

# THE PEOPLE'S MONK

*Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara  
Supreme Patriarch of Thailand*



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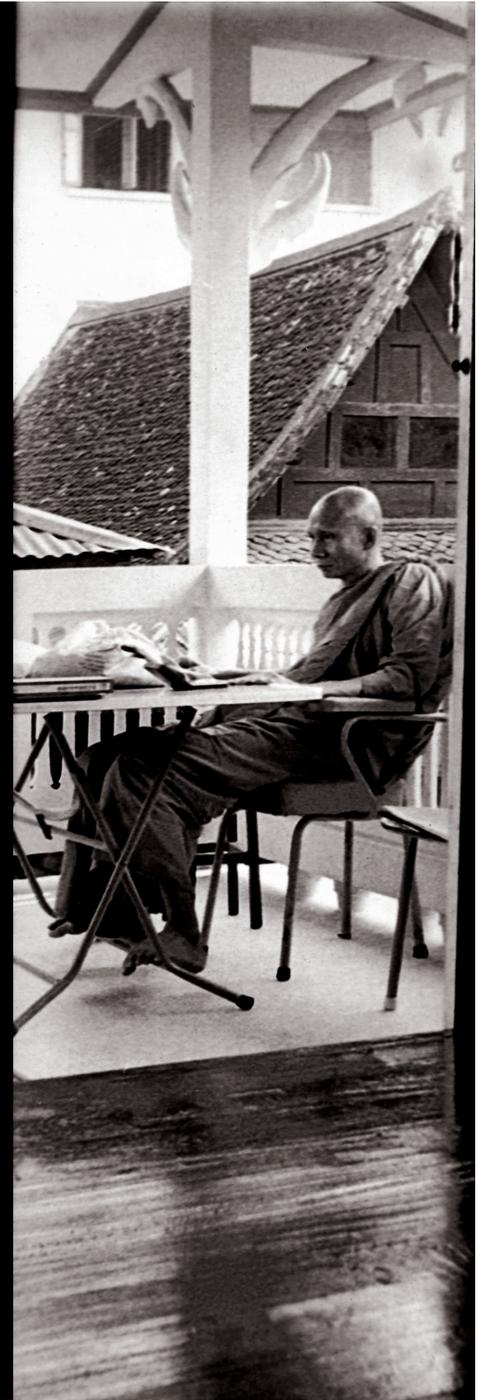
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*"To wish others happiness is what everyone should do  
because such a wish is an important mental quality called metta.*

*Metta literally means loving-kindness.*

*If one's mind is filled with metta,  
one is certain to be happy."*

*Sd. Phra Nyanasamvara*



# *The People's Monk*

*Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara Supreme Patriarch of Thailand*

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# Foreword

The late His Holiness Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara (Chareun Suvaddhanao), the 19<sup>th</sup> Supreme Patriarch of the Ratanakosin Period of Thailand was a Buddhist monk who possessed a great demeanor. He strictly followed Buddhist monasticism and emanated monastic comportment beautifully. He was perfect in his virtues and loving-kindness, the qualities which made him greatly adored by all Buddhists. He was the Supreme Patriarch of Thailand. He was humble yet strictly followed the Buddhist doctrines and disciplines. He tirelessly propagated Buddhism and Buddhist teachings until his last breath in every direction of the world from Asia to Europe and other regions.

One of the missions of the Department of Religious Affairs, Ministry of Culture is to promote and support religious activities particularly Buddhism. Towards the end of 2015, Thailand is integrating into the ASEAN community. Accordingly, the Department of Religious Affairs is publishing a book entitled “The People’s Monk : Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara, the Supreme Patriarch of Thailand.” The book is a collection of His Holiness Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara’s holy life and the Buddhist teachings which he had taught in different books and occasions. This publication would not only be beneficial to people who read it alone but it is also a great tribute to spread the glories of His Holiness Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara, Supreme Patriarch of Thailand far and wide. The Department of Religious Affairs, therefore, publishes this biographical book entitled “The People’s Monk: Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara, Supreme Patriarch of Thailand” into 8 different languages: Thai, English, Burmese, Cambodian, Laotian, Indonesian, Vietnamese and Nepali.

The Department of Religious Affairs would like to thank His Eminence Somdet Phra Wanarat (Chund Brahmagutto) and Venerable Phra Shakyavongvisuddhi (Dr. Anil Man Dhammasakiyo) of Wat Bovoranives Vihara who kindly accepted to be the advisors of this publication and went through the manuscripts thoroughly of all these 7 volumes. I sincerely hope that these 7 books in 8 different languages are of a great benefit to the general public.

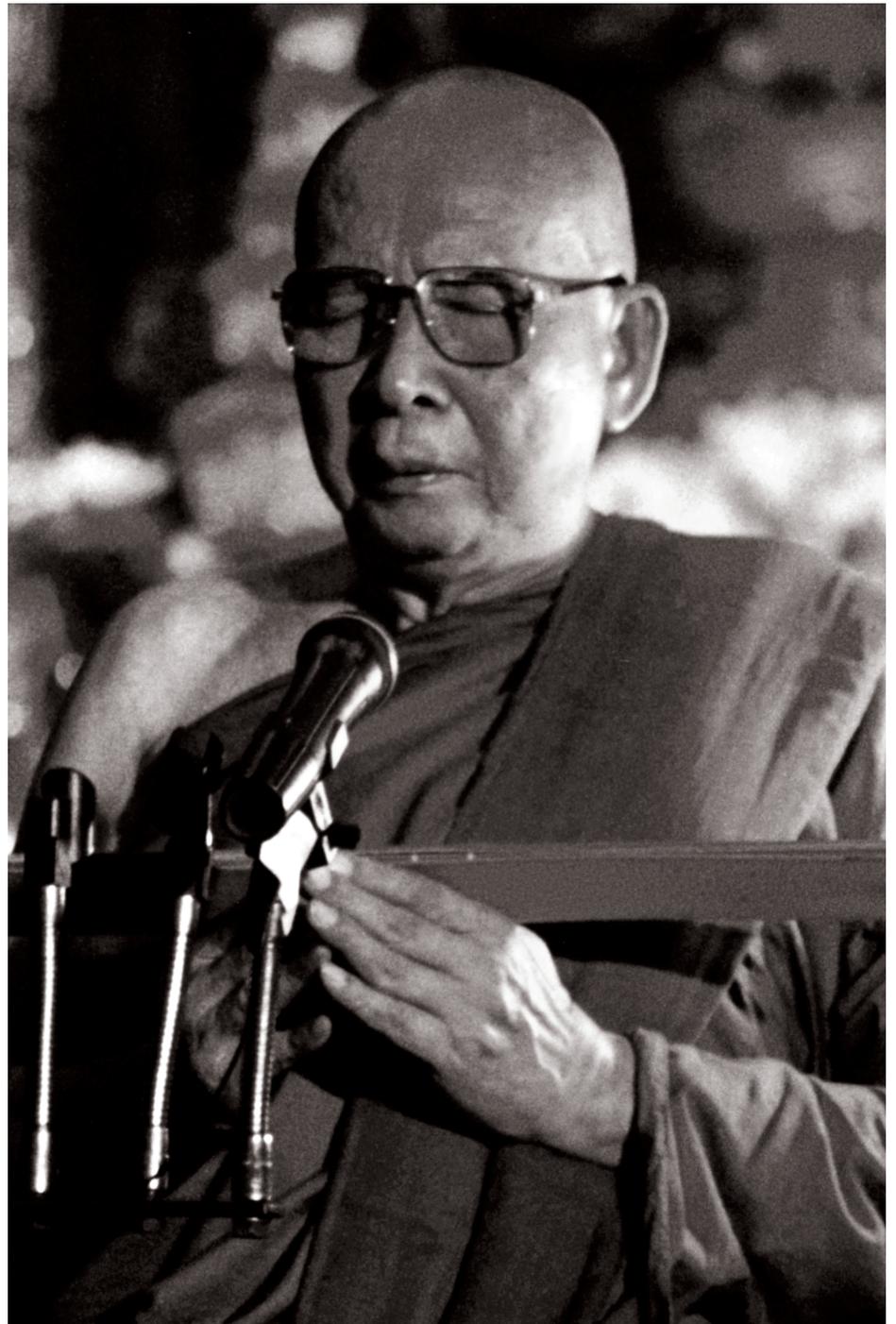


Kritayapong Siri

Director-General of the Department of Religious Affairs

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# Perfectly Prosperous

*"Ajita, as long as waves of tanha (craving) exist, use sati (mindfulness) to intercept them. Mindfulness thus guards against those waves. The Wisdom by which one stills the waves of craving is called Nyanasamvara."*

*Commentary of Mulapariyaya Sutta, MN#1*



Just over a century ago in Baan Nuea, a small village situated on the shores of the scenic river Khwae, in Mueang District, Kanjanaburi Province, on the fourth waxing moon of the eleventh month of the Year of the Ox (October 3, 1913), a boy was born to the Gajavatra family.

At that time, no one yet realised that small child was destined for greatness and would become the 19<sup>th</sup> Supreme Patriarch of the Kingdom of Thailand. His Holiness Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara, the Supreme Patriarch, was given the name 'Chareun'. He was the first-born son of Noi Gajavatra, the Assistant District Chief of Amphawa District in Samutsongkhram Province. Noi's family line could be traced back to Ayudhya and to the noble 'Na Takuathung' family from the South of Thailand. Kimnoi, the boy's mother, who worked as a tailoress, came from the Rungsawang family, which came from both Chinese and Vietnamese ancestry.

His Holiness was born at the Rungsawang's family house on Pakphraek Road, the same house where his two younger brothers, Jammian and Samut, and his cousins were born. As a child, he was surrounded by much love and kindness and looked after by family members and other relatives living nearby.

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Though His Holiness was fortunate enough to be brought up in a loving and stable environment, he suffered from poor health throughout his entire childhood. Once, when he was seriously ill, adult family members prayed for his recovery, vowing that he would be ordained as a Buddhist novice (samanera) should he recover.

After his father passed away, when His Holiness was just 9 years old, the family struggled to cope financially. He was sent away to live with Aunt Kimheng, his mother's elder sister.

Though he missed his family, Aunt Kimheng's warm heart and tender loving care brought joy and warmth to the boy's life. He became very dear to her, and was always found at his beloved Aunt's side.

The Rungsawang's family home was situated near three temples: Wat Devasangharam (Wat Nuea – the North Temple), Wat Chaichumpholchana-songkhram (Wat Tai – the South Temple) and Wat Thavornvararam (Wat Yuan – Wat Khanthoetue). Being devout Buddhists, Aunt Kimheng and the boy's mother regularly attended ceremonies and festivals at the nearby temples, and always took His Holiness along with them so that he was introduced at a young age to the religious faith that he would embrace. During the Vassa or Rains Retreat – the three-month long annual retreat observed by Theravada Buddhist monks – young His Holiness would sit listening to a Dhamma talk every evening at Wat Nuea. This shows that His Holiness had become familiar with the Buddha's teachings ever since he was a young boy.

Being a playful young boy with an active mind, he recalled what he had observed at the temple and used his imagination to play games that recreated something of the religious ceremonies he had attended. He liked to pretend to be a monk giving a Dhamma discourse, holding up an elongated palm leaf in place of a talipot fan – a Thai Buddhist ceremonial handheld fan – just like he observed at the temple.

Another game called the 'Throw Baskets,' was a yearly ritual in which food and other necessities were offered to those in need. The merit derived from those good deeds was dedicated to suffering hungry spirits (peta). He asked other children to play with him, laying out a piece of cloth in the way monks traditionally received such offerings.

The Rungsawang and the Gajavatra family members would often say that "He has been a monk since childhood,"

and they would frequently reminisce about the 'monk' games that he enjoyed playing.

As part of her daily routine, Aunt Kimheng awoke early to set off for work. It became his habit to awake early as well. Before leaving, Aunt Kimheng would light a candle for her boy to play with. His Holiness would then sit gazing at the flickering flame until dawn broke and the first rays of sunlight appeared over the horizon.

Looking back, it became obvious to everyone that these activities had foretold that His Holiness would spend his life wearing the sacred yellow robes of a Buddhist monk.

His Holiness had a gentle heart and a docile nature. He was never naughty. As the eldest child, he took care of his younger brothers and the other children in the family.

When he was 8 years old, His Holiness went to study at the school in near by Wat Devasangharam. He completed his elementary education at the age of 12 in 1925.

