of Luang Phor Wat Paknam) told him that:

“It is true that this Amulet was produced by Somdej ‘Toe’. I went up to see him. Right now Somdej “Toe” is at the Brahma realm having eight hundred retinues. I asked Somdej Toe, he told me that this amulet has been given to his son.”

Pol. Tor. Jor. Nueng Arkuputta was shocked and delighted with the reply of Chao Khun Bhavana Kosolthera because it was true according to his resolution. This article proved clearly that Luang Phor Wat Paknam had talent that he could go up to see Somdej Toe on the Brahma realm.<sup>312</sup>

These evidences proved that Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni had very advanced knowledge and virtue beyond others' speculation. His teaching was not wrong. Those meditation masters knew each other through their insight. Phra Tipprinya (Dhub Glampasut) who was former judge investigated and confirmed nothing was wrong.

#### **4.4 Summary and Conclusion**

Wat Paknam has become a major meditation and education center within Thailand. Wat Paknam's branches abroad are spreading his Dhamma-propagation worldwide, but, do not pressure anyone to practice the Dhammakāya method. Wat Luang Phor Sodh and its branches are multiplying Wat Paknam's efforts through organized training programs, teaching Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's Buddha-Dhamma precisely as passed on through Chao Khun Bhavana Kosolthera (Veera Kanuttamo). Wat Phra Dhammakāya and its branches are also spreading Luang Phor Wat Paknam's Buddha-Dhamma even more broadly both within Thailand and abroad. Their well-organized efforts have resulted in major quantitative dhamma-propagation. Their 'individualistic' approach, however, has resulted in some backlash.

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<sup>312</sup> Duang Dhamma, op.cit., p.5.

People from all walks of life came to Wat Paknam more and more because of Luang Phor's mode of teaching and his compassion to help them from suffering and to obtain peace which is the happiness in supra mundane level. He taught people to take the Triple-Gems as their refuge rather than the black magic and holy water. He was criticized as showing off his superhumane state. Phra Tipparinya, a scholar from Wat Mahadhatu came to inspect him and finally he wrote an article named "Dhammkaya" to explain the reality of this subject. His teaching was valuable to the people, especially in this contemporary world of competition and stepping stone in order to survive in this materialism world. People harm each other verbally, physically and violation. He taught the Buddhists to take concept of Buddhism for their problem solving tactfully and without violence.

## Chapter V

### Conclusion and Suggestion

#### 5.1 Summary

In summary, the researcher has studied Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni or Luang Phor Wat Paknam's propagation of Dhamma against the background of Lord Buddha's Dhamma propagation. In Chapter One, the researcher reviewed the relevant literature. (1) Phra Maha Sawai Chotiko (1999, B.E. 2542) found that the word "Dhammakaya" had been used in Buddhist texts as a name of Lord Buddha and also to refer to the nine supramundane states – four paths, four fruits and Nibbana. Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni used the term to refer to a body of man that was beyond the unconditioned – it was permanent (niccam), blissful (sukham), and self (atta). This interpretation could not be found in the Buddhist texts. (2) Phra Maha Santhiti Visuhved (2000, BE 2543) found similarities between Dhammakaya and Tibetan Buddhist meditation methods. (3) Charoon Somnoi (2000, BE 2543) concluded that the Dhammakaya approach is a perversion of Buddhism. (4) Phramaha Samruay Charuvanno (1999, BE 2542) sought openings for expanded Dhamma propagation and found openings in beneficial social development, more meditation locations, application of Dhamma to modern living, Dhamma programs on radio and television, more positive news about monks, and question and answer sessions following preaching. (5) Phramaha Thammajariya Khruangthip (1999, BE 2542) studied the Wat Paknam Foundation and found it to be managed in a family-style in which people worked based on faith. (6) Wiroj Nakchatri (1993, BE 2536) studied the belief of Buddhists and Christians in miracles, and found belief higher among Buddhists. Fifty-nine percent of respondents believed in Luang Phor Wat Paknam's miracles, and 90% said they obtained what they wished for by praying to Luang Phor Wat Paknam.

In Chapters Two and Three, the researcher studied the Dhamma propagation techniques of Lord Buddha and Luang Phor Wat Paknam, respectively. The researcher summarized that The Buddha had various

valuable techniques that he taught his disciples as effective ways in propagation. After that, his disciples changed the Buddha's teaching technique according to their time. Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni followed in accordance with the Buddha's teachings. Nothing was different from the Buddha's *Dhamma-Vinaya*. His teachings were Right View (*Sammaditthi*) not Wrong View (*Miccaditthi*) or pervasion. Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni applied the Buddha's teaching methods which were suitable to his particular era.

His main teaching was the mind that should be purified through cultivation of oneself spiritually. A person should practice meditation to be able to know, to see, and to be Dhammakaya. That would be one's own refuge to conduct wholesome conducts physically, verbally and mentally. With his dedication and effort, he attained the Buddha's Dhammakaya. He trained himself until he visualized the Buddha's real Dhamma framework. That was *Dhammakaya Gotarabhumi*, where he knew, he saw and he became *Dhammakaya*, able to see the large, bright sphere. He saw body within body and rediscovered the Dhammakaya meditation technique.

In Chapter Four, Although, Luang Phor Wat Paknam has already passed away for over forty-years, people still have faith in him. There are tremendous amount of people come to Wat Paknam for paying respect to him and cultivating of their spiritual virtues through donation, studying Dhamma and practicing meditation. "Samma Araham" meditation is now an accepted "school" of mediation teaching in Thailand. Luang Phor Wat Paknam has helped to relate the academic and meditation components of Buddhism which were developing on separate tracks. Dhammakāya meditation may also be opening more ground for closer relations between Theravada and Mahayana practice, with its visualization component. It may, also be opening more ground for linking with "modern-scientific" thinkers through emphasizing "see for yourself". Visualizing many bodies may ease "letting go" for those trapped in "worldly" material culture, here and now, by leading the meditator to see that he does not just have this one coarse body, but also multiple refined spiritual bodies.

"Dig your well in search of the spring.  
Keep on digging, never rest.

Dig shallow and no water is found.  
Dig deep to reach the flow.”<sup>312</sup>

## 5.2 Conclusions

In conclusion, Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni’s Dhamma Propagation is a specific samatha-vipassana technique for practicing Lord Buddha’s Four Foundations of Mindfulness. In the Maha Satipatthana Sutta, Lord Buddha taught disciples to use perseverance (*atapi*), awareness (*sampachano*), and mindfulness (*sātima*) in seeing body within body, feelings within feelings, mind within mind and dhamma (mind-objects) within dhamma, over and over, to clean themselves of defilements and achieve higher and higher states leading Nibbāna. In Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni’s technique, samatha-vipassana meditation is cultivated in accordance with the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, contemplating body within body, feelings within feelings, mind within mind, and dhamma within dhamma. The meditator cultivates mindfulness in contemplation to see the body within each body, and the corresponding feelings, mind and dhamma, concentrating deeper and deeper to reach higher and higher states. The mind becomes refined when it stops still.

More specifically, Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni’s meaningful motto was “Stop.” In meditation he taught “Stop Still” in order to attain the Dhammakāya. In daily life he taught his followers to “stop retaliation” to cut the momentum of negative kamma. “A Bhikkhu will neither fight nor run. We just stop ourselves and continue doing good deeds.” When the attacking culprits heard these words, they dropped their weapons and ran. The word “To stop” is very meaningful that the researcher would like to share with the Buddhists at all levels especially the young generation at this era to be aware of this word. It is common to all of us to confront problem of competition, jealousy, obstruction of other’s progress, and false accusations. Nobody can avoid these situations. Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni’s word “To stop” means to stop our defilement that hidden innately. This technique could eliminate conflict and major problem as the ‘time goes by’. We must learn to be tolerant of people’s temperaments without fighting back or forcing the issue. At the same time, we have to stand on our rights and dignity, not ignoring our principles or allowing others to step on our rights. The key point is to conquer one’s own mind

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<sup>312</sup> Dhammakaya Foundation, op. cit., p. 89.

even though it seems to be defeat in the eyes of the opposition. But, a person stops oneself from anger, hatred, violation, defilement and creating Kamma to oneself and to others. Any problems arise, minor or major issue, just stop oneself from anger, hatred and violation. Be firm in Dhamma. The Buddha said that “Dhamma will protect the person who has Dhamma.” To forgive and to forget would help people become friendlier and live harmoniously, without hatred.

This is the essence of Buddha’s teaching for Buddhists to contemplate and remember. Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni said that “A truthful person should not be afraid of hidden motives. He applied the Buddha’s teachings to real life and taught Buddhists to follow in the Buddha’s footsteps. If we are all aware of this word ‘stop’ and remain always mindful to avoid all kinds of arguments, peace will be in our heart. People should always put themselves in the other’s shoes to understand oneself and others better. If people would just help each other to avoid suffering and achieve a better life for society in the present, the world would be much happier. This is the way to maintain peace and encourage harmony in the society, the nation and the world as a whole. This is what King Bhumibol Adulyadej and the Queen Sirikit devote their valuable time and precious hearts to teaching the Thai people. Senior Sangha authorities, especially Phra Thepsophon, join with the nations to organize conferences for World Peace.

The purpose of this thesis was to study Phra Mongkol Thepmuni’s Buddha-Dhamma propagation in order to understand how he was so successful. We achieved this objective. In Chapter Four, we showed how he never worried when confronted with criticism and readily predicted the future when requested. When someone said this was risky, he answered:

“I am a straightforward person. I just say what I know. A person who is secure in the Dhamma will not fear questions with hidden motives. Don’t be silly. How could the Buddha-Dhamma be fake? The Dhamma is real. Dhammakāya doesn’t deceive anyone.”<sup>313</sup>

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<sup>313</sup> Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen, **Dhamma Sermons and Explanation of Present Amulet**, Published for the second year anniversary of Chao Khun Phra Monkolthepmuni’s Funeral, BE 2504), pg. 21.

In brief, his Buddha-Dhamma propagation was successful because it was based on the truth. Not only he, himself, but many advanced followers could see that truth (*Dhammakāya*) for themselves. Thus, his teachings could be verified scientifically through personal observation. Luang Phor's main teachings emphasized morality, concentration and wisdom. Most of his sermons stressed morality. For monks, the 227 precepts should be observed strictly to earn the respect and faith of the laity. Lay people must observe the five precepts strictly to attain peace in society. The more precepts people observe, the faster they can attain higher Dhamma and prepare themselves to become Noble Persons and attain Nirvana.

The major impact of Phra Mongkolthepmuni's Buddha-Dhamma propagation has been renewed emphasis on Buddhist education, integrating scripture study and meditation. He said "Education can change a student's life for the better. Knowledge is the King's heritage, accessible to the common man. It benefits us for life." His ecclesiastical school and support for developing the formal examination system brought Buddhist education to a strong position. Furthermore, his emphasis on meditation practice along with scripture study merged a split, which was developing in Buddhism, where universities focused on academic study of the texts while meditators sought contentment in the forests. The obvious meditation success of Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni and his followers brought renewed interest in meditation to people at all levels from homes to academic institutions.

Finally, Phra Mongkolthepmuni's Buddha-Dhamma propagation may have helped to stem the tide of consumerism which is rampant among Thai youth. Currently, Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakayaram and Wat Phra Dhammakaya as well as Suan Kaew Dhamma Practice Center emphasize programs for youth. At a time when youth are becoming more and more infatuated with international consumer culture, Luang Phor Wat Paknam clearly demonstrated the amazing success of his meditation technique applied to real life. Thus, some youth have come to re-appreciate the importance of Buddhism and other worldly considerations. It is essential for the Buddhists to help society, especially the youth, steer clear of drug addiction, adultery and gambling.

Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni always reminded us to stay ever mindful through meditation practice. Nobody knows what will happen in his own

future life. Frightening situations like the Tsunami earthquake warn us to be heedful. Luang Phor Wat Paknam taught us to practice meditation so that we can confront such problems with mindfulness. Being mindful in our present life can lead to life after death in peace, rather than in the miserable realms. Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni set an excellent model for us to follow, teaching us to seek the liberation taught by Lord Buddha and to preserve Buddhism. Thus, his teaching is timeless, and always up-to-date.

### **5.3 Suggestions for Further Study**

The researcher would like to suggest further research on Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's teaching technique with respect to the Four Foundations of Mindfulness. This could be very valuable in clarifying the phrase "contemplating body in body." A second topic for study is researching the Dhammakaya in relation to the Abhidhamma. Phra Tipprinya, the Abhidhamma Instructor of Wat Mahadhatu, stated in a book entitled "Dhammakaya" that Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni taught Abhidhamma. Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni emphasized the mind. It would be quite interesting to analyze how the mind in the Dhammakaya method relates to each *citta* in the Abhidhamma. A third topic could be studying methods of curing illness through Dhammakaya meditation. These three subjects are interesting and challenging topics for future scholars to consider.

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Dhammathorn (Phadungpong Soikham), Phrakhru. Abbot, Wat Paknam-New Zealand. Interview. January 24, 2005

Khantisaro, Montri, Phramaha. Pali Instructor, Wat Paknam and Wat Luang Phor Sodh, Former Instructor of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya. Interview. January 2, 2005.

Mongkolbhavananusith (Chai Kittisaro), Phrakru. Meditation Master, Wat Paknam. Interview. February 20, 2005.

Rajratanavimol (Pyle Pathako), Phra. Secretary of Ecclesiastical School, Wat Paknam. Interview. January 22, 2005.

Rajyanvisith (Sermchai Polpatanaritdhi), Phra. Abbot, Wat Luang Phor Sodh, Damnoen Saduak District, Rajburi Province. Interview. January 20, 2005.

Uttamapañño, Walter, Phrakrubaidika. The Secretary to the Abbot, Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakayaram. Interview. February 13, 2005.

Vinaithorn (Somporn Voravuttho), Phrakhru. The Assistant to the Abbot, Wat Thepleela, and the Secretary of Bangkok sub-district. Interview. March 7, 2005.

Yanathiro, Barton, Dr. Phrakrubaidika. The Secretary to the Abbot, Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakayaram. Interview. January 12, 2005.

### **Nuns**

Jukorn, Varncai, Ajahn Mae Chee. The Meditation Master of Suan Kaew Dhamma Practice Center. Interview. January 12, 2005.

Nakbun, Yupa. Mae Chee. The Head of Thonburi District Nun, Wat

Paknam. Interview. February 25, 2005.

Osodh, Cintana. Thai Medicine Doctor. Interview. March 1, 2005.

## Appendix A

### Biography

#### Chao Khun Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni

#### (Luang Phor Sodh Chandasaro)

“Chao Khun Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni” is the Ecclesiastical Title of “Luang Phor Wat Paknam”. ‘Chandasaro Bhikkhu’ was his ordination name. His original name is ‘Sodh Meekaewnoi’. He is fondly known as Luang Phor Wat Paknam and simply called as Luang Phor (means ‘Venerable Father’) by everyone in the temple. Therefore, the title of Chao Khun Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni is seldom referred to. ‘Luang Phor’ or Luang Phor Wat Paknam will be referred to throughout this paper.

#### Birth and Family

Luang Phor was born on October 10, 1884 (2427 B.E.), at Ban Songpeenong, Songpeenong District in Suphanburi Province. The house was in the opposite side of the Songpeenong Temple. Luang Phor was the second child out of the five children of Nai Ngern and Nang Sudjai Meekaewnoi. Luang Phor had only one elder sister and three younger brothers. These three brothers passed away before Luang Phor, only the elder sister left behind.

#### The Life of Childhood

Luang Phor obtained his education with his uncle who was a bhikkhu at the Songpeenong temple. After that he studied ‘Khmer’ language at Wat Bangpla, Nakorn Pathom Province. He was successful and very proficient in Khmer language, enable to read ‘Pra Malai’ until finishing his last grade. Luang Phor was never behind anyone in gaining education.

After finishing up his study, Luang Phor left the temple and helped his parents in trading rice. At the age of fourteen, he looked after his mother

when his father passed away. He took over his father's rice trading business and became a competent businessman. He was diligent and very devotee with his career. His trading business based on the trust, agreed for the price and loaded down rice in the boat and payment will be made afterwards. He was successful in his business and also concerned about other's business as well. He extended his sympathetic joy to those who did well in their business and gave advices to those who were unsuccessful in business. Therefore, he was trustworthy and respectful person among the traders. He took full responsibility over his workmen as a boss. He always sacrificed himself to die first to save his workers from the killing of the robbers at that time.

### **Worldly Life**

At the age of nineteen, he realized that life is so suffering. It was so difficult to earn money for living. Whoever did not earn much became a low class people, without gaining respect from anyone. His father had worked hard as rice trading businessman and carried on to his generation. At the end of his father's life, he died alone without taking with him anything he earned throughout his life, even his mother, brothers and sisters. He himself also had to die in the future. Suddenly, he lay down in the stern on the boat and "made believe that he was dead that his disembodied spirit was wandering about seeking for his dead forbears and those friends he had loved."<sup>315</sup> He went to see all relatives and friends, but they ignored him because they could not see him. He was only a spirit. He threw clods of earth and sticks to his friends, but they mistook him as a ghost.

When he became conscious, he quickly lit three sticks of incense, he made a vow with strong determination that 'Don't let me die now. At least let me die in the yellow robe. If I can ordain, I will remain in the monkhood throughout his life.' At this point, he had ordained spiritually because of his realization of the truths (*anicca, dukkha and anatta*) and had set up his strong determination to ordain before his death. Therefore, he continued with his business for three years in order to earn enough money to support his mother throughout her life.

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<sup>315</sup> Dhammakaya Foundation, op.cit., p. 27.

### **Ordination:**

Then, at the age of 22, he ordained at the beginning of October, 2449 B.E., was given a monk's name as 'Chandasaro Bhikkhu' at Wat Songpeenong, a temple opposite to his house. The name 'Chandasaro' was in the traditional Pali language and meant 'the one with a bright radiance like the moon.' Chandasaro Bhikkhu began to practice meditation and studied Pali scriptures. He searched for deeper and wider knowledge. He resided at Wat Songpeenong for over 7 months.

### **Education:**

He came to stay at Wat Phra Chetupon Vimonmangkalariaam (Wat Bodhi) in Bangkok for studying *Dhamma-Vinaya*. He studied both *Kanthadura (Pariyātti)* and *Vipassana (Patipatti)*.

He studied scriptures as required at that time namely, Pali language, Pali root forms (*mālakaccālyana*), euphonic combination (*sandhi*), nouns (*nāma*), samas, secondary derivation (*taddhita*), indeclinables (*ālkhayāḷta*), primary derivation (*kita*). After he memorized all of the foundation materials, he furthered his study of the scripture of the Dhammapada. All Scriptures were not in book form but on palm leaves in 'Khom script. At that time, bhikkhu had to study at the teachers' places. The education system was that each monk was responsible for one lesson of Dhammapada at random order and presented to the teacher. Therefore, Luang Phor carried a heavy load of scriptures crossed the river to Wat Arun everyday in order to acquire more knowledge from listening to others' lessons. He studied further two other popular texts, the *Mangaladīpanī* and *Sārasaṅgaha* until he became so well versed that he was able to teach others.

Luang Phor had a difficult time during his study. In the morning he crossed the river from Wat Po to Wat Arun to study Pali and came back for lunch at Wat Po. In the afternoon, he went to Wat Mahatat. In the evening, some days he went to study at Wat Suthat, Wat Chakkawat, some days at Wat Sampleum. At night, he studied at Wat Po. He was an earnest student, never absent from classes.

His effort had been recognized by people around Wat Chetuphon and they offered alms round and other necessities to him every morning. Therefore, Luang Phor had better life since a merchant lady named ‘Nuam’ offered him food every lunch. When Luang Phor moved to Wat Paknam, he took this old lady to stay at Wat Paknam and support her until she died. Luang Phor gave a cremation to her. This was the outstanding quality of Luang Phor who had gratitude to the one who offered him food while he was studying.

Luang Phor studied at various places for several years. There were officers who had faith in Luang Phor and brought food to him at lunch time everyday. This provided convenience to him. So, Luang Phor set up his own school at his residence to teach bhikkhus and novices.

Luang Phor studied Pali scriptures and grammar when the education system had changed from oral to written examination. Many schools merged to one. His Pali school ceased out. It was not his objective to obtain higher academic degree from examination but encouraged others to obtain higher education. His aim was to pursue meditation practice, after his successful ten years of translating Makadi. Thus, he stopped *Kanathatura* and devoted time to studying the *Visudhimagga* to get basic knowledge of meditation practice.

### **Meditation Practice**

Soon, Luang Phor was recognized as an accomplished meditation instructor by his meditation teachers namely, Luang Phor Nium of Wat Noi at Supanburi Province; Chao Khun Sangavaranuvongse (Aium) of Wat Rajasiddharam, Bangkok; Chao Khun Phra Mongkol Thipmuni (Muey), former Abbot of Wat Chakrawat, Bangkok; Phra Khru Nyanavirat (Po) of Wat Bodhi, Bangkok and Phra Ajahn Singha of Wat Lakorn Tham, Thonburi; and Phra Achaen Pleum of Wat Kao Yai, Kanchanaburi. Phra Khru Nyanavirat (Po) of Wat Po and Phra Ajahn Singha testified Luang Phor’s attainment and elected him to teach meditation. But, Luang Phor humbly refused to be a master teaching anyone. He searched for more knowledge alone wherever there was a reputable master to further his meditation practice.

Luang Phor adopted Dhutanga vatra, the Austere Practices for Purification such as wandering in solitude through the forest wilderness, staying in caves, and practicing the Dhamma with piety.

### **Attaining Dhammakaya**

At his 11<sup>th</sup> vassa, he paid respects to Somdej Phra Puthacarn (Khem Dhammasaro), the abbot of Wat Chetuphon and departed to Wat Boatbon, Bangkuevieng, and Nonthaburi. He spent his eleventh rains retreat with his scripture teacher, Acharn ‘Chum’, abbot of Wat Boatbon who gave him information of two texts, *Mūlakaccāyana* and *Dhammapada* text. He wished to repay this debt to his Acarn by sharing what he had learned of these two texts with the monks and novices in this temple.

In 1916 (2459), on the fifteenth day of the tenth month, he realized that he had been ordained for eleven years but still had not obtained the truth found by the Buddha. He set *adhiṭṭhāna* that he would not break off from meditation throughout his life if he had not yet obtain the Dhamma, and request the Buddha to give Dhamma to him. If his Dhamma attainment would hurt the religion, then please do not give to him. He started to meditate but the ants disturbed him. So, he was just about to wipe them out with gasoline. Suddenly, he realized that he was willing to sacrifice his life for meditation practice but why he was afraid of ants. So, he continued with his meditation with mantra ‘*sammā araham*’ until late at night. He started to visualize a bright, clear and shining of Dhamma sphere which called as the *paṭhama-magga, or Dhammanupassanā Satipaṭṭhāna*, at the center of his body which makes a human body. Once Luang Phor obtained the Dhamma, then he clearly and completely understood that Dhamma is very subtle for people to attain. Attainment can be achieved when the sensation, memory, thought and cognition must be united into one single spot. When the mind stopped still, then it ceased to be. Once it ceased to be, the new one can arise. If it was not ceased out, there was no existence at all. This was the truth. It must be at the right position in order to visualize the sphere. During that time, Wat Bangpla, where he had studied earlier, came to his vision. It appeared in his *nimitta* that he was in that temple. It gave him insight that there must be someone can attain Dhamma over there. From that day

onwards, he dedicated himself for meditation practice to find out deeper and deeper reality. The more he practiced meditation, the more he discovered the miraculous core of the Buddha Dhamma which was very subtle. At the end of rain retreat, he went to Wat Banpla at Nakorn Pathom for teaching Dhamma he attained. There were three monks and four lay people attained Dhammakāya.

## **Work**

After visiting Wat Banpla, he came back to Wat Phra Chetupon for the rains retreat. His last destination was Wat Phrasri Ratana Mahathat, in Suphanburi Province. The temple was half ruined with many broken Buddha images destroyed by hooligans. He started teaching meditation to the local people, in order to help with the restoration of temple. There were a large number of faithful people, devoted to helping with this restoration. They came to practice meditation. This was not a common occurrence in Suphanburi. The Suphanburi Authorities mistook the group of people gathered in a negative sense and reported Chandasaro's inappropriate conduct to Somdej Phra Wannarat (Pearn Tissadatto). Luang Phor was called back to Bangkok. He dropped everything he was doing, with respect, and was transferred to Wat Songpeenong instead.

At Wat Songpeenong, he also initiated a Nak-Dhamma school for monks and novices. He also led the local people to set up an educational foundation for monks and novices. These were his great contributions to Wat Songpeenong. He did not hesitate before any obstructions that arose.

In 1916 (B.E. 2459), the *Abbot position* was vacant at *Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen*, a temple under royal patronage. H.E. Somdej Phra Wannarat of Wat Phra Chetupon (monastic governor for Bhasicharoen) wanted to find a secure temple for Chandasaro Bhikkhu. Therefore, His Excellency offered him this position. He wanted to deny the offer, but had to accept it in the end. There was no way to refuse. Somdej Phra Wannarat forbade him from performing miracles or doing anything that might offend the Abbots of neighboring temples. Somdej Phra Wannarat knew that Luang Phor was energetic and creative. It was not in his nature to sit idle. Somdej Phra

Wannarat chose Chandasaro Bhikkhu to be a peace maker for the monastic community.

Somdej Phra Wannarat accompanied Luang Phor to Wat Paknam. His new title was *Phra Khru Samu Thananukrom*. His first priority as abbot was to build people, training and developing them, rather than restoration or construction of temple buildings. His motto was that once the people were developed, other things would also flourish. Education and morality should go hand-in-hand.

Education can change the student's life for the better.  
 Knowledge is the king's heritage, accessible to the common man.  
 It benefits us for life.<sup>316</sup>

(Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni)

Luang Phor developed education -- both *pariyatti* (scripture study) and *patipatti* (meditation practice). In 1950 (B.E. 2493), he constructed a big 3-storey school called the "*Phra Pariyattidhamma-bhavana Nusorn*" for monks and novices.

Although, Luang Phor carried a heavy burden with many commitments, he always managed to follow a strict daily schedule, performing all of his duties. He also devoted most of his time and effort to teaching meditation to the monks and novices and close disciples. His disciples multiplied into the thousands.

### **Ecclesiastical Titles**

His ecclesiastical titles can be summarized as follows:

- 2459 Abbot of Wat Paknam Bhasricharoen.
- 2464 Phrakhru Samana Dhammasamadana.  
(Phrakru Sanyabat)
- 2490 Preceptor (Upajaya) of Wat Paknam.

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<sup>316</sup> Dhammakaya Foundation, op.cit., p.33.

- 2492 Phra Rajakana Saman level ‘Phra Bhāvanā-kosolthera’.
- 2494 Received Honorary Pali Grade Fan (Phrayod Tiab Parien).
- 2498 Phra Rajakana- ‘Raja’ class, ‘Phra Mongkolrajamuni’
- 2500 Phra Rajakana- ‘Thep’ class ‘Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni’.

### **Death**

Luang Phor died at the age of seventy-five, on February 3, 1959 (BE. 2502). This was just a pause for the immortal master, who devoted all his life to helping people out of suffering. His life should serve to remind other human beings to pursue their own obligations to the Noble Path carefully. Luang Phor’s teachings live on, manifesting the Ultimate Righteous Truth.

### **Foresight**

Somdej Pun, of Wat Bodhi, was a nephew of Luang Phor. Luang Phor told him his prediction that, in the future, he would become the Supreme Patriarch. But, Somdej Pun did not believe it. While Luang Phor’s was ill, Somdej Pun came to visit. He was surprised to see a long line of monks and novices already prepared to welcome him. This was how he learned that Luang Phor was able to see future.

In B.E. 2498, Luang Phor called a meeting of all his disciples to inform them that in the next five years he would no longer be with them. The chart below summarizes major events in his life and in his times.

### Summary of Luang Phor Sodh's Bio-data vs. World Situation

Age	Incidents	Year	Government Situation	King
		2411	King Rama V crowned	R.5
	Luang Phor's birth	2427		R.5
14	Father's death	2431		R.5
	Being a merchant	2431		R.5
19	Resolution for ordination	2446		R.5
		2448	Freeing slave system	R.5
22	Ordination at Wat Songpinong	2449		R.5
		2453	King Rama VI reigned	R.6
		2457	World War I started	R.6
31	Attaining Dhammakaya	2459		R.6
33	Abbot of Wat Paknam	2459		R.6
	Kitchen was set up	2459		R.6
		2460	Thailand joined in W.W. I	R.6
		2461	W.W. I ended	R.6
	PhrakruSamanadhammasamadan	2464		
		2468	King Rama VII reigned	R.7
47	Meditation Work Shop was set	2474		R.7
		2475	Government Reformed	R.7
		2477	King Rama VIII reigned	R.8
		2482	W.W. II began	R.8
		2488	W. W. II ended	R.8
		2489	King Rama IX reigned	R.9
	Somdej Phra Wannarat sick	2490		
	Phra Bhavanakosolthera	2492		R.9
	Amulets I was manufactured	2493	Korean War began	R.9
	Royal Title Fan	2494		R.9
	Amulets II was manufactured	2494		R.9
	William A. Purfurst was ordained	2497		R.9
	Phra Mongkolrajmuni	2498		R.9
	Amulets III	2499	Korean War ended	R.9
	Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni	2500		R.9
75	Luang Phor's death	2502		R.9

**Varoporn, Following Phra Mongkolthepmuni (Luangphor Wat Paknam,**  
 (Bangkok: Fongthong Enterprises, 2000 (B.E. 2543), p.50.

## Appendix B

### The Pre-Meditation Service

#### 1. Paying Homage to the Triple Gems

‘Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammā Sambuddhassa’ (thrice).  
(Homage to the Lord, the Emancipated, the All-Enlightened Buddha).

#### 2. Declaring for adopting the five precepts

‘Mayam Bhante Tisaranena Saha Pañcā Silāni Yacāma  
Dutiyampi Mayam Bhante Tisaranena Saha Pañcā Silāni Yacāma  
Tatiyampi Mayam Bhante Tisaranena Saha Pañcā Silāni Yacāma’

#### 3. Obeisances to the Triple Gems

‘Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Samma Sambuddhassa’ (thrice).

Yamaham Sammā Sambuddham Bhagavantam Saranum Gato  
Iminā Sakkārenatam Bhagavantam Abhipūjayāmi

Homage to the All-Enlightened Buddha, who by himself discovered perfection and truth, wherewith he is acknowledged as the Refuge whereby all suffering may be rendered null and void.

Yamaham Svākkhātam Bhagavatā Dhammam Saranum Gato  
Iminā Sakkārenatam Bhagavantam Abhipūjayāmi

Homage to the Doctrine well-preached by the Lord, where-with it is acknowledged as the Refuge whereby all dangers may be rendered null and void.

Yamaham Supatipannam Sangham Saranum Gato  
Iminā Sakkārenatam Bhagavantam Abhipūjayāmi

Homage to the Order of Disciples wherewith it is regarded as the Refuge, whereby all sickness may be rendered null and void.

#### **4. Ratanattayavandanā**

Araham Sammā Sambuddhho Bhagavā,  
 Buddham Bhagavaantam Abhivādemī.  
 Svākkhāto Bhagavatā Dhammo, Dhammam Namassāmi.  
 Supatipanno Bhagavato Sāvakasangho, Sangham Namassāmi.

#### **5. A Request for Forgiveness from the Triple Gems**

‘Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Samma Sambuddhassa.’ (thrice).

Okāsa, Accayo No Bhante Accagamā Yathabae Yathāmūlhe Yathāakusale  
 Ye Mayam Garamhā Evam Bhante Mayam Accayo No Paṭigganhata Ayatim  
 Samvarāyama.

I request the opportunity to ask the Lord Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha to forgive the wrong actions from my thought, word or deed which I may have committed against the Buddha, the Doctrine, and the Order. With the stipulation (considering my heedlessness, delusion, and the unwholesomeness which has deviously impregnated my mind), please forgive me for my wrong actions. May I be aware of my actions caused by my body, speech and mind from now on.

#### **6. Invitation (*Arathana*)**

“Ukāsa, may all the great Enlightened Buddhas (past, present, and top come), numberless as the sands in the bowls of the four great oceans, impregnate, illuminate, and irradiate, my six senses: cakkhu-dvāra (the door of vision), sota- dvāra (the door of audition), ghāna-dvāra (the door of olfaction), jivhā-dvāra (the door of gustation), kāya-dvāra (the door of form), mano-dvāra (the door of mind), as to apprehend and perceive the truth in its original splendour and purity pristine.

Ukāsa, May the teachings of the Buddha leading to attainment of the supramundane, ninefold in scope, revealed times beyond counting (past, present, and future), impregnate, illuminate, and irradiate, my six senses (dvāra): cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya, and mano, to apprehend and perceive the truth in its original splendor and pristine purity.

Ukāsa, May all the emancipated and noble disciples of the Buddhas, beyond counting (past, present, and to come), impregnate, illuminate, illuminate, and irradiate, my six senses : cakkhu dvāra, sota- dvāra, ghāna-dvāra, jivhā-dvāra, kāya-dvāra, mano-dvāra, as to apprehend and perceive the truth in its original splendour and purity pristine.”<sup>317</sup>

### 7. Resolution (Adhiṭṭhāna)

“I hereby invoke the aid of the Buddhas, the Doctrine, and the Order of Disciples, and also my good preceptor, my good mother, my good father, and all my spiritual resources:

Dāna pārami	Silā pārami
Nekkhamma pārami	Paññā pārami
Viriya pārami	Khanti pārami
Sacca pārami	Adhitthāna pārami
Mettā pārami	Upekkhā pārami

which I have practiced and accumulated for a hundred existences, a thousand, ten thousand, a hundred thousand existences, which I have practiced and accumulated from the beginning, little by little, whether remembered or otherwise. May all these accumulated resources now aid me on the Path (*Magga*) which I am hereby treading, so as to attain its Fruit (*Phala*).

### Nibbāna Paccayo Hotu

(May this be the means whereby Nibbāna is ultimately attained)”<sup>318</sup>

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<sup>317</sup> T. Magness, “Sammā Samādhi, The Method of Right Insight”, p.11-12.

<sup>318</sup> Ibid., p.12.

## Appendix C

### Basic Method of Meditation Practice Vijja Dhammakaya Approach

Luang Phor Wat Paknam taught a specific method for beginning meditators to bring the light sphere (aloka-kasina) to the center of the body.

In basic samatha vipassana practice, two aids are used:

1. The repetitive word (parikamma-bhāvanā), ‘samma araham’ is used.
2. The object of visualization (parikamma-nimitta), the bright, clear, luminous sphere or translucent Buddha State. In Bahavana or meditation practice, we teach visualization of the light sphere (aloka-kasina).

Such concentration allows the mind components – vision, memory, thought, and awareness – to rest together as oneness or Ekaggatā-ramana.

### The Path to the Center of the Body

#### Preliminary Procedure

Please sit in a regular meditation posture, cross-legged, with the right leg resting upon the left, right hand on the left turned up, right index finger just touching the left thumb, the body upright, the mind fully alert. Take deep breath and relax the body as you feel comfortable. Close the eyelids lightly not tightly, and do not press them. Make your mind peaceful and fully alert.

There are seven positions along the way.

1. First, concentrate with your mind that there exists a vision of a bright and clear sphere. Visualize the sphere at the nostril, the ladies on the left nostril, the gentlemen on the right nostril. Fix your attention and

rest your mind at the sphere center, a size of a black eyes ball grain or needle point. Mentally recite the words sammā araham three times in order to focus your mind at the clear sphere.

2. Second, mentally move the bright clear sphere slowly up to rest at the eye socket. While you are slowly moving the sphere with your mind, fix your attention always at the small bright sphere with mentally recitation of sammā araham.
3. Third, shift the sphere slowly to rest at the center of your head. The mind always fix at the bright center of the luminous sphere. Silently repeat the words sammā araham three times to keep the sphere as bright and clear. So, it shines and remains in that position.
4. Fourth, roll your eyes upward without lifting your head, so that your vision will turn back and inside. Mentally move the shining and transparent sphere slowly, and directly downward towards the palate. Recite silently ‘sammā araham’ three times to keep the sphere even brighter and clearer and rest it there.
5. Fifth, mentally move the bright clear sphere slowly and directly downward to rest at the throat aperture. Repeat the words ‘sammā araham’ to keep the transparent sphere brighter and shiner and rest it there.
6. Sixth, slowly move the clear and shining sphere directly downward while your attention is focused upon the bright nucleus at the center of the sphere, until it rests at the center of the body, at the same level as the navel. Mentally recite ‘sammā araham’ thrice to keep the transparent sphere brighter and shiner and rest it there.
7. Seventh, shift the sphere directly upwards about two finger-widths above the navel. This is the center of the body and the seventh position. This is the mind’s permanent resting place.

## Appendix D

### Summary of Interviews

This is a summary of the results obtained from interview respondents. Interviews were conducted with ten monks, nuns and lay people familiar with Luang Phor Watpaknam, as follows:

#### Interviewees

##### Monks

1. Phra Dhammapanyaporn, Secretary of the Pali Institute (Mae Kong Sanam Luang) and Dhamma Missionaries (Dhammadhuta) at Wat Paknam, February 28, 2005.
2. Phra Rajratanavimol (Pyle Pathako), the Secretary of Ecclesiastical School, Wat Paknam, January 22, 2005.
3. Phra Rajyanvisith (Sermchai Polpatanaritdhi). Abbot, Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakayaram, Damnoen Saduak District, Rajburi Province, on January 20, 2005.
4. Phrakru Mongkolbhavananusidh (Chai Kittisaro), Meditation Master, Wat Paknam, February, 2005.
5. Phrakhru Dhammathorn (Phadungpong Soikham), Abbot, Wat Paknam-New Zealand, on January 24, 2005.
6. Phrakru Vinaithorn (Somporn Voravuttho), the Assistant to the Abbot, Wat Thepleela, and the Secretary of Bangkok sub-district, March 7, 2005.
7. Phrakrubaidika Walter Uttamapanyo, the Secretary to the abbot, Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakayaram on February 13, 2005.
8. Phrakrubaidika Dr. Barton Sensenig, the Secretary to the Abbot, Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakayaram, on January 12, 2005.

9. Phramaha Montri Khantisaro, Pali Instructor, at Wat Paknam and Wat Luang Phor Sodh, Former Instructor of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya, January 2, 2005.
10. Phra Sangvien Athivatto, Meditation Master, Wat Paknam, on January 7, 2005.

### **Nuns**

1. Ajahn Mae Chee Varncai Jukorn, the Meditation Master of Suan Kaew Dhamma Practice Center, on January 12, 2005.
2. Mae Chee Yupa Nakbun, the Head of Thonburi District, on February 25, 2005.

### **Laity**

1. Khun Cintana Osodh, Thai Medicine Doctor, on March 1, 2005.

### **Questions**

- Q1. What was Luang Phor's technique for Dhamma propagation that inspired people to come to Wat Paknam from the past until the present?
- Q2. What were Luang Phor's important principles for propagating Dhamma?
- Q3. In what ways were his methods of propagating Dhamma similar to or different from those of Lord Buddha?
- Q4. Was Luang Phor's teaching hard to understand?
- Q5. In what ways were his methods of propagating Dhamma similar to or different from those of Lord Buddha?
- Q6. Did Luang Phor succeed in his propagation? Is his propagation beneficial to Thai society in the present? How?

**Interview 1: Phra Dhammapanyaporn** is Secretary of the Pali Institute (Mae Kong Sanam Luang) and Dhamma Missionaries (Dhammadhuta) at Wat Paknam.

Q1. What were Luang Phor Wat Paknam's techniques for Dhamma propagation that inspired people to come to Wat Paknam from the past until the present?

Luang Phor Wat Paknam's propagation of Buddhism (the Triple-Gem) was teaching the Dhammkaya technique. He used Buddhist teachings to get to meditation practice. The principle underlying this practice was the tactic of using form (rūpa) as a means to discard form. Most people are usually very attached to form (rūpa). So, we use form as a means of teaching people to abandon form. People do not understand this concept. There is nothing wrong with holding the Buddha in mind to remind us to extinguish defilements. We use the Satipatthana technique to contemplate the Buddha in the body so that we will have mindfulness and concentration all the time. The propagation technique of Wat Paknam is that the disciples spread out to teach Dhamma elsewhere. Wat Paknam is a center for teaching Buddhism. We have to practice in order to know reality. We must be able to know and see for ourselves.

Q2. What about the Mae Kong Sanam Luang?

Phra Dhammapanyaporn acknowledged that Sangha education required both Dhamma and Pali courses. General education was included in the curriculum afterwards. Education in the Sukothai and Ayudhaya reigns set the curriculum for the elementary "tri" level of study and three years of Mūlakaccana, advanced Pali Grammar, for translating Suttas. Mūlakaccana is the very difficult language for explaining the Tipitaka. It uses very high class language. Examinations were not available every year. One had to request them whenever one was ready. The King and the Supreme Patriarch were present at the examinations to listen to the monks. This was how monks gained the respect and faith of the king and the people.

In the old days, propagation and education went together. Monks taught people to understand Dhamma and practice accordingly. The whole

way of life related to Buddhism, starting with birth, marriage, ordination, sickness and death. They all ended up at the temple. Propagation in the old days was based on the people's recognition of the value of Buddhism. The temple was the center for both good and bad persons. Monks taught people to be good people. At present, democracy plays a key role. Whoever has power and wisdom will shape people in any way he wishes. Therefore, education is a melting pot for people. The academic curriculum assigns subjects to teach the way we want people to be. Authority is delegated to the provinces and districts to work out in detail. Education establishes standard principles to help people think right, do right, and have right view and wisdom.

Historically, Thai Kings fought wars for the throne, but they always maintained and preserved Buddhism with respect. All the Thai Kings respected Buddhism and the monks. They allowed monks to sit on their throne for preaching. Monks played an important role in reaching compromises and settling cases for the King and people.

**Interview 2: Phra Rajratanavimol** (Pyle Pathako), the Secretary of Ecclesiastical School, Wat Paknam, on January 22, 2005.

The Monthly Periodic Journal "Mongkol Saran", was compilation of various articles in Dhamma which initiated by Phra Bahavanakosolthera (Theera Dhammaro) or Luang Phor Lek in 1964 (B.E. 2507). The reason of having this journal was because of the shortage of financial after Luang Phor Wat Paknam passed away. Luang Phor Lek tried to gather memberships to raise funds for food offered to monks and novices and other expenses in the temple.

Novice Commemoration Day "Sammaneras Anusorn" was first set up by the group of novices at Wat Paknam. The purpose was to raise fund for chanting Abhidhamma to Luang Phor Wat Paknam's funeral as an expression of their gratitude to Luang Phor Wat Paknam. From then onwards, there were bhikkhus commemoration day and nun commemoration day in Wat Paknam. Wat Paknam was the first temple in Thailand that organized these commemoration days.

Luang Phor gave rewards to monks and novices who passed Pali examinations. Some times, he had inadequate robes for giving as presents that he had to give them later on. Following Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni's pattern, the Most Venerable Somdej Phramaharajchamangklacarn, the present Abbot of Wat Paknam has also given reward every year to monks and novices of Wat Paknam who passed the Pali IX examination. There are two levels of awards. Monks and novices pass the examination of Pali grade 1 to 8, will receive robes. Whoever obtain Pali grade IX, will receive a computer as an honorary award.

Thus, this school became a center of studying Nak Dhamma, Dhamma Sueksa, Pali Study, and issuing examinations for the junior bhikkhus (Navaka), Nak Dhamma and Pali grade III, V, and VI. It was a center for planning examinations, and issuing I.D. Cards. Wat Bavornnives is the center for grading 'Nak Dhamma' examination.

**Interview 3: Phra Rajyanvisith (Sermchai Polpathanaridhi)** is the Abbot of Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakayaram.

- Q1. What was Luang Phor's technique for Dhamma propagation that inspired people to come to Wat Paknam from the past until the present?
- Q2. What were Luang Phor's important principles for propagating Dhamma?

The technique of Luang Phor's propagation in the past and the present as a whole is that he follows the Buddha's practice and propagation for the learner able to know, to see and to practice for himself. He used the marvel of teaching (Anusasānī) technique.

1. For the Monastic Disciplinary teachings (Vinaya), he actually practiced strictly himself so that others could see and observe how he did it. He had good moral conduct in accordance with the Dhamma-Vinaya. This method applies throughout the temple. His technique of propagation was to actually do himself to set good example for the other monks to follow. As an Abbot of Wat Paknam, he set a good example in moral conduct and in

good performance of duties, strictly in accordance with the Vinaya. He did not touch money. The monastic treasurer took care of all financial matters.

With respect to the Dhamma aspect, he studied both scripture and meditation practice. In scriptural studies, he studied advanced Pali grammar. Phra Dhammatheraraj Mahamuni (Vichien Anomakuno), the head of scriptural studies, said that Luang Phor Wat Paknam had the knowledge to teach Pali at level VII. He also noted that, in the old days, the curriculum for bhikkhus' study was Advanced Grammar (*mūlakaccana*) which was important for translating Pali efficiently. Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni was very proficient in Pali. In every sermon, he cited Pali from memory and translated the meaning to the audience very efficiently, just like the monks at Pali level IX today. Luang Phor Wat Paknam also studied the Visuddhimagga.

He devoted almost all his time to meditation practice. He attained Dhammakaya through his truthfulness and devoted practice. He was able to know, to see and to be at the higher levels of Dhamma. He wished for Buddhahood, be a Bodhisatava, and truly practiced for attaining enlightenment. He had a good monastic daily routine and practiced nearly to the highest noble person. But, he never said anything or showed off. Only his close disciples would know of his virtue. He learnt and practiced well. He was a person who had great knowledge (*Bahussacca*) and reached the virtue of a Buddha, that is, the Dhammakaya within himself. When he had experience thorough knowledge of hell and heaven, he became brave enough to teach what he had experienced without fear. He said that “Dhammakāya is real and can be proved. What have we to be afraid?” This is why people had faith in him. But, it remained an obstacle that some people thought that he was wrong.

He supported both scriptural studies and practice. He did not accept any personal invitations from devotees. He spent all his time in meditation practice, preaching, teaching and supervising his disciples in vinaya monastic conduct. He slept only two hours and spent the rest of his time in contemplation of Vijja Dhammakaya, just walking up and down for relaxation.

He knew each individual's potentiality and supported them accordingly. He selected the persons with potential and trained them to attain the higher Dhamma. There were three key personnel at Wat Paknam, Luang Phor Lek, Chao Khun Bhavana, and Phra Chua. He also instructed many nuns to meditate and helped the nation and Thai society a great deal, behind the scenes.

3. He taught people to know, to see and to attain Dhammakaya that gives real fruition. This is the ability to know and to see by oneself (*Sanditthitiko*) through practicing properly at the center of the body. It must be seen (*Ehi-passiko*), should be brought into oneself (*Opaniko*), and invites all to come and see Hell, Heaven and Nibbana for themselves. He taught followers to develop Dhammakaya in their own minds. This is called to knowing for oneself (*Paccatam*). The heart of his teaching was to practice meditation in order to develop Dhammakaya within oneself and for others. This is taught by the marvel of teaching (*Anusasānī*) technique.

He demonstrated all three types of miracles (patihara): super-human powers, mind-reading, and the miracle of teaching followers to see the Truth and gain benefit from practice. He stated clearly that when developed properly, at the right position, the Dhamma element (Dhamma Dhatu), can help to make it rain. Whenever it was dry, people came to Luang Phor for help. He would tell them to observe the five precepts and practice meditation, repeating 'samma araham'. Then, Luang Phor would spiritually help them to receive rain. Thus, people had more and more faith in him. In another example, a nun reported to him that there was no more rice left to cook for devotees and monks. Luang Phor told her "Wait a moment, someone is sending rice here." Then, a devotee really did send rice to Wat Paknam. This was an incident that could be seen immediately. In such ways, others could really see the concrete results of practice and the power of Dhammakaya. This was the technique of teaching by seeing reality that could really be proved (The *Anusasane* technique).

Q3. In what ways were his methods of propagating Dhamma similar to or different from those of Lord Buddha?

People had faith in him because of his good moral conduct. He emphasized meditation practice but also promoted scriptural studies. The essence of his teaching was to develop the Dhammakaya within oneself and to help to develop it within others. He planned to build a school. He produced Amulets, a first lot, second and a third lot, for raising funds to build the school. People found the protection of these amulets very effective. In general, they had faith in him because he was different from other monks in giving help to the public community. He knew of the social problems and was able to analyze them and apply Dhamma to solve them. He spread *metta*, *karuna*, *mudita* and *ubekka* to all. He used his higher levels of meditation to help in curing illness and in the life problems of the people. Some spoke against Vijja Dhammakaya because he exhibited these special qualities, but these are the qualities of a Noble Person (*Ariya puggala*) who has attained at least the knowledge of the cessation of mental intoxications (*Āsavakkhayañāṇa*). He used the mundane level combined with the supra mundane level to be cause and effect in giving knowledge related to the endless cycle of rebirth.

He governed all monks, novices and nuns to have good moral conduct. He provided the four necessities and Dhamma on *pariyatti*, *pattipatti* and *pativedha*. His most important quality was setting a good example of moral conduct for others to follow. He was a student of both Dhamma scriptures, with emphasis on Sila, Samadhi, and Pañña, and meditation practice, in accordance with the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (*Satipatthana*). He sought to follow the Noble Eightfold Path and to contemplate the three-fold characteristics and reach the three special *vijja*, the eight *vijja*, the six *abhinña*, and the four perfected skills *patithañana*.

The Three Vijja provide knowledge regarding the causes and effects regarding the rebirth of all beings. They are all based on ignorance. This provides the basis for contemplation of Dependent Origination (*paticcasamuppada*) and the three-fold contemplation of the Four Noble Truths. The Fourth Jhana (*Asavakkayañana*) leads to the extinction of defilements. The word Vijja does not just refer to the well-known three-fold and eight-fold super knowledge. There are more Vijja which are beneficial in knowing and seeing and in building peace throughout the world.

Advanced Vijja Dhammakaya can help the nations of the world, behind the scenes, just as it can make rain and cure illness.

Luang Phor had only twenty years of worldly experience, but through meditation practice he gained wisdom. He helped people with their problems and used the treasures of *Chakrapatr* to maintain Wat Paknam in peace and harmony. It could be easily seen that anyone who continued to practice well following his virtuous example would gain property. He showed the quality of a good Dhamma preacher of being a good friend (*kalayanamittata*) who could explain the deepest and most subtle Dhamma, pointing out the reality and the way to know, see, and be Dhammakaya. Can Heaven and Hell be proved? They are always in our hearts and minds. They can be proved through meditation. This is knowing for yourself (*paccatam*). You can act as if you were dying and know where you will go. By practicing higher morality, concentration and wisdom to attain Dhammakaya, you can see Heaven and Hell. It is beyond explanation. The Dhammakaya method is in the doctrine, and Buddha taught that practicing meditation is the essential task, but no one has been practicing it.

Q4. Was Luang Phor's teaching hard to understand?

Luang Phor's teaching was both hard and easy to understand. If a practitioner paid attention during his teaching, he could understand. Dhamma is subtle. Luang Phor could focus on a particular person. Only that particular person would understand. The remainder could learn from him. It depends on the level of wisdom of each individual. He would project to anyone who could receive the Dhamma. He taught at introductory, intermediate and advanced levels, depending on the ability of the person to perceive.

Q5. What are the major obstacles that Luang Phor faced?

A major obstacle that continues until now is that some groups spread rumors against Luang Phor that he showed super human states. Luang Phor was under pressure by the authorities to follow their policy. Thus, he was not appointed preceptor until 20 years after he became abbot. The authorities overlooked his wholesome deeds because they didn't

practice meditation. Luang Phor attained Dhammakaya and contemplated the Three Vija following in the footsteps of the Buddha. Those who want to attain Path and Fruition in accordance with the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (Satipatthana) must practice seven years at the Anagami level. Most people just wish for the level of Buddha's disciples.

Luang Phor just stood firm to overcome obstacles. His motto was not to fight or run, just keep on doing good. Fighting could not defeat him or win, but escaping could be a defeat. Just continuing to do good cannot be defeated.

Q6. Did Luang Phor succeed in his propagation? Is his propagation beneficial to Thai society in the present? How?

He was successful in his own time. He helped people to practice and attain Dhammakaya. The advanced Dhammakaya could help nations a great deal. As a result, this technique has been taught until the present. But, there should be more results than there are at the present time. The social situation has deteriorated because of immoral conduct combined with the progression of technology which has been influencing people to overlook the value of meditation. There are some Buddhists who do not know, do not see, and cannot attain Dhammakaya deeply. This is the problem of propagation. However, there are more people today who study and practice the Dhammakaya method attentively.

Dhammakaya is suitable for the present society. We should introduce it and urge people to practice it righteously and introduce others to know the value of this method. For example, a Christian priest sent his Buddhist students to practice at Wat Luang Phor Sodh in order to be able to see Hell and Heaven. They spread this news to other students who changed their view to be afraid of Hell and changed their attitude and started to practice meditation. Some Muslims have also seen Dhammakaya, Heaven and Nibbana. And, one yogi, Loren Reid Johnson, who saw Hell, Heaven and Nibbana, is now teaching Dhammakaya meditation in the United States. The method is samatha-vipassana meditation in accordance with the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, with moral behavior as the basic requirement. This leads to the attainment of Dhammakaya. Dhammakaya means the

Buddha's virtue in accordance with each individual's level of wisdom. One learns to know, to see and to become Dhammakaya.

Phra Rajyanvisith concluded that Luang Phor Wat Paknam was very different from other monks of his era. He had many differences from the other monks. First, he was similar to the Buddha who was hesitant to teach the Dhamma because it was very difficult, subtle, delicate and deep. Then, he realized that there would be some who could attain the Dhamma. Similarly, Luang Phor realized that the Dhamma was very difficult for people to understand. His initial aim was seeking tranquility in the forest. But, his second thought was concern for the people who were careless, indulging deeply in sensual pleasures and delusion. He had the fortitude to teach Dhamma to the people, while other meditation masters sought tranquility in the forest. The people in society had no interest in meditation practice. He was the first to try. As Abbot, he bravely turned Wat Paknam into a meditation center, not fearing anyone.

He taught Dhammakāya to people from all walks of life. They came to him for help with all kinds of problems. Everyone has some suffering -- from health problems through family, career, and personal problems. He sincerely helped them without expecting anything in return. His main objective was to teach Buddhists to be secure in the Triple-Gem. He urged people to pursue higher education and spiritual development to upgrade their status in life and society. He provided education in both scriptural Dhamma studies and meditation practice. He, also, offered food to all monks, novices, nuns and lay followers.

His teaching of Dhammakaya and providing education and food inspired more and more monks, novices and lay people to come to Wat Paknam. It was well known that he could cure severe illness and that he taught vipassana through the Dhammakāya method that could lead to seeing Hell and Heaven. Vijja Dhammakaya was spreading throughout Thailand and abroad.

**Interview 4: Phrakhru Mongkolbhavananusith**, the Meditation Master, Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen.

Blood Donation is another merit-making activity which has been carried out from the past until the present. Phrakru Mongkolbhavananusith initiated blood donations at Wat Paknam in order to obtain more donations from devotees and to save trips for monks and novices. The result is that the number of contributors gradually increased each year. Phrakru Mongkolbhavananusith had to increase one more day to serve the devotees' purpose. The schedule is set for every three months. The Red Cross also supports other services in addition to the blood donation, such as donation of eyes and organs of the body. The Red Cross has collected a large volume of blood each period that can be used to help people everywhere. Wat Paknam has become a center providing convenience to all devotees.

**Interview 5: Phrakru Thammathon (Phadungpong Soikham)**, the Abbot of Wat Paknam-New Zealand, interviewed on January 24, 2005.

In 2002 (B.E. 2545), Wat Paknam-NZ was established at Tauranga, New Zealand. The Most Venerable Somdej Phramaharajchamangkacarn, the present Abbot of Wat Paknam, appointed Phrakru Thammathon (Phadungpong Soikham) as an Abbot of Wat Paknam NZ., Tauranga, New Zealand.

Phrakru Thammathon acknowledged that The Most Venerable Somdej Phramaharajchamangkacarn is broad-minded and is on international level, welcome all religious to join activities in the temple. His propagation principle is to go along with the Buddhism principles without forcing anyone to respect and practice Dhammakaya meditation method. Phrakru Thammathon and the team can adjust attitude of people around to join temple's activities and tradition. People will join together on weekend to chant and practice meditation for one or two hours. They can offer alms to the monks. Dhamma talk is opened at anytime. The obstacle is the language barrier in communication especially, the Buddhist terminology. Phrakru Thammathon needs some monks who can communicate with foreigners and explain Buddhism to them more efficiently.

**Interview 6: Phrakhru Vinaithorn (Somporn Voravutto)**, the Assistant to the Abbot of Wat Thepleela and the Secretary of Bangkok sub-district. The Most Venerable Somdej Phramaharajchamangklacarn sent him to Japan with Phrakru Sudhammapiom (Sahas Sudhammo), Abbot of Wat Paknam-Japan.

Phrakhru Vinaithorn (Somporn Voravutto) advised that ninety percent of the people who come to the Wat Paknam-Japan on weekends are Thai. This helps creating spiritual refuge for them because Thai people never see Thai temple in Japan. Another five percent are Japanese. Five percent more are from Sri Lanka, Nepal and elsewhere. They come for merit-making, donation for temple maintenance, for meals offering to monks. For meditation practice, a tape recording of Luang Phor Wat Paknam's meditation teaching is used with translation for foreigners.

**Interview 7: Phra Khru Baitika Walter Uttamapaño**, from Denmark, has been a monk at Wat Luang Phor Sodh for six years. He previously toured the world as a concert pianist. He developed and maintains the English language Website for Wat Luang Phor Sodh.

Q1. What was your inspiration to be ordained as Buddhist monk?

Buddhism appeals to him as being scientific and provable, not just blind belief. Some foreigners don't know where they are going. We can guide them to know what is important in life. It is his good luck to be ordained in Buddhism to see cause and effect based on reason. This is what is missing in other religions.

Q2. Why did you choose to ordain at Wat Luang Phor Sodh?

He chose ordain at Wat Luang Phor Sodh because it is one out of only 20 temples in Thailand where one can practice both meditation and study of the Dhamma and scriptures. There are 60,000 temples in Thailand, but only about 700 are temples where one can practice, and only about 20 of these also offer Pali study. He wanted to practice meditation and pursue scholarly studies. It was his good fortune to meet Phra Rajyanvisith at the Thai temple in Sweden.

Q3. What impressed you about Luang Phor Sodh's teachings?

He was impressed with Luang Phor Sodh's teachings because he taught his Dhamma from the center of the body, not like other scholars who preach from books. Luang Phor did not focus on any one subject. He continued what the Buddha taught. But, others thought that his teaching was different. Luang Phor's reciting of the words "Samma Araham" is just Buddhānussati, which has been taught since the Buddha's time. The sphere is one of the ten Kasina devices. Anapanasati is also applied simultaneously. These three are all basic techniques used by the Buddha. This is just a continuation of the Buddha's techniques. Luang Phor made it more accessible to the public.

Q4. How did Luang Phor teach foreigners?

The first foreign monk ever ordained in Thailand was ordained by Luang Phor Sodh. He was a pioneer in teaching foreigners. The first one, Professor Dr. William August Purfurst (Kapilavadho Bhikkhu), had the potential to attain Dhammakaya. Luang Phor taught without using language. He smiled and pointed at Dr. William and taught meditation directly to him. Luang Phor was very interested in foreigners and keen on having foreign monks come to be trained. Afterwards, he sent Kapilavadho Bhikkhu to teach in England.

Q5. Is the Dhammakaya method difficult?

We make it difficult, but it is actually very visual. You can see sphere, and the teaching is there at the center. What we have to do is to purify our mind. We have to see clearly. In fact, it is the easiest technique. Other methods cannot measure how far you are in meditation. It is very definite to see different bodies. When the meditator comes to the Rupabrahma state, everyone sees the same thing. Even the foreigner sees himself dressed like a Brahman. You can't get rid of that. This proves that you can really see through practice, not imagination. Wat Luang Phor Sodh helps meditators to heal themselves. You can check yourself if the four elements are clear enough for you to see if something is wrong inside you. This is the way of

healing yourself when your Dhamma sphere is bright. When you are sick, you can see that the sphere is dark or clouded. When you really attain this for yourself, you can see it directly and prove it.

Q6. What were the Dhamma propagation techniques that drew more and more people to Wat Paknam?

It was Luang Phor's virtues or perfections that drew people. He did not want to be cremated, so that people can still come to see him. The whole spirit is still there, special the atmosphere and the feeling that people want to come to Wat Paknam. People miss him and want to see him. He was worried about the well-being of Wat Paknam. We want to be near to the one who has perfection. The Buddha advised us to get closer to scholars and wise people, but stay far away from stupid people.

Q7. Did he succeed in his propagation?

He was very successful. Buddhism spread to England. Vija Dhammakaya connected to the whole world outside. Another Englishman, Richard Randall, wrote a book entitled "Life as a Siamese Monk", about Wat Paknam.

Q8. Are there any obstacles?

There are no obstacles. People are ready to learn. They come by themselves. They know when something is good. Luang Phor was very modern. If he lived in this era, he would probably use computers and the latest techniques. Wat Paknam used new methods to propagate Dhamma at that time. We should use things all the things that senior monks in Thailand see as big bureaucracy, such as CD ROMs and the Internet. With them, anyone who wants to listen can. Listening to the voice is the starting point to draw interested people to come and listen in person. We should make appeals to the new generation in a modern style. Monks should use easy language in preaching and try to cut out the Pali words. We should follow the Buddha by teaching things that are necessary and useful to people, in accordance with their ability to understand. Luang Phor Wat Paknam was a

devout and famous monk, with knowledge of both the world and the Dhamma. Luang Pa is his continuation.

Q9. What were Luang Phor's obstacles in propagation in his time?

His popularity became a major problem to other masters and their disciples. It also disturbed the Sangha authorities in those days. He was accused of showing off super human states. The authorities sent monks and lay people to investigate circumstances at Wat Paknam. At last, Phra Parinya from Wat Mahadhatu, a former judge who attained Pali level VII, came seeking to find how Luang Phor was wrong. But, he confirmed that Luang Phor was not wrong in his teachings.

The Venerable Walter commented that Luang Phor was the devout monk. He had knowledge both the world and Dhamma.

**Interview 8: Phra Baitika Dr. Barton Yanathiro** has been a monk at Wat Luang Phor Sodh for three years. He is an American Ph.D. (Sociology) who previously worked with Phra Rajyanvisith at the U.S. Information Service Research Office. Interviewed on January 12, 2005.

Q1. What was your inspiration to be ordained as Buddhist monk?

He worked with Phra Rajyanvisith forty years ago as a researcher in the U.S. Information Service Research Office. Later, even while he was still head of the research office, he became an expert meditator and put most of his energy into teaching Dhammakaya meditation. He was impressed by the depth of his attainment. Later, when he retired and became a monk, he would come annually for his meditation retreats. At one point he became a monk for just two weeks, to see what it was like. When he reached 65, he could retire with his monthly social security payments. He had to take care of my mother until she died. Then, he ordained as a monk. In brief, Phra Rajyanvisith is his inspiration.

Throughout my life, my main question has been 'What is reality really like?' I was a student and professor for many years, ranging through physics, Electrical Engineering, political science, sociology, psychology,

and anthropology. But, I concluded that the answer was not within academia. So, I set out to Africa to help the poor, and that became my career throughout my working life. Since retirement, I have now been ordained for three years. I am studying Dhamma and meditation in order to go back to teach in the United States. I want to teach meditation for all to see for themselves, whether or not they are Buddhists. “See for yourself” is scientific. In the long run, I hope to spend half the year in Thailand and half in the United States.”

**Interview 9: Phramaha Montri Khantisaro** is an Instructor of Pali at Wat Paknam and Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakayaram. He is a former Instructor at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya. Interviewed on January 2, 2005.

Q1. What were Luang Phor’s techniques for Dhamma propagation that inspired people to come to Wat Paknam from the past until the present?

Phra Maha Montri responded that people had faith in Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni’s meditation practice for three main reasons: (1) He had practiced up to true personal knowledge, (2) He could teach to the real core of Dhamma, and (3) Each student could see and verify his teachings for himself. (1) Regarding the first factor, his true personal knowledge, he had practiced meditation ever since he was ordained. His two ordination teachers (assisting the preceptor) were both meditation masters. After ordination, he focused on meditation practice in Satipatthana. He contemplated body, feelings, the mind (to see if there was any greed, hatred or delusion), and the Dhamma (mind-objects), focusing on the Four Noble Truths. At his time, most people focused on contemplation of breathing (*Anapanasati*). Two methods of practice were common: first, studying with other meditation masters and, second, individual practice. Not many people could do the second.

Luang Phor Wat Paknam practiced at various temples. He went to Wat Lakorn Dhamma, Bangkok Noi, then went back to Wat Bangplama where there was a big forest suitable for practice. There were five monks who went for practice there. Luang Phor was able to visualize the sphere

(*Nimitr*) and able to know and see it directly, but not too clearly. Why did he choose the Dhammakāya method? He took the Buddha as his example and as his refuge. The mind focuses at one-pointedness (*Ekagattā*) able to contemplate the body within the center of the body, piled up at each sphere over and over deep down more defined smaller than atom. He thought that this method was the easiest way to do.

In the middle of the tenth month of his eleventh year as a monk, he meditated in the Uposatha at Wat Bangkuvieng, which is located in the midst of a forest, far from any community. Phra Maha Montri used to go there for meditation practice because it is very peaceful and suitable for practice. Luang Phor Wat Paknam made the resolution that if he did not attain the Buddha's Dhamma, he was willing to die. He repeated the same method and contemplated until he attained the Dhamma sphere. The mind was calm from contemplation of Satipatthana. He reached the higher states of serene contemplation (*jhāna*) and higher *knowledge* (*Ñāṇa*), until he attained Dhammakaya. This was his method of practice. He had the strong determination to do what he planned.

Phra Maha Montri previously interviewed Phra Khru Sangaratathanakij at Wat Luang Phor Sodh. He had attained Dhammakaya, and said the Dhammakaya State was very calm, and delightful (including Piti). It was very distant from all defilements. He was not interested in material goods or external respect. That was samadha meditation. Then, he practiced on up to vipassana meditation.

Q6. Did Luang Phor succeed in his propagation? Is his propagation beneficial to Thai society in the present? How?

After he attained Dhammakaya, he taught this method to others. He focused on teaching villagers and common people, scholars and children. People liked to cultivate merit by giving gifts (*dana*) and offering food to monks. He provided food to everyone, both the monks who studied and those practiced meditation. Luang Phor built a school for monks to study Pali, utilizing contributions from people. Scholarly people observed that many people came to practice meditation, so they also came for meditation practice. Many government officers and universities students came to Wat

Luang Phor Sodh to learn meditation practice. (As an example, Ajahn Charoen Panratana was a professor at Chulalongkorn University. When he got cancer, he came to ask Luang Phor Wat Paknam whether or not he would be cured. Luang Phor Wat Paknam said he could be cured, but he had to practice meditation. Within seven days, he attained Dhammakaya. Afterwards, he set up a meditation practice center to teach meditation.) Many scholars and government officers ordained as monks at Wat Paknam. Luang Phor taught children to seek higher education. Phra Maha Montri himself taught Pali IX and got good results from meditation practice and from offering food to the monks. People could see successful results, so they came to cultivate merit through giving and practicing.

At present, many scholars from different Universities in Thailand and abroad have been ordained at Wat Paknam, Wat Phra Dhammakaya, and Wat Luang Phor Sodh. Phra Rajyanvisith (Phramaha Sermchai), the Abbot of Wat Luang Phor Sodh, has a Master's degree from Thammasart University and worked for USIS. He is very proficient in English and received his Vija Dhammakaya knowledge directly from Phra Rajbrahmathera (Chaokhun Bhavanakosolthera), the meditation master of Wat Paknam under Luang Phor Wat Paknam. Phra Baitika Dr. Barton from the USIS Research Office and Phra Khru Baitika Walter, from Denmark, have taught Dhamma on the Internet. They are all valuable assets to Luang Phor Wat Paknam.

Q2. How did Luang Phor teach foreigners?

At that time, traveling was not convenient. But, Dhammakaya spread worldwide. An English professor from London and the Japanese came to study with Luang Phor Wat Paknam. Luang Phor could not speak English, but there were many scholars and volunteers who helped to translate English. I was one of them.

Q3. What problems did Luang Phor face in his Dhamma propagation?

When Luang Phor introduced Dhammakaya meditation, many problems arose, because people did not understand. It is common that whoever becomes popular, will be attacked. Luang Vichivothakarn has

composed a motto: “Do good deeds, but don’t do them prominently. This could lead to danger.” Luang Phor was criticized severely. Even the Buddha was criticized. Luang Phor Wat Paknam’s motto was “Do not fight or run, just keep on doing good.” This will conquer all opposition. In Buddhism, the principle is to “Think of the virtue of the Triple-Gem. Then, fear will vanish.” Luang Phor Wat Paknam adopted this principle and always won over the others whenever a problem arose. But, to succeed or even to survive, such a person must have extraordinary qualities.

Q4. What has been the impact of Luang Phor’s Dhamma propagation on Thai society?

Luang Phor’s Dhamma propagation is suitable for present society. The poor live with just self-sufficiency. The rich contribute to the poor. He taught people not to be selfish. This is a rule that society can live by. There is a long list of names of people wanting to host ‘*Kathina*’ for many years into the future. This demonstrates the depth of the impact of Luang Phor’s Dhamma propagation. Wat Paknam and the devotees dedicate themselves to helping the community and the country through charity without expecting anything in return. If Thai society uses this principle it will not deteriorate. King Bhumibol introduced the self-sufficiency concept to help this world not be selfish.

Q5. How did Luang Phor administer the temple to support Dhamma propagation?

Luang Phor Wat Paknam’s temple administration was based on two components: (1) scripture study and (2) meditation practice, together. Monks, novices and nuns had to practice first and then study the scriptures afterwards. They could choose either field, based on their potential. The essential part in meditation practice is to purify the mind from defilements. Studying scripture is for the preservation of Buddhism, not for selfish reasons. Luang Phor Wat Paknam wanted his students to reach the top of the ladder, for the good reputation of Thailand. Luang Phor sent monks and novices to study the higher levels of Pali at Wat Bencamabopit. He, himself, knew all the scriptures well and could translate them all. He had the knowledge, but he did not have a degree. Luang Phor was earnest in his

study of both scriptures and meditation practice. He loved his disciples in the right way. He had a splendid personality with an echoing voice and sat like a lion looking around. He walked fast, but kept his mind in contemplation all the time.

**Interview 10: Phra Sangvien Athivatto**, Meditation Master at Wat Paknam. Interviewed on January 7, 2005.

Phra Sangvien shared his experience encountered Luang Phor's miracle of mind-reading. He was sitting at the back of the Dhamma hall, listened to Lung Phor's sermon. Lung Phor taught that anyone has a baby girl or baby boy, give them the King's property. Phra Sangvien thought to himself that I am very poor, how could I give them properties. Lung Phor said that to have baby girl, give her academic degree. This education degree cannot be used up. If you do not give to her, she will depend on you to death. Another example was on Luang Phor's birthday, he gave sermon about the Buddha left his princess to become ascetic. Phra Sangvien was listening to Luang Phor's preaching. He thought to himself that he would leave his wife for ordination. Luang Phor said that: "Don't ever think so. The Buddha was a prince full of wealth. But, we are not rich. Must be responsible to her, do not leave her. It is a lack of loving-kindness."

**Interview 11: Ajarn Mae Chee Varncai Jukorn** is the Meditation Master of the Sangvechaneesathan Stupa Parinibbana, Suan Kaew Meditation Practice Center. Interviewed January 12, 2005..

Q1. What major techniques did Luang Phor have for Dhamma propagation that drew more and more people to Wat Paknam??

Luang Phor Wat Paknam taught four physical elements: earth, water, wind and fire, plus space and consciousness (*viññana*). He also taught the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (*Satipatthana*). Luang Phor's principles of propagation were (1) to practice according to the Buddha; (2) to train himself to be good and to be a refuge for himself first, then to teach others; (3) to teach children to truly do good deeds and avoid bad deeds, but not to cling to the good. His main teachings were based on the foundation of

morality (*Sila*) -- having good and proper conduct. Then, he taught *samadhi* (concentration) meditation to train the mind to be firm and stable. Initially he taught to move from the first to the seventh position in the body. Then, he taught to progress from the crude to the refined states. Finally, he taught the meditator to attain wisdom (*paññā*).

He taught that the ‘self’ must be the refuge for the self’. A person must love one’s self first and then love others. We must have Dhammakaya in mind to enable us to see Hell and Heaven, to see the whole world, and to know reality in accordance with the Buddha’s teachings. Dhammkaya has two components: the first part is the Buddha who destroys the state of existence (*bhava*) and the birth (*jati*). We practice meditation in order to cultivate perfections to be deliverance and conquer the evil, to have purity physically, verbally and mentally to see Dhamma and the reality. The second part is creating the state of existence (*bhava*) and the birth (*jati*), to have wrong view to attach in the suffering and the circle of rebirth endlessly. Those can not be recovered because they have sin and dull life. He taught them to cultivate merit by listening to Dhamma to get light for their lives.

Q.2      What were Luang Phor’s outstanding methods of Dhamma propagation that differed from others and impressed people?

Mae Chee Varncai, Mae Chee Yupa and Khun Cintana Osodh shared the same opinions that people came to Wat Paknam with the faith in Luang Phor Wat Paknam who practiced and followed the Buddha’s teaching. Whoever had problem and suffering, came to consult Luang Phor for advices. He taught everyone with sincerity, compassion and loving-kindness just like the father taught, advised and helped his children. Then they have gratitude and faith in Luang Phor. His had sincere intention for people to truly practice meditation to attain Dhamma. He started with general talk with everyone and advised them to cultivate merit by giving, morality and meditation. He started with having morality as fundamental stage.

Mae Chee Varncai advised that Luang Phor taught them to know their own suffering and advised them to do good cause in order to get good

consequence or result. Everything has cause first and then the effect comes after. He explained if we do this way, we will get such consequence, we must accept it. We cannot choose the way to be born. We are lucky to be born and find Buddhism. Mae Chee Varncai said at the present, everyone should do good cause and accept the fact what is going to happen if we cannot correct such problems.

Mae Chee Yupa explained that we have to look at the origin of the cause where it comes from and what is the consequence of that cause. The world nowadays has causes. Nature is also sacred. The law of nature is the law of Kamma. Defilements cause people do wrong things and create bad kamma toward others.

Mae Chee Yupa said that Luang Phor Wat Paknam taught standard Buddhism concepts adapted with Dhammakaya method of training the mind to ‘stop still’ at the bright sphere. By nature, every one has shaky mind, never stop still. Thus, Luang Phor used the sphere as a mean to hold the mind still at one point. The crystal sphere represents the Triple Gem which exists in our body. He used this tactic to draw in the Triple Gem into the body using ‘crystal sphere’ as the object to ease the practice. The crystal sphere is pure and is a mean helping our mind become pure. It is a simple method to calm our mind by contemplating constantly until become efficiency. The essence of Luang Phor’s teaching was to train the mind to stop still, to be calm first. That is samadha. Then, one should cultivate oneself spiritually to attain wisdom. That is vipassana.

Khun Cintana Osodh expressed that Luang Phor Wat Paknam was just like a father of everyone who helped changing miserable life for the better life on the path of morality. He gave life to every one who came to reside with him. His loving-kindness was unlimited. Everyone who met Luang Phor felt like he has met his own real father.

Ajahn Mae Chee Varncai reported that people from all walks of life came to Luang Phor Wat Paknam for help in their suffering. He taught them to realize that their suffering was caused by their own actions (*kamma*). Everything has causes and effects. He taught that “self is a refuge for self”. A person must help oneself first and extended his help to other when he had

strength. Mae Chee Yupa commented that people had faith in Luang Phor Wat Paknam because of his sincere help and teaching given to them to extinct suffering. Thus, they come to Wat Paknam to pay respect to Luang Phor Wat Paknam frequently whenever they could. They expressed their appreciation and gratitude to Luang Phor Wat Paknam in different manners and various activities.

Q3. How has his teaching of Dhammkaya affected the propagation of Buddhism? What technique did he use that people believed.

Mae Chee Varncai said that teaching Dhammkaya has good effects for the propagation of Buddhism. He was a great meditation practitioner. He taught to have the Triple Gem in the mind as a refuge. This is called having Buddhism in the heart. He taught mindfulness and Right View to control physical and verbal expression. The mind must be a refuge. When we have established the self as a refuge, then we have the duty to help others to be happy, both inside and outside the family. He taught us to truly do good deeds and to have morality as our fundamental principle. Giving (*Dana*) and morality (*Sila*) go together. If we don't have money, we can contribute our strength by working.

Q4. What has been the impact of his Dhamma propagation on Thai society? Were there any obstacles?

Mae Chee Varncai said that he was very successful in propagation. He had many disciples. The Dhammkaya method was very useful to the society and preservation of Buddhism for young generation and **for world peace**. If people practice according to the Buddha's teaching which is the Buddha division, the society and the world will be in peace and happiness. At the same time he also had many obstacles. He dedicated his life to truly practice to fight with internal evils and external evils. The internal evils were greed, hatred and delusion. The external evil was Rupa Dhamma. There were fewer evil divisions when he was alive, but since Luang Phor passed away, there have been many evil divisions. There doesn't appear to be any visible end or peace in sight. The world continually becomes more complicated and miserable.

Q5. What was his technique in teaching foreign monks?

Mae Chee Varncai said that those who wanted to study meditation practice with him must have faith and believe in his teaching. Initially, the translator helped in conveying the message of the meditation method. During the practice section, Luang Phor could communicate and taught his foreign disciple through inner mind.

Q6. How does she administer her center?

Ajahn Mae Chee Varncai Jukorn has the objective of teaching the youth to be good children of their parents and to be a good citizens of Thai society. She wants to teach the youth to have good behavior, moral conduct and virtues. She teaches the youth to have Buddhism in their hearts as their refuge. The most important virtues are to be honest, to have gratitude and devotion.

**Interview 12: Mae Chee Yupa Bunmak** is head of the District.

Mae Chee Yupa commented that Dhammkaya has had a good effect for Dhamma propagation. It has not had any bad effect on society. It can have a bad effect on an individual, when that person does not understand the principle and does not practice, but just criticizes. Dhammakaya has spread all over the world. Foreigners are interested to practice this method. Dhammakaya came from the Buddha's teachings. The Buddha said: "whoever sees Dhamma, sees me. Whoever sees me, sees Dhamma." Obstacles exist in every era. At the Buddha's time, there were many sects that did not believe in his teachings. The Buddha taught only those who had some elements of Dhamma. They would understand the Buddha's teaching. There are always fights, even within the same religion. Evil divisions can destroy each other.

**Interview 13: Khun Cintana Osodh** is a Thai Medical Doctor.

Luang Phor admired everyone. In general, he did want monks and nuns to disrobe except those who had family obligation to take care of their family. He knew who had intention to be ordained without disrobe, knew

who had wisdom and who would have miserable life if disrobe. Luang Phor sent Khun Cintana to practice meditation in the meditation work shop and sent her to teach Dhamma in other province. Luang Phor told her if she disrobed and got married, she would have tuff life. He always taught nuns to be honest, truthful, tolerant, and firm in virtue. Luang Phor always warned her through her meditation, not to give up on giving and supporting Sangha.

### **Biography of Researcher**

- Name: Mae Chee Amphai Tansomboon
- Date of Birth: May 16, 1952
- Ordained as Nun: May 16, 2002
- Place of Birth: Bangkok, Thailand
- Residence: Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen, Bangkok
- Education: Secondary School at Saint Joseph Convent School, Bangkok, Thailand.  
High School at Lincoln High School. Seattle, Washington, U.S.A.  
College at Seattle Community College. Seattle, Washington, U.S.A.  
Bachelor Degree in Business Administration and Psychology, (1978) at Washington University. Seattle, Washington, U.S.A.  
Posted-Graduate School in Social Work Washington University. Seattle, Washington, U.S.A.  
Certificate of Dhamma Studies ‘Tri’, ‘Tho’ and ‘Eak’, (2002-2004), Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen. Bangkok.  
Master Degree in ‘Buddhist Studies’, Graduate School, the International Program, Class 3 (2002-2004), Mahachularajavidhyalaya University.
- Meditation:  
Experience: Anapanasati, Samma-Araham, Rising-Falling
- Work: Over Thirty years work for several Multi-International Companies in the United States and Thailand.  
Voluntary Work for Special International Conferences, at Mahachularajavidhyalaya University.  
English Translation Work for the Head of Nun of the Thonburi District, Wat Paknam.

