

Luang Por Jamnian Silasettho

An Abridged Biography

In Reverence to Our Teacher

Luang Por Jamnian Silasettho

1936 – 2026

An Abridged Biography

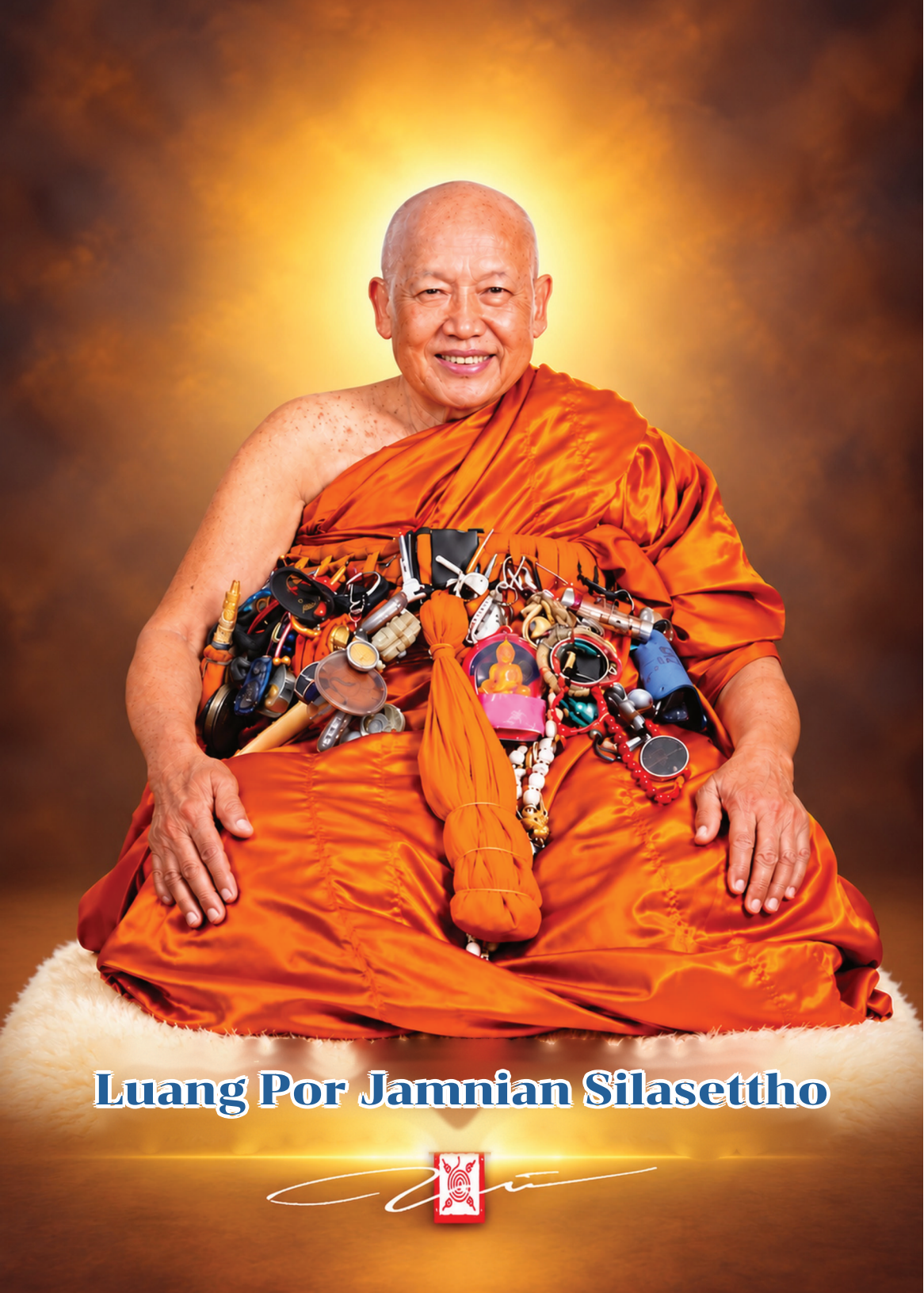
A Note on Romanization

In this edition, Luang Por's monastic name is spelled *Silasettho* (Pali: *Sīlaseṭṭho*), in keeping with the standard romanization of Pali accepted by scholars and in wide general use. It therefore departs from the spelling "Seelasettho" found in other books about Luang Por published previously.

The monastic names of the other monks in this book are likewise given in romanized Pali.

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Luang Por Jamnian Silasettho



Homage to the Triple Gem

This book is humbly offered in veneration

to the Most Venerable

Luang Por Jamnian Silasettho

the light illuminating the path of Dhamma

for his disciples throughout the world

His Disciples



Preface

The editorial committee, made up of disciples of the Most Venerable Luang Por Jamnian Silasettho in the United States and Taiwan, has received the kind support of Phra Thammawachiraphutthakhom (Chao Khun Chai Purindako) to publish this abridged biography of Luang Por, who was like the light illuminating the path of Dhamma for his disciples, monastic and lay, in Thailand and abroad. It is offered as a gift of Dhamma to Buddhists and to all who seek the Dhamma throughout the world.

This biography has been prepared in four languages: Thai, English, Chinese, and Indonesian. It draws on two sources: a chronology of Luang Por's life compiled and published by Professor Lin Chung-An and team of Taiwan, and a draft biography in which Tsai Tse-Sheng and his team revised, expanded, and added to that chronology to make it more complete.

Luang Por was a great elder who dedicated his body and life to the Triple Gem. For many decades, until the end of his life, he shared the heart of the Buddha's teaching with the people of Thailand and of the world. His teachings were

simple yet profound, and could truly be put into practice in daily life.