Throughout his childhood, His Holiness was greatly influenced by the warmth of his close-knit family and by the simple country life that nurtured him to be compassionate, patient and honest. All these qualities nourished the growth of Dhamma (spiritual truth) within him and produced the great spiritual and philosophical master whose compassion has touched the hearts of many throughout the world. He who will become "His Holiness Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara, the 19<sup>th</sup> Supreme Patriarch of the Kingdom of Thailand."

*"One's mind is important, so is one's mindfulness. Wisdom is also important, so are compassion and loving kindness. These qualities cannot be regarded separately. The mind must be mindful, wise, compassionate and kind. All four must always be balanced. Never let anything direct your mind other than mindfulness, compassion and loving kindness."*

*Each Life has Limited Time*

# A Life Nourished by Dhamma

*"The Dhamma [spiritual truth] is Precious (ratna) because the Dhamma is flawless and useful. Nothing is useless in the Dhamma. The Buddha revealed the Dhamma through his teachings. It is a discipline, a systematic code that encompasses every aspect of one's life; it is an illumination that shows the truth in all of our lives. His teaching provides nourishment to each and every one of us so properly and so sufficiently."*

*The Buddhist Principles*

*H*is Holiness Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara, the Supreme Patriarch renounced lay life for the path of Dhamma when he was 14 years of age.

In 1926, when two of His Holiness' uncles, Thaem and Thongdi, were about to be ordained at Wat Devasangharam, his mother and Aunt Kimheng urged him to enter the monkhood as a novice, fulfilling the vow taken many years before upon his recovery from ill health. He had just completed his primary school education at this time and so he consented.

His Holiness' preceptor was Phra Khru Adulyasamanakij (Dee Buddhajoti), popularly known as 'Luang Phoe Wat Nuea', abbot of Wat Devasangharam. Phra Khru Nivitsamajarn (Rian Suvannajoti), abbot of Wat Sri Upalaram, conferred the *sarāṇa* on the boy, in which he was asked to seek refuge in the 'Triple Gem' (the Buddha, the Dhamma teachings and the Sangha of the ordained community). This was followed by the undertaking of *sīla*, the Buddhist moral precepts.

From this moment in his life, His Holiness followed the Path of Dhamma and never returned to the secular life.

During his first year as a novice monk, His Holiness studied hard and practised all he had learned, including chanting. He also attended to the needs of his guardian teacher, Luang Phoe Dee. At night, Luang Phoe would recite the Dhamma, making the novice learn by heart all of the teachings. Luang Phoe would recite one part, and then continue every night until the whole chapter was covered. This traditional method of bestowing Dhamma has been practised since ancient times.

*Ariya Dhana* (Noble Treasures) was the first chapter Luang Phoe taught His Holiness, which he memorised in a very short time. Having mastered the methodology, he was able to give a sermon in the first year of his monastic life. He preached fluently and with great conviction. Every word of his first sermon was recorded in his personal diary.

He may have begun his life as a novice just to fulfill a vow made by his relatives, yet he went on to wholeheartedly embrace the Buddhist faith and flourish as a monk. In 1927, Luang Phoe Dee sent him to study Pali with Phra Khru Samvornvinaya (Arj), abbot of Wat Senha in Nakhorn Pathom Province. Luang Phoe Dee decided that he should train as a teacher. Luang Phoe Dee then built a religious school, Phra Pariyattidhamma, while awaiting the return of his student from study.

Life far away from his birthplace was not a lonely existence as His Holiness was quick to make friends. He cherished the camaraderie he enjoyed with dozens of monastic friends, monks and novices at Wat Senha. Many photos captured the happy, shared moments and were aptly captioned and neatly kept in his photo albums.

As a student at Wat Senha, His Holiness did so well that Phra Maha Phak Sakchaleum recommended that he enroll in a programme of higher learning at Wat Makutkasattriyaram. Phra Maha Phak Sakchaleum was a scholar monk from Wat Makutkasattriyaram in Bangkok, and encouraged His Holiness to follow in his footsteps. After seeking the advice of Luang Phoe Dee, His Holiness was advised to pursue his higher studies at another temple in Bangkok, Wat Bovoranives Vihara, which was located near the former residence of Luang Phoe Dee. There was also an influential connection with the 13th Supreme Patriarch, Krommaluang Vajiranyanavangsa, whom he, Luang Phoe Dee, had

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known for many years. After another year of study at Wat Senha, he accompanied his teacher to Wat Bovoranives Vihara. In 1929, Luang Phoe Dee and His Holiness as Samanera (Novice) Chareun boarded a train for the journey from Kanjanaburi to Bangkok.

His Holiness the 13<sup>th</sup> Supreme Patriarch, who had been awarded the rank of Somdet Phra Vajiranyanvansa, was abbot of the royal monastery, Wat Bovoranives. The 13<sup>th</sup> Supreme Patriarch readily accepted His Holiness into the temple, relying on Luang Phoe Dee's endorsement.

Throughout the first twenty-days of his stay at Wat Bovoranives, His Holiness complied with all the temple's rules and regulations so diligently that the Abbot conferred a new monastic name upon him, *Suvaḍḍhano*, the 'cultivated one'.

At this institution of higher learning and amongst the Sangha (community of ordained monks and novices), His Holiness thrived and matured. He studied with great dedication and accomplished Grade 3 (top level) of Dhamma study and Grade 4 of Pali studies (there are 9 grades of Pali studies). At age 20, he returned to Kanjanaburi and asked his preceptor at Wat Devasangharam to ordain him into the monkhood.

After his ordination as a monk, which coincided with the Vassa or the three-month annual Buddhist retreat, His Holiness stayed on to help his preceptor in teaching Dhamma at the newly opened religious school as of the wish of his teacher.

On February 15, 1933, His Holiness returned to Wat Bovoranives in Bangkok to be re-ordained by His Holiness the 13<sup>th</sup> Patriarch. Phra Ratnadhajamuni (Ju Issaranyano) was then His Holiness' teacher. From that day forward, His Holiness, also known by his new monk's name, *Suvaḍḍhano* Bhikkhu [Bhikkhu is a Pali honorific for a fully ordained Buddhist monastic], would devote his entire life to the Dhamma, a vocation that he embraced whole heartedly. It was also a calling that greatly benefited society. A life-long devotion to the Buddha, to the Dhamma, and to the Sangha has ensured that His Holiness remained self-effacing, gentle and respectful to his elders, teachers and benefactors. Nourished by Dhamma and true to the meaning of his Bhikkhu name, his character flourished and matured.

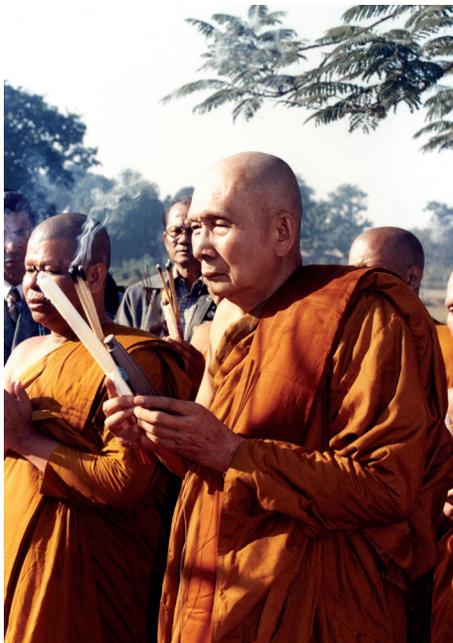
*"The real giving of Dhamma is to become the Dhamma oneself, to automatically manifest Dhamma in oneself and amongst others. There is no need to demonstrate the Teaching through spoken words, preaching, or discourse."*

*Giving Dhamma Conquers all Gifts*



*"To practise Dhamma until one's body and mind become one with Dhamma is to disclose Dhamma to both onlookers and seekers. This method is certainly more effective than writing a book."*

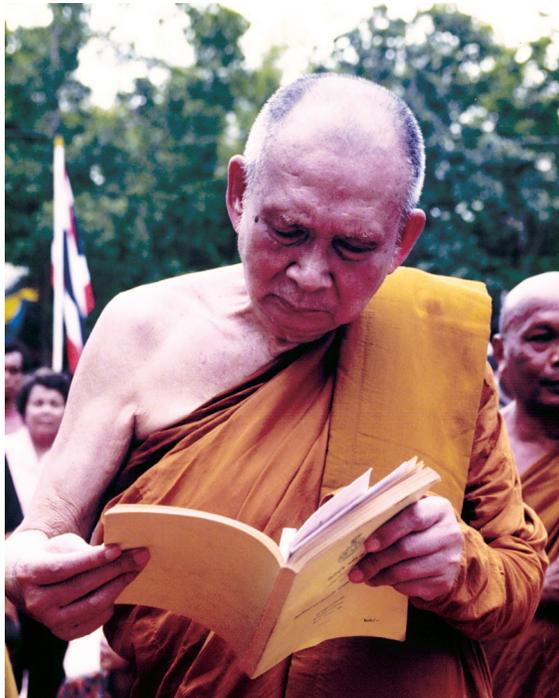
*Giving Dhamma Conquers all Gifts*



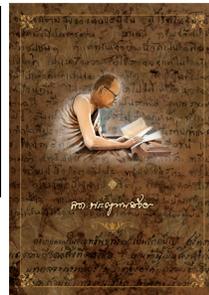
# Monk who Treasures Education

*"Education is first and foremost to cultivate knowledge and skill in working and socializing; second, to foster humane qualities. The first objective is, in itself, obvious. The second objective means that to be born a human, to possess a human body, is not yet to be considered truly human. Only when conscience is genuinely integrated or fused with one's personality will humanity truly arise. When one actually possesses humanity, one can truly be called a 'human'."*

## Principles of Buddhism



*[too  
Morality, Collectedness, and Wisdom  
Together with Emancipation unsurpassed,  
These aspects (of the Dhamma) fully known  
By Gotama (the Teacher) well renowned.  
He, the Buddha having penetrated them  
Instructs the bhikkhus (for their welfare too).*



*The precious gem may be  
ignored when he is in hand, having  
slipped from the grip, be highly  
cost and more grasped, if being  
back. (One who never knows precious  
thing, never knows the cost).*



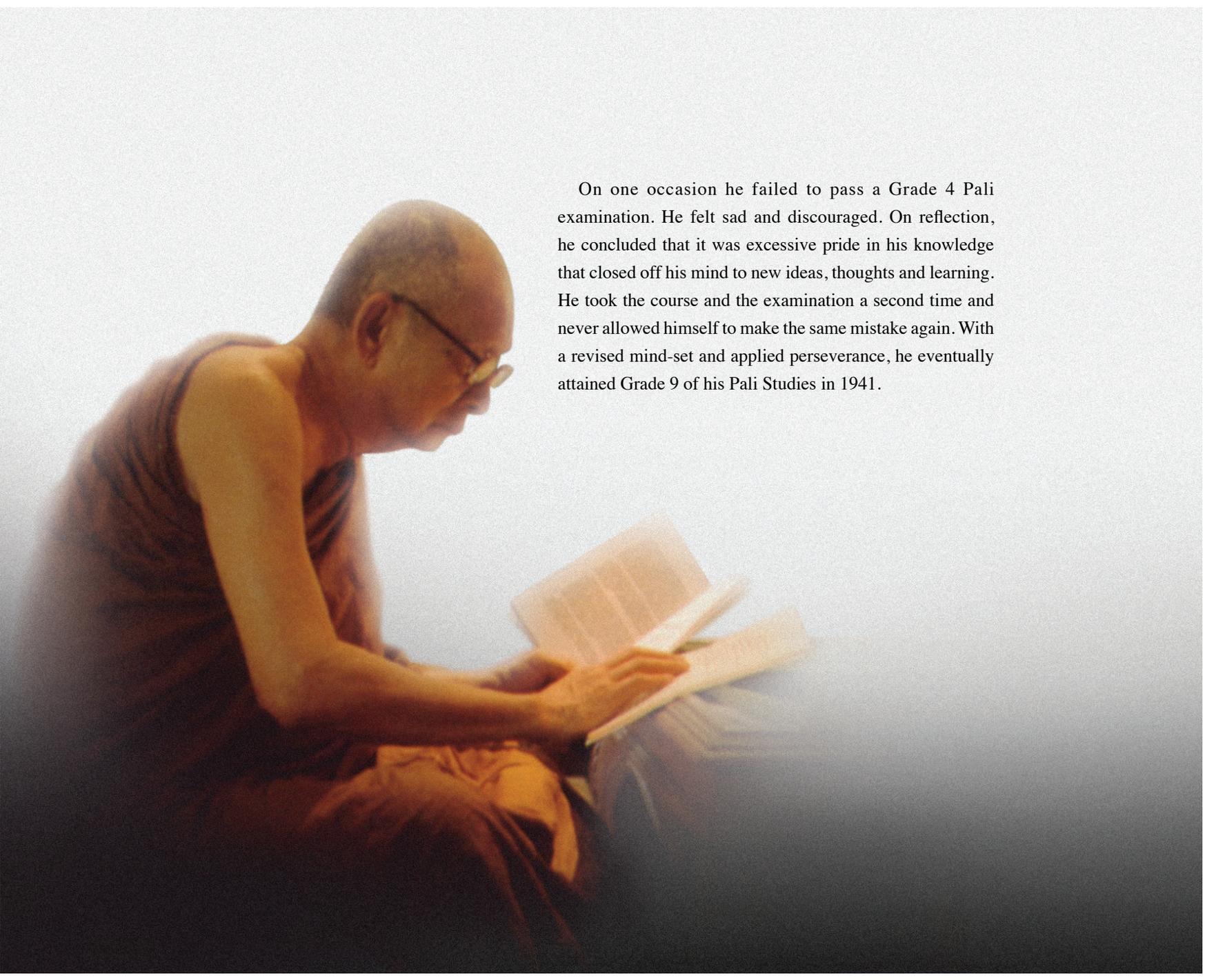
With a passion for research ingrained in his spirit, His Holiness was an eager and determined student and practitioner of Dhamma, languages and other knowledge. All these attributes would become enormously useful in his future activities.

On his path to enlightenment, Chareun was blessed to have many outstanding teachers who were a great influence on his spiritual development and maturity. While he was studying as a novice at Wat Bovoranives, Somdet Phra Vajiranyanavangsa (the future 13<sup>th</sup> Supreme Patriarch) entrusted young His Holiness to the care of Phra Khru Buddhamonpricha. His Holiness— subsequently known as *Suvaddhano* Bhikkhu – later spoke of his teacher as a gentle and kind person, but also as someone who knew exactly what one should and should not do. Phra Khru Buddhamonpricha was a competent and effective administrator in supervising the monks and novices under his charge. He had good judgment and, if he had any doubt about someone's abilities, he would not hesitate to withhold responsibility for fear of harming the student. Though tough on his students, he was quick to facilitate and encourage a student's accomplishments.

Somdet Phra Vajiranyanavangsa liked His Holiness and personally taught him many things. His teaching style was so stimulating that the diligent novice became more analytical, inquisitive and thoughtful. He was the novice's first meditation teacher. When he was first at Wat Bovoranives, Somdet summoned the novice to his residence and said, "I hear that you are very diligent. Don't be too studious. Be sure to find time to meditate, too."

His Holiness had great admiration and genuine affection for all of his teachers, and respected them as role models in his life.

Despite his poor health, His Holiness made good progress and excelled in his studies. By applying mind over body in pursuit of his education, he was able to overcome his fragile health. At times, when he was ill, His Holiness refused to be bedridden and would wrap a thick woollen cloth around his chest to keep warm and continue with his studies and assignments.

A photograph of a Buddhist monk, likely a Theravadin, sitting cross-legged and reading a book. He is wearing glasses and a traditional brown robe. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The lighting is soft, highlighting the monk's profile and the pages of the book.

On one occasion he failed to pass a Grade 4 Pali examination. He felt sad and discouraged. On reflection, he concluded that it was excessive pride in his knowledge that closed off his mind to new ideas, thoughts and learning. He took the course and the examination a second time and never allowed himself to make the same mistake again. With a revised mind-set and applied perseverance, he eventually attained Grade 9 of his Pali Studies in 1941.

From the time he completed his Grade 5 Pali Studies, His Holiness taught Dhamma and Pali at Wat Bovoranives Vihara Institute. He taught himself Pali Grade 6-7 in 1932. That year, Professor Swami Satyanandapuri Vedantapradipa, an Indian expert in Hinduism, Sanskrit and English, opened an educational exchange centre opposite Wat Bovoranives called Dhammashram. Over a period of two years, he spent as much time as he could spare from his teaching and studying to learn from Swami Satyanandapuri.

This period became the foundation and beginning of his self-education. Through self-learning he was able to acquire English language skills, becoming fluent in speaking, reading and writing the language. He followed this accomplishment by developing an interest in other languages including German, French and Chinese. His linguistic skills, combined with an inquisitive mind, helped develop an intellectual sharpness that allowed him to condense, clarify and communicate Dhamma. He was able to express himself fluently and effectively when teaching and in writing many books, both in Thai and in foreign languages.

His linguistic studies were curtailed as he gradually took on more and more responsibilities as a Buddhist educator.

- For example, in 1941 he became the director of the Wat Bovoranives Vihara Institute, supervising the curricula for monks and novices alike;

- And in 1945, he became a teacher at the Mahamakut Buddhist University and a committee of the Educational Council. On the same year he became a member of the Ecclesiastical Judicature under the Sangha Supreme Council;

- Over a period of 20 years, he established a master's degree course for monks. He also supported the endowment of scholarships for monks and novices, including a great number of secular students at various institutes.

Even though he lived most of his adult life in an urban environment, His Holiness managed to live a contemplative life conducive to his meditation and spiritual development. Taking as his role model his first meditation teacher, the 13<sup>th</sup> Supreme Patriarch, Krommaluang Vajiranyanavangsa, His Holiness was always a model of self-discipline and self-restraint. He remained mindful at all times and researched Dhamma carefully in both theory and practice.

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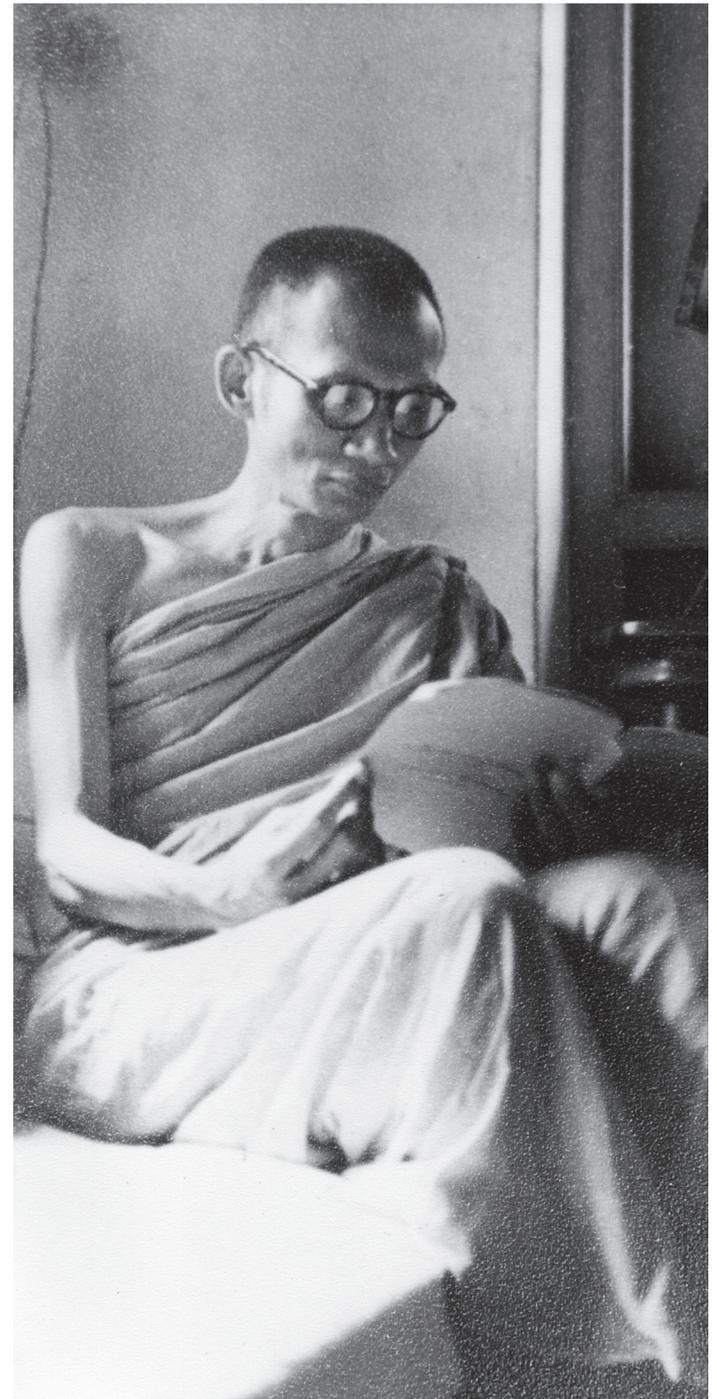
He also travelled to visit other monks who were great meditation masters, so as to find out what each had learned and knew of the Dhamma. He was especially keen to visit monks in the Northeast of Thailand. He made frequent visits to Luang Pu (Venerable Grandfather) Fan Acaro, Luang Pu Dul Atulo, Luang Pu Khau Analyo, Luang Pu Thes Desaramsi, Luang Ta (Venerable Grandfather) Bua Nyanasampanno, Luang Phoe (Venerable father) Phut Thaniyo to name but a few.

His Holiness went to Chiang Mai to visit Luang Pu Waen Sucinno of Wat Doi Maepang. He went south to visit Luang Phoe Buddhadas Indapannyo of Wat Suan Mokkhabalaram in Suratthani.

An unrelenting interest in knowledge and self-education made him one of the most respected scholars in Thailand. He had a deep understanding of the Dhamma and was admired by all as a principled monk who had progressed in his pursuit of the Dhamma beautifully.

*"If one wants to become knowledgeable, one must be studious. If one wants to acquire wealth honestly, one must work properly and diligently in an appropriate manner. By following this way, one is already following the Eightfold Path in the secular world."*

*Giving Dhamma Conquers all Gifts*



# Pursuit of Dhamma

*"The more important the job or title one is given, the more dedicated one should be in upholding that position. Only then will one be able to demonstrate to the world that one truly accepts the task. One must also remain sincere in one's responsibility. Only then will one fulfill one's responsibility to the vocation."*

*Life and Truth*

*F*rom the day he ordained as a Buddhist monk, His Holiness, Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara, has devoted himself to Dhamma education for the improvement of the lives of other people.



1997: His Holiness with international monastics on occasion of Inauguration Ceremony of Wat Thai, Bodhgaya, India

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Once he completed his Grade 9 of Pali studies, His Holiness gradually accepted more responsibility as Director of the Wat Bovoranives Vihara Institute. If problems arose, he would resolve them quickly. His enthusiasm and devotion earned him the trust of the 13<sup>th</sup> Supreme Patriarch, Krommaluang Vajiryanavangsa, who always entrusted him with important assignments.

In 1946, he became Private Secretary to the 13<sup>th</sup> Supreme Patriarch, and embarked on one of the most important periods of his life, undertaking all kinds of work within the monastic order. He also participated in scholarly work, teaching Dhamma, and contemplation (*vipassana*). All these activities helped prepare him for when he himself became the Supreme Patriarch.

Despite having to undertake more responsibilities, His Holiness continued to focus on teaching students, monks and novices (known as *saddhivihārika antevāsika*) to ensure that they would be able to understand and appreciate the Dhamma in both its doctrinal and spiritual aspects. From the time King Rama IV entered the monkhood and became the abbot of Wat Bovoranives monastery, it was considered a major undertaking to be a preceptor [someone who ordains other monks] at the monastery. Teaching was always at the top of His Holiness's list, and he never delegated this responsibility to others despite his heavy work load. During the annual three-month Rains Retreat when there were many newly ordained monks and novices in the temple, he would personally give Dhamma instruction to them for an hour every day. His Holiness would also teach meditation regularly throughout the year. He would give a Dhamma talk twice a month in the main meeting hall (*Uposatha* Hall) and also teach meditation twice a week.

He would teach meditation and contemplation to monks, novices and lay people



alike. Twice a week he would give a Dhamma discourse and then guide his listeners in meditation. This was to become part of his regular schedule when he became abbot of Wat Bovoranives in 1961.

In 1963, His Holiness was appointed an executive committee member of the first Sangha Supreme Council in accordance with the Sangha Act of 1962 and has played a part in drafting the legislation of the Sangha Supreme Council ever since.

His Holiness not only dedicated his time and energy to the welfare and betterment of the Sangha and to the people of Thailand, but also to the happiness of people from other countries. Starting 1969, he conducted many Dhamma classes in English. These sessions were attended by foreign monks, novices and lay people. Mrs. Josephine Stanton, the wife of a former US Ambassador to Thailand, was one of his pupils. Another was Jane Hamilton-Merritt, an American writer and reporter who wrote *A Meditator's Diary*, a book recounting her experiences attending those Dhamma classes. His Holiness is the founder of the Training Institute for Dhammaduta Bhikkhus Going Abroad (*dhammadūta* means ambassador of dhamma). At Wat Bovoranives, His Holiness also trained foreign monks to become Dhamma teachers. These activities drew an ever increasing number of foreigners who were interested in studying and benefiting from Dhamma. For the benefit of all those who were interested, His Holiness oversaw the establishment of the English Buddhist Library in the Khana Soong International Section at Wat Bovoranives.

In 1973, His Holiness, by then holding the title of Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara and also being Vice-Chairman of the Board of the Dhammayuttika Order, was elected as the Board's representative when visiting the Sangha and Buddhist communities of the 9 provinces in Northeast Thailand. On one such visit lasting



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10 days, he visited 37 temples, schools and governmental offices, addressing monks and novices, students and officials, military personnel and police officers. The people gathered in large numbers at every town and venue he visited. His talks inspired great enthusiasm and interest in the Dhamma everywhere he went.

In addition to the Dhamma instruction he gave, His Holiness also taught meditation to anyone who was interested. He fostered a great awareness of the benefits of meditation as a way to deepen one's insight into Dhamma. In 1976, he agreed to teach at the Department of Philosophy and Religion at Kasetsart University. The course, known as 'Meditation in the Buddhist Way', aimed to provide insight into the scriptural and practical aspects of Dhamma. The course aims to teach university students of the necessity and importance of compassion and conscience in society. His Holiness has as well taught meditation at other institutes, including governmental bureaus and private establishments. Many schools and institutions have recognized the benefits of meditation and include the Buddha's teachings in their curriculum.

As Chairman of the Board of Mahamakuta Rajavidyalaya Foundation under Royal Patronage, His Holiness had the *Tipiṭaka* (the Pali Canon) and the *Aṭṭhakathā* (the Pali Commentaries on the Canon) translated into Thai. It was a considerable achievement, for this was the first time that the *Tipiṭaka* and its Commentaries had been translated into Thai from the original Pali language. The first Thai version comprised 91 volumes and became a source of enrichment that contributed significantly to Buddhist studies and the imparting of the Dhamma.

His Holiness's unstinting efforts together with his prolific writings will illuminate the Dhamma Path for others for many years to come.

*"To have one's mind radiate with joy, one must work at achieving this state of mind oneself. No one can do it for you. How? By being mindful, and also by being able to recognise greed, hatred or delusional behaviour. One must use wisdom to guard against their harmful effects. Never hesitate. It can be compared to letting fire burn down one's own house. The longer one hesitates, the more difficult it is to put out the fire, and the more damage is done."*

*Merit Shines so Bright*

*"Greed, hatred and delusion will encircle the mind like strong and powerful walls, blocking out all light. Our minds should always be pure and radiant. It is a pity that we use a variety of conditioning and mental defilements to build walls of darkness."*

*Illuminate the Mind*

# Sweet Scent Flows throughout the World

*"The Buddha taught Dhamma in places already civilized. We will see that his teachings appealed to renunciate ascetics who had already practised concentration, who maintained morality, and who cultivated spiritual knowledge, all with a hope of transcending suffering. With regard to the laity, the Buddha approached the leaders first: kings, aristocrats, Brahmins and learned men. When these people understood Dhamma and established their minds firmly in the Dhamma, then many others would follow."*

*45 Years of the Buddha*

*F*or many years, Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara, the Supreme Patriarch, has tirelessly laid the foundation for another significant objective, which is to plant the seeds of Dhamma throughout the world so that more and more people may gain spiritual understanding.

In 1966, as Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Training Institute for Dhammaduta Bhikkhus Going Abroad, he undertook the responsibility of disseminating the Dhamma overseas.



## THE PEOPLE'S MONK

*Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara, Supreme Patriarch of Thailand*

He presided over the inaugural ceremony of Wat Buddhapadipa in London, the first Thai Buddhist temple in the UK and Europe. He studied religious activities in England as well as in Italy in order to maintain goodwill with other religions. In later years, he also visited various countries: Nepal, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Australia and the Philippines to nurture religious goodwill and to understand religious affairs in those countries.

As a result of His Holiness' devotion to the religion, Theravada Buddhism was revived in many countries. Because of a request from several Buddhist communities in Indonesia to visit that country, a group of Thai monks (as *Dhammadūta* Bhikkhus) worked long and hard to revive Buddhism there. His Holiness, in support of these initiatives, took it upon himself to visit Indonesia and preside over the ordination of Indonesian men. Wat Jakarta Dhammacakka Jaya houses many monks today but was then the first Theravada Buddhist temple to be built in Indonesia in many years. Since then many more Theravada temples have been built around the country, and it can be said that His Holiness breathed new life into Theravada Buddhism in Indonesia.



1993 : Jiang Zemin, President of the People's Republic of China welcome His Holiness at Nanhai Presidential Palace, Beijing, China.

Nepal is another country where His Holiness helped to revive the Theravada Sangha. He provided scholarships to Nepalese monks and novices so that they could study Buddhism in Thailand. Upon the completion of their studies, they returned to Nepal and helped to establish Theravada Buddhism in their homeland. Many more Nepalese monks and novices came to Thailand and were encouraged by His Holiness to revitalise the historical ordination of Nepalese Sakya men, and thus the reestablishment of Theravada Buddhism in Nepal was implemented almost effortlessly.

In 1993, His Holiness became the first religious patriarch ever to be invited by the government of the People's Republic of China to pay an official visit to that country.

In 1998, he attended the first World Buddhist Propagation Conference in Japan; the second and fourth conferences was held in Thailand the following years.

His Holiness also visited the USA, India, Nepal, Canada, Australia and several countries in Europe. The Buddhist communities in those countries were inspired by his presence to build more temples: Wat Buddharangsi in Australia, Wat Carolina Buddhajakra Vanaram in the USA, and Wat Thai Lumbini in Nepal.

Neighbouring countries in Southeast Asia were not overlooked. His Holiness visited Cambodia to join the celebration honoring the holy relics of the Buddha and his Great Disciples in Phnom Pen. Visits to Yangon in Myanmar followed, to attend the second meeting of the Sixth Tipitaka Rehearsal (*Chaṭṭhasaṅgāyana*). Later in 1991, the government of Myanmar conferred a special title 'Abhidhajamahāraṭṭhaguru' on His Holiness, comparable in their country to the title 'Supreme Patriarch.' The event emphasized the depth of the religious relationship between the two nations.



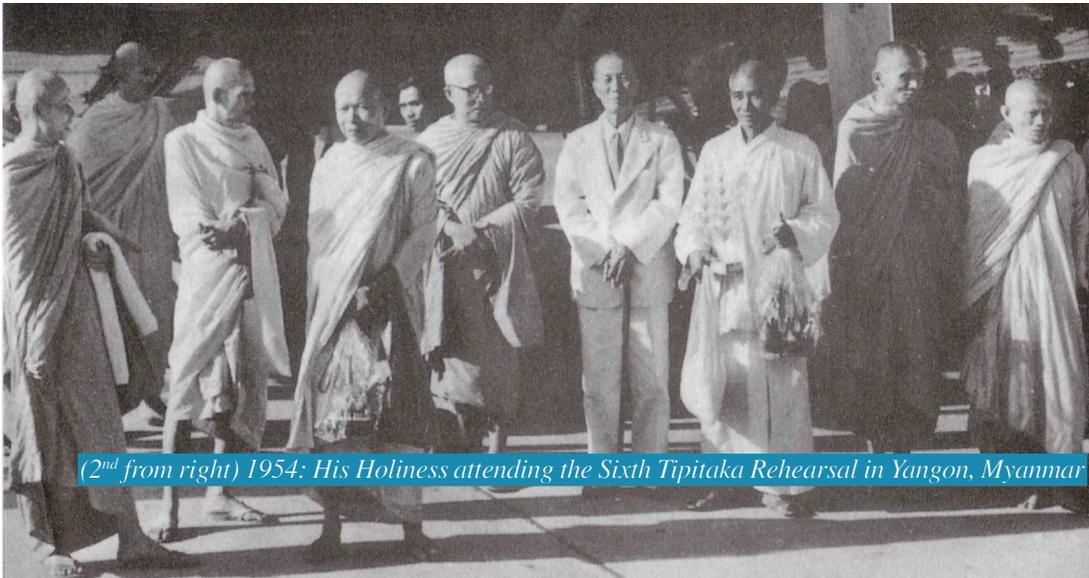
## THE PEOPLE'S MONK

*Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara, Supreme Patriarch of Thailand*

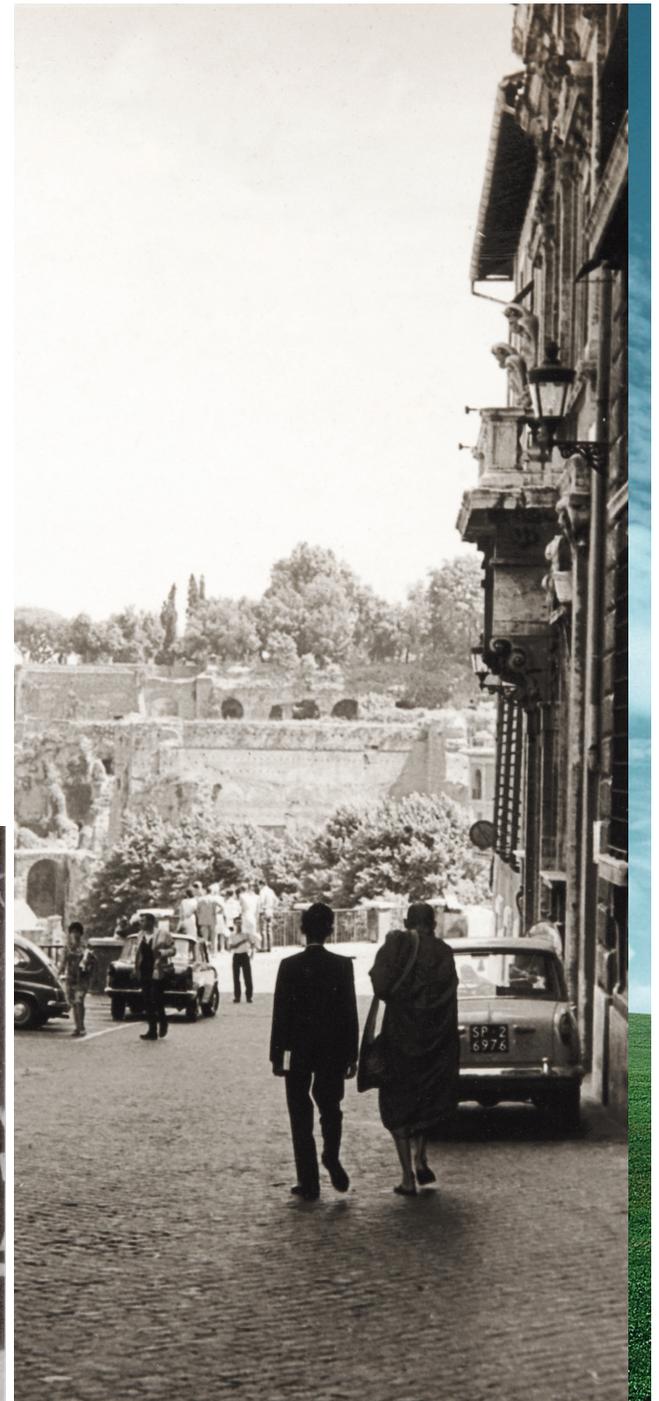
His Holiness's efforts have helped to firmly re-establish Theravada Buddhism in many countries and make the Dhamma blossom throughout the world. Wherever he went, his tranquil demeanour inspired affection and interest among the people. The sweet scent of his moral presence spread far and wide, creating a strong spiritual bond among the countries that he has visited.

*"Nothing can be more joyous than a happy mind, which only metta (loving kindness) can produce. Thus cultivating metta is significant and necessary."*

*Giving Dhamma Conquers all Gifts*



*(2<sup>nd</sup> from right) 1954: His Holiness attending the Sixth Tipitaka Rehearsal in Yangon, Myanmar*



# The Pillar of Buddhism

*"Each and every one of us in a community or a country is responsible for the happiness of everyone else. But as a leader one must behave in an exemplary manner so as to set a high standard for subordinates or for those under one's care. A leader's responsibilities are therefore more burdensome than others'. Therefore, the Buddha emphasized the necessity of first establishing in the Dhamma the leader of a group or the leader who governs or rules a country."*

*Kings' Dhamma and Social Development*

## THE PEOPLE'S MONK

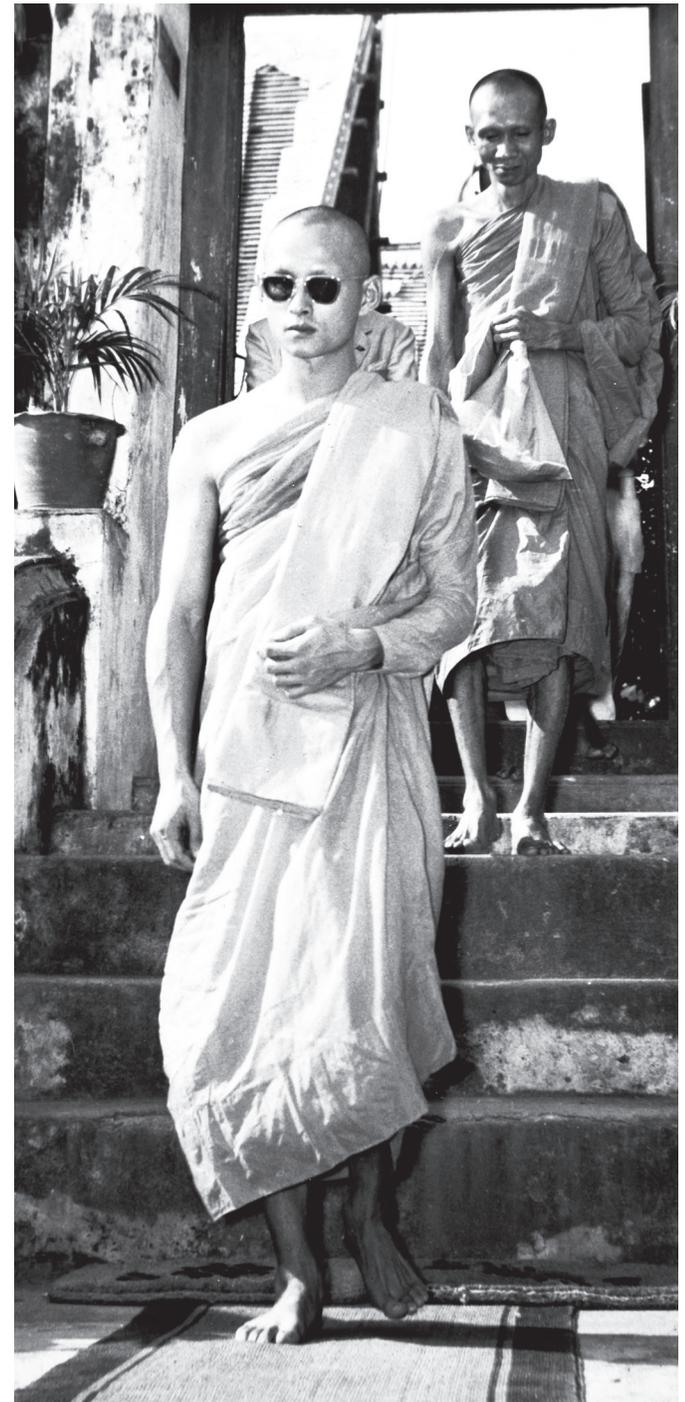
*Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara, Supreme Patriarch of Thailand*

On Friday, April 21, 1989, a great royal ceremony took place at the Temple of the Emerald Buddha at which Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara became the new Sangharaja Sakala Mahasangha Parinayaka, the 19<sup>th</sup> Supreme Patriarch of Thailand.

In Thailand under the Sangharaja, monks of the rank Somdet Phra Rajagana and Phra Rajagana carry out their duties throughout the kingdom. Each of these two positions has a number of conferred titles. Most of the titles reflect the spiritual nature of the monk, especially any title conferred upon His Holiness.

The special ecclesiastical title 'Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara' (Somdet Phra Rajagana's position) conferred on His Holiness in 1972 means 'a person of great insight.' This title was first introduced during the reign of King Rama II in 1816. The title and ecclesiastical rank of the chief of the Vipassana line was conferred on the first Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara (Suk) in 1816. After that monk became the Supreme Patriarch in 1820, no other monk had been given that particular title. Then, 152 years later, His Holiness was the became only second monk to be given the title 'Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara.' His considerable ability in carrying out his duties as chief of the Vipassana line has been highly praised by the lay people.

Moreover, all the Supreme Patriarchs of non-royal lineage were usually conferred with the title 'Somdet Phra Ariyavongsagatanyana.' His Holiness is the first Supreme Patriarch of non-royal lineage to use the special title 'Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara' in recognition of his many scholarly achievements and his mindful and meditative virtue. His Holiness is an excellent role model who is highly respected by all people regardless of ethnicity, status or nationality.



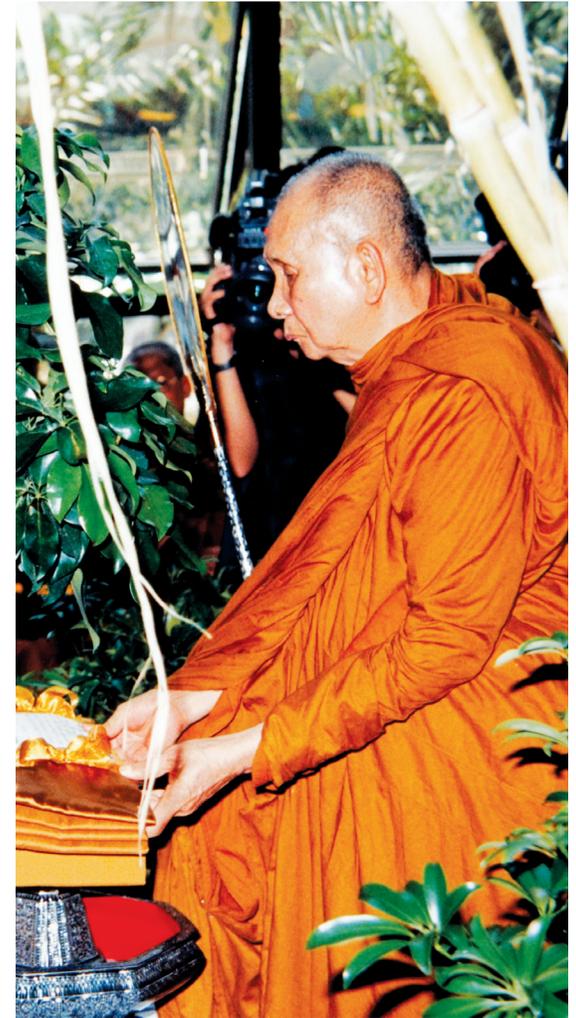
His Holiness has said that his main aim in teaching Dhamma to young people and to other members of the public is to generate peace and happiness for the whole nation. He instructs everyone to value and support the institution of the monarch, as he realises that the people of Thailand regard His Majesty the King as the heart of the Nation. His Holiness believes that the survival and health of the country depends upon the institution of the monarch. The country becomes united and strong when the people acknowledge and respect the virtues of the King.

In 1956, when His Holiness held the title of 'Phra Sobhanaganabhorn,' he was tasked to be the advisor and chaperone to H.M. the King while the latter was ordained as a monk at Wat Bovoranives Vihara for a period of 15 days.

In 1978 when H.R.H. Vajiralongkorn the Crown Prince had ordained as a monk and resided at Wat Bovoranives Vihara, His Holiness, as 'Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara,' was appointed as the *Kammavācācariya* or Act-Announcing Teacher, whose task was to assist the preceptor during the ordination ceremony and subsequently to instruct the Crown Prince in the ways of a monk. His Holiness was the Crown Prince's primary Dhamma teacher during the duration of his monkhood.

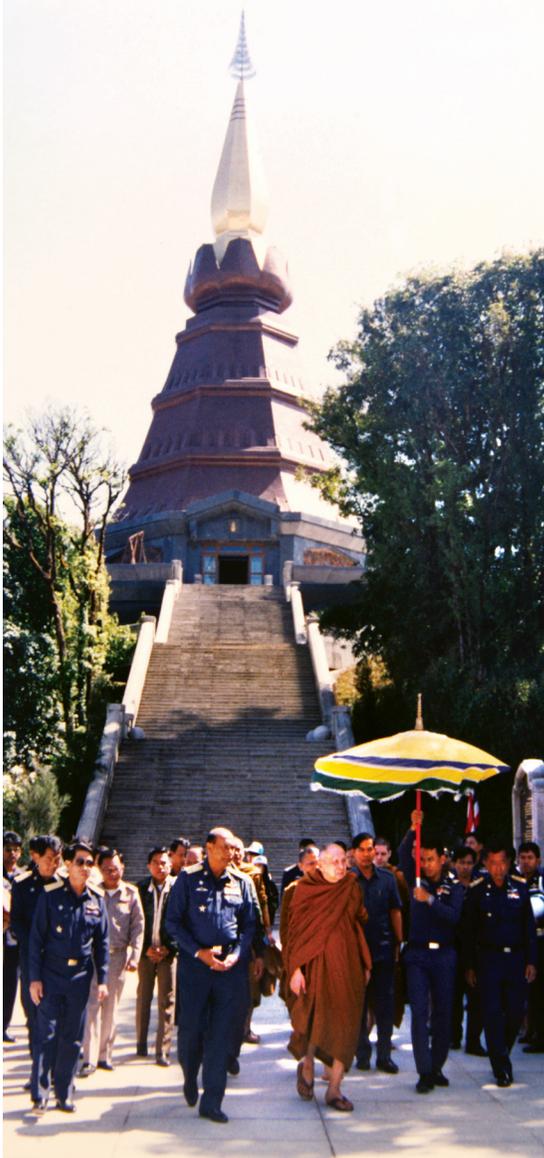
His Holiness has managed all his responsibilities flawlessly and is highly admired and respected by their Majesties the King and Queen, who have always invited him to preach Dhamma at all royal religious occasions, both in his official capacity and in private audience with their Majesties. All members of the royal family have a high regard for His Holiness and often visit him to question him about the Dhamma.

His Holiness's great compassion and concern reach out to all members of society. Even though he assigns various tasks and appointments to senior monks throughout the kingdom, he avidly keeps track of all issues since the ultimate responsibility



## THE PEOPLE'S MONK

*Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara, Supreme Patriarch of Thailand*



still rests with him. Rules and regulations that no longer support the activities of the Sangha have been modified.

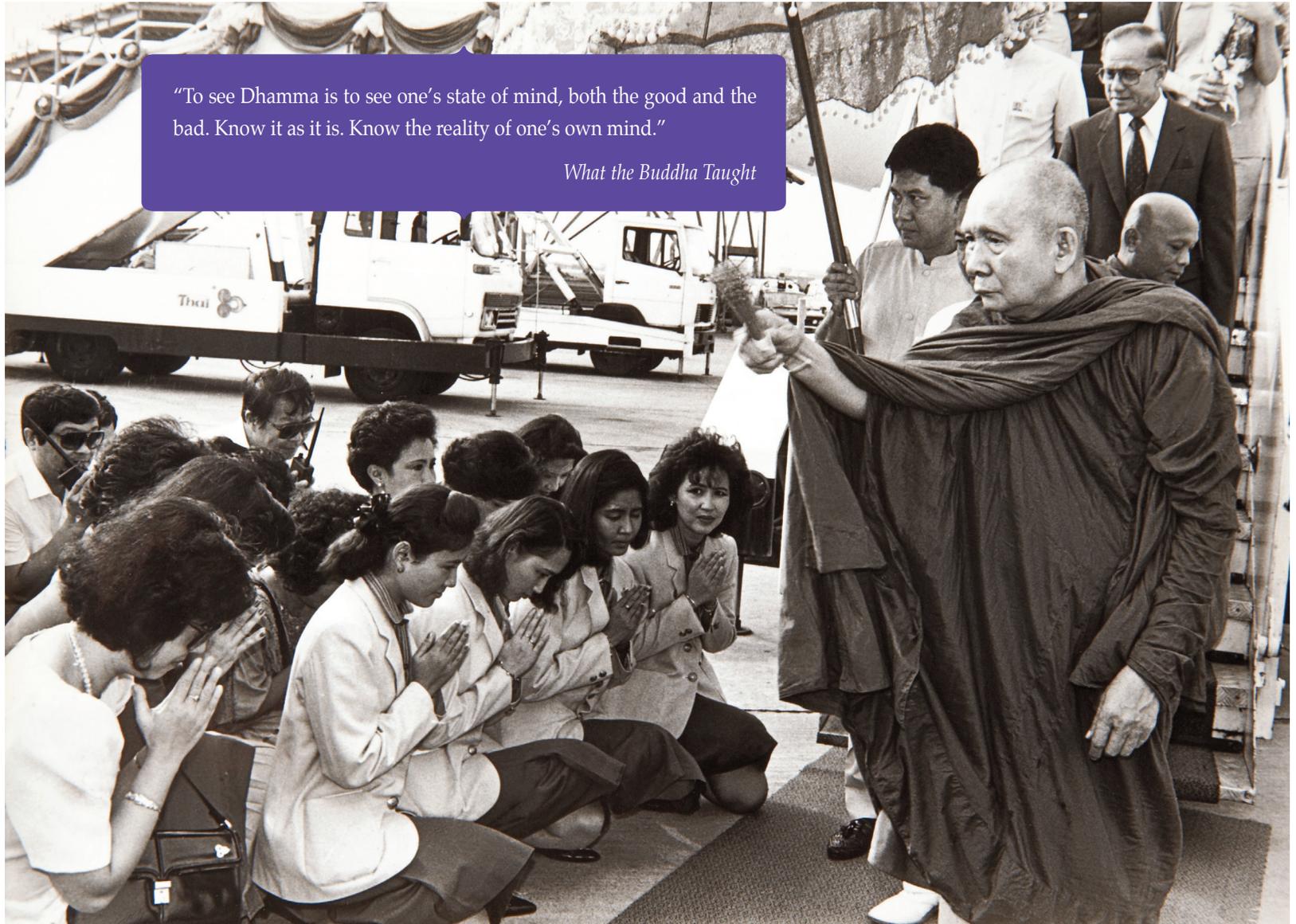
As the Sangharaja, head of the Thai Sangha, His Holiness has met and welcomed in person many international guests. His humble simplicity has impressed many national leaders who have acknowledged him as one of the world's great spiritual leaders, not just the spiritual head of Thai Buddhism. His gentle and self-effacing nature has been widely admired just as highly as his perceptive strength in decision-making.

In 1967, His Holiness the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama, the spiritual head of Tibetan Buddhism, visited Thailand for the first time. He paid a visit to His Holiness the Supreme Patriarch at Wat Bovoranives and received some advice on Theravada meditation. When His Holiness the Dalai Lama revisited Thailand and stayed at Wat Bovoranives in 1993, he greeted His Holiness the Supreme Patriarch of Thailand by addressing the latter as 'My elder brother,' in recognition of the bond of brotherly love and mutual admiration that exists between the two Buddhist leaders.

For more than 80 years, since His Holiness entered the path of Dhamma as a novice, his ongoing devotion to Dhamma and its universal benefit to mankind never diminished. Even as Head of the Thai Sangha, the integrity of his holy life and work has become more pronounced, more venerated and stands as an inspiration to all who witness it.

"To see Dhamma is to see one's state of mind, both the good and the bad. Know it as it is. Know the reality of one's own mind."

*What the Buddha Taught*





## His Brilliance

*“A Buddhist ‘wise person’ refers to someone who has insight and reasoning, knowing the cause and subsequent result. He is someone who knows which cause is wholesome or unwholesome and which result is wholesome or unwholesome. Furthermore, he knows that only a wholesome cause will yield a wholesome result, and only an unwholesome cause will yield an unwholesome result. No wholesome cause can give rise to an unwholesome result, and no unwholesome cause can give rise to a wholesome result. Those who truly understand cause and result as taught by the Buddha are considered ‘wise’ in the Buddhist sense. They will refrain from unwholesome activities. They will perform only wholesome actions with bravery and without hesitation for the benefit of oneself and others. They do so no matter how physically or mentally demanding it may be and no matter how much money or wealth they must invest.”*

*Sobhanakatha: the preaching on  
Her Majesty the Queen’s Birthday on August 12, 1991,  
at Amarindravinichai Throne Hall in the Grand Palace*

“Wisdom is the light of the world; all sages should immerse themselves in wisdom.” This passage from the Pali Scriptures was translated by His Holiness and reflects clearly how he develops his insight until it shines brilliantly. His enthusiasm for learning has led to the developed of both his expertise in scriptural understanding and his spiritual faculty.

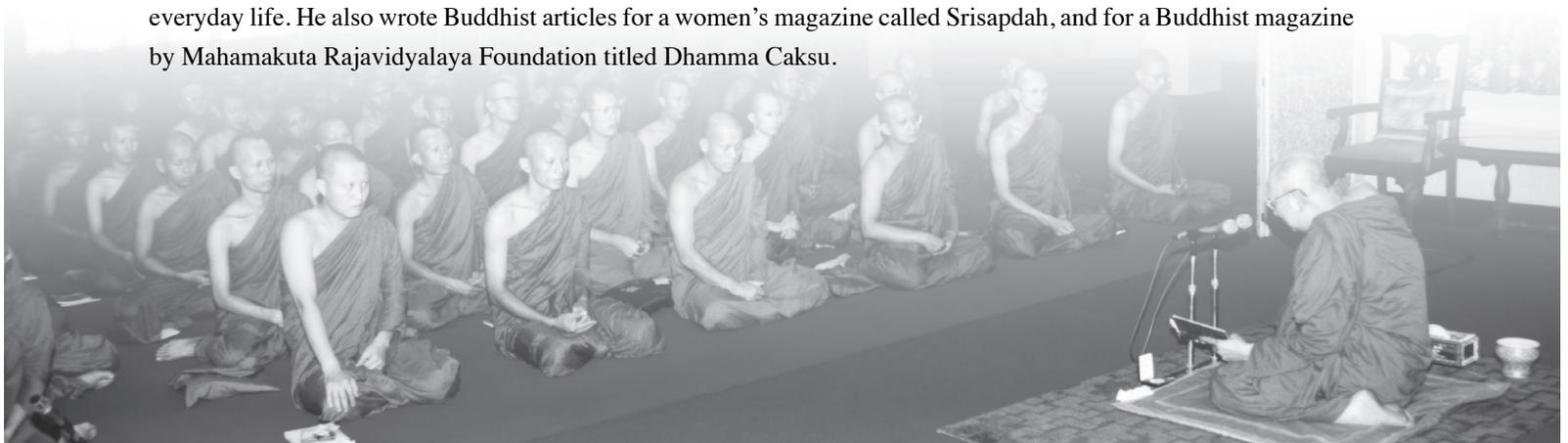
His Holiness is a far-sighted scholar, interested in researching and analyzing all facets of Buddhism, and has himself put his discoveries to the test. He is definitely a sage and an *ariyasamgha* – a learned and disciplined monk.

His intelligence, combined with his vast experience of Buddhist affairs, has made all his public works highly valued and regarded as important religious works in themselves. (These include books, essays, construction of religious sites, restoration of ancient Buddhist architecture and the creation of Buddha sculptures and amulets.)

### His important works can be categorised as follows:

#### Mass Media

In responding to the late H.R.H. Princess Mother Srinagarindra’s request, His Holiness started the Sunday morning radio broadcast ‘Mental Management’ from Amphornsathan (A.S.) Radio Station in the Dusit Palace and continued the project for many years. Its objective was to teach the listening audience how to develop mindfulness and use it in everyday life. He also wrote Buddhist articles for a women’s magazine called Srisapdah, and for a Buddhist magazine by Mahamakuta Rajavidyalaya Foundation titled Dhamma Caksu.



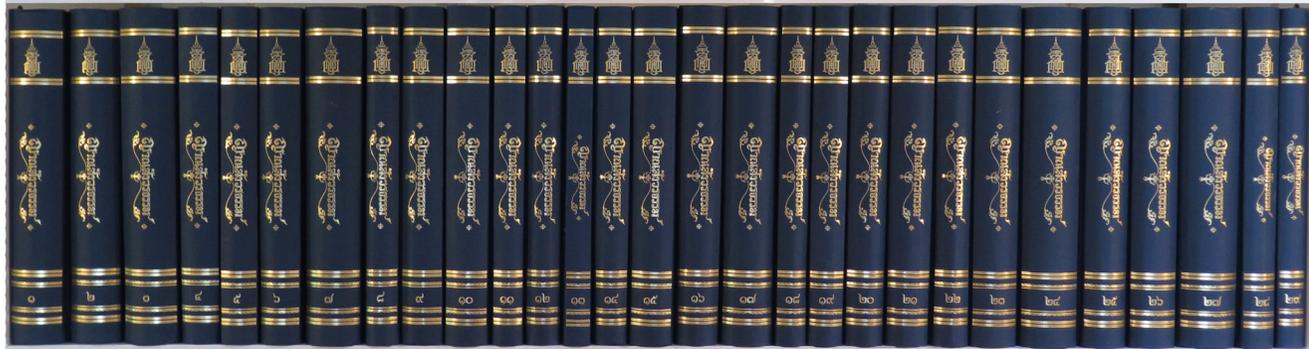
## THE PEOPLE'S MONK

*Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara, Supreme Patriarch of Thailand*

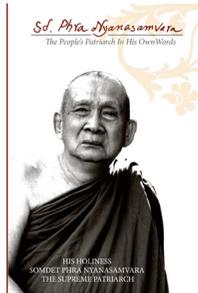
### Books

His Holiness is interested in foreign languages including Sanskrit, English, French, German and Chinese. However, the only foreign language he is fully conversant in is English, and he is skilful in reading, writing, and speaking that language. This skill, plus his untiring passion for research, makes his books even richer and more profound. He is able to adopt modern knowledge and utilize it so as to explain Dhamma so effectively that his books are easily understood by every generation, encouraging more people to take an interest in studying Dhamma.





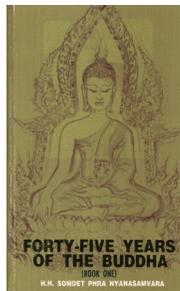
Examples of his books:



**Solasa Questions**

This is about the 16 (*solasa*) subtle Dhamma questions, together with their explanations. The book clearly reflects his brilliant analysis of profound Dhamma discussions, showing his capability in both scriptural expertise and spiritual adroitness and how he can use both faculties spontaneously and skillfully.

*Dasapārami Dasabidharājadhamma*



His Holiness sees how these two Dhamma categories are interrelated. *Dasapārami* are the ten Dhamma virtues that will lead to ultimate attainment (*vimutti*) or enlightenment. *Dasabidharājadhamma* are the ten secular virtues that aim to achieve a state of happiness by the people. Both have similar content and result in the accumulation of merit. The most interesting point in the book is his comparative and adaptive style of studying, which will guide the readers to different viewpoints and wider aspects of Buddhist study.

## THE PEOPLE'S MONK

*Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara, Supreme Patriarch of Thailand*

### ***Forty-five years of the Buddha***

This book recounts 45 years of the Buddha's life from his enlightenment until his *parinibbāna* (death) and final release from the round of birth and death at the town of Kusinara. His Holiness has compiled information and stories from the *Tipiṭaka*, the *Aṭṭhakathā*, other scriptures and books, including the Mahayana Scriptures, and retells the life of the Buddha in a captivating narrative. This is yet another book that demonstrates his profound subtlety in Dhamma teaching.

There are many other scholarly works that he wrote including the Pali grammar books volumes I-II for students of Pali studies. He also initiated the compilation and publication of Prince Kitiyakaravaralaksana's Dictionary of Pali, Thai, English and Sanskrit.

Other translations under his supervision include many Buddhist textbooks that have been translated into English such as Navakovada, Vinayamukha, the Life of the Buddha, Upasampadavidhi, Bhikkhupatimokkha, and Book of Chanting. There are many other publications of his sermons. Those already published include Mangalavisesakatha, Pancaguna, Dasabala-nyana, Mangaladesana, and Sanghaguna.

### **Construction and Restoration**

Construction and restoration of many Buddhist buildings have been done for the perpetuation of the Buddhist heritage and for the artistic expression of the people's wholehearted veneration and gratitude to the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha. Nearly 100 construction and restoration projects have been initiated by His Holiness, with the most important ones listed as follows:

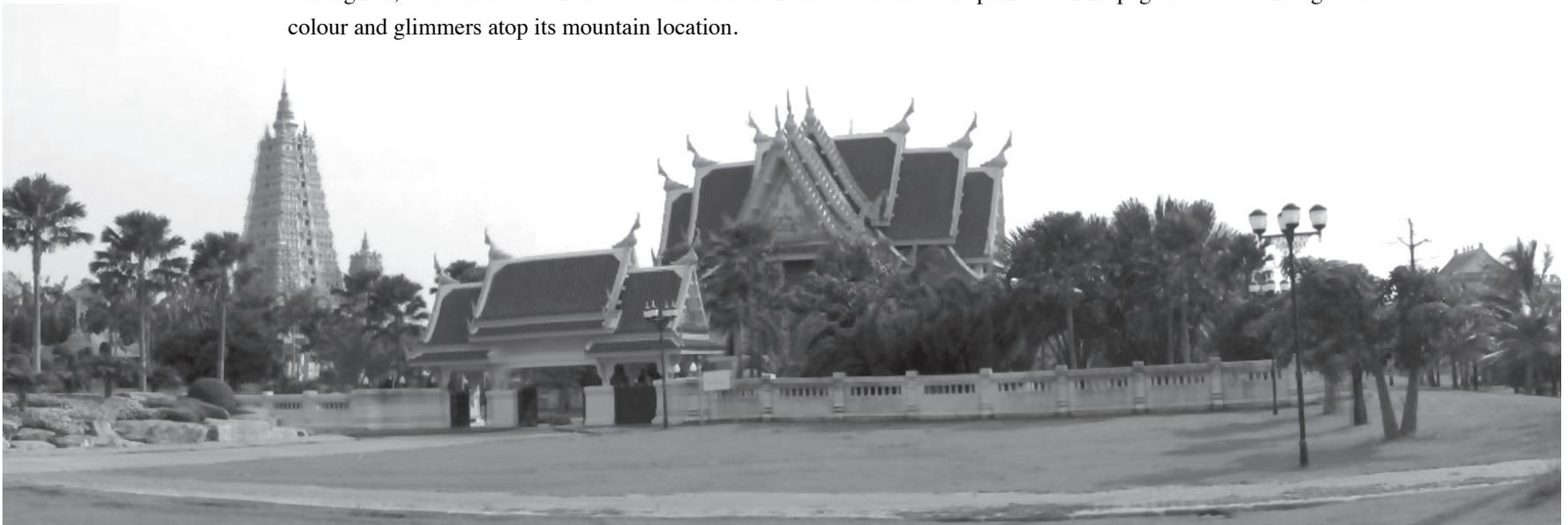


### 1. Domestic Constructions and Restorations

In remembrance of and with gratitude towards his preceptors, teachers and other benefactors, His Holiness dedicated a project to each and every individual who had shown him the spiritual path to deliverance: Bha. Pa. Ra. Study Pavilion at Wat Devasangharam (Wat Nuea) in gratitude to his first preceptor and progenitor of his spiritual life, Luang Phoe Dee; Ravidevananda Building in gratitude to the Devasangharam Temple School where he received his primary education as a child.

One such beautiful and artistic building is Wat Nyanasamvararam in Cholburi Province, dedicated to H.M. King Rama IX, the present monarch, and to all of his royal predecessors. As a part of protecting rock mountain and environment, His Holiness also initiated a bas-relief depiction of the Buddha hewn out of a cliff face known locally as Chi-chandr Mountain. This impressive carving is skillfully outlined by laser and by the use of gilding. Holy relics of the Buddha were installed inside the engraved Buddha. The inauguration ceremony was presided over by H.M. the King.

The beautiful white and grey Srinagarindra Mahasanti-giri Pagoda at Wat Santigirinyanasamvararam, Doi Maesalong, Chiang Rai, was constructed in honour of H.R.H. the Princess Mother. The pinnacle of the pagoda is a beautiful golden colour and glimmers atop its mountain location.



## THE PEOPLE'S MONK

*Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara, Supreme Patriarch of Thailand*

There are other constructions and restorations of temples in both near and remote areas: Wat Ratchadabhisekand and Wat Buddhavimuti in Kanjanaburi; Wat Wangphusai in Petchburi and Wat Lanna-nyanasamvararam in Chiang Mai.

### 2. International Constructions and Restorations

With his far-sighted judgement, His Holiness recognizes the importance of *Dhammadūta* (missionary) work by helping Theravada Buddhism in other countries and, at the same time, upholding the friendly relations of international communities. His efforts over the years have blossomed on many of the world's continents.

Today, many Theravada groups around the world have requested His Holiness to become the Chairman of the Administrative Committee as well as Chairman of the Sponsoring Committee. This is for the construction of their temples and Uposatha halls. For instance, Wat Buddharangsi in Sydney, Australia, which is the first Theravada temple on the that continent; Wat Jakarta Dhammacakka Jaya in Jakarta, Indonesia; Wat Carolina Buddhajakra Vanaram, USA.; Uposatha Hall of Wat Nagara Mandapa Srikirti Vihara in Kirtipur and Wat Thai Lumbini in Lumbini, Nepal.



Uposatha Hall of Wat Srikiti Vihara in Kathmandu, Nepal



Uposatha Hall of Wat Thai Lumbini in Lumbini, Nepal.

### 3. Construction and Restoration within Wat Bovoranives Vihara

As abbot of Wat Bovoranives monastery, His Holiness closely supervised the restoration of the whole compound, including these important structures:

- The Uposatha Hall. His Holiness had the hall restored with marble slabs from Italy in order to preserve its original architecture and ancient artwork, which are unique examples of that style of art.
- The Sri Lankan style Great Stupa. His Holiness had the whole stupa decorated with Italian golden mosaic tiles, making the stupa glimmer beautifully in the sunlight.
- Bha. Pa. Ra. Museum Building. The Wat Bovoranives Vihara Museum was constructed to display the monastery's antiquities.
- Sa.Va. Dhammanives Building was built and dedicated to H.R.H. the Princess Mother.
- Kavibannalaya Building was built to accommodate the dean's office and the library of Mahamakut Buddhist University.

All the aforementioned projects reflect and capture not only the vision, gratitude and zeal of His Holiness, but also his insight and compassion for the Thai people, and for the welfare and happiness of the entire world.

*"An individual may think he is doing something good, but if his mind is anxious, he will not find peace. If so, one should understand that one is, in fact, merely trying to give the appearance of doing good."*

*Illuminate the Mind*

*"The possibility of good and evil exists all the time, but never at the same time. We must do one or the other. We must choose between good and bad. Do not hesitate to do good. Do not give in to the temptation of evil; for if you fall under the power of evil, it will impede your opportunities to do good."*

*Each Life has Limited Time*



# His Holy Life

*"Dhamma is an ornament that adorns one's mind, nourishes it until the mind grows and prospers, and makes a human truly humane and graceful so as to become a learned, happy and serene person. If compared to worldly treasure, Dhamma is like nourishment that nurtures the body and sustains life, like jewelry that beautifies our appearance."*

*Principles of Buddhism*

*"If you'd like to revere a good monk, you don't have to come as far as Chiang Mai. You already have one in Bangkok. Go visit Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara."* So said Luang Pu Waen to one of his followers who had travelled from the Thai capital to Wat Doi Maepang in Chiang Mai, where Luang Pu was living.



His Holiness was with deaf students.

The above comment is a reconfirmation from that great monk, Luang Pu Waen, widely revered as a *supaṭipanno* (noble disciple of good conduct), that His Holiness has lived a righteous life, and has thus been a beacon of light for all Buddhists in the modern Thai capital.

His Holiness always venerates and lives according to the Dhamma, making everyone who knows him feel as though Dhamma adorns him. The title '*Phra Sobhanaganabhorn*' (Phra Rajagana's rank) which means 'like a jewel or a robe that beautifies one's community,' was therefore conferred on him in 1947. His subsequent title, the Venerable *Phra Dhammavarabhorn*, was conferred upon him in 1956; it means 'one sublimely adorned with Dhamma.'

People who have seen His Holiness whether close up or from afar, and those with whom His Holiness has engaged in conversation, have all felt impressed by his grace and delighted in his ever-present serenity. The conscientious and compassionate nature that shines from within him has inspired trust and has become the liberating ideal imprinted in the minds of monks and lay people alike. His Holiness' presence has instilled hope in their daily lives that freedom is possible, that suffering can be alleviated if they tread the same righteous path, living a wholesome life according to the Dhamma.

## **Daily Life**

Everyday, at approximately 4:00 am, His Holiness arises, recites morning chanting and meditates, before carrying his bowl on alms round. Around 9:00 am, he will have his one and only meal of the day, eating from his alms bowl. He will then receive guests for one hour in the morning, and then again in the afternoon, otherwise he will read and conduct research. Should a more urgent matter arise, then his usual morning and afternoon activities will be rescheduled.

His Holiness accepts as many invitations as he possibly can; it might be an opening of a small shop or a larger event, but as long as they are made by people from all walks of life, then His Holiness will be pleased to accept the invitation. When his close supporters show their concern that he is working too hard, he will gently explain, "I am a people's monk."

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*Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara, Supreme Patriarch of Thailand*

In the evening, when the heat of the day has passed, he will walk around the temple to take exercise while inspecting the premises, then he will do more paperwork, research and meditation until it's time to retire. He sleeps no more 3-4 hours a night.

### **Mindful Existence**

Composure and strict adherence to the moral precepts forms a part of his inner character.

He studies his monk's vows carefully and is always mindful never to transgress them.

He uses every possible moment to meditate. People very often see him sitting upright, eyes closed and at peace. Then he will move on to continue his work calmly as his schedule dictates.

### **Gratitude**

His Holiness always remembers and feels grateful towards those who were kind to him in his childhood and takes every opportunity he can to repay their kindness. Gratitude is thus one of his outstanding characteristics, part of the very core of his existence, which personifies his holy life.

Every year he holds a ceremony to dedicate merit to his 18 predecessors, the Supreme Patriarchs of Thailand in Bangkok era, including all his preceptors and teachers. He also had a school built and a temple renovated, dedicating these activities to his first preceptor, Luang Phoe Dee of Wat Devasangharam.





In memory of his second preceptor, the 13<sup>th</sup> Supreme Patriarch, Krommaluang Vajiranyanavangsa of Wat Bovoranives, His Holiness constructed a building in his name. All the Thai Kings of the past are remembered through various commemorative building projects, including schools and hospitals, and the monument to King Rama V in Kanjanaburi.

In deep gratitude to his mother, His Holiness brought her to Bangkok and had her live in a small white cottage beside his own residence in Wat Bovoranives. She stayed there until her passing. He also founded 'the Noi Gajavatra Foundation' in memory of his father and mother, both of whom had 'Noi' as a part of their name. The foundation provides funds to support the education of monks, novices and young people, for His Holiness recognizes the importance of educating people. He always says, "I had no opportunity for a higher education, so I would like to provide such an opportunity to others whenever possible."

#### **Humility and Respect**

One aspect of His Holiness's character that has never changed is his humble respect towards elder monks as he considered the years spent in monkhood to be an important indication of seniority. Even when he assumed the highest position as Supreme Patriarch of the country, he still paid his respects to all monks who were senior (years as a monk) to him. When he knew that a visiting monk had been ordained for more years than he had, His Holiness would invite 'his elders' to sit on a higher seat. He would then pay respect to them in the manner prescribed by Buddhist practice. With younger monks, he always welcomed them politely with compassion and kindness.

## THE PEOPLE'S MONK

*Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara, Supreme Patriarch of Thailand*

### Loving Teacher

His enthusiasm for learning and his love of imparting knowledge to others are well known. His Holiness possesses the heart of a teacher who never fails to pass on the best to his students, wishing only that they will receive what he has presented to them.

With a pleasing voice, he speaks clearly when teaching Dhamma and ends every teaching session exactly on time, without a clock to time himself. He lets those close to him absorb his teaching mainly through his ethical and loving behaviour.

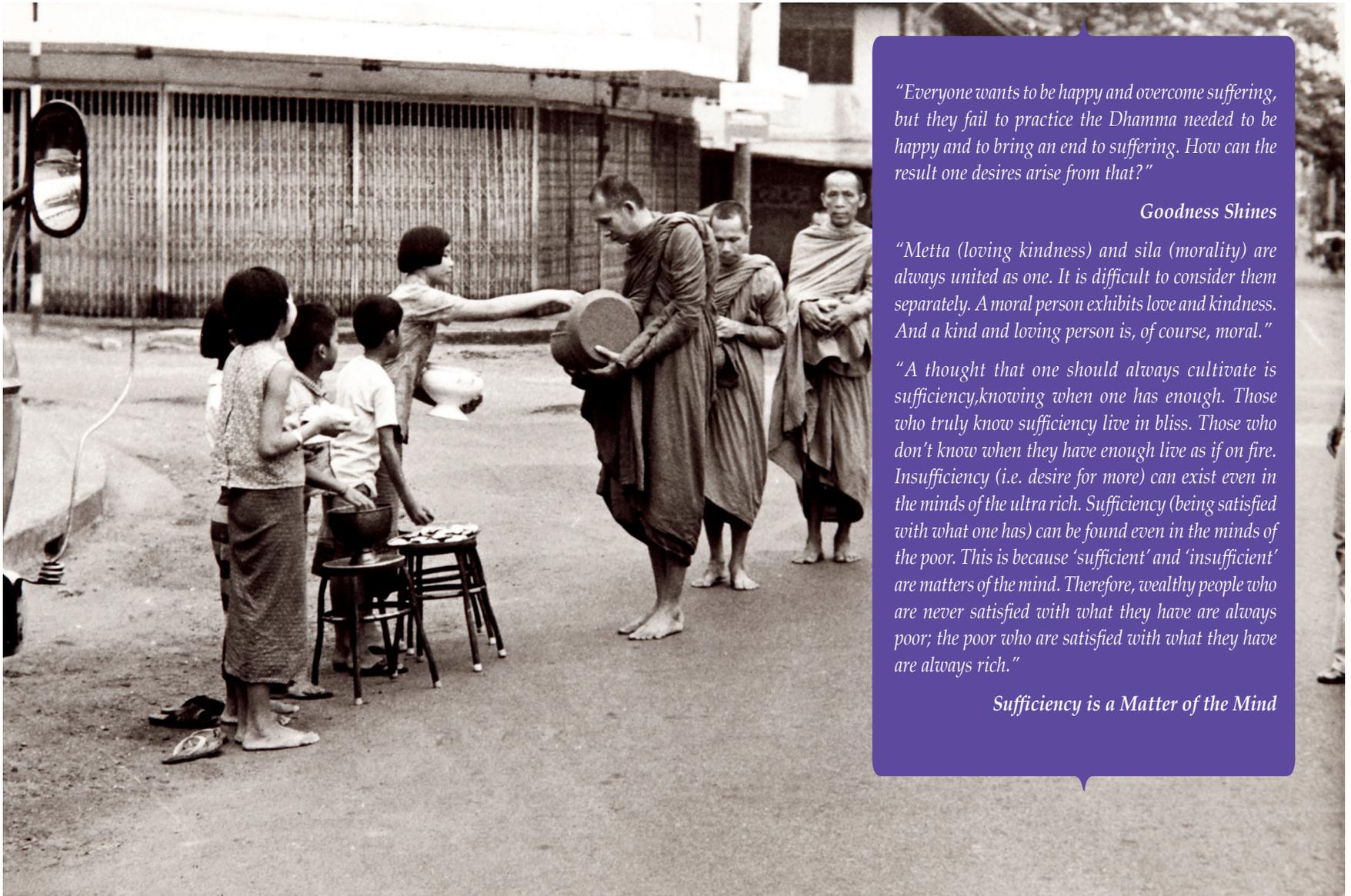
### Peaceful Simplicity

His Holiness lives simply and is always modest, patient, and unattached to the formality that has become a part of his life as the Supreme Patriarch. No special decoration is allowed in his residence. No unnecessary things clutter his room. He teaches the monks and novices that, "Monks and novices should not live in luxury. Abandoning the life of a householder, one must renounce the unnecessary."

His Holiness prefers using his well-worn saffron robes to new ones. He also prefers to wash and repair these garments himself. All monks and novices are told to use the temple's resources economically. Any surplus offerings must be redistributed to those in need, for instance, when the Rains Retreat is over.

An expensive car was once offered to him for his personal use. "There is no place to keep it," he responded, trying not to offend the donor when refusing the luxurious offering. In merit-making ceremonies at other temples, the abbots of those temples would often offer to His Holiness part of the donations given by the public. His Holiness always accepted the donations and then returned them right away, saying "I would like to join you in making merit myself."

The values that His Holiness has cultivated have ensured that he has found success in his life. It has helped him to get through life's difficulties and disappointments, which are a normal part of worldly existence. His life has been an outstanding example for others to follow.



*"Everyone wants to be happy and overcome suffering, but they fail to practice the Dhamma needed to be happy and to bring an end to suffering. How can the result one desires arise from that?"*

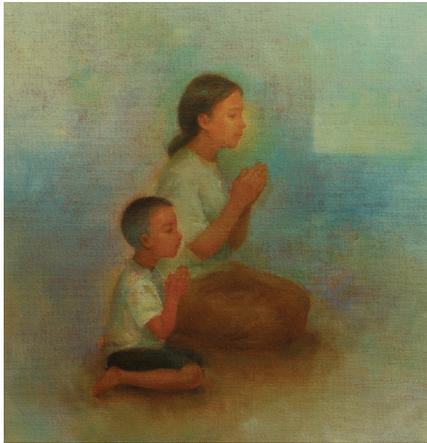
### *Goodness Shines*

*"Metta (loving kindness) and sila (morality) are always united as one. It is difficult to consider them separately. A moral person exhibits love and kindness. And a kind and loving person is, of course, moral."*

*"A thought that one should always cultivate is sufficiency, knowing when one has enough. Those who truly know sufficiency live in bliss. Those who don't know when they have enough live as if on fire. Insufficiency (i.e. desire for more) can exist even in the minds of the ultra rich. Sufficiency (being satisfied with what one has) can be found even in the minds of the poor. This is because 'sufficient' and 'insufficient' are matters of the mind. Therefore, wealthy people who are never satisfied with what they have are always poor; the poor who are satisfied with what they have are always rich."*

*Sufficiency is a Matter of the Mind*

# The Compassionate One



*“All the buildings and sites like temples, schools and educational training centres, for example, which have been constructed by various people for the benefit of all, demonstrate the kindness those people have for others. Karuna (compassion) is the wish that others will overcome suffering. When one witnesses the pain of others and one’s heart is moved with concern for them, then one will be motivated to help alleviate their suffering. Thus karuna (compassion) is the opposite of vihimsa (cruelty).”*

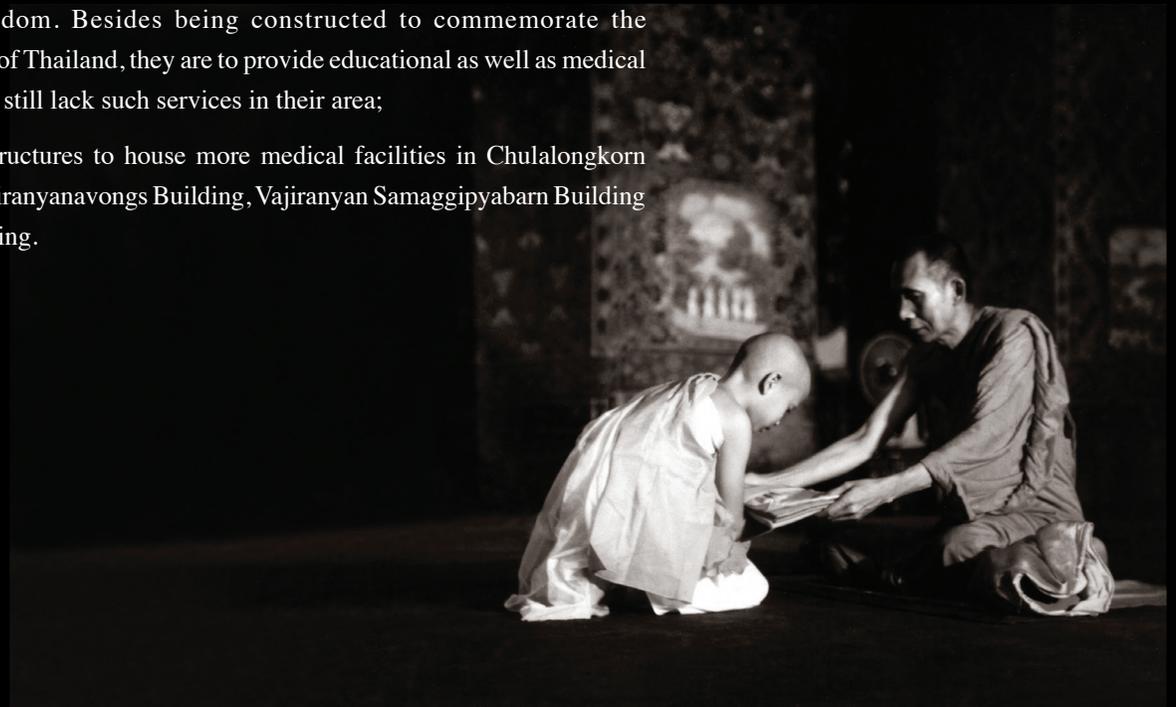
*Anything that helps relieve the pain and suffering of others, such as the construction of a hospital, reflects the founders’ compassion.”*

*Ordinary Living, Ordinary Happiness*

*B*ecause of his compassionate nature, His Holiness always helps to alleviate the pain and suffering of the people. He always concerns himself with the well being of people and the happiness of the nation. Instilling Dhamma in people’s hearts and teaching them to live in harmony with one another with loving care for others will build unity and mutual compassion within their own families and society.

His Holiness himself lights the way and leads people to a more peaceful life by extending his kindness to those in need without partiality. He especially focuses on those who live in remote regions, providing many types of infrastructure that will benefit them. Some of those projects include:

- King Rama V Ramaniyakheth School in Kanjanaburi for needy and poor students, including a hospital of the same name near the school;
- Wat Nyanasamvararam Hospital in Cholburi, for monks and lay people;
- Supreme Patriarch Buildings, or Sakolmaha-sanghapaninayok Buildings of which there are nineteen in number. Each is within a hospital and are located throughout the Kingdom. Besides being constructed to commemorate the 19 Supreme Patriarchs of Thailand, they are to provide educational as well as medical services to people who still lack such services in their area;
- Three additional structures to house more medical facilities in Chulalongkorn Hospital, Bangkok: Vajiranyanavongs Building, Vajiranyan Samaggipyabarn Building and Bha. Pa. Ra. Building.



## THE PEOPLE'S MONK

*Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara, Supreme Patriarch of Thailand*

When the nation is struck with natural disasters or a crisis, His Holiness moves quickly to repair the damage and aid the victims. For instance, whenever and wherever there is a flood, he will bring provisions, medicines and relief to the affected people, at times personally delivering these supplies to the stricken sites.

On October 14, 1973, when many university students demonstrated showing their discontent with the government, various groups attacked the students with brute force at the Phra Meru Grounds and along the Rajadamneun Avenue. His Holiness wrote an article encouraging everyone to maintain national unity. He had the article copied and distributed so as to calm violent emotions and reduce further damage.

In 1991, a fire broke out in the middle of the night among the houses behind Wat Bovoranives. The incident happened not far from His Holiness's residence. People were panicking as the raging inferno spread so his close followers concerned for his welfare asked him to move to a more secure building. But His Holiness was so concerned for the welfare of the people that he went immediately to help by calming their fears and asking them to make way for the firemen. His Holiness continued to comfort the community until the danger had passed. He then allowed them to take shelter in the temple's grounds till they could find alternative dwellings.

In 1997, when the economic 'Tomyamkung' crisis erupted, His Holiness went on alms rounds in several areas around Bangkok to console the people and give them hope in that difficult time.



2015 : His Holiness' compassionate relief for Earthquake in Nepal



2008 : His Holiness sent over relief goods for victims of Nargis in Myanmar



2009 : His Holiness' compassionate relief for flood victims in Bangkok

Every time the nation faces a crisis, His Holiness asks monks from around the country to perform Buddhist chanting together to give spiritual support to the people. For instance, when His Majesty the King suffers ill health, His Holiness always asks monks throughout the Kingdom to chant together to make merit and offer it to aid the king.

Even though His Holiness does not generally endorse the making of amulets, he usually grants permission to others to do so if it is for a purpose that would be beneficial to the public. And if he is invited to a ceremony to consecrate Buddha statues or amulets, he will rename the gathering as a 'mind pledging' (*citta-adhiṭṭhāna*) ceremony so as to focus people's thoughts on the Triple Refuge, i.e. the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha - community of noble monks. He also generously allows people to engrave his initials 'NYSS' on such amulets or images, if that will help unite the people for a good purpose.

Invitations to 'mind pledging' ceremonies have steadily increased in number as His Holiness' meditation ability is as well-known as his ability to teach the Dhamma. And, out of compassion for the people, he usually accepts their requests, including invitations to wedding ceremonies, funerals, shop openings and the launching of a naval ship or the commission of the national flag carrier's aeroplane and the like.

His Holiness considers imparting wisdom through the perception of Dhamma as the most inspiring gift to give to the people. But to encourage more people to become interested in the Dhamma needs a well thought-out approach. When people visit the monastery to pay homage to the Supreme Patriarch, he always gives them a small Buddha amulