

Luang Por Dhammajayo

BEYOND WISDOM

DHAMMAKAYA FOUNDATION





Luang Por Dhammajayo

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A MORAL HERO

In our tumultuous world today in which wars, economic turmoil, family crisis, and the breakdown in human values affect everyone, a new kind of hero is needed—a 'moral hero'. Like war, peace has to be won. Rather than conquering thousands and millions in battle, Luang Por¹ Dhammajayo believes that world peace can be achieved more effectively through inner peace and universal love. He spends his entire lifetime teaching people of the world how to achieve inner peace through the practice of meditation and performance of good deeds.

Through his initiative and leadership, tens of thousands of people have taken the path of purity by ordaining as Buddhist monks and novices in Thailand; millions of women, children and teachers have participated in ethics training; and 100,000 Buddhist monks have joined together in one place to perform meritorious activities, the first in modern history. His tireless efforts in propagating Buddhism have paid off. Today, Thailand has become the world's center for Buddhism, and Wat Phra Dhammakaya, where he is the Abbot, has grown to become the largest Buddhist temple in the world with millions of followers in thirty countries.

Luang Por's vision is to foster world peace through inner peace and to change the world one person at a time. He is indeed a moral hero of our time.

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The Dhammakaya Tradition

Founded by the Great Abbot of Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen, Phra-mongkolthepmuni (background picture), the Dhammakaya Knowledge was passed on to Khun Yai Chand Khonnokyoong (center), who in turn imparted the Knowledge to Luang Por Dhammajayo (left) and Luang Por Dattajeevo (right), the current Abbot and Vice-Abbot of Wat Phra Dhammakaya (the Dhammakaya Temple), Thailand.



LUANG POR'S STORY



1884-1959



The Great Master Phramongkolthepmuni, Abbot of Wat Paknam, Discoverer of the Dhammakaya Meditation Method.

1909-2000



Khun Yai Chand Khonnokyoong, founder of Wat Phra Dhammakaya (the Dhammakaya Temple).

1963



Chaiyaboon Suddhipol, the future Luang Por Dhammajayo, Abbot of Wat Phra Dhammakaya, met Khun Yai and began studying meditation with her.

1966



Padej Pongsawat, the future Luang Por Dattajeevo, Vice Abbot of Wat Phra Dhammakaya, began studying meditation with Khun Yai.

1985



Temple ground expanded to 1,000 acres with capacity to hold 1,000,000 people.

2000



The Great Dhammakaya Cetiya completed. 1,000,000 Buddha images enshrined here.

2001



DMC (Dhammakaya Media Channel), world's first 24/7 Buddhist Satellite TV channel launched. Now broadcast in more than thirty countries.

2003



Dhammakaya Open University (DOU) began, offering Bachelor's Degree in Buddhism.

1969



Chaiyaboon was ordained into the monkhood at Wat Paknam and was named Ven. Dhammajayo Bhikkhu. He is now Abbot of Wat Phra Dhammakaya.

1969



Lady Prayad donated a 78-acre plot of land in Patumthani to build the future Wat Phra Dhammakaya.

1970



Buddhajak Center (now Wat Phra Dhammakaya) established on this land. Many more developments followed.

1982



Main Chapel completed, surrounded by beautiful landscapes.

2008



Launched V-Star Program, moral and ethics training for youths; reviving ethics for the world.

2010



Launched mass ordination programs for 100,000 monks.

2010



Launched Crystal Upasika renunciation programs for 1,000,000 women

2012



First annual Dhammachai Dhutanga Pilgrimage Walk began, covering a distance of 446 kilometers. Organized to promote awareness and advancement of Buddhist culture.



Luang Por Dhammajayo

LUANG POR DHAMMAJAYO

Phrathepyanmahamuni
Abbot of Wat Phra Dhammakaya

"I seek to pursue Perfections by instilling goodness in the hearts and minds of the people of the world, for them to embrace morality and to practice mental cultivation until they see the Truth, and to have Dhammakaya as their refuge."

With this pledge, Luang Por Dhammajayo gave his heart and soul to furthering Buddhism and bringing peace and happiness to mankind. Throughout his forty-four years of monkhood he never took a day off from his work. He set new standards for monkhood, rekindled the faith and confidence of the people, and took the Buddhist religion to a new height.



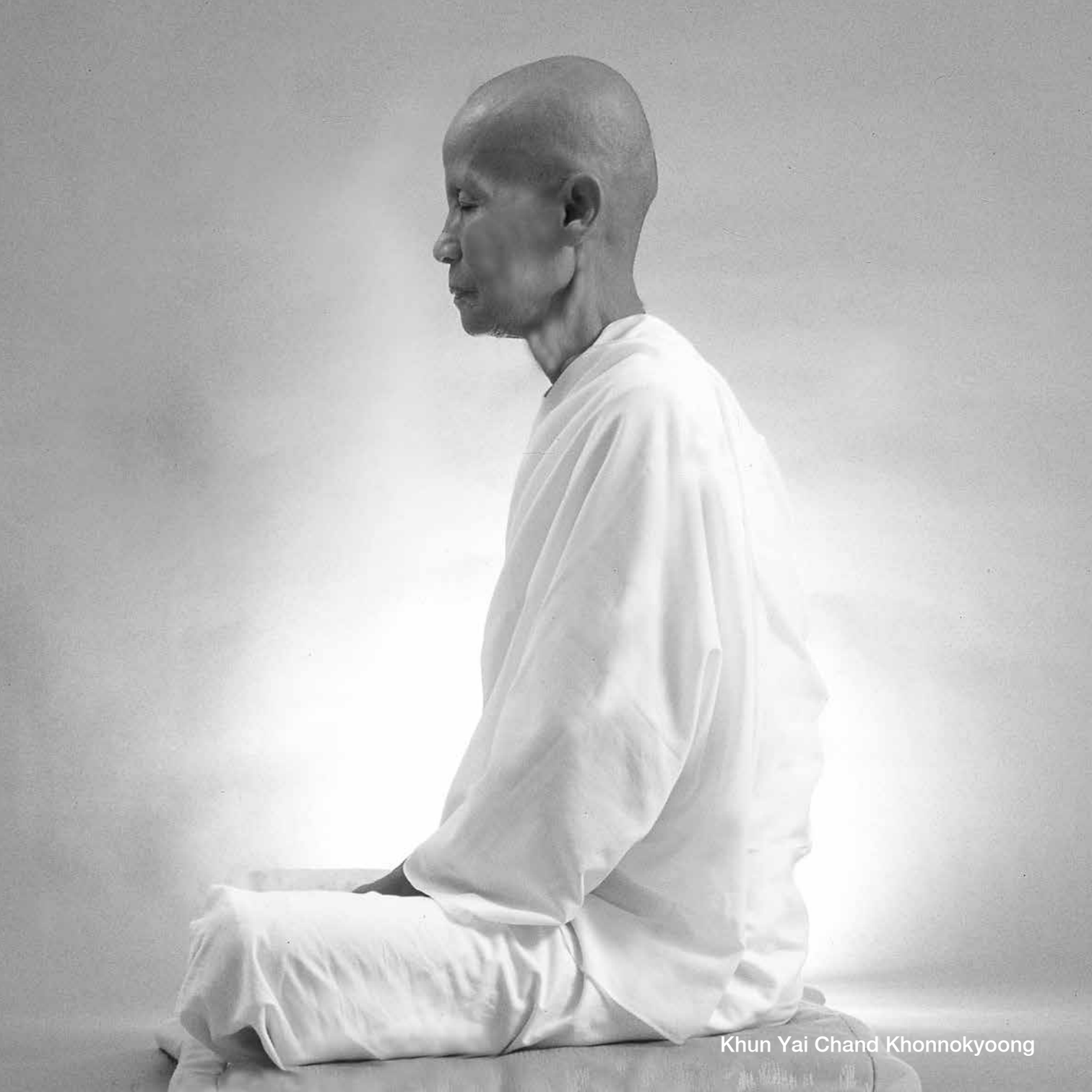
Chaiyaboon's interest in Buddhism began at a very young age

Luang Por Dhammajayo was born Chaiyaboon Suddhipol on April 22, 1944, to the family of Janyong and Juree Suddhipol. He grew up in a small house on the bank of the Chao Praya River in Singhburi, Thailand. His father was an engineer working for the Ministry of Industry whose job required him to be relocated regularly. Chaiyaboon often had to be put in boarding schools away from home for his schooling.

Young Chaiyaboon was eager when it came to acquiring knowledge. His interest in Buddhism began at a very young age. His favorite past time during his teens was to hang around bookstands that lined the streets surrounding Sanam Luang, a public park of Bangkok, where books of every kind could be found. The subjects that fascinated him were Buddhism, the Teachings of the Buddha, and biographies of important people.

The more books he read, the more Dhamma sermons he listened to, the more he wondered: “Why are we born? What is the purpose of one’s life? Where do we go after we die? Do heaven and hell really exist?”

These questions lingered in his mind and he could not find the answers.



Khun Yai Chand Khonnokyoong

One day, he came upon a book titled *Dhammakaya* written in the format of a sermon by the Great Abbot of Wat Paknam¹, who said: "Reading books alone is not enough to gain the perfect knowledge of Dhamma. One has to put Dhamma into practice until the Truth is revealed to him." He later found an article in *Vipassana² Banterngsarn*, a publication on meditation which was about a nun named Khun Yai³ Chand, a disciple of Luang Por Wat Paknam, who possessed extraordinary meditative power. Fascinated by her story, Chaiyaboon determined to seek her out and learn meditation from her.

Chaiyaboon finally met Khun Yai at Wat Paknam in 1963. He was then a freshman at Kasetsart University. Khun Yai agreed to accept him as her student. Through Khun Yai, Chaiyaboon finally found the answers to the questions that had lingered in his mind for a long time.

"Yes, heaven and hell do exist," Khun Yai told him. She explained, "Reaching high level meditative attainment allows one to possess special abilities to do wondrous things such as reading another person's thought, seeing into the past or the future, recalling one's past lives, or traversing to afterlife realms." Chaiyaboon also learned that the true purpose of one's life was to pursue Perfections (*parami*) and to attain Nibbana (Nirvana).

This was a turning point in Chaiyaboon's life. He began to practice meditation dili-

¹ **Wat:** Thai word for Buddhist temple. Wat Paknam is the name of a famous Buddhist temple in Thonburi, a sister city of Bangkok.

² **Vipassana:** insight meditation

³ **Khun Yai:** a Thai word for grandmother



Family and friends at Dhammajayo Bhikkhu's ordination

gently. Every morning he would leave his dorm at 6 a.m., spent two hours on three different buses to reach Khun Yai's place in order to practice meditation with her. After school he would do the same and would not return to his dorm until 10 p.m. Often times he would get up in the middle of the night to meditate. Some days he would meditate as many as 12 hours. His meditation skills became so profound that Khun Yai allowed him to teach others.

Chaiyaboon graduated from Kasetsart University in 1969 with a Bachelor's degree in Economics. He took the yellow saffron to become a Buddhist monk at Wat Paknam on August 27th, 1969. Whereupon, he was given a monastic name⁴ "Dhammajayo", which means "Victory through the Dhamma".

Upon Chaiyaboon's ordination, Khun Yai felt it was time to build a temple so she

⁴It is tradition for a newly ordained monk to be given a monastic name



Surveying the land with pioneering team members

and her team could have their own place to teach and practice meditation and to propagate Buddhism. Unfortunately, all Khun Yai had in her possession was her own meager savings of 3,200 Baht (\$160 in 1970). The team thought the idea was an impossible dream. But Khun Yai, with her faith and confidence in the power of merit⁵, told the team that the power of their collective virtue and merit would lead them to “celestial wealth” and would attract benevolent people to help them accomplish their goals. Her optimism was so strong that it gave the team confidence to proceed.

⁵ merit (Pali, punna) virtue, Possitive energy Resulting from acts of good deeds, production of good deeds.



Lady Prayad donates 78 acres of paddy fields to the future temple

They imagined the ideal temple should be built on a large piece of land not far from Bangkok with a river or creek flowing through it. After considerable scouting, they found a tract of land that fit this specification. It was a barren paddy field owned by an aristocratic lady named Lady Prayad. The team wasn't sure whether the owner was willing to part with her land but ventured to see her anyway. The day they met with Lady Prayad happened to coincide with her birthday. It was the team's lucky day, for not only was Lady Prayad willing to part with her land, but she in fact was willing to donate 78 acres as her birthday merit-making gift to the future temple. This was indeed a miracle of celestial proportion. There was no logical reason to explain their luck other than the collective force of merit that Khun Yai spoke about.

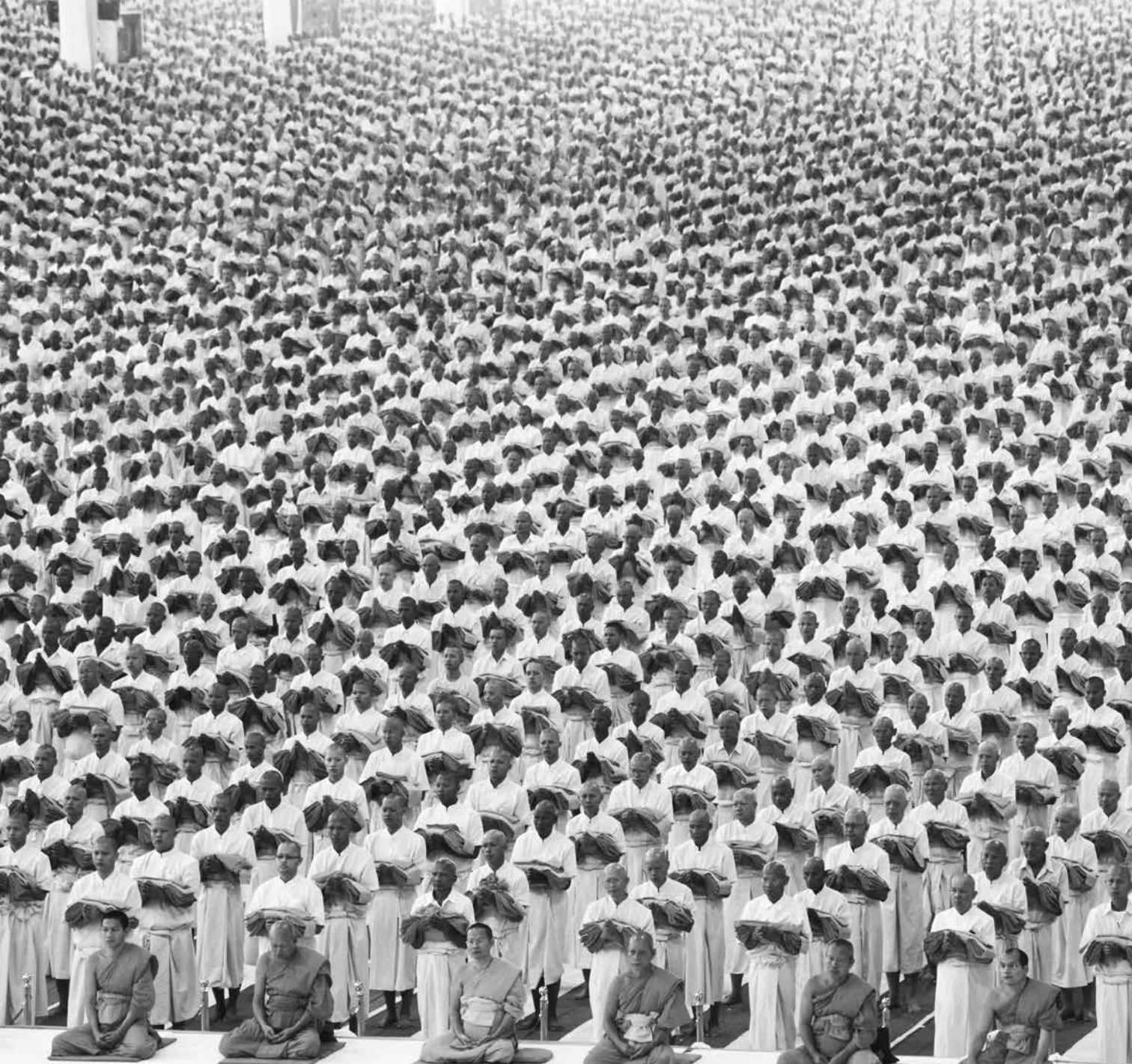


From barren paddy fields to the
world's largest Buddhist center

Wat Phra Dhammakaya (the Dhammakaya Temple) was formally established on Magha Puja Day, February 20, 1970. The Main Chapel was completed in 1982. The property was later expanded to 1,000 acres in 1985. The Great Dhammakaya Cetiya⁶, a dome-shaped pagoda built to last one thousand years, was completed in 2000. It became the world's largest Buddhist monument ever built. One million personal Buddha images were enshrined at the Cetiya—300,000 on the exterior dome and 700,000 on the inside.

Today, Wat Phra Dhammakaya has grown to become the world's largest Buddhist organization with over one hundred centers in thirty countries covering six continents. On Sundays an average of 30,000 Buddhists come to perform meritorious activities and practice meditation at the Temple. Every year, millions of people from around the world come to celebrate major religious events.

⁶**Cetiya:** Pali word for pagoda



Spreading goodness to the world

During the forty-four years under Luang Por's leadership, the world has witnessed some of the most astounding accomplishments any one person can achieve in one lifetime. There are more than one hundred projects that Luang Por has initiated and led to completion. Here are a few examples:

- Establishing Dhammakaya centers throughout the world. As of 2013, eighty international centers have been established in thirty countries.
 - Initiating mass-ordination programs for monks and novices. To date, hundreds of thousands of men have ordained in Thailand and overseas.
 - Instilling in the minds of people the importance of generosity, morality and mental cultivation. More people are now aware of the importance of virtue and merit than any time in modern history.
 - Launching DMC (Dhammakaya Media Channel), the world's first 24/7 Buddhist satellite TV channel, now seen in more than thirty countries. DMC was awarded sixteen Telly Awards in 2007, the most any organization ever won in one year.
 - Establishing Middle Way meditation retreats for foreign speakers. Thousands of people from around the world have participated.
 - Organizing annual Dhamma Quiz competitions aimed at elevating children's moral standards. More than five million youths participate in this program each year.
-

- Providing training programs for ethics and civic duties to teachers, students, government employees, men and women throughout Thailand. Millions participate in these programs every year.
 - Launching “Inner Dream Kindergarten” TV programs aimed at teaching morals and the Law of Kamma to the public. These programs have become some of the most popular Dhamma programs in the world, watched by millions each day.
 - Luang Por’s campaigns for social reform have motivated thousands of people to give up smoking, drinking, gambling and other forms of vice. Some liquor-producing factories in Thailand voluntarily shut down their operations to show support for this cause. Several bars, night clubs, brothels and gambling houses voluntarily closed down their operations. Many restaurants and retail stores agreed to stop selling liquor and cigarettes. The success of his campaigns earned Luang Por a distinguished award from the UN World Health Organization.
 - Initiating nationwide alms offering for two million monks throughout Thailand. Proceeds are used to relieve the suffering of monks, teachers, students, citizens and law enforcement personnel who suffer hardships caused by Islamist insurgencies in southern Thailand. As of 2013, more than 4,300 tons of food and supplies have been donated for this cause as well as for victims of floods and other natural disasters in Thailand, Myanmar, Japan
-

and the United States.

- Collaborating with, and giving support to, Buddhist organizations throughout the world. Facilitated ordination and training programs for monks and novices in Nepal, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Australia. 222 Buddha statues were gifted to Sri Lanka in 2008 and 250 to Bangladesh in 2010.
- Establishing research programs for scriptural studies and renovation of ancient texts. This is done in collaboration with fifty institutions and scholars around the world. Projects include translating Tipitaka into English and Sinhalese and digitizing Buddhist scriptures of all traditions.

Luang Por's success in these programs has earned him numerous prestigious awards from organizations throughout the world. Wat Phra Dhammakaya is recognized by the United Nations as a member of the NGO (Non-Government Organization), and occupies a seat in the UN.

Unlike many leaders of the world who conquer thousands and millions through battles, Luang Por Dhammajayo conquers the hearts and minds of millions through Dhamma and the practice of good deeds. We hope, one day, his vision of World Peace through Inner Peace is embraced by all.



PHRAMONGKOLTHEPMUNI



Phramongkolthepmuni

PHRAMONGKOLTHEPMUNI

Discoverer of the Dhammakaya Meditation Method

Famously known as Luang Por Wat Paknam, one of the most Venerated Buddhist monks in the history of Thailand, Phramongkolthepmuni was born as Sodh Mikaewn-oi on October 10, 1884 to the family of Ngeun and Sutjai Mikaewnnoi, a rice merchant in Songpinong District, Suphanburi, a province 60 miles west of Bangkok, Thailand. Sodh was the second born of five brothers and sisters with an older sister Dha, and three younger brothers, Sai, Phook and Samruam in order of birth.

Sodh was an intelligent child with a strong will power. In whatever he set out to do he would always persevere until it was done and done well. Sodh showed the signs of compassion even when he was very young. While helping his parents plough the rice fields each morning, as it neared midday, he would gaze up to check the position of the sun to note what time it was. His sister thought he was lazy, waiting for the time to take a break, but in fact he was watching for the appropriate time to relieve his ox. If he saw that the oxen had been overworked and had become tired, he would lead them off for a bath then let them loose to graze.

Sodh helped his parents with their work until he was nine when he began his formal education with his uncle, a monk at Songpinong Temple. In those days, before the establishment of state schools, monks were the only teachers and Buddhist temples functioned as schools for people in the community. When his uncle left the monkhood he went on to continue his study at Bangpla Temple, Nakornpathom Province, where he studied Thai and Cambodian languages.

Sodh was fourteen when his father passed away. As the eldest son, the burden of running the family business and supporting his mother and siblings fell on his young shoulders. He took over his father's rice trading business and worked hard to grow the business. Soon his business prospered and the family became well established.

A turning point in his life came when, on one trading trip to Bangkok, he sold all the rice in his boat and headed home with the empty barge and a large sum of money. The main river routes that he traveled were extremely treacherous so he took a detour through a remote waterway known as Klong⁷ Bang-Eetan. This was a narrow stretch of canal dreaded by boatmen because it was infested with pirates and bandits. Only a few lucky boats would manage to pass Bang-Eetan without being robbed or killed. Usually they would travel in a convoy for security. That day, Sodh's was the only boat in sight. Upon reaching this narrow stretch, the fear of death struck him. Sodh knew the strategy of the pirates: they would aim to attack the captain or the helmsman first to gain control of the boat. The person at the front of the boat would be in a safer

⁷**Klong:** Thai word for canal

position, as he could fight or escape. Sodh's survival instinct told him that he should switch his position from the helm to the front of the boat to avoid danger. So he ordered his crewman at the front to take his place at the helm.

Then a guilty conscience struck him. He thought: "All the crew gets from me for looking after this wretched barge is eleven or twelve Baht a month (equivalence of 50-60 cents in those days). As for me, I am the owner of the boat and I have all the money. If I hand down death to my less-than-fortunate workers I would be taking advantage of a fellow man. This is the wrong thing to do. The money is mine; the boat is mine; if someone should die it should be me. Let the workers escape so they can live to take care of their families."

He was ashamed for having made the selfish move. He called the crewmen back to the oars and sat himself at the tiller with the rifle in his lap. Although he finally managed to pass through the crisis in safety, the whole episode left him with a deep sorrow for his fellow men. He came to realize: "Making a living is such a hard thing indeed—to go through such an ordeal just to avail oneself of a day's wage. Material wealth is so ingrained in man's values that he loses touch with the reality and true purpose of life. In the end everyone must die. My father has died. My relatives have died. And when they died they could take nothing with them. What is the point of having all these possessions when you can't enjoy them after your death? One day, I, too, must die. Haven't I learned from my deceased father and relatives?"

He pondered about what he should do with his life, and came to the conclusion that there was nothing more worthwhile for him to do than pursuing a life of purity by becoming a monk. He made the resolution: "Please don't let me die before I have a chance to ordain. Once I take ordination it will be for life."

Sodh entered the monkhood in July 1906 at Songpinong Temple when he was 22. He was given the monastic name of Candasaro Bhikkhu⁸. He began practicing meditation the next day and continued to do so until the last day of his life. For many years he journeyed through many forests and mountains throughout the country of Thailand searching for the best meditation teachers to apprentice with. After eleven years of practice with some of the best Thailand had to offer he still felt that he had not yet attained the ultimate knowledge realized by the Buddha. So he decided to set out on his own. He studied Visuddhimagga, the Path of Purity, a scriptural text on meditation practice, and practiced on his own.

One morning, while taking residence at Bangkoowieng Temple, Nontaburi Province, he went to the chapel to meditate. He determined to stay unmoved until the midday drum sounded (time for the last meal of the day at 11:00 a.m.). He began meditation around 8 a.m. After a couple of hours, right before the sound of the midday drum, his mind began to settle to a completely standstill state. Whereupon, a bright sphere the size of an egg yolk appeared at the center of his body. He experienced a feeling of bliss, something he had never experienced before. He knew in his heart that this was

⁸**Bhikkhu:** Buddhist monk

the beginning of the path to spiritual attainment. He was overjoyed. Even the midday meal tasted extraordinary delicious that day. He looked forward to continuing a long meditation session that afternoon.

Sitting in front of the main Buddha statute, he made the following resolution: *“Upon this sitting, if I cannot attain even a small part of the Truth realized by the Lord Buddha, then I shall remain here unmoved until I perish. If I die, I will become a worthy example for people after me.”*

He sat in a half lotus position and began to meditate. The bright sphere that he saw earlier that morning emerged again and appeared even more radiant. It began to expand and remained with him from 7 p.m. to 1 a.m. the next morning. A tiny bright spot appeared at the center of the sphere and gradually became bigger. Afterwards, several transcendental bodies appeared one after another, each successive sphere bigger and brighter than the previous one. Until, finally, a supremely bright and pure image of the Buddha appeared. This was the Dhammakaya—Body of Enlightenment, an image brighter and clearer than any Buddha images in the world.

Sodh Chandasaro knew this was the right path—the path to enlightenment. He continued to further the depth of his knowledge and meditation practice until it reached the supramundane level. His meditation skills and mental powers became so powerful that he became Thailand’s most revered meditation master. He devoted his time

and attention in practicing and teaching his meditation method to the general public. The Dhammakaya Knowledge that he rediscovered⁹ was so profound that he aimed to use it to help all beings reach an end of all defilements and free from the cycle of rebirth.

In 1918, Sodh Chandasaro was appointed abbot of Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen. His reputation as a meditation master and the miracles associated with Buddha amulets created by him made him a sought after spiritual teacher. He organized a 24-hour meditation workshop to train gifted meditators. Many of his students reached the highest level of meditative attainment known as attaining the Dhammakaya. He was also the first Thai preceptor to ordain a westerner as a Buddhist monk. He later rose to higher monastic rank with a new monastic name of Phramongkolthepmuni.

Phramongkolthepmuni passed away in 1959 at age seventy-five. He became one of the most revered Buddhist monks in Thailand's history. After his death, his top disciple, a nun by the name of Chand Khonnokyoong, continued to further the legacy of the Dhammakaya Knowledge on his behalf. Along with her two outstanding students, Chaiyaboon Suddhipol and Padej Pongsawat, who later became the Abbot and Vice Abbot of the Dhammakaya Temple, she went on to found the Dhammakaya Temple which later became the largest Buddhist temple in the world.

The Dhammakaya Knowledge rediscovered by Phramongkolthepmuni has helped transformed the lives of millions. The Dhammakaya Tradition, the meditation method

⁹ It was said that the Dhammakaya Knowledge had disappeared from this world for five hundred years after the death of the Buddha

that he founded is practiced by millions of people throughout the world today. For most Buddhists in Thailand, Phramongkolthepmuni is best known by his miracles, prophecies and super-natural healing powers. Hundreds of thousands of Thai Buddhists pray to him daily asking for help and guidance in their lives.

The legacy of Luang Pu Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen lives on.



**KHUN YAI CHAND
KHONNOKYOONG**

Khun Yai Chand Khonnokyoong



KHUN YAI CHAND KHONNOKYOONG

Founder of Wat Phra Dhammakaya

“Khun Yai” Chand Khonnokyoong was born on January 20, 1909, in Nakorn Chaisri, a rural municipality of Thailand. She was the fifth of nine children in the family. Her father, Ploy, and mother, Pan, were rice farmers. The word “Khun Yai” means “grandmother” in Thai. It is a respectful way to call a woman of advancing age. Khun Yai’s given name was Chand, which means “moon”. Her last name was Khonnokyoong, which means “peacock-feather”. In those times, Thai families seldom send their daughters to school. Because of this, Chand never learned how to read or write.

Chand’s father was a good family man but he was addicted to alcohol. One day, he became so drunk that he fell asleep under the house while the family slept inside (a village house is usually built on stilts to protect from wild animals and flooding). He was mumbling and snoring so loudly that it bothered the family. In disgust, her mother called him a “sparrow” (a Thai expression for a worthless person) that leached off of her. This remark wounded his pride. He angrily asked all the children if they heard their mother insult him. The children stayed quiet. Innocently, Chand said that she did not

think her mother had insulted him. This infuriated her father, thinking she was taking her mother's side. In anger, he cursed Chand to deafness for 500 lifetimes.

Many Thai folks believe that the parents' words are sacred and potent. Chand worried that her father's curse would come true for her. She wished to ask for her father's forgiveness so the curse could be lifted. Unfortunately, she never had the opportunity to do so until he died.

On the day her father passed away, Chand was out working in the rice field. When she came home after a long day, she saw everybody crying for her father. It is a Thai tradition to ask a dying person for forgiveness for any wrongs done to the person. Everybody had already asked for his forgiveness, except for Chand.

His death profoundly affected Chand's life. Most Thai people believe in rebirth. She worried that she would be reborn deaf as a result of her father's curse. Now that her father had passed away, the only place to find him was in the afterlife realm.

Chand left home in 1935 when she was 26 years old to look for the Great Abbot at Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen in Thonburi, a legendary monk known for supernormal meditative powers. While working in the household of Mrs. Liab, a benefactor of Wat Paknam, Chand met a meditation master, Thongsuk Samdaengpan, a leading disciple of the Great Abbot. Chand practiced meditation with Thongsuk Samdaengpan for two years. She eventually attained the Dhammakaya, a high state of absorption

in meditation.

Having achieved this high level of meditative attainment, Chand asked Thongsuk to show her how to traverse to the afterlife realms so that she could find her father. With Thongsuk's help, Chand finally located her deceased father who, due to his bad drinking habits, had fallen into one of the hell realms. Through her Dhammakaya Body, Chand was able to communicate with her father and asked for his forgiveness, which he granted. And through the power of the Dhammakaya, Chand helped him to recall the merits from his good deeds in earlier lifetimes so these merits could relieve him from this retribution. Her father's retribution was indeed neutralized by the power of his past merit and he was freed from the hell realm.

Upon attaining the Dhammakaya, Chand decided to renounce the worldly life to become a nun. She finally met the Great Abbot in 1938 who ordained her as a nun and accepted her as his disciple. Chand devoted herself entirely to meditation without concerns for anything else. She meditated twelve hours each day, six uninterrupted hours in the morning and six uninterrupted hours in the evening. Her meditation skills became so profound that she soon became the Great Abbot's most outstanding disciples. The Great Abbot called her "Second to None".

The Great Abbot passed away on February 3, 1959. After his passing Chand continued to teach meditation at her residence at Wat Paknam. Among these students were two promising young men, Chaiyaboon Suddhipol and Padej Pongsawat, who later became two great Buddhist monks who led the Dhammakaya Temple to its

pinnacle of success as we know today. Chaiyaboon and Padej were the driving force behind many of Khun Yai's success.

After the ordination of Luang Por Dhammajayo, Khun Yai felt the time was right for them to build a Buddhist temple where true monks could be developed and the Dhammakaya Knowledge could be propagated to benefit mankind. To fulfill this vision, a great deal of financial resources would be needed. Unfortunately, all that Khun Yai had was her own savings of a mere 3,200 Baht (US\$160 in 1970).

But Khun Yai was a perpetual optimist who believed in the power of merit. The day that Khun Yai's team met with Lady Prayad, owner of the vast piece of land that the team aimed at acquiring, happened to coincide with Lady Prayad's birthday. It was a lucky day for Khun Yai and the team. Not only was Lady Prayad willing to part with the land, but she was in fact willing to donate the entire 78.4 acres of her land to the future temple as her birthday merit-making. This was nothing less than a miracle—or, more appropriately, a 'merit power'.

The Dhammakaya Temple was formally established on Magha Puja Day, February 20, 1970. The Main Chapel was completed in 1982. The property was later expanded to 1,000 acres in 1985. The Great Dhammakaya Cetiya, the world's largest Buddhist monument where 300,000 Buddha images are enshrined on the exterior dome, was completed in the year 2000. The Grand Opening Ceremony of the Cetiya took place

on Saturday, April 22, 2000. Khun Yai was 91 years old when the great Cetiya was completed. She lived to see that big day. The Great Dhammakaya Cetiya is indeed a gift to mankind. The compounds surrounding the Cetiya are now the gathering ground for Buddhists around the world. Over one million Buddhists gather at the Cetiya during important Buddhist events. The Dhammakaya Temple, Khun Yai's brainchild, is now the center of Buddhism for all Buddhists around the world.

Khun Yai passed away on the morning of Sunday, September 10, 2000. At her Cremation Ceremony in 2002, 100,000 Buddhist monks from 30,000 temples all over Thailand, many senior monks from twenty different countries, and hundreds of thousands of others from around the world came to pay their final respect to Khun Yai. This is the biggest gathering of Buddhists in history.

Like the story in a fairy tale:

A tiny little farmer girl, completely illiterate, took a journey on a spiritual quest, found a Great Master, learned the great Knowledge from the Master, went on to build a great temple, produced many true monks and virtuous people, and brought goodness to mankind.

Khun Yai's legacy lives on.



THE DHAMMAKAYA KNOWLEDGE



The Dhammakaya Knowledge (*Vijja*¹⁰ *Dhammakaya*) is a profound knowledge that deals with the 'Five Aspects of Natural Law', the Law that governs all things. They include Biological Law, which governs all living things; Chemical and Physical Law, which governs all chemical and physical matters; Psychic Law, which governs the functions of the mind; Karmic Law, which governs the law of action; and Law of Cause and Effect, which governs the functions of cause and consequence. Knowing how the Five Aspects of Natural Law came into existence reveals the knowledge of how to abolish samsara, the system that controls the cycle of rebirths. This knowledge leads us to the right practice and eventually helps us overcome defilements and attain Nibbana, thus freeing ourselves from the cycle of rebirths.

Phramongkolthepmuni dedicated his entire life to the study of this knowledge. He assigned a team of highly accomplished meditators to research the subject. The outcome of their collective research revealed the facts that samsara had originated from the following three elements: wholesome states, unwholesome states, and neither-wholesome-nor-unwholesome states.

Wholesome states represent the faction of virtue (the "white force") responsible for giving rise to the creation of the "physical form" of humans. Unwholesome states represent the negative element, or the faction of Evil (the "black force"), responsible for contaminating humans with defilements, illnesses, and negative kamma, causing them to end up in unhappy realms. Neither-wholesome-nor-unwholesome states sometimes characterize as the "grey force".

¹⁰ **Vijja**: Knowledge gained from the "Eye of Dhamma"; it is the Knowledge that enables one to rid oneself of ignorance.

The Dhammakaya Knowledge is taught by the Buddha to constitute the transcendental, blissful, eternal, and pure Self of the Buddha. Dhammakaya doctrines can be found in the scriptures of all major Buddhist schools including Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana (Tibetan Buddhism).

The word Dhammakaya means “Truth Body” or “Body of Enlightenment”. Dhammakaya Knowledge teaches that all sentient beings possess the Buddha-Nature, the inner potential for attaining Buddhahood, common to all people. It also teaches that the nature of mind is luminous, blissful, perfect, complete and full of wonderful qualities, but due to temporarily being obscured by defilements we do not recognize it. It is only through meditation practice and spiritual attainment that this true nature is revealed. This is known as “attainment of Dhammakaya.”

Once we attain Dhammakaya, we will have the clear-seeing ability to perceive the ultimate Truth—the knowledge of who we are, why we were born, what our true purpose in life is, and how we can free ourselves from the realm of suffering. Thus, attainment of Dhammakaya is something that everyone should aspire to achieve.



**WAT PHRA
DHAMMAKAYA**





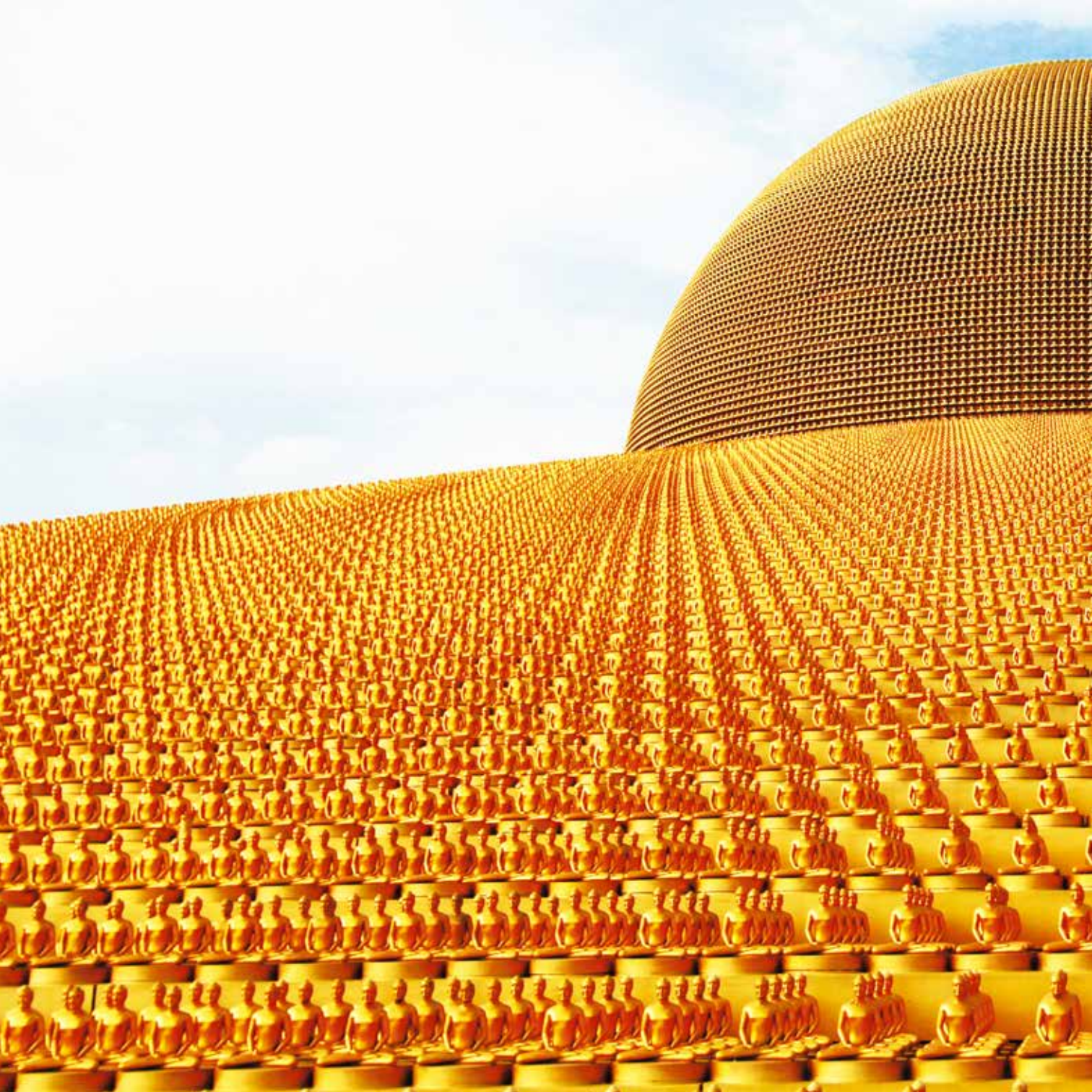
Developing true monks

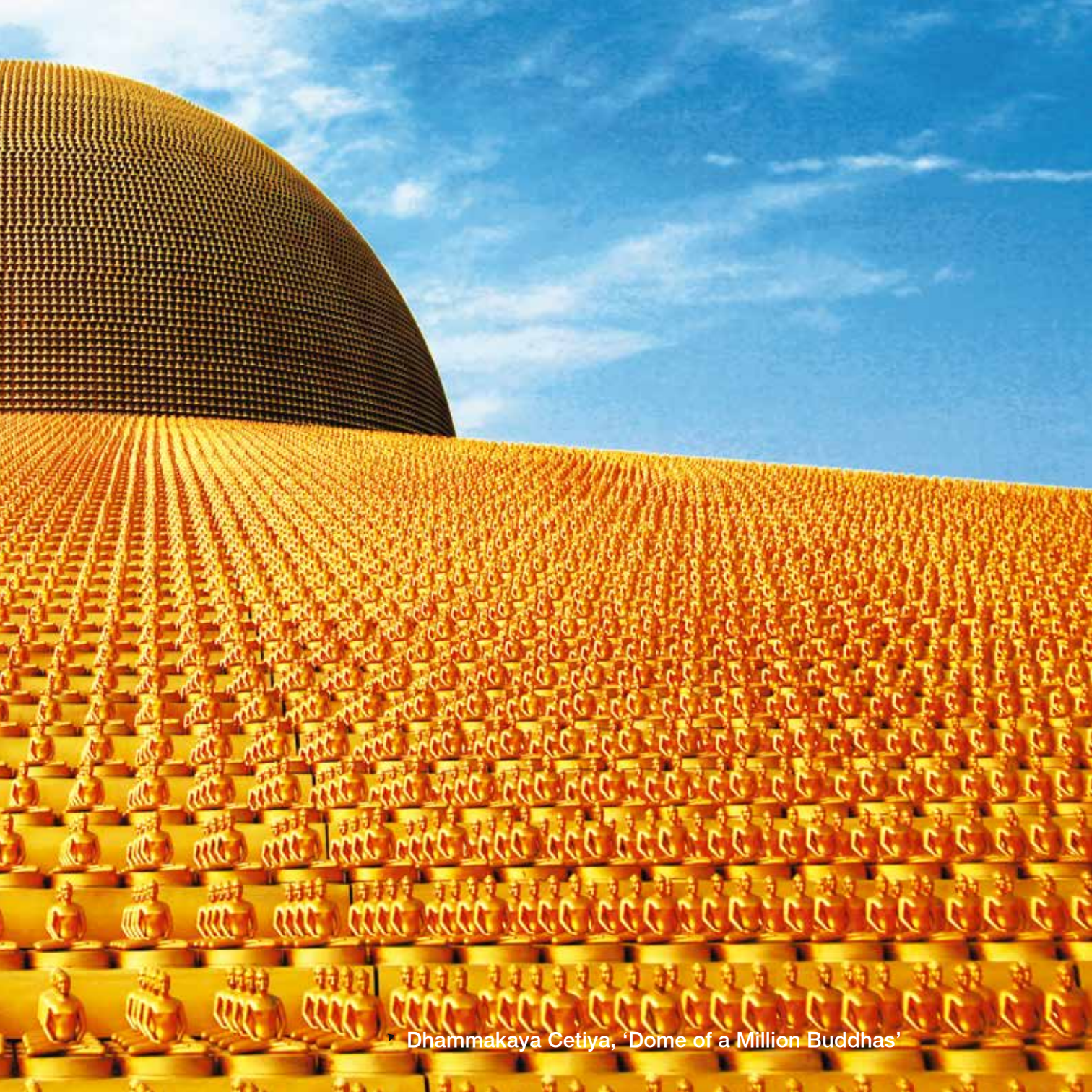
The Dhammakaya Temple is more than just temple buildings. It is a community that exemplifies a culture of peace and non-violence where meditation comes first and material concerns come last.

Established on Magha Puja Day, February 20, 1970, the Temple was created with this ideal: “Build a temple to be a true temple. Build monks to be true monks. Build people to be good people.” It follows the Buddha’s teaching of the Four Favorable Environments, which consist of favorable place, favorable food, favorable people, and favorable Dhamma. Every construction is implemented on the basis of minimum budget, maximum benefit, and longest-lasting.

Principle facilities consist of the world’s largest meditation hall, the Dhammakaya Meditation Hall, which comfortably accommodates 150,000 people in one gathering, and the Dhammakaya Cetiya, the world’s biggest Buddhist monument ever built. The exterior dome surface is enshrined with 300,000 personal Buddha images engraved with the names of individual donors. The interior is enshrined with the Buddha relics, the principal Buddha statute cast in pure silver, and 700,000 personal Buddha images. The surrounding Cetiya grounds have the capacities to accommodate 1,000,000 people.

Other major buildings include the Main Chapel, the Grand Meditation Stadium, the Memorial Hall of Phramongkolthepmuni, Khun Yai Chand Centennial Building, Memorial Hall of Khun Yai Chand, and Khun Yai Chand Refectory.





Dhammakaya Cetiya, 'Dome of a Million Buddhas'





Dhammakaya Buddhas





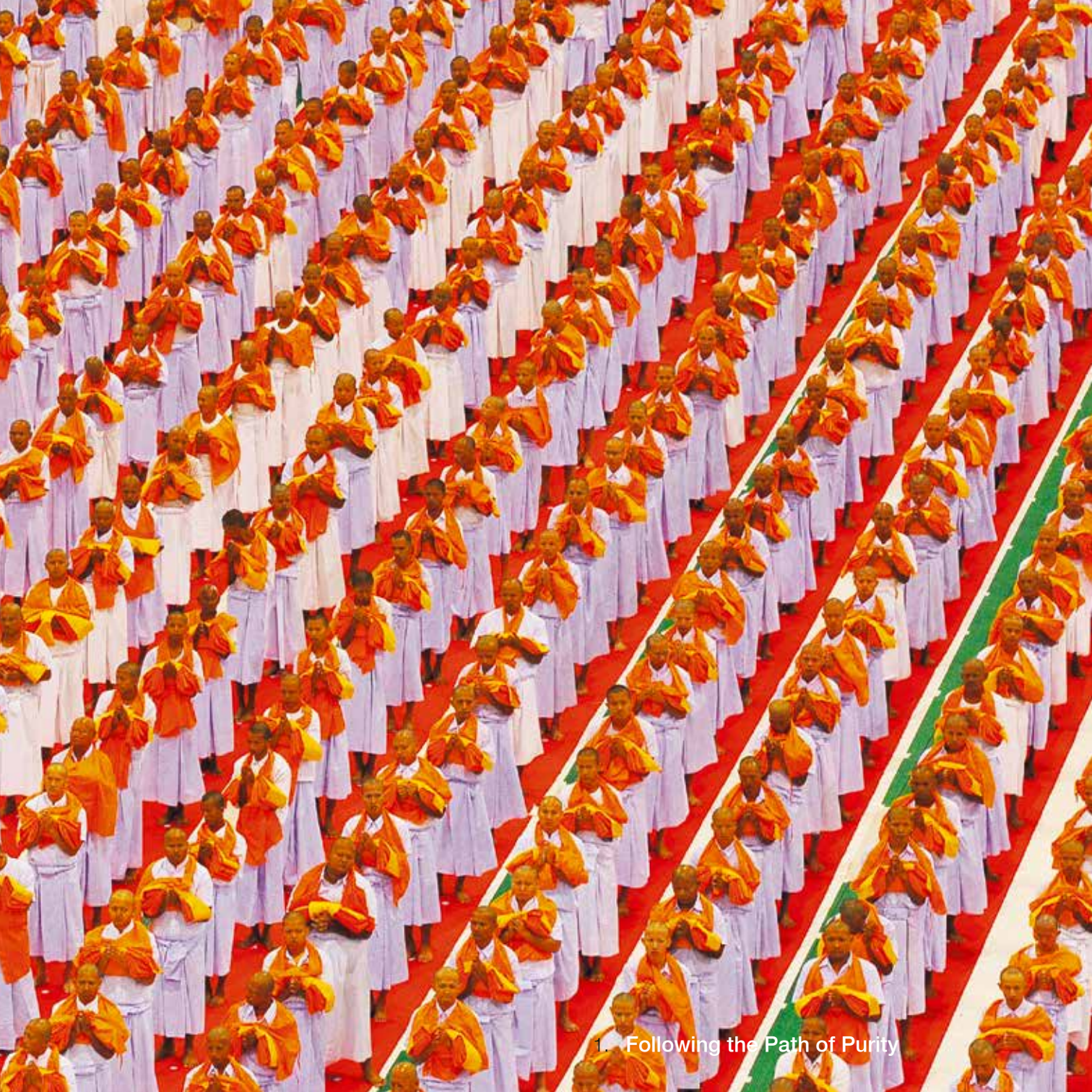
Community that exemplifies a culture of peace and non-violence





Dhammakaya Meditation Hall





1. Following the Path of Purity



พระสงฆ์ ๓๐๐,๐๐๐ รูป ร่วมพิธีถวายผ้าป่าสามัคคี
เพื่อสมทบทุนสร้างพระอุโบสถวัดพระศรีรัตนศาสดาราม

พิธีบวงสรวงและถวายผ้าป่า โดยสงฆ์อุปสมบทภาคฤดูร้อน ๓๐๐,๐๐๐ รูป ทุกหมู่บ้านทั่วไทย
ในวันอาทิตย์ที่ ๒๘ มีนาคม พ.ศ. ๒๕๕๙ ณ วัดพระธรรมกาย กรุงเทพมหานคร



► Mass Ordination



MEDITATION

**The Mind
What is Meditation
Types of Meditation
Center of the Body
Seventh Base of the Mind
The Dhammakaya Tradition**

THE MIND

“When I’m in peace the world is in peace. World peace begins with inner peace.”

Human beings consist of body and mind. The mind is a form of energy which controls and sends signals to the brain, enabling us to think, speak and act in either good or bad fashion. The function of the mind is “to see, to remember, to think and to know”. We must not confuse the “mind” with the “brain”. They are two different entities. The brain has a solid physical form of flesh and blood and is located inside the skull. Although not visible to the human eye, the mind also has a form, but an intangible one, much like electricity or magnetic energy.

The mind is the origin of all actions, good or bad. It is the quality of the mind, or the lack thereof, that makes us good or bad. We need to nurture and control the mind so it can’t control us. In its natural state, when the mind is completely still, the mind is pure and perfect, free of any mental contaminants known as defilements. It is in this state that the mind functions at its maximum potential.

But the mind is always restless and never still. It jumps quickly from one thought to another. A mind that is restless is like stirred water sullied by impurities, losing its clear-seeing quality. Mental impurities cloud our mind like dirt clouds water. It is hard to see with a clouded mind. Meditation is a process that stabilizes and purifies the mind, restoring it to its natural state of clarity.

WHAT IS MEDITATION?

The mind can be compared to an ocean, and momentary mental events such as happiness, irritation, fantasies, and boredom can be compared to the waves that rise and fall on the ocean's surface. Just as the waves can subside to reveal the stillness of the ocean's depths, so too is it possible to calm the turbulence of our mind to reveal its natural clarity. The ability to do this lies within the mind itself and the key to the mind is meditation.

Meditation is a means of mental development and cultivation. It is through meditation that our mind is trained, refined, and perfected. Meditation can be practiced by a lay person for the benefit of a happy life, as well as by a monastic for the attainment of liberation. Meditation is universal. It is not only for Buddhists, but for people of all faiths.

At its core, meditation is about touching the spiritual essence, or the seed of enlightenment, that exists within us all. This spiritual essence is not something that we create through meditation; it is already there, deep within, behind all the barriers, patiently waiting for us to recognize it. One does not have to be religious or even interested in religion to find value in it. Becoming more aware of your "self" and realizing your spiritual nature is something that transcends religion. Anyone who has explored meditation knows that it is simply a path that leads to a new, more expansive way of seeing the world around us.

TYPES OF MEDITATION

Buddhist texts, such as the *Visuddhimagga*¹¹, describe forty different methods of practice. All of them have the same goal: to train the mind to be still and to attain Buddhahood. The practice of meditation can be divided into three types based on how the mind is positioned and the locations of its bases: positioning the mind outside the body; positioning the mind somewhere in the body; positioning the mind at the center of the body.

Positioning the mind outside the body - Most people practice with this method because they are accustomed to the habit of looking outward. The downside is that the images seen tend to be illusionary, not real. This is not the right practice if you wish to achieve the highest level of attainment.

Positioning the mind somewhere in the body - This is keeping your consciousness, your feelings or emotions inside your body. This method is practiced by very few people. False images seldom appear and a wide range of knowledge can unfold, but you won't arrive at the path that leads to the ultimate attainment.

Positioning the mind at the center of the body - This is the method of settling your mind at a point in the center of your body. You train your mind to be perfectly still until it reaches the right balance, at which stage you'll experience inner mental phenomena leading to higher knowledge and bliss. This is the direct practice that leads to the path of liberation.

¹¹ **Visuddhimagga**: Path of Purification

CENTER OF THE BODY

Every object in nature has its center of gravity, the point where it keeps its balance. For example, the center of gravity for a cup is at the center point of the cup; the center of gravity for a stick is at the middle point of the stick, etc. If you place a cup or a stick sideways or off the center of gravity, it will fall because it is out of balance. The center of gravity of all material objects is always located at the center location.

The center of the body is the central point of our stream of consciousness, and also the inner source of happiness and wisdom. It is the natural home of the mind. Its location is two finger-widths above the navel in the middle of the abdomen. This is known as the “Seventh Base” of the mind.

The goal of a meditator is to “tune” or adjust the mind through a single point of concentration and to arrive at the point of balance at the center of the body. When the mind reaches its perfect point of balance, it will have a clear-seeing quality that enables it to penetrate into a higher form of knowledge, insight, and wisdom. Think of the mind as the lens of a camera or the dial of a radio receiver. You can adjust the focus of the lens of the camera to capture the clearest picture; you can tune the dial of the radio to find the right wave-length in order to reach a desired station. The same principle applies to the mind—when the “focus” or “wave-length” of the mind is adjusted to the right point, it becomes the most powerful.

SEVENTH BASE OF THE MIND

The Seventh Base, located at the center of the body, two finger-breadths above the navel, is the natural home of the mind and also the gateway to spiritual attainment. When the mind is settled at the Seventh Base, it is in a safe sanctuary sheltered from mental impurities and outside influences which contaminate its purity. This is where the mind becomes most peaceful and pure, functioning at its best. The Seventh Base of the mind is the beginning point of all goodness. It is the path of purity, the gateway to Nirvana. All Buddhas attained enlightenment through the Seventh Base, at the center of the body.

You should acquaint yourself with the center of the body and develop a habit of keeping your mind there at all times.

THE DHAMMAKAYA TRADITION

The Dhammakaya Tradition is a Buddhist meditation method taught by Phramongkol-thepmuni in the early 20th century. Dhammakaya meditation encompasses both the *samatha* (tranquility) and *vipassana* (insight) levels. The goal at the *samatha* level is to overcome the Five Hindrances¹² and reach a state of one-pointedness known as the ‘standstill of the mind’. Although the meditator may start out with as many as forty different paths of practice, once the Hindrances are overcome, all methods converge into a single path of mental progress which leads into meditation at the *vipassana* level. Dhammakaya meditation embarks on the *vipassana* level at a higher stage than some other meditation schools.

In the Dhammakaya Tradition the level of attainment is usually explained in terms of equivalent inner transcendental bodies—numbering eighteen—which start with the physical human body and the subtle human body and going in successively deeper layers until reaching the Body of Enlightenment known as the Dhammakaya. The process of purification in the Dhammakaya Tradition corresponds with that described in the *Dhammacakkapavattana*¹³ Sutta where the arising of brightness is accompanied by the divine eye, the knowing, the wisdom and the Knowledge.

¹² **Five Hindrances** (*panca nivaranani*): negative mental states that impede success with meditation and lead away from enlightenment. They consist of sensual desire, ill-will, sloth and torpor, restlessness, and doubt

¹³ **Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta**: The Setting in Motion of the Wheel of Dharma, a Buddhist text considered to be a record of the first teaching given by the Buddha after he attained enlightenment.

In the Dhammakaya Tradition, the Buddha's words "He who sees the Dhamma sees the Buddha" are taken literally as seeing one's inner body of enlightenment which is in the form of a Buddha sitting in meditation.

It is believed that the Buddha became enlightened by attaining the Dhammakaya.



When I'm in peace the world is in peace





MEDITATION BENEFITS

MEDITATION BENEFITS

Meditation has been linked to a variety of health benefits. A review of scientific studies identified favorable outcomes of meditation which include: relaxation, concentration, an elevated state of awareness, self-observing attitudes, perceptual sensitivity, good memory, self control, empathy, and good self esteem. Meditation has been linked to a host of biochemical and physical changes in the body that alter metabolism, heart rate, respiration, elevated blood pressure and brain activity. Studies also show that meditation can improve academic and work performance.

Meditation has now entered the health care domain because of evidence suggesting a positive correlation between the practice of meditation and emotional and physical health. Examples of such benefits include: reduction in stress, anxiety, depression, headaches, pain, and blood pressure.

In a Buddhist Discourse on Concentration, *Samadhi Sutta*¹⁴, meditation benefits are indicated and described as follows:

Happy living – We gain immediate happiness by the mere act of letting go from worries and burdens of life. It is akin to unloading a heavy load that one has carried in a long journey. The body feels lighter and the mind is relieved. By training the mind to be free of worries, we find happiness in everything we do and everywhere we go. We

¹⁴ **Samadhi Sutta:** Samadhi, a Pali word which means concentration. Sutta means Discourse.

sleep with happiness, wake with happiness, and go about our daily duties with happiness. This aspect alone is enough of a reason for someone to meditate.

Happiness derived from a mind that is peaceful is durable and lasting. It is a true kind of happiness. Nothing can adversely affect a person whose mind is peaceful even when facing difficult life conditions. The more we meditate, the higher the degree of happiness we gain. This is the kind of happiness that no one can take away from us.

Super knowledge and insight – It is said that less than 10% of the human brain is utilized, while the other 90% is left unused. Although the human brain is far better developed than other species in the animal kingdom, some of our faculties are underdeveloped and imperfect. Unlike some animals, we can't see in the dark, smell or hear from a far distance, nor can we remember things that happened to us a long time ago.

Our minds are clouded by mental impurities like dirt clouds water. Meditation can help purify the mind, perfect our faculties, and bring us transcendental knowledge that has been concealed from us. When we reach a higher point of meditative attainment and our faculties are perfected, we will have clarity that brings forth a higher form of insight and knowledge including the ability to read other people's thoughts, to see the past or the future, or to recall our past lives. Cases of such supra-mundane abilities have been documented throughout time.

Mindfulness and comprehension – Meditation can help us develop a keen sense of perception and awareness. We will become more alert and mindful of everything around. Our body and our mind will become more in sync with one another. We will become more focused and less distracted. Our concentration and memory will improve resulting in better performance in school and at work. We will have better capability to understand and comprehend matters that are complicated. Our success will become easier to attain.

Abandonment of defilements – Defilements are mental impurities caused by greed, anger and delusion. They are the causes of all evil and man's biggest flaw. Greed causes discontent and misguided ambition. It drives people to cheat, steal, lie and to commit crimes. Anger gives rise to hatred and ill will. Delusion gives rise to ignorance, the worse of the three. One who is ignorant lacks the insight and understanding of what is right or wrong and what is good or bad. Many people commit crimes because they don't know that their actions are wrong.

Defilements come from a mind that is impure. Meditation helps to purify the mind and improve its moral quality leading to wisdom and good conduct and behavior. One who has wisdom is aware of the harmful effects of defilements and strives to free oneself of them. The wise practice generosity in order to combat greed; they observe moral precepts to combat ill will, and exercise wisdom to overcome ignorance.

From a spiritual point of view, wisdom gained from meditation will help us become more ethical in our decision-making and also our choice of action. We will become more at ease with ourselves and our surroundings, knowing that our actions are morally sound. Our family life will become more harmonious and we will be a better parent to our children.

All actions, good or bad, originate from the mind. Most social problems originate from a low moral quality of mind. If the people of society practice meditation regularly, the quality of their mind will elevate to its original quality of goodness. Mutual respect and cooperation will increase, crime and civil unrest will be reduced, and the willingness to participate in social good will become more widespread. A society whose people practice meditation regularly will be a peaceful society. World peace begins with inner peace.

The understanding of the truth of nature and the true purpose of one's life will lead one to fulfill one's life along the path of righteousness and purity. A person with a purified mind will not commit any wrongful action. Such a person will be assured of a happy afterlife destination.

Wisdom from Meditation – There are three ways that wisdom is acquired: through learning, thinking, and meditating. Often, what we consider to be the truth today may no longer be true tomorrow. A real “truth” must be timeless; something that was be-

believed to be true ten thousand years ago should still be true today and should remain true ten thousand years from now.

Knowledge gained from meditative insight is based on real truth. There is much more to the secrets of life than can be found in books or lectures, or through one's thinking abilities. Meditative attainment allows us to tap into the "inner knowledge" that reveals our true nature and the spiritual essence that exists within each one of us.

Merit Gained From Meditation Practice – One of the byproducts of meditation is "merit", a form of positive energy that is created whenever a good deed is performed, mentally, physically or verbally. Merit is the basis for all wealth, health and happiness, and the force that causes one to be beautiful, smart, rich, famous, or fortunate. Merit acts like a wish-fulfilling instrument that turns our wishes into reality. It behaves like a magnet that attracts good things to us. Merit also has the ability to purify the mind and improve its moral quality.

Merit is generated through the practice of good deeds, the most significant of which include charitable giving, keeping moral precepts, and mental cultivation through the practice of meditation. Whenever you practice meditation, you generate merit.



World peace begins with inner peace



LUANG POR'S GUIDED MEDITATION

**Achieving Inner Experience
Relaxed and Alert
Seven Bases of the Mind
'Stop' Is the Key to Success
Five Hindrances
How to Make Use of Your Merit**



ACHIEVING INNER EXPERIENCE

(Now that we have paid respect to the Triple Gem, let us close our eyes and begin our meditation.)

Sit cross-legged with your back upright. Put your right leg on your left leg, your right hand on your left hand, with the index finger of your right hand touching against the thumb of your left hand, palms facing up.

Gently close your eyes as if you're about to fall asleep. Close your eyes softly and gently but not completely. Don't strain your eyes or squeeze your eyes shut. Make sure that you close your eyes in a manner that makes you feel relaxed and comfortable.

Relax every muscle of your body. Relax the muscles of your head, your forehead, your face, your neck, your shoulders, your arms, all the way to the tips of your fingers. Relax the muscles of your chest, your torso, your abdomen, your hips, your legs, down to the tips of your toes. Adjust your body so that your breathing and your circulation are completely natural. Adjust your position to minimize any possible aches or pains.

Make sure there are no signs of tension anywhere and that you're closing your eyes the right way. Create a feeling of ease, happiness and purity. Feel that you're entering upon a perfect state of calm with both body and mind. Don't be concerned about anything or anyone. Detach yourself from your job, your business, your responsibilities, your family, everything and anything at all.

Let go of everything. Realize that everything around you exists only for a short time. All things will come to an end. Even the world we live in will eventually expire. Our world has to undergo the cycles of creation, existence, and destruction. We, the mere creatures that live in this world, are no exception. All of us will eventually perish. From the time we left the wombs of our mothers until this present moment, our bodies are constantly going through the process of decay and deterioration, and eventually everything will come to an end. This is the way of the world, whether we realize it or not.

Our bodies are but temporary shelters that function as vehicles for our streams of consciousness to pass through. Eventually we'll find the original source of our consciousness and wellbeing, which is located within our very own body. This is known as the Seventh Base of the Mind. It is located at the center of our body, two finger-breadths above our navel. It was through the Seventh Base of the mind that the Lord Buddha found his divine knowledge and supreme wisdom.

Now, I'd like to invite all of you to settle your mind at the center of your body. Do it with a soft and gentle attention, an attention so soft and gentle that it is like a bird's feather floating down delicately to settle upon the surface of a body of water, floating down so lightly that it doesn't even break the surface of the water. Such is the gentleness of the attention we need. Maintain a state of mind that is bright and clear, lightly, gently, tenderly, continuously, for as long as you can.

How Do You Know Whether You're Doing It the Right Way?

If you're doing it the right way according to the right Knowledge (*Vijja*), your body will feel relaxed and at ease. Your mind will also feel relaxed and at ease. Even if you may not see anything at this stage, you'll feel content with the feeling that you have. You'll feel open, spacious, free and relaxed. This is the first reward that you'll receive when you do this the right way.

Maintain this relaxed state of body and mind calmly, easily, relaxingly and continuously. Soon there'll be more rewards, that is, your body and your mind will feel furthermore relaxed, so relaxed that your body will feel light, spacious and expansive. You'll feel as if your body has dissipated and disappeared into the environment, as if you no longer have your physical body, as if your body has become the air that is subtle and purified, and the stream of happiness and purity has come to take its place. And your body and your mind will become furthermore relaxed.

Your mind will become still, free of all thoughts. This is the kind of feeling that you've never experienced before. The mind that is free of all thoughts is much more pleasing than one that is busy with thoughts. Maintain this state of mind continuously. Soon more of this reward will come your way. Your body will feel even lighter and more spacious. Here, you'll begin to understand the words "light body-light mind" in a more meaningful way. You'll want to hold on to this pleasant state of mind for as long as you can.

After having reached this increased state of stillness, your mind will become even more still and consistent (unlike the stillness that comes and goes), so still that the stillness seems “firm and solid”. But it is the feeling of “solid” stillness that is open and spacious, not confined. And your mind will become even more gentle and delicate. You’ll now understand the word “gentle” in a more meaningful way. This is the inner experience that exemplifies the meaning of the words “solidly still and gentle”.

Continue to maintain this state of mind. Soon brightness will emerge to shine upon your new life, removing you from the old life that is half-awake and under the spell of illusion. Now is the life of one who knows, one who is awake, one who is joyful. This inner light is far more satisfying than any other kind of light.

It is remarkable that we don’t see darkness when we close our eyes. As our mind continues to stay calm and still the inner brightness will gradually turn brighter and brighter, from a kind of faint, predawn light to the golden brightness of a morning sun that shines radiantly upon a new day

This is a cool, refreshing inner light that comes from the Dhamma within. All of us have this inner light within us, but it has been obscured by the Five Hindrances¹⁵ (sensual desires, ill will, etc.) that we engage ourselves in.

The images you see will evolve progressively. Observe them with a calm and stable state of mind without getting excited, the same way you'd passively observe the sun rising at dawn. The presence of inner light, the light of Dhamma, is an ordinary occurrence that happens when one's mind is still. It is a reward for one who practices meditation regularly and in the right way.

So, at this beginning stage, learn how to settle your mind in the right way. Maintain your mind softly, gently, lightly relax. Keep your mind radiant and refreshed.

Please continue your meditation in silence.

¹⁵ **Five Hindrances:** Sensual desires, ill will, apathy and inertia, restlessness and agitation, doubt and uncertainty





RELAXED AND ALERT

Sit cross-legged, with your right leg over your left leg, your right hand over your left hand, palms facing up. Place both hands gently on your lap. Let the tip of your right index finger touch the tip of your left thumb. Close your eyes gently, as if you're about to fall asleep. Don't strain your eyes or squeeze your eyes shut. Relax every muscle in your body. Adjust your position. Make sure that your breathing and your circulation flow naturally.

Relaxation is the heart of meditation. Maintain your mindfulness along with your relaxed mood when you meditate. Mindfulness and relaxation must go hand in hand. Regardless of whatever method of meditation you choose to practice, you want to make sure that you're both relaxed and alert at the same time.

Reflect on what our great teacher has taught us. Our Great Master Luang Pu¹⁶ Wat Paknam¹⁷ advised us to visualize a crystal sphere and recite the mantra “*samma arahang*”¹⁸ at the same time. Visualizing and reciting the mantra at the same time is a way to maintain your mindfulness. But mindfulness has to be observed in a way that is relaxing while also feeling alert at the same time. Please don’t overlook this.

Mindfulness and relaxation must go hand in hand, from the beginning to the end. This is the way to help your mind become still more easily. Once your mind is at a standstill state you’ll be able to see the inner Dhamma Sphere¹⁹. It is this simple. Don’t meditate with a mind that is gloomy or restless, or you’ll get nowhere. Make your mind spacious, radiant, light and refreshed.

The sitting position mentioned herein is the standard meditation posture which our Great Master has replicated from the all-knowing, the Dhammakaya within. In his natural position the Dhammakaya sits cross-legged in a meditation posture, with his right leg over his left leg, his right hand over his left hand, with the tip of his right index finger touching the tip of his left thumb. If you place both of your hands close to your body your back will be upright. This is the standard meditation posture, a perfect position that you should adopt.

¹⁶ **Luang Pu**: Thai word for Reverence Grandfather.

¹⁷ **Luang Pu Wat Paknam**: Phramongkolthepmuni

¹⁸ **Samma Arahang**: Pali word which means “The Noble One who has properly attained enlightenment”, or “Pure state of mind achieved in a proper way”

¹⁹ **Dhamma Sphere**: A crystal clear sphere that appears at the center of one’s body during meditation

But in your practice at home you can choose any position you wish, as long as it is comfortable. You can sit with your back against the wall, with your legs hanging down, or with your legs sideways, whichever is right for you. Maintain your mindfulness along with your relaxed mood. Make sure that there is no tension in any part of your body.

Relaxing Your Mind

After you have properly adjusted your sitting position, now gently turn your attention to relaxing your mind. There are many techniques to help relax the mind. The Lord Buddha has taught us ten different ways of relaxing our minds known as the “Ten Recollections²⁰” methods, i.e., Recollection of the Buddha, Recollection of the Dhamma, Recollection of the Sangha, etc. Following one or more of these methods can also help calm your mind.

Some of you may prefer to use something nice and serene from nature to help you relax your mind or to inspire you to meditate. This is also acceptable.

But the most efficient way is to empty your mind and keep it still. Act as if you’re the only one in the world with no attachments to anything or anyone, with no concerns about your family, your work, your study, and your everyday life, as if you’re in an outer space with no living beings or anything around. Look at the world as an empty space, void of people, animals, or any objects. This is the shortcut to help relax your mind. The state of relaxation you achieve here is a preliminary state of relaxation in which you feel neutral—not feeling happy or feeling unhappy.

²⁰ **Ten Recollections:** Recollection of the Buddha, Recollection of the Dhamma, Recollection of the Sangha, Recollection of Morality, Recollection of Liberality, Recollection of Deities, Contemplation on Death, Contemplation on Body, Contemplation on Breathing, Contemplation on the Virtue of Nibbana

Maintain a neutral state of mind. Keep your mind empty, spacious, calm and still, in a way that makes you feel happy and relaxed, consistently, without rushing. Soon you'll arrive at a deeper and more relaxed state. Your goal at this stage is to simply relax your mind. You can achieve this by keeping your mind light, spacious and still, feeling like you're floating in space. Keep being relaxed and alert. Soon what you used to think was difficult will indeed become easy to attain.

Inner Dhamma

We used to perceive that the inner Dhamma was something profound and difficult to attain, that one had to put in an immense amount of effort and had to do it in a remote place in order to achieve it. But now, we have found the way. Now, we know that attainment of inner Dhamma, though profound, is not something too difficult to accomplish after all—simply maintain the state of mind that is alert, relaxed and still. The word “Dhamma” has many meanings. More than fifty meanings have been mentioned in the Buddhist Scripture, but in general it means “cleanliness, purity and goodness”.

Some places mention that Dhamma has a physical form in the shape of a crystal clear sphere. Some mention that Dhamma is the Body of Truth, the Dhammakaya—a crystal clear, transcendental body that is as clear as a crafted diamond, situating in the center of our body. When our mind is happy and relaxed and is in a standstill state, it is possible to see our inner Dhamma.

The Great Master Luang Pu Wat Paknam has discovered the inner Dhamma, which coincides with the teaching of the Buddha. The inner Dhamma indeed has the shape of a crystal clear sphere and is perfectly round. Its size ranges from that of a star, a full moon, to the size as big as the midday sun.

He further discovered that when the mind is relaxed in a standstill state, while resting at the center of the Dhamma Sphere, inner transcendental bodies will emerge, one after another: from coarse human body to subtle human body, from subtle human body to divine human body, from divine human body to Form Brahma body, from Form Brahma body to Non-form Brahma body, from Non-form Brahma body to Dhamma body, layer after layer, successively.

These transcendental bodies already exist within each and every person. It is not something that man has created or made up. When our mind is fully relaxed and refined and is at a standstill state, we'll be able to see these images.

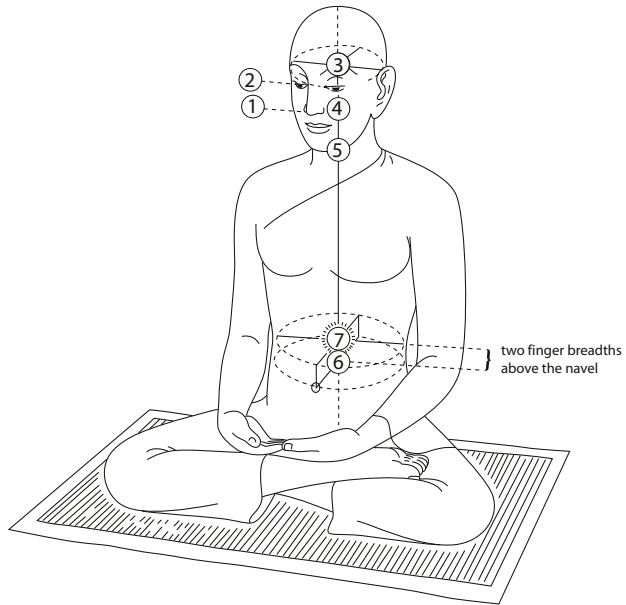
Each and every one of us has our inner Dhamma regardless of who we are, what nationality we belong to, what language we speak, what faith we believe in. Our task is simple: to keep our mind still, in a relaxing manner, calmly and continually. Soon we'll be able to attain our inner Dhamma.



SEVEN BASES OF THE MIND

Now let us refresh the Knowledge that the Great Master Luang Pu Wat Paknam has taught us about the Seven Bases of the mind.

- The first base is at the rim of the nostril, on the right side for men and on the left side for women.
 - The second base is at the inner corner of the eye, on the right side for men and on the left side for women.
 - The third base is at the center of the head.
 - The fourth base is at the roof of the mouth.
 - The fifth base is at the upper center of the throat (above the Adam's apple).
 - The sixth base is at a point in the middle of the abdomen, the meeting point of an imaginary line between the navel through the back and the line between the two sides.
 - The seventh base of the mind is two fingers' breadth above the navel. This base is the most important point in the body. It is the very center of the body and the point where the mind can come to a standstill.
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SEVEN BASES OF THE MIND

The first to the sixth bases are the paths, or the resting points, of the mind. The Seventh Base is the home of the mind. This is where the mind should be maintained at all times.

You'll be able to see the Seventh Base when your mind is perfectly still. However, as a beginner whose mind may not be still yet, just be aware that it is located in the middle of your stomach, two finger-breadths above your navel. Or simply imagine that it is somewhere in the middle of your abdomen, somewhere that is easy and comfortable for you to imagine.

Visualizing a Meditation Object

The Great Master gave us a good technique for visualization: to imagine a crystal clear sphere that is totally flawless, as clear as a polished diamond, the size of your iris, as your object of meditation. Bring your mind to settle at the center of this crystal clear sphere at the Seventh Base of the mind. Recite the mantra “*samma arahang, samma arahang, samma arahang*” as you visualize. Make sure that the mantra and your visualization go hand in hand. Maintain this state of mind continuously. This is the method that our Great Master has taught us.

Some of you may find it difficult to visualize the crystal sphere. If this is the case, you may choose an object that is easiest for you to imagine, something that you’re more familiar with, such as an apple, an orange, a dumpling, a bread bun, or whatever you may feel most comfortable imagining.

A gentleman imagined a bread bun as his object of meditation because he sold buns for a living. Before long that bread bun turned into a crystal and appeared at his Seventh Base. From that day on, his bread buns were selling like crazy. Keep visualizing, and soon, whatever object you visualize will progress to become the Sphere of Primary Path²¹. Use whatever object you wish as your object of meditation: a diamond, a pearl, a precious stone, or anything at all. But make sure you visualize in a nice and easy way, continuously. You may choose to recite the mantra along with your visualization or choose not to. This is up to you.

²¹**Sphere of Primary Path:** the beginning path to liberation which emerged in the form of a sphere as experienced during meditation

If Visualization is Not for You, Then You Don't Have to Visualize

Visualization may not be for everyone. Some of you may feel tense or uncomfortable using this method. Or you may put too much effort into making it happen, to rush it, or try to squeeze out the image. If this happens, then this method may not be suitable for you. In this case, you can forego the method of visualization. Instead, simply relax your mind at the Seventh Base, or its whereabouts. Relax your mind quietly with a happy mood. You may feel like reciting the mantra "*samma arahang*" to appease your mind, or you may just want to keep your mind still without reciting the mantra. Either way is fine. Still your mind quietly, calmly and comfortably. Relax all your muscles and your senses. Your mind will gradually become spacious, light and radiant.

Darkness Is Your Friend

Darkness is not an enemy that stops you from attaining the Dhamma. Darkness is your friend if you know how to take pleasure in it. Don't be discouraged if you don't see any images. Stay with the darkness in a relaxed manner.

The darker it is the closer it is to brightness. Sooner or later the brightness will appear. Stay with the darkness in a happy and joyous mood without questioning whether or when brightness will appear. Get acquainted with the darkness using a calm and peaceful mind. Don't become anxious or disappointed.

Feel that you're sitting quietly in a night that is pitch black. If it appears like 1 a.m., then accept it as 1 a.m. No matter how badly you want to rush, the sun is still not ready to come out at this hour. Even if it is 2 a.m., 3 a.m., 4 a.m., or 5 a.m., still it is not yet the right time for the sun to show up. It is only when the dawn is breaking that the sun will come out to give its bright, shining, golden rays to the world. If you just sit quietly and calmly without worrying about anything, soon your mind will become peaceful, your wishes will be fulfilled, and the brightness will appear on its own.

Light of Purity

Don't get excited when you see the bright light, or wonder where the light is coming from, or whether you have left the lights on. Be unaffected by it. Feel happy that there is brightness. It is natural for the inner light to appear when the mind is stilled and purified, the same way it is natural for the golden rays of sunlight to appear with every breaking dawn. This is the light of purity. It is your reward when you embrace the Dhamma and train your mind to be still.

Once you realize that the appearance of the bright light is a natural occurrence, you won't feel excited, the same way you don't feel excited seeing the sun rising in the morning. By being calm your mind will become even more still. Soon you'll see the source of the inner light, and one after another, the transcendental bodies will emerge.

Continue to maintain a calm and radiant mind until you attain the inner Dhamma.



‘STOP’ IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS

Stopping the mind (from wandering) is more important than anything else. Whatever images that appear in your meditation, observe them impassively without engaging your mind with them. This will help your mind to remain still. The purpose of your practice is aimed at stilling your mind, not at seeing images or seeing bright light.

The Great Master Phramongkolthepmuni emphasized these words persistently: “‘Stop’ is the key to success”. He hardly spoke of anything else but this. This is what he said: “We must be able to stop our mind (from wandering), whether it is in darkness, in brightness, at the center of the sphere, at the center of the inner body, or at the center of the Buddha image.” His aim is only for one thing: stopping the mind. Adopt this maxim in your practice: “‘Stop’ is the key to success”.

Luang Por Dhammajayo's Aspiration

After Luang Por Dhammajayo took the yellow robe to become a Buddhist monk he resolved that he would preach only the subject of stopping the mind. Over the past forty plus years, his teachings consisted primarily of stopping of the mind. Everything else was secondary. He put his heart into making people understand the importance of stopping of the mind, because he knew 'stop' is the key to success.

Between the age of sixteen and nineteen, Luang Por managed to read every volume of the Tipitaka as well as any important books on Buddhism he could lay his hands on. After reading all these books, he came to the conclusion that reading alone wasn't enough. It is like reading a map without actually making the trip—you miss the excitement of the journey and the experience of getting to the place. Reading Dhamma books without actually practicing Dhamma and meditation is the same way. You know only the theory, but you lack the actual experience, the sensation, the touch, the feel, the taste and the flavor of the practice.

So he decided to seek out well-known meditation teachers available at that time and apprenticed with them. He practiced every kind of meditation technique known to him. Finally, he met the famed meditation master, Khun Yai Chand Khonnokyoong. It was through Khun Yai that he learned the importance of stopping the mind, that 'stop' is the key to success. He realized then that stopping the mind was the only way to achieve inner experience. 'Stop' is indeed the key to success. Learning from text books and listening to lectures won't get you there.

Cultivate your mind by training it to be still. This was the essence of the method taught by Khun Yai. The more still the mind is the more expansive and penetrative it will become, penetrating deep into the source of inner knowledge that only a still mind can reach. This is a different kind of knowledge, more profound than any knowledge one can learn from reading and listening. You can read all the textbooks you want, but until you're able to achieve a standstill state of mind, you'll never understand Dhamma in such a profound manner that you want to embrace it as your refuge. This is why 'stopping' the mind is so essential.

It is Important to Start the Right Way

I wish all of you, both here and overseas, give importance to training your mind to be still. Begin your practice the right way. Even if you may not see the result as quickly as you wish, in the long run you will find greater satisfaction. You may not see images, or see only images that are blurry, but if you're able to feel light, relaxed and expansive, it is the sign that you're heading toward the right direction. Seeing bright light or images is a by-product of a still mind. It will happen naturally when the mind comes to the right point of balance and become still. This is the result of practicing the right way. It may sound like a slow progression, but in fact it is quite fast.

Some of you may be quick in seeing a Buddha image or a sphere right away, but the image appears stiff and lifeless, and it gives you discomfort. This may have gone on for as long as ten or twenty years without you making any further progress or witnessing any inner experience. So you get tired of meditation and even have a misgiving about anyone who says he or she is able to reach high attainment. In this case, it looks like a speedy achievement, but in fact it is slow.

But if you begin your practice in the right way, even if the result may appear slow but in fact it is not slow at all. Although there's no shortcut in the way of practice, in due time the shortcut will present itself.

So, train your mind to be still. Find happiness and joy every time you practice, or at least get to the point where you no longer feel tense, uncomfortable, or bored. If you're able to experience even a brief moment of happiness each time you practice, it is the sign that you are doing it the right way. Your inner experience will improve with time.

Meditate today like a kindergarten student. Take it easy and follow the instruction without reluctance, and you'll see good results. When you reach a certain level of attainment, you'll feel open, spacious, serene and peaceful, and be able to access the source of happiness. You'll feel refreshed like walking near a waterfall, hearing the sound of the water and feeling the cool mist touching your body; or like walking on a cool, shallow stream on a hot sunny day. Experiencing even a tiny dose of happiness that rejuvenates your spirit is an indication that you're on the right path.

Keep practicing with the right method. If it takes you half an hour to get to the point of contentment, try to reach that same point each time. Your speed of getting there will improve as you go—from half an hour to 15 minutes, to 5 minutes, to 1 minute, to the very moment you close your eyes.

When you arrive at that point your progress will step up. Your mind will become more refined, the time to get there will be shorter, and the images will emerge more frequently and more clearly. You'll feel increasingly blissful each time a new inner image emerges (bright light, Dhamma spheres, inner bodies, inner Buddhas). Maintain this state of contentment as best as you can.

When you get to this state of achievement, you'll no longer feel bored, annoyed or agitated. Instead, you'll find great joy every time you meditate. But if you feel unnatural, or have to use too much effort, it means you're not doing it the right way. In which case, get up to wash your face, then come back again to restart. Remember the instruction given you. Follow the instruction full heartedly like a kindergarten student.

I often mentioned that, as soon as you finish kindergarten you become a Ph.D., that is, when you practice the right way. And the right way of practice is to 'stop' the mind continually without letting it be interrupted by anything. Even when images appear, don't let them interrupt the continuity of your still mind. Doing this will further improve the stability and subtlety of your mind. At which state, more new phenomena will appear and more Buddha images will emerge, giving you a supreme state of blissfulness. Keeping the mind still is your primary goal. Seeing images is secondary.

Practice comfortably and easily. Don't worry about the days and time that have passed, or will pass. Focus your attention on the present, and your progress will speed. Meditate with happiness and joy.



FIVE HINDRANCES

Close your eyes softly and gently. Relax every part of your body. Don't let any part of your body be tense.

Leave the habit of using your eyes to look into your tummy to see images. Close your eyes gently and roll your eyes upward. This will help correct the habit of using your eyes to look inside.

There is no need to use your eyes at all. The appearance of bright light or images have nothing to do with your eyes at all, and it is impossible for your eyes to see images inside your body. Everything happens because of your mind, not your eyes. Your eyes are used to see at objects outside, not objects inside.

Your body will tell you whether you're doing the right thing or not. If your eyebrows twist, or your eyes, your forehead and your body become tense, or you feel tedious, discouraged, and the time seems to pass very slowly, this means something is not right. Don't force yourself to continue. Adjust your way and restart from the beginning. Be willing to restart several times until you know how to adjust your body and your mind.

Once you know how to do it, everything will become easy, or at least not difficult. Work to overcome this problem. If you know the right method you can overcome the problem.

The Dhammakaya, the inner bodies, the spheres, the bright light, all exist within us. But they are obscured by darkness, by what we call hindrances. These couple with the wrong way of practice makes matter worse.

Five Hindrances

Hindrances are negative mental states that impede success in meditation. They consist of:

Sensual Desire – craving for pleasure of the five senses: sight, sound, smell, taste and touch. When you're involved with any of these things your mind is attached to them instead of to yourself.

Ill will – feelings of malice toward others. These come in the forms of moodiness, irritation, dissatisfaction, anger, hatred, vengefulness, reprisal, a negative outlook, and bad intentions.

Doubt – lack of conviction or trust; having misgiving or hesitation. Examples: questioning whether you or others can really achieve a meditative attainment, whether inner Triple Gem really exists, whether mental objects are real, etc.

Apathy and inertia – discouragement and lethargy. Feeling discouraged, depressed, dejected, having a lack of spirit. Feeling drowsy, sluggish, weary and lack of energy, etc.

Restlessness and agitation – disturbance, troubling thoughts, worrying, inability to calm the mind.

The Five Hindrances are major obstacles that impede meditation. It is the darkness that obscures our mind like dark clouds obscuring the shining sun causing the sun not to be seen. Our mind is obscured by these Five Hindrances causing us not to be able to see our inner brightness, inner spheres, inner bodies, and the Dhammakaya.

But this darkness cannot obscure a mind that is stable and still. If we're able to remove our mind from the commotions, from involvement with all the things around us including our family, our job, our study, our responsibilities, then we can defeat the hindrances.

First, bring your mind back to the center of your body. If you know that you won't be restless you can just let your mind rest there without visualizing a meditation object. But if you're the restless type, then you want to visualize an object as a way to indicate the whereabouts of the Seventh Base. You can visualize a crystal sphere, a crystal Buddha, or the image of Luang Pu. They represent the Triple Gem: the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Sangha. They are the objects of purity that serve as an anchor for our mind to hold on to.

Contemplate on the Center of Your Body “Twice”

Keep your awareness at the center of your body constantly, with or without visualizing the image. Do this frequently, and your mind will grow accustomed to it. Follow the homework given to you.

Muslims pray to their God five times a day. They contemplate their mind toward their God five times a day, every day. As for us, we need to contemplate our mind only “twice”: once when we open our eyes, once when we close our eyes; or once when we breathe in, and once when we breathe out. That is, to contemplate our mind to settle at the center of our body, to bond with the Triple Gem. You can start with imagining any of these three objects first: the Buddha, the sphere, Luang Pu’s image. When your mind settles, all three will come together in the same place, like putting three different objects in the same pocket. For example, you may choose to visualize a crystal sphere (representing the Dhamma), when your mind settles and becomes still, you’ll still arrive at the Triple Gem. All you need is to begin the right way.

If you do it right from the beginning to the end, your journey will be smooth and easy. All you have to do next is to keep doing it repeatedly. Do it regularly, repeatedly, constantly, and you'll get better and better.

The first step is to bring your mind back inside. You have to practice diligently and correctly in order to succeed. Don't think you're so special that you can do it any time you want and still succeed.

Realize that you're still an ordinary person, one who's still immersed in defilements, one who's subject to the grip of Mara. The only difference is that you now know the path to liberation. So, you must keep on practicing every day, diligently, without getting discouraged. One day soon you'll be able to reach your goal of attainment.

You have to put in the necessary effort for whatever you do. Even in simple things like eating a meal, you have to find food, to cook, to put it in your mouth, to chew, to swallow. If you get tired of doing this and stop eating, then you know what will happen. It takes so much effort to feed your body; it takes no less effort to feed your mind. Be mindful of this fact and please give enough effort for your practice.

Every time you close your eyes to meditate, even if you see only darkness and feel tense and restless, you still gain merit. Your merit will accumulate each time you sit down to meditate. One day your merit will become full and you'll find success. The

only way you won't succeed is when you don't practice. If you do practice, you'll eventually succeed. It doesn't matter how fast or how slow you see the bright light. It matters how often and how consistent you practice.

You can train your mind to be still the way you want it if you practice with the right method and do it in a nice and easy way, calmly, gently and tenderly. Sometimes you may have to allow yourself to be sleepy, or your mind to wander. Don't be annoyed by it. If your mind wanders, open your eyes. If you're sleepy, sleep. If your body aches, adjust your body. Keep on adjusting until you prevail. There will be a time when all your hindrances are subdued and the darkness disappears.



CALLING UPON YOUR MERIT

Keep your mind still. Reflect on all the merits that you have accumulated throughout your countless past lifetimes all the way to the present lifetime. You may not remember all the merits you have performed in your past lifetimes, but if you channel your mind to think about these merits, your mind will connect to your pool of accumulated merits and converge to become a merit sphere located at the Seventh Base of your mind.

Your mind is a form of energy that has its own intrinsic quality to make things happen. To give an example, if you think of someone whose words or actions have upset you in the past, even though the incident has been long gone and the person is not even aware of your thought, your mind will pull in these negative things that happened in the past to upset you in the present. Same is true with merits. If you reflect on your merits frequently and repeatedly, even though they may have taken place in your past lifetimes, the intrinsic quality of your mind will have the ability to connect to all these merits, from past to present, and transform them into a crystal clear sphere to appear at the Seventh Base of your mind.

Merit Sphere

A merit sphere is a perfectly round and flawless sphere that is utterly bright and clear. It is as clear as, or even clearer than, a polished diamond. It is as bright as, or brighter than, a midday sun. Its brightness is soothing and pleasant to look at, more soothing and pleasing than the light of a full moon.

The merit sphere is the source of all success and happiness. From the time an ordinary person performs his virtue until the time he becomes an enlightened one, it is the force of merit that sustains him. Merit is the cause of all positivity and prosperity. It is the positive energy that enables one to have pleasant appearance, physical strength, good health, good wealth, freedom from illness, long life, good personal quality, intelligence and abilities.

Merit is the force behind every success. It is the power of merit that helps one achieve success in a field that he or she is not even educated in. It is also the force of merit that helps one succeed easily in life without facing obstacles. Merit is the driving force that propels one to be reborn in the happy realm, to possess heavenly wealth, and to achieve spiritual attainment that leads to Nibbana.

Merits are the fruits of good deeds. Good deeds performed through generosity, morality and mental cultivation all bring about merit. The fruits of good deeds converge to become a bright merit sphere affixed to the center of a person's body. It is beneficial to reflect on your merits frequently. They will come to your assistance at the times of need.

The opposite of merit is demerit. Demerit is the negative force that causes you problems, hardships and obstacles in life. By reflecting regularly on your merit, the positive force of your merit can neutralize or lighten the negative effect of your demerit. So, develop a habit of recalling your merit sphere at the center of your body regularly. Use it as the starting point in training your mind to become still and to connect to the Seventh Base.

By regularly reflecting on merit, you're blocking out the opportunity for demerit to enter. This will allow your mind to become radiant, happy and joyful, and be pleased that you have utilized your time productively in pursuit of virtues the same way the wise, the Noble Ones, the Arahants and the Buddhas have done in the past.

Reflect on your merit sphere, easily and comfortably. Develop a feeling that you have a bright merit sphere residing at the center of your body. It doesn't matter whether the sphere may appear clearly to you or not. Don't try too hard to make the image appear clearly to you. This will stress you out and will inhibit your progress.

Your objective is to still your mind at the Seventh Base by reflecting on your merits in a nice and easy way. Whether the sphere will appear clearly to you or not depends on how refined and how still your mind is. The more refined your mind is the more clearly the image will appear; the less refined, the less clear.

Reflect on your merit at all times, during all activities. Soon your mind will become more and more refined and the merit sphere will appear more clearly to you until it becomes utterly clear at the center of your body. At which time you will feel like your physical body has disappeared and only the center of your body remains.

Your progress has a lot to do with your practice. The more you practice the better you get. Treat this as an important mission in your life. Constantly reflect on your merit and the Seventh Base of the mind. Let your mind get acquainted with the Seventh Base until it becomes second nature.

Reflect easily and comfortably. Relax your eyelids, adjust your sitting position, relax your body, and create a feeling of stillness, tenderness and comfort. This is all you have to do. It is the only method that will allow you to see the merit sphere clearly. And your mind will be drawn inward to reach the inner Triple Gem. There is nothing simpler than this that will allow you to fulfill your goal in life for being born a human.

Many of us have dedicated our lives in pursuit of things that are not worthwhile. We give importance to things that are difficult and problematic, things that give us pressure, yet we fail to recognize the importance of stopping our mind to achieve inner peace. There is nothing more simple and worthwhile in fulfilling our happiness than keeping our mind stable and still. 'Stop' is the key to success. It is the key to supreme satisfaction, to true happiness, purity, mind power, wisdom, kindness, love and compassion for all beings.

Please continue to settle your mind. Keep your mind still, softly, gently, comfortably and relaxingly. Reflect on your merit sphere. Repeat the mantra "*samma arahang*" continuously until the appropriate time. Please meditate in silence.



HOW TO MEDITATE



DHAMMAKAYA MEDITATION

The Dhammakaya meditation method was initiated in Thailand 96 years ago by the Great Master Phramongkolthepmuni, famously known as Luang Pu Wat Paknam. It is one of the most popular meditation techniques practiced by Buddhists and non-Buddhists around the world. The method is simple, easy, and effective. Everyone can learn how to do it and can achieve inner peace and happiness that you may never know existed.

“Dhammakaya” is a Pali word which means “Body of Enlightenment”. The term appears in many places in the Buddhist scriptures of Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana (Tibetan) schools. The uniqueness of the Dhammakaya meditation is that it teaches about the center of the body as the natural home of the human mind as well as the inner gateway to enlightenment. The stiller the mind is at its natural home, the deeper the happiness one experiences.

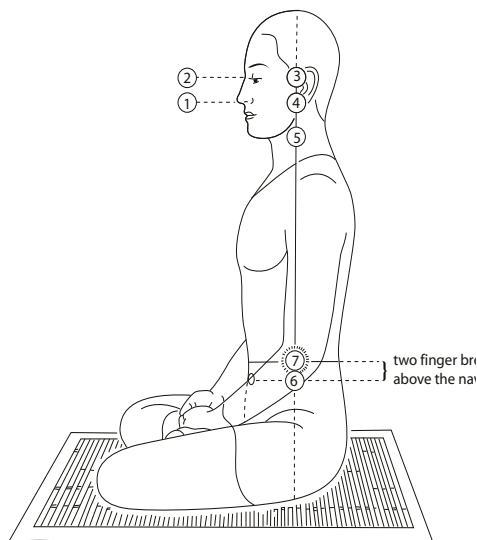
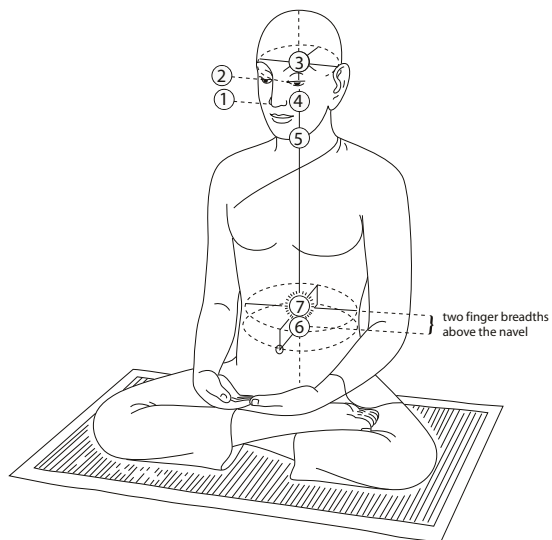
Dhammakaya meditation also has a moral impact on the mind. A person who meditates regularly will become gentler, kinder, and more peaceful.

Step-by-step instruction:

1. The sitting posture, which has been found to be the most conducive for meditation, is the half-lotus position. Sit upright with your back straight, cross-legged with your right leg over the left one. You can sit on a cushion or pillow to make your position more comfortable. Nothing should impede your breathing or circulation. Your hands should rest palms-up on your lap, and the tip of your right index finger should touch your left thumb. Feel as if you were one with the ground on which you sit. Feel that you could sit happily for as long as you like.
 2. Softly close your eyes as if you were falling asleep. Relax every part of your body, beginning with the muscles in your face, then relax your face, neck, shoulders, arms, chest, trunk and legs. Make sure there are no signs of tension on your forehead or across your shoulders.
 3. Close your eyes gently but not completely. Stop thinking about any worldly things. Feel as if you were sitting alone; around you is nothing and no one. Create a feeling of happiness and spaciousness in your mind.
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Before starting, it is necessary to acquaint yourself with the various resting points or bases of the mind inside the body.

- The first base is at the rim of the nostril, on the right side for men and on the left side for women.
 - The second base is at the inner corner of the eye, on the right side for men and on the left side for women.
 - The third base is at the center of the head.
 - The fourth base is at the roof of the mouth.
 - The fifth base is at the upper center of the throat.
 - The sixth base is at a point in the middle of your abdomen, the meeting point of an imaginary line between the navel through the back and the line between the two sides.
 - The seventh base of the mind is two fingers' breadth above the navel. This base is the most important point in the body. It is the very center of the body and the point where the mind can come to a standstill.
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4. Feel that your body is an empty space, without organs, muscles or tissues. Gently and contentedly rest your attention at a point near the seventh base of the mind at the center of the body. Whatever experience arises in the mind, simply observe without attempting to interfere with it. This way, your mind will become gradually purer and inner experience will unfold.

5. If you find that you cannot dissuade the mind from wandering, then your mind needs an inner object as a focus for attention. Gently imagine that a bright, clear, crystal sphere, about the size of the tip of your little finger, is located inside at the center of the body. Maybe, you cannot imagine anything, but later, you'll be able to see a crystal ball with increasing clarity. Allow your mind to come to rest at the center of the crystal ball. Use the subtlest of effort and you'll find that the crystal ball becomes brighter and clearer.

6. If you find that your mind still wanders from the crystal ball, you can bring the mind back to a standstill by repeating the mantra, "*Samma-arahang*" silently, as if the sound of the mantra is coming from the center of the crystal ball. Repeat the mantra over and over again without counting.

7. Don't entertain thoughts in your mind. Don't analyze what's going on in the meditation. Allow the mind to come to the standstill. That is all that you need to do. If you find that you cannot imagine anything, repeat the mantra "*Samma-arahang*",

silently and continuously in the mind. If you are not sure about the location of the center of the body, just know that anywhere in the area of your abdomen will do. Don't be disappointed if you find your mind wandering. It is only natural for beginners. Make effort continuously, keep your mind bright, clear and pure, and in the end, you will achieve success.

8. Keep repeating the mantra. Eventually the sound of the mantra will fade away. At that point a new bright, clear, crystal sphere will arise of its own accord. This stage is called "*pathama magga*" (primary path). At this stage the shining crystal sphere is connected firmly to the mind, and is seated at the center of the body. You will experience a great happiness that you have never known before. With a perfectly still mind focused at the center of the crystal sphere, it will give way to a succession of increasingly purer transcendental inner bodies, until it reaches the "Body of Enlightenment" known as "*Dhammakaya*". This is the highest meditative attainment which enables the practitioner to achieve super knowledge and supreme happiness.



TEN DAILY HOMEWORKS

These Ten Daily Homeworks are designed to help improve your meditation results. Practice it daily and you'll find that not only would your meditation results become better, but also your overall wellbeing and happiness.

1. Upon waking, immediately reconnect your attention with the center of the body.
 2. Before getting up, take a moment to reflect on the fact that you're fortunate to have survived another day, that death is inevitable and will come upon you one day. Spread loving-kindness to all living beings in the world.
 3. Throughout the day create the feeling that you're united with the mental object at the center of the body.
 4. Take one minute of every hour to still your mind and think of the mental object at the center of the body.
 5. Keep your awareness at the center of the body while conducting other activities throughout the day.
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6. Build a happy environment around you with a smile and speaking in an endearing way.
 7. Make the effort to see the virtues in yourself and others. Rejoice in others' merits.
 8. Keep daily notes of your meditation experience in a diary.
 9. Before going to sleep, reflect on the good deeds you have done throughout the day.
 10. Maintain your consciousness at the center of your body before falling asleep.
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GLOSSARY

Attaining Dhamma: meditative attainment; a state of absorption in meditation where the mind achieves super insight and knowledge; knowing and seeing according to the truths.

Attainment of Dhammakaya: a state of absorption in meditation where the mind achieves super insight and knowledge, having penetrative insight into the reality of life and the world; seeing and becoming one with one's own inner Body of Enlightenment.

Bhikkhu: Buddhist monk

Buddha: 'Awakened One', one who is fully enlightened and who has realized Nibbana without the benefit of a Buddha's teaching in the lifetime in which he attains it. Those who attained enlightenment by following the Buddha's teachings are called Arahants or Arahats. The name Buddha is a title, not a proper name, meaning 'awakened', thus 'enlightened'. Buddhas appear at vast intervals of time. There are countless numbers of past, present and future Buddhas.

Cetiya: Pali word for pagoda

Defilements (Pali, kilesa): mental impurities consisting of greed, anger, and delusion; hindrances or contaminants that cause beings to perform undesirable deeds.

Dhamma (Skt. Dharma): the truth; the natural condition of things or beings; the law of their existence; the ethical code of righteousness; the whole body of religious doctrines as a system; the Teachings of the Buddha; the eternal truth that the Buddha realized, his verbal expression of that truth, and the phenomena or elements that comprise reality.

Dhamma Sphere: A crystal clear sphere that appears at the center of one's body during an advanced stage of meditative absorption.

Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta: The Setting in Motion of the Wheel of Dharma, a Buddhist text considered to be a record of the first teaching given by the Buddha after he attained enlightenment.

Dhammakaya: Body of Enlightenment; Body of Truth.

Dhammakaya meditation: a profound meditation technique initiated by the Great Master, Luang Pu Wat Paknam.

Dhammakaya Tradition (vija Dhammakaya): also referred to as Dhammakaya Knowledge, is a method of meditation founded by the Great Master Phramongkol-thepmuni, former Abbot of Wat Paknam, one of the most famous Buddhist temples in Thailand. According to Dhammakaya Tradition, it has been established that each

individual person possesses 18 transcendental inner bodies, which can be reached through advanced stages of meditative absorption. Once a person reaches the Dhammakaya, the purest of all transcendental bodies, the person achieves a higher form of insight and knowledge not available through ordinary means.

Five Hindrances (*panca nivaranani*): negative mental states that impede success with meditation and lead away from enlightenment. They consist of sensual desire, ill-will, sloth and torpor, restlessness, and doubt

Four Noble Truths (Noble Truths of Suffering): the Buddha's first and most important teaching. It explains the reality and nature of suffering, the origin of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path to freedom from suffering.

Kamma (Skt, Karma): action or deed of body, speech and mind. Every willed action brings future consequences, including future rebirths; the consequences of past deeds largely determine one's general life situation. Under the Law of Kamma, by which all creatures must live, a person bears the consequences of his own actions. Bad actions cause bad consequences and good actions bear good consequences.

Khun Yai: a Thai word for grandmother

Klong: a Thai word for canal

Luang Por: a Thai word which means Venerable Father, an informal way of addressing a senior monk.

Luang Pu: a Thai word which means Venerable Grandfather, an informal way of addressing an elderly senior monk; referring to the Great Master Phramongkolthepmuni, founder of the Dhammakaya Tradition.

Luang Pu Wat Paknam: Phramongkolthepmuni, founder of the Dhammakaya Tradition

Mara: evil, both as a concept and as a personification. In Buddhist cosmology, Mara is a supra-natural being responsible for hindering people from performing meritorious deeds. Mara can also mean obstacles for doing good deeds.

Merit: result of good deeds; a positive energy, or good kamma that is created whenever a good deed is performed. Merit is generated in three major ways: charitable giving, observance of moral precepts, and meditation.

Merit Sphere: a transcendental sphere representing merit, that lies within each person; the more merit accumulated, the larger the merit sphere.

Mundane merit: merit gained through performance of good deeds, such as sweeping the temple, helping the poor, making charitable contributions.

Nibbana (Skt, Nirvana): the state of ultimate happiness, the happy condition of enlightenment, the highest spiritual attainment. This is not the sense-based happiness of everyday life; nor is it the concept of happiness as interpreted by Western culture. It is an enduring, transcendental happiness integral to the calmness attained through enlightenment. Once a person has attained Nibbana, he has reached the end of the cycle of rebirths—the final and total release from cyclic existence—never again to be subject to rebirth. Nibbana is a supramundane state that cannot be expressed by words and is beyond space and time. This is the state of perfect enlightenment realized by Buddhas and Arhants. Those who have gained this realization no longer accumulate karmic consequences and will no longer be reborn into samsara, the cycle of existence, when they die.

Noble Eightfold Path: the Path to end suffering, consisting of Right View, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration.

Pacceka Buddha: a Buddha who has attained Enlightenment by himself but does not teach others or lead others to Enlightenment; a private Buddha.

Pali: an ancient language used in India, now no longer an active language. The original Buddhist scriptures were written in Pali. Pali texts are used by the Theravada school of Buddhism.

Parami: a Pali word meaning transcendental virtues, perfected virtues, or Perfections. Parami is a spiritual perfection achieved by a Bodhisatta (Buddha-to-be) on his path to Buddhahood, or by those who are determined to attain enlightenment. Virtues are practices which must be fulfilled by all aspirants who wish to free themselves from suffering. What distinguishes the Bodhisatta from other aspirants are the degree to which virtues must be cultivated and the length of time they must be pursued.

Perfections (*Parami*): perfected virtues; transcendental virtues; spiritual perfection. Transcendental virtues cultivated as a way of purification, purifying kamma and helping the aspirant to live an unobstructed life, while reaching the goal of enlightenment.

Precepts (*sila*): moral principles that form the framework of Buddhist ethical conduct and the baseline of one's virtue.

Primary Path: beginning stage of meditative attainment leading to more advanced stages of absorption.

Right View: view and wisdom in accordance with the Truths, consisting of the following beliefs: generosity is virtuous; it is necessary to honor those worthy of honor; it is good to be hospitable; actions produce consequences (Law of Kamma); a child has debt of gratitude to his parents; this world and the next exist; there will be afterlife and rebirths; there are heavenly and hell beings; monastics are able to purify themselves of all defilements (to become enlightened).

Samadhi: a Pali word for concentration, one-pointedness of mind, mental discipline; a state of stillness of mind.

Samatha: tranquility

Samma arahang: Pali words which mean “The Noble One who has properly attained enlightenment”, or “Pure state of mind achieved in a proper way”

Samsara: the cycle of constant rebirth in which all beings are trapped as a result of their intentional deeds (kamma); ocean of birth and death; eternal wandering; the wheel of cyclic existence.

Sanskrit: another ancient language used in India; Buddhist scriptures in Sanskrit are translated from the Pali language; Sanskrit texts are used by the Mahayana school of Buddhism.

Seventh Base of the mind: natural home of the mind, located two finger-widths above the navel in the middle of the abdomen. |

Sphere of Primary Path: the beginning path to liberation which emerged in the form of a sphere as experienced during meditation

'Stop': stop in this sense means stopping the mind from wandering, or stop doing bad deeds. The key to success in meditation is to still the mind and stop it from wandering.

Sutta: Buddhist Discourse

Ten Recollections: ten different ways of relaxing one's minds using the recollection method, namely, the Recollection of the Buddha, Recollection of the Dhamma, Recollection of the Sangha, Recollection of Morality, Recollection of Liberality, Recollection of Deities, Contemplation on Death, Contemplation on Body, Contemplation on Breathing, Contemplation on the Virtue of Nibbana

Tipitaka (Skt, Tripitaka): Buddhist scripture. Tipitaka means the Three Baskets. They consist of the Basket of Discipline (Vinaya Pitaka) – rules and regulations of the Order of monks and nuns; the Basket of Discourses (Sutta Pitaka) – discourses concerning social, moral, philosophical and spiritual significance; and the Basket of Ultimate Things (Abhidhamma Pitaka) – dealing with psychological and philosophical aspects of the Doctrine, the four ultimate things, i.e., mind (citta), mental properties (cetasika), matter (rupa) and Nirvana.

Transcendental merit: merit acquired through mental cultivation and the practice of meditation, considered to be more potent than mundane merit.

Vijja: Knowledge gained from the “Eye of Dhamma”; it is the Knowledge that enables one to rid oneself of ignorance.

Vipassana: insight meditation

Visuddhimagga: Path of Purification

Wat: a Thai word for Buddhist temple.

Wat Paknam: one of the most famous Buddhist temples in Thailand where the Great Master Phramongkolthepmuni used to be the Abbot.

Wise (*pundita*): A wise is someone who has wisdom. Being wise is not the same as being educated. A wise can be a person who is highly educated or one with no formal education at all. He is righteous and ethical by nature. A wise is someone who possesses the Right View and the ability to separate right from wrong, good from bad. A wise is the complete opposite of a fool.

Wrong View: view that is in contrast with the Truths, for example, having the notion that generosity is not good, parents are not worthy of gratitude, the Law of Kamma does not exist, there is no afterlife and rebirth, heavens and hells do not exist, etc.





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Changing the World One Person at a Time

The teachings of Luang Por Dhammajayo have inspired millions of people around the world to perform good deeds and to cultivate their minds through meditation. His campaigns for social reform have motivated thousands of people to give up smoking, drinking, gambling and other forms of vice. His innovative teaching methods and communication skills have made Buddhism more visible and accessible to the general public than anyone in history. Today, Wat Phra Dhammakaya that he cofounded has become the world's largest Buddhist temple with hundreds of centers around the world. His home country Thailand is now the world's center for Buddhism.

This book takes you into the life and achievements of Luang Por Dhammajayo and the Dhammakaya Knowledge, a profound meditation method that he teaches.