On the occasion of his passing on August 18, 2026, his disciples bow in remembrance of his boundless kindness and offer their deepest grief with love, reverence, and the utmost gratitude.

Should this book, *Luang Por Jamnian Silasettho: An Abridged Biography*, bring benefit or growth in any way, the editorial committee humbly offers that merit in veneration of the Most Venerable Luang Por Jamnian Silasettho, who will dwell forever in the hearts of his disciples.

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Part One · The Life

Luang Por Jamnian Silasettho



1936 – 2026

An Abridged Biography

Chapter 1

Birth and Family Lineage

Luang Por Jamnian Silasettho was a great elder of southern Thailand, revered by his disciples and by devout people everywhere. He was born on May 1, 1936, in Ban Pak Nakhon, Tha Rai Subdistrict, Mueang District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province. His father was Phet Chonsakhon, and his mother was Ta Sae-Phu.

His paternal grandfather, Yantra Chakara, was born into a family of Brahmin astrologers in Nepal. His paternal grandmother, Pheng, came from a family of astrologers in Thailand. His maternal grandfather, Yi, was a Chinese man from Hainan Island who was kind-hearted and devoted to Dhamma practice, while his maternal grandmother, Phrom Lim, was a Christian from Laos. Luang Por thus descended from four lineages: Nepalese, Thai, Chinese, and Lao.

His father was a traditional village healer, and both of his parents were devoted to meditation practice in the Buddhist tradition.

Together they had seven children:

1. Phra Mani, born in 1930, who lived as a monk in Malaysia (now deceased)
2. Mrs. Jamrat
3. Mrs. Jampi, formerly a mae chee (nun) at Wat Tham Suea
4. Phra Jamnong, born in 1934 (now deceased)
5. **Luang Por Jamnian Silasettho, born in 1936, who later founded Wat Tham Suea in Krabi Province**
6. Mrs. Jamnan
7. Jamroen, a boy who died just 14 days after birth



Chapter 2

Early Life

Luang Por Jamnian was trained to meditate from the age of three or four. His father had once been a monk, spending twelve rains retreats as a wandering ascetic (*dhutanga*) monk before leaving the robes to raise a family. He was an expert astrologer who could combine meditation with astrology to read a person's destiny with great accuracy, and he also knew how to treat people believed to be afflicted by black magic. The sick came to him for herbal remedies, and his reputation spread far and wide.

When his father examined his son's horoscope, he perceived that the child had gathered great merit in past lives and would one day become a leader and a source of strength for Buddhism, someone no one could harm. Yet care was needed: if he fell in with bad company, he could become a powerful bandit who killed people and whom no one could ever catch.

For this reason, Luang Por underwent rigorous training from early childhood. Because the family home stood beside a canal near the sea and they often traveled by water, he

began learning to swim at just one year old. His father threw him into the water with two coconuts to cling to and let him struggle his way back to the bank on his own. Within a few days he could swim.

To make him brave and fearless, his father sent him into canals where crocodiles lived and into the sea where tiger sharks swam. He also trained him in kasina meditation and in gazing at the sun, and passed on the knowledge he had gained as a wandering monk: protective incantations, astrology, and traditional herbal medicine.

1941

In 1941, at the age of five, he sat in meditation through the whole night until his mind became calm and luminous, and he tasted profound joy in *jhana*, meditative absorption. From then on he loved meditation, and he would often slip away to meditate in a cemetery.

1942

In 1942, at the age of six years and four months, he lost his mother, who died seven days after giving birth to her youngest child. His father was so grief-stricken that his moods became unstable, so Luang Por suggested that he find a stepmother to help care for the household. His stepmother taught him to read and write, and through determined effort he learned to read, write, and do arithmetic within just 14 days.

He learned protective incantations from Ta On, his stepmother's father, and began learning Buddhist chants from his own father.

As he approached the age of seven, he resolved to become a novice, seeing that the monastic life would give him more time to meditate, to touch inner brightness and happiness, and to be free of the grief of losing his mother. But his father would not allow it, wanting him to help support the family first.

From the age of eight, he took over his father's responsibilities: reading horoscopes, treating illness with herbs, helping those believed to be afflicted by black magic, fishing, and earning wages by carrying money to the bank, all to support his family and relatives.

At the same time, he studied the "Five Dhammas for Purifying the Mind" with a wandering monk, to uplift his mind and his life, and learned the teaching of the "Four Principles of Loving-Kindness" from Ta On, a lay Dhamma practitioner. He resolved to follow these teachings for the rest of his life.

At the age of nine, he began studying the Tipitaka, the Buddhist scriptures, at Wat Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan in Nakhon Si Thammarat, about 15 kilometers[1] from his home, a round trip of some 30 kilometers. Sometimes he

1. The published Chinese edition gives about 20 km, as recounted by Luang Por himself.

caught a ride by car or boat, but usually he ran. Later he also studied at nearby Wat Nari Pradit, which kept a complete set of the Tipitaka. He studied the Tipitaka on his own for some twelve years, until he was old enough for full ordination.

From the age of seven, he caught crocodiles[2] to sell to help support his family, until about the age of ten, when he stopped after elders warned him that this was creating bad karma. After that he went to sea as a fisherman. By the age of 18 he owned two fishing boats with a crew of about twenty. During this time he also took an interest in science. He was bitten by a sea snake at 17, and at 18 a small monkey bit his finger.

Luang Por had promised his father that he would not ordain until his father had passed away. In 1957, when Luang Por was 21, his father, whose health had been failing since 1956, died. After the funeral, Luang Por made a firm decision to ordain. He told his elder brother, "Take whatever property and land you want, and give all the rest to the poor. I will carry no money with me." Then he declared:

"I will never again live the household life.
I will ordain, and I will never disrobe."

2. The published Chinese edition says he caught and sold "eels," not "crocodiles."

Chapter 3

Ordination and Intensive Practice



1957

On July 2, 1957, just two weeks after his father's death, Luang Por Jamnian was ordained in the ordination hall of Wat Nari Pradit, Tha Rai Subdistrict, Mueang District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, with Phra Khru Kadoem

of Wat Buranaram as his preceptor and Phra Khru Praditsuwannawat, abbot of Wat Nari Pradit, as his ordination teacher. He meant to set out on wandering practice from his very first day as a monk, but the abbot would not allow it, so he promised to stay and attend the abbot at the monastery for seven years. Throughout that time he kept his monastic duties strictly, passing the elementary Dhamma examination (*Nak Tham Tri*) in his first rains retreat. By day he taught the novices and received lay visitors; by night he went alone to meditate in the cemetery. He studied many approaches to meditation with accomplished teachers: watching the rise and fall of the abdomen, discerning mind and matter (*nama-rupa*), the Dhammakaya method, and recitation of "Buddho."

In his fourth rains retreat, he also learned earth and wind kasina from Luang Por Daeng Dhammajoto, former abbot of Wat Choeng Khao in Bacho District, Narathiwat Province, a forest wandering monk renowned for his mastery of kasina. Luang Por Daeng never stayed long in any one place; at times he would suddenly appear, and at times he seemed to vanish the moment one glanced away.

1964

In 1964, at 28, having completed the seven years he had pledged at Wat Nari Pradit, Luang Por went to Wat Chai Na in Nakhon Si Thammarat to study insight meditation

(*vipassana*) under Ajahn Paen Dhammadharo (1913–2005), a great vipassana master of the Theravada tradition. Before he began, Ajahn Paen asked him to give up all the sorcery, healing, and astrology he had learned since childhood and devote himself to insight meditation alone. Luang Por agreed and kept his word. Ajahn Paen taught the Four Foundations of Mindfulness in thorough detail according to the Mahasatipatthana Sutta, and explained the Noble Eightfold Path with remarkable depth.

In his first rains retreat at Wat Chai Na, Luang Por made a decisive breakthrough in his practice: he discovered the "Middle Way." Seeing how earnestly he practiced and how deeply he understood the teachings, Ajahn Paen, when he had to return to build Wat Sai Ngam Thammaram in Suphan Buri Province, entrusted Luang Por with serving in his place as meditation teacher to the monks, novices, and nuns of Wat Chai Na.

1966

Around 1966, at the age of 30, while still residing at Wat Chai Na, Luang Por vowed not to lie down or recline for three years: to make amends for once having slept through a chance to bless lay supporters who had come specially to take leave of him, and to give all his time to serving others. He later extended the vow to seven years, and then to nine.



Chapter 4

Compassion amid Conflict

1966

In 1966, when Luang Por Jamnian was 30, political conflict broke out in southern Thailand, especially in Surat Thani Province, a major stronghold of communist insurgents. He himself became the target of several assassination attempts. In November of that year, at the invitation of the deputy abbot, Phra Samu Sombat Pabhassaro, he moved from Wat Chai Na in Nakhon Si Thammarat to Wat Sukhonthawat in Ban Na San District, Surat Thani, to help villagers who were living under threat. Some were killed by officials, others by the insurgents, and on some days clashes left several people dead.

He did everything he could to protect the villagers from unjust killing and to show the right way to those who had gone astray through misunderstanding.



Before moving to Wat Sukhonthawat, around June 1966, he had gone to pay respects to Por Than Khlai Wajasit (1876–1970), a deeply revered elder monk at Wat Chan Di in Nakhon Si Thammarat, and asked to learn a supramundane method of consecration whose power would never fade. After receiving the complete transmission, Luang Por made sacred objects for the first time, to help save people's lives, and gave them out to more than 500 lay supporters at Wat Chai Na.

After moving to Wat Sukhonthawat, he had small black-and-white photographs of himself set in plastic frames and consecrated them exactly as Por Than Khlai had taught. He then gave them out to people in the danger zones on every

side, without distinction: villagers, insurgents, police, and soldiers alike. The first batch of 2,000 went to women and children, so that they could keep them as a guarantee of safety and a source of courage. Everyone who received one came through unharmed.






These became known as the “Protection Guarantee” amulets

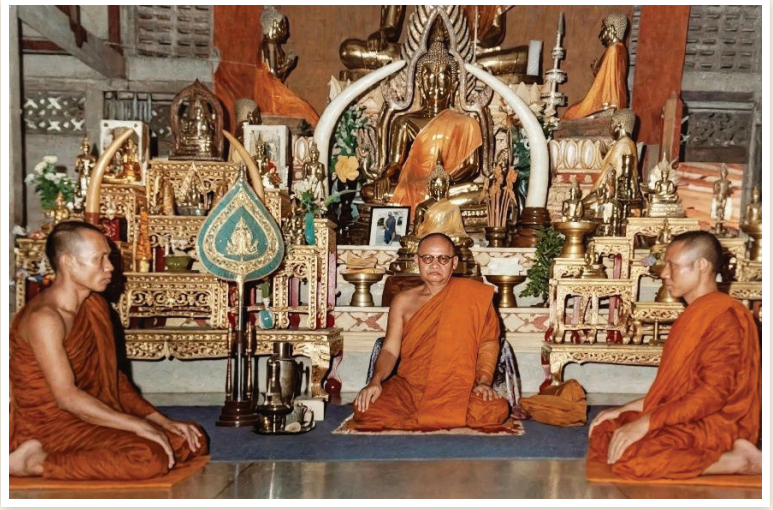
1969–1974

Between 1969 and 1974, after the end of each rains retreat, Luang Por set out on wandering practice six times, traveling through many provinces of the North and Northeast as far as Chiang Rai, and paying respects to nearly 200 teachers. From time to time he also visited Buddhadasa Bhikkhu (1906–1993) at Suan Mokkhaphalaram in Surat Thani, whom he had first met in 1965.

1970

In March 1970, at the age of 34, Luang Por and Phra Samu Sombat Pabhassaro led a group of monks and lay supporters to Wat Nong Pah Pong in Ubon Ratchathani to

> pay respects to Luang Por Chah Subhaddo (1918–1992), staying there three days and two nights. He was deeply inspired by Luang Por Chah's way of practice, balanced in both Dhamma and Vinaya. When he asked permission to bring his monks, novices, and nuns to practice there, Luang Por Chah instead advised him to return to the South to carry on his work of easing the conflict between the insurgents and their supporters and the authorities, especially in Nakhon Si Thammarat. So he returned to Wat Sukhonthawat.



Phra Heet Bhuripanno, one of his disciples (now deceased), begged him to remain as a refuge for the people of

the South, in keeping with the words of Por Than Khlai. When Mae Chee Im Viraso once asked him, “When your merit is spent, Por Than, whom should I go to?” he replied, “When I am gone, there is a young monk with even greater merit than mine, Ajahn Jamnian, who will be a refuge for the people of the South.”

1971

In 1971, although Luang Por was already 35, people often mistook him for a novice because of his slight build, and some advised him to put on weight so that he would look more mature.



So Luang Por decided to change his appearance. He gave up the simple diet of a forest monk for rich, fatty food, while fixing his mind on the word "fat." Within just 30 days his weight rose from 45 to 60 kilograms.[3]

1972

In 1972, when Luang Por was 36, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu suggested that Jack Kornfield go to see him at Wat Sukhonthawat. Kornfield later wrote about him in the book *Living Buddhist Masters* (1977), later reissued as *Living Dharma*, which honored Luang Por as one of twelve leading contemporary vipassana teachers from Thailand and Myanmar, and the youngest among them.

For nearly ten years, from 1966 to 1975, Luang Por helped to resolve the conflict within the country. Between 1966 and 1969 alone, some 20,000 insurgents and supporters in the area around Wat Sukhonthawat laid down their arms and returned to society. In the end, he persuaded insurgents and their supporters elsewhere in the South to lay down their weapons and accept amnesty from the Thai government.

3. The published Chinese edition does not include this account of his gaining weight.

Chapter 5

The Founding of Wat Tham Suea

1975

In 1975, at the age of 39, while Luang Por Jamnian was seeking a new place for Dhamma practice, he had a vivid vision of a place in Krabi Province ringed by mountains, with a cave called “Tham Suea” (Tiger Cave) and several other caves. He felt a deep bond with that place, as though he had known it before. He sent Phra Heet to search for a site for a monastic community, and one of the places Phra Heet found was Tham Suea.





When Luang Por arrived at Tham Suea, he found that it matched his vision in every detail. On May 25, 1975, he brought 53 monks and novices and 56 nuns from Wat Sukhonthawat to establish an insight meditation center there. At first, Mr. Pring Amonkul donated 8 rai of land (about 3 acres); the grounds later grew to more than 200 rai (about 80 acres). Dwellings, practice areas, and religious buildings were built little by little, until ten years later, in 1985, it was officially recognized as a monastery.

1976

In May 1976, at the age of 40, he began building a concrete-and-stone stairway to replace the old wooden one leading down into the valley within Wat Tham Suea; it was finished in just three months. The 1,237-step stairway to the mountain summit was built later, overseen by Phra

> Ajahn Witoon Acarasubho,[4] one of Luang Por's principal disciples.



4. The published Chinese edition gives his name as "Phra Ajahn Witoon Punnami."

Chapter 6

Dhamma beyond Borders

1976

In October 1976, after the rains retreat, Luang Por Jamnian made his first journey abroad, to Malaysia, invited by Phra Ajahn Thong Mengsam (now deceased), a Thai monk of Chinese descent and abbot of Wat Tham Ratsami (光炽岩), to radiate loving-kindness to the spirits of those killed in a landslide in Ipoh.



Later, on October 22 of the same year, while staying there, he met His Holiness the 16th Gyalwa Karmapa, Rangjung Rigpe Dorje (1924–1981), at Wat Tham Ratsami. The meeting helped him see the connection between causes and conditions in the past and his future mission of spreading the Dhamma. From then on, Luang Por was invited to teach in Malaysia every year.

Luang Por traveled widely to carry out his religious work, training and teaching meditation at temples and meditation centers, and at government agencies that invited him.

1975

Around 1975, at the age of 39, people began to say that he was an arahant. So he took to carrying sacred objects in his shoulder bag and hanging them all around his body; together with his everyday personal belongings, they weighed some 60 kilograms. He did this to loosen people's attachment to the idea of him as an arahant, and it became his trademark from then on.



1978

In 1978, at the age of 42, he traveled to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, at the invitation of Phra Ajahn Thong of Wat Sai Khao, to perform a ceremony dedicating merit to those who died in a disaster at a supermarket, and to teach the Dhamma.

1988

In 1988, at the age of 52, lay supporters of a Thai temple in Alaska invited him to the United States to advise on the temple's affairs and management. He was later invited to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)

in Houston, Texas, to help deal with a problem said to involve “abnormal energy.”



1994

In July 1994, at the age of 58, he was invited by Jack Kornfield to teach at Spirit Rock Meditation Center in California for the first time, leading a full day of practice. From 1995 to 2007 he returned to the center every July to lead a full day of insight meditation.

1995–2003

Between 1995 and 2003, he traveled to Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland, Germany, and France to build bonds of Dhamma friendship.

1996

In 1996, when he turned 60, after some 21 years of carrying sacred objects, he cut their weight by half, from about 60 kilograms to about 30.



Chapter 7

Pilgrimage and the Buddha Relics

2005

In 2005, at the age of 69, Luang Por Jamnian traveled to Nalanda, India, to support Phra Ajahn Witoon Acarasubho in building a road to the Black Buddha image. He returned the following year to make a solemn aspiration before the Black Buddha.





Around that time, he came to know Ruth Denison (1922–2015), a renowned meditation teacher in Southern California. He admired her practice and kindly accepted her as a student of the Dhamma at her request. In his Dhamma talks he often spoke of her as a fine example of one who has found liberation through realizing the Dhamma.

2007

In 2007, when Luang Por was 71, a delegation representing him traveled to Taiwan, with Phra Krerkpong Tejadhammo and Phra Ajahn Ngam Ratananano coordinating with Phra

Duangjai Pannadharo of Wat Zhongli Yanwararam.

2007–2008

During 2007–2008, Luang Por arranged for relics of the Buddha to be enshrined in the chedi at Wat Tham Suea, and for a portion to be enshrined at the Buddha Park of Ravangla in Sikkim, India. He also contributed 2 million baht toward building the sacred site. This was part of a relic-exchange project among twelve countries: India, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, China, Taiwan, and South Korea.



Chapter 8

Teaching the Dhamma around the World

2009

In May 2009, at the age of 73, Luang Por Jamnian went to teach in Taiwan for the first time, at the invitation of Phra Prasert Nanaviro, a Thai monk at the Lotus Pond Dhamma Hall in Keelung. From then on Professor Lin Chung-An coordinated the invitations, and Luang Por returned to teach in Taiwan every year until July 2018. After that he stopped traveling, shortly before the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2019.



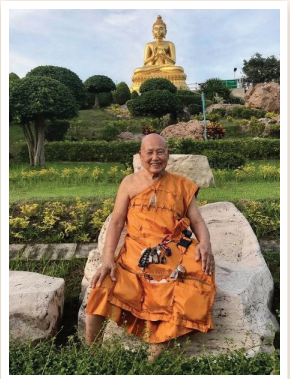












Earlier, in 2005, at the age of 69, after some 30 years at Wat Tham Suea, he left the monastery so that he could travel freely to spread the Dhamma, entrusting Phra Kasemsuk Khemasukho with accepting all invitations on his behalf. Near or far, large or small, in Thailand or abroad, he went wherever he was asked. In 2007 he moved to Wat Sukhonthawat for about two years, and in 2010, at the age of 74, he moved to spend the rains retreat at Wat Khao Lao in Wang Manao Subdistrict, Pak Tho District,[5] Ratchaburi Province. He went on teaching insight meditation in the surrounding area, including at Rangsi Matchima Monastic Residence in Muak Lek District, Saraburi Province, where he had stayed after leaving Wat Tham Suea.

2012

In mid-2012, Luang Por traveled to Washington State in the United States to teach insight meditation to his disciples and to others interested in the practice.



5. The published Chinese edition places Wat Khao Lao in Kanchanaburi.

Late that same year, he joined in teaching the Dhamma beneath the sacred Bodhi Tree at Bodh Gaya, India, for the first time.

He later returned to Bodh Gaya many times during the International Tipitaka Chanting Ceremony held there every year, both to teach and to chant the “Nine Yantra Verses” beneath the sacred Bodhi Tree to clear away obstacles.

His last Dhamma talk at Bodh Gaya was in 2018. Unable to travel to India that year, he gave the talk by telephone from Thailand.











2013–2015

Between 2013 and 2015, Luang Por traveled to the United States once a year to teach insight meditation in Washington, Oregon, and California.









2016

In 2016, at the age of 80, he traveled to Moscow and St. Petersburg, Russia, to spread the Dhamma.





Late in the same year, he gave Dhamma talks in Australia, and he returned there again in 2017.









During this period, besides his yearly teaching visits to Malaysia and Taiwan, he also accepted invitations to teach Dhamma and meditation in Singapore and Indonesia.

























Chapter 9

His Later Years

2018

In June 2018, at the age of 82, after leading an intensive 11-day retreat in Taiwan, Luang Por Jamnian told his disciples that he would not come the following year, so that he could rest and recover from illness.



2019

In 2019, at the age of 83, Luang Por left Wat Khao Lao to spend the rains retreat and receive health care at a Mahayana temple in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. During this time he still taught disciples in many countries through Zoom from time to time, the last time in 2021.



Luang Por Jamnian Silasettho



1936 – 2026

Luang Por Jamnian Silasettho passed away on August 18, 2026, in Malaysia, at the age of 90, after 69 rains retreats as a monk. His passing is the loss of a great and virtuous elder, revered by his disciples and one of the foremost insight meditation teachers of southern Thailand, and it brings deep sorrow to his disciples and devotees in Thailand and abroad.

Luang Por Jamnian Silasettho · 1936 – 2026

Key Events in His Life

1936 **Birth** May 1, at Ban Pak Nakhon, Tha Rai, Mueang District, Nakhon Si Thammarat

1941 **Taste of samadhi** age 5; meditated all night, his mind still and bright

1942 **Loss of his mother** age 6; she died after bearing her youngest child

1957 **Ordination** July 2, at Wat Nari Pradit, Nakhon Si Thammarat, at the age of 21

1964 **Vipassana** with Ajahn Paen Dhammadharo at Wat Chai Na

1966 **Wat Sukhonthawat** moved to help villagers caught in the conflict, Surat Thani Province

1970 **With Luang Por Chah** at Wat Nong Pah Pong, Ubon Ratchathani

1972 **Global recognition** honored as a modern meditation master in *Living Buddhist Masters*

1975 **Tham Suea founded** May 25; a vipassana center opens in Krabi Province

1976 **Dhamma abroad** first journey abroad, to Malaysia

1985 **Made a monastery** Tham Suea officially becomes a monastery

1988 **United States** invited to Alaska and to NASA in Houston

1994 **Spirit Rock** first teaching at Spirit Rock Meditation Center, California

2005 **Leaving Wat Tham Suea** to travel freely to spread the Dhamma

2007 **Buddha relics** enshrined at the Wat Tham Suea chedi, with a portion in Sikkim, India

2009 **Taiwan** begins yearly teaching visits

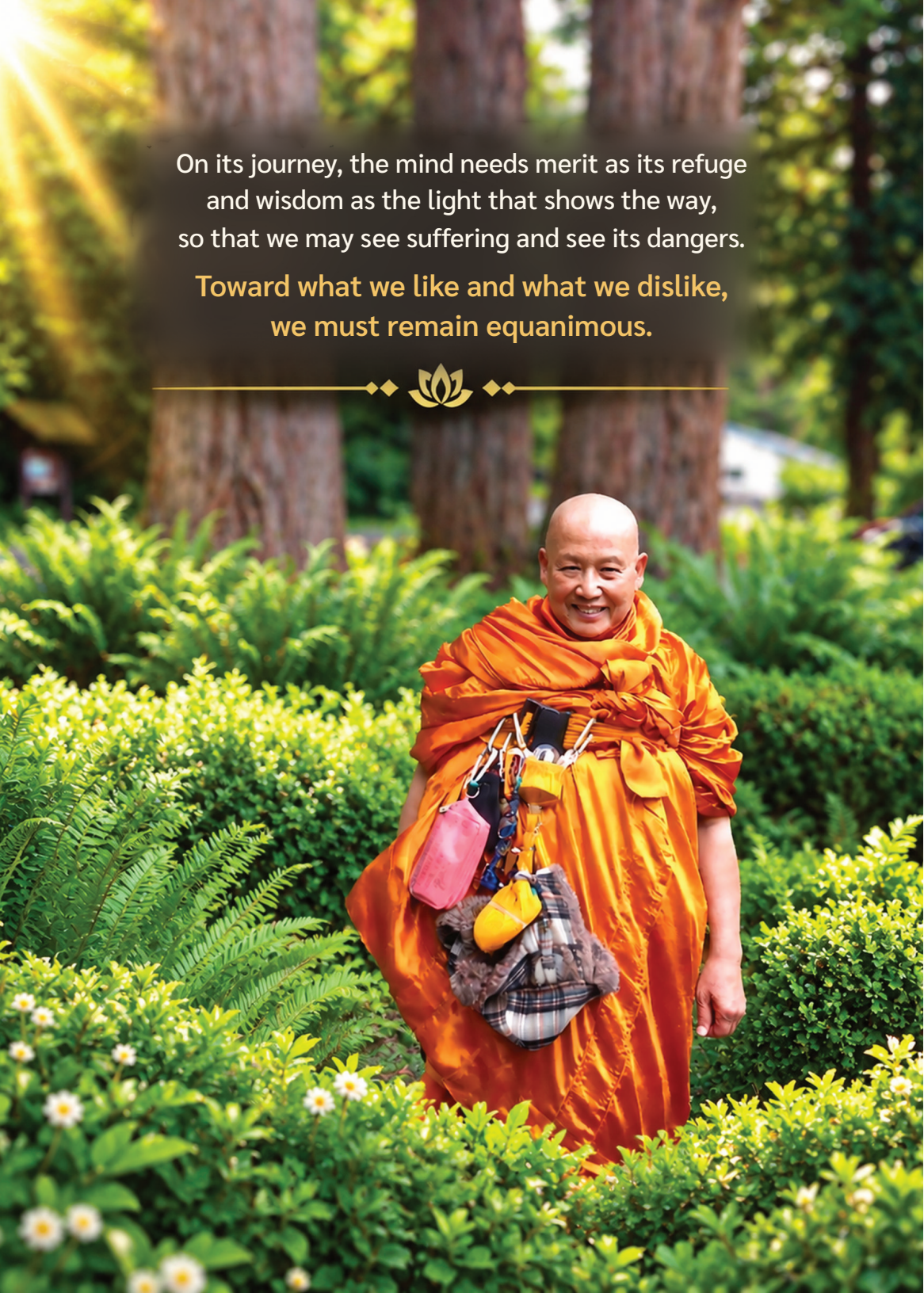
2010 **Wat Khao Lao** rains retreat in Pak Tho District, Ratchaburi

2012 **Bodh Gaya** first teaching beneath the Bodhi Tree

2016 **Russia · Australia** teaching in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Australia

2019 **Final years** rains retreat and health care in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

2026 **Passing** August 18, in Malaysia, aged 90, after 69 rains retreats


On its journey, the mind needs merit as its refuge
and wisdom as the light that shows the way,
so that we may see suffering and see its dangers.
Toward what we like and what we dislike,
we must remain equanimous.

A Dhamma Journey around the World




















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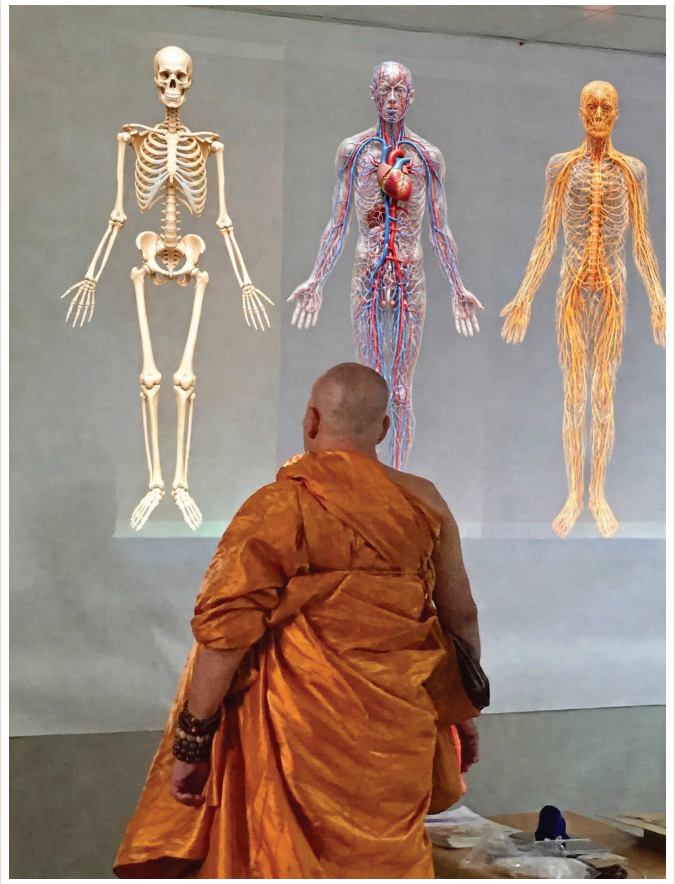






Those wishing to study the teachings of Luang Por Jamnian Silasettho will find further material at

Jamnian.org



A loving-kindness chant handed down by Luang Por Jamnian

"Au-ae, Au-aa, Metta, Buddho"

Au-ae	the cry of a baby girl, which stirs tender compassion
Au-aa	the cry of a baby boy, which stirs tender compassion
Metta	love and goodwill that make no distinctions
Buddho	the Buddha, endowed with the qualities of "the One Who Knows, the Awakened One, the Joyful One"

Taken as a whole, the chant means bringing the heart of the Buddha into our own hearts, to radiate loving-kindness to all beings as though they were our own children.

Luang Por received this loving-kindness chant from Ta On, his stepmother's father. Reciting it increases loving-kindness and compassion and brings blessings to oneself and others. Yet the secret that makes the chant sacred and effective is this: the heart of the one who recites it must be filled with goodwill and loving-kindness toward all beings. If anger toward anyone arises, the power of the chant weakens at once.

Part Two · Epilogue

Recollections and Dhamma Teachings



Phra Thammawachiraphutthakhom (Chao Khun Chai Purindako)

Deputy Ecclesiastical Governor of Region 17

Abbot of Wat Mahathat Wachiramongkhon, Royal Monastery, Krabi

Acting Abbot of Wat Tham Suea, Krabi



Imprints of Dhamma

Chapter 1

Meditation in the Deep Forest and a Test of Life and Death

"Profound solitude and the hardships of the path let us see clearly the truth of our own minds."

I once practiced alone deep in the forest of Phang Nga Province for an entire year, with just one lay supporter bringing me food. All that year I never went on alms round. I let go of every outside concern and gave myself to meditation alone. Later, Luang Por Jamnian climbed the mountain to visit me. At night he stayed with me on a simple bamboo platform and kept passing on to me profound methods of meditation.

At that time Luang Por trained me very strictly. He insisted that I must be able to enter samadhi in the "standing posture." Standing is the hardest posture for meditation, compared with sitting or lying down, because while standing the mind is hard to unify and easily shaken. Yet on the very day Luang Por instructed me, I succeeded in entering

samadhi while standing. When he saw that I could do it with ease, he said, “After this, if you wish to go and study elsewhere, I will not stop you anymore.”

He passed on everything to me without holding anything back: mindfulness, concentration, wisdom, the knowledge and vision of realization, and the ways of inclining the mind to contemplate the various phenomena. Luang Por walked extraordinarily fast, often climbing up and down the mountain at dusk and at night, while I stayed deep in the forest, quietly practicing and reviewing what he had taught.

While living deep in the forest, I once vowed to keep silence for a year, speaking to no one. During that time I fell seriously ill. When Luang Por heard of it, he hurried up the mountain to care for me and teach me. I asked him to teach on the *bojjhangas*, the factors of enlightenment, especially *sati-sambojjhanga*, mindfulness as a factor of enlightenment, because this was the teaching I most loved to hear.

As Luang Por was teaching, my mind took in the current of Dhamma, and the illness eased at once. I recovered completely without taking a single pill. Speaking with Luang Por meant breaking my vow of silence, but he reassured me that since I had spoken in order to hear the Dhamma, and the illness was gone, there was no need to worry about it.

Through those days and nights of rigorous practice in

the mountain forests, one of the most terrifying tests of life and death came while I was meditating in a cave where a giant python lived. That day an enormous python slowly slid out. Had it wanted to eat me, it could easily have swallowed me whole. It came right up before me, flicking its tongue, then slid across me, its heavy, ice-cold body pressing down on my legs as I sat cross-legged.

In that split second between life and death, cold sweat poured over my whole body. But I quickly regained mindfulness and firmly resolved:

"Enter samadhi now. Give up this life.
If I must die at this moment, then let me die."

At that moment I cut off all attachment and all fear of death, letting go of this body completely, and through the power of mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom I decisively withdrew the mind from the body. People fear death because they cling to this being, made of the five aggregates, as "me." Once the terror of death is cut off, nothing in this world can shake the mind again.

The python circled around me for a long time before slowly moving away, as though it had come to test the resolve of a practitioner, or perhaps it was a sacred guardian of that place.

"When we let go of clinging to the body,
the threshold of life and death is but a passing breeze."



Chapter 2

Receiving Luang Por's Final Instructions Quietly Building the Temples

Wat Tham Suea was founded in 1975. At that time I was a novice nearly 18 years old, and I followed Luang Por Jamnian here to reside for the rains retreat.

By nature I dislike commotion and prefer solitary meditation and wandering practice, so I seldom went with Luang Por on his teaching journeys. But whenever I was at the monastery, I attended closely to him, and he taught and trained me day and night without fail.

Later, Luang Por wished to withdraw from outside turmoil and seek a quiet place of seclusion, for his heart was set above all on the Dhamma and on meditation practice. Yet wherever he went, people were moved by his loving-kindness and abundant spiritual virtue, and disciples would stream in to seek refuge in his goodness. As the saying goes, "Where there is loving-kindness, people naturally gather."

I once gave Luang Por my word: "Please be at ease, Luang Por, and travel wherever you wish. I will take on the work of

building the temple." I also told him, "When I have finished building Wat Bang Riang in Thap Put District, Phang Nga, as a royal merit offering to King Rama IX, I will come back to build Wat Bang Thong in Krabi as a royal merit offering to King Rama X. Phang Nga is my mother's birthplace, so Wat Bang Riang repays my debt of gratitude to her; Wat Bang Thong in Krabi repays my debt of gratitude to my father."

Then Luang Por charged me in all seriousness:

"Wat Tham Suea is your duty.
You must come back and see this temple through."

Luang Por himself bought all the land of Wat Tham Suea. Before the monastic community and lay supporters he clearly declared that the temple and its land were entrusted to my care alone, and asked everyone to give their full support, so that the temple would be built properly and the true Dhamma would long endure.

While Luang Por was still alive, he traveled to many places and even spent rains retreats at a Mahayana temple in Malaysia. But as to the handling of his body after his passing, he left a clear spoken instruction: if I arrived before he died, or within seven days afterward, every decision about his remains would rest with me alone; if I could not arrive in

time, the cremation was to be held within seven days, as he wished.

Luang Por understood the character and gifts of each disciple very well; each had different abilities. As for me, I am the one who does the actual work. Over the years I have held firmly to Luang Por's final instructions: no lavish ceremonies, no showing off, going forward step by step, and quietly and steadily bringing every temple entrusted to me to completion.

When Luang Por handed all the details and plans over to me, he said:

"You must take the lead in all the planning.
I will never let anyone else build this chedi."

When I asked Luang Por why he placed such importance on building the chedi, he answered with kindness:

"I am not a monk who builds temples and chedis.
My duty is to practice the Dhamma and teach it.
As for the aspiration to complete the chedi,
I entrust it to you to fulfill in my place."





Imprints of Dhamma

Chapter 3

Living Simply
Using the Mind to Ease Pain

Throughout the two years and eight months since I came back to reside at Wat Tham Suea, I have not had a single personal bank account. For me, this is a basic duty and observance that a practitioner should keep.

If lay supporters wish to offer money for my personal use, I do not accept it. Every baht and every satang I receive goes, with purity and transparency, to the communal work of building the temple and the chedi. Since I carry no money at all, when I fall ill I do not go to a doctor. I let the body follow its natural course; whatever happens, let it be.

Living alone and without money, my best medicine is to sit in samadhi. I rely on the calm of samadhi to heal this body and on the power of mindfulness to unravel and quiet illness. Many times a serious illness has slowly eased and healed by itself while I was contemplating in samadhi.

When my disciples later found out, they asked with concern, “Ajahn, why didn’t you tell us you were unwell?” I

told them that I did not want everyone to worry and wear themselves out running around. But if someone happens to find me and insists on taking me to the hospital, I go along with it and do not stubbornly resist. In truth, though, if the mind is not dragged along by bodily feeling, there is no need to struggle in search of help from outside.

When people are ill, most of their severe suffering does not come directly from the wound or the disease itself. It comes from the mind clinging so tightly to this body that it is always crying out, "It hurts so much... I'm suffering so much..." But in truth it is this very "self," this "me," that grabs hold of the pain.

If we can see for ourselves that there is no substantial "self" there to receive the suffering, we can simply sit still and watch it arise, remain, and pass away, and let it go completely. When we can do that, things will pass, and the pain will gradually ease and withdraw by itself. If one's life span is not yet over and one's time has not yet come, the body will naturally recover. But if the final moment has truly come, no amount of struggling can keep us here.

So those who study and practice the Dhamma should not lose heart or despair. Do not let negative states overwhelm you. Live normally, and accept whatever appears before you as it truly is.

When old karmic debts come due, we repay them in their time. Even if the body must suffer, do not resist the law of karma, and do not stand in the way of others' merit. When wholesome deeds arise, help them come to fruition. When the result of past karma must be faced, receive it with a calm and peaceful heart. Once the old karmic debts are fully repaid and these five aggregates are clearly seen through, the true nature of life is pure and luminous from beginning to end.

My own life is exceedingly simple. I have no money, and my food and lodging are modest. Building a temple is different, though. The memorial hall that will enshrine Luang Por Jamnian's remains will be spacious and air-conditioned, so that lay supporters and devotees who come to pay respects and meditate can sit in comfort and open their hearts fully to the Dhamma. This is the intention and the heart of my temple building.



From an interview with

Phra Thammawachiraphutthakhom (Chao Khun Chai Purindako)

in August 2026

at Wat Tham Suea, Krabi Province



A Life Devoted to the Dhamma

From a childhood in a small fishing village in southern Thailand to a lifetime of carrying the Dhamma around the world, the Most Venerable Luang Por Jamnian Silasettho gave his whole life to practicing and teaching the Dhamma in the footsteps of the Buddha.

This abridged biography tells the story of his life, from his rigorous training as a child and his years of intensive meditation, to the loving-kindness with which he eased political conflict and the founding of Wat Tham Suea in Krabi Province, together with stories and memories from close disciples that reveal his warmth, his determination, and his unwavering resolve to help others.

His life is a beautiful testament that gratitude, perseverance, wisdom, and loving-kindness can turn hardship into a path to liberation, and it remains an inspiration to all who seek peace within.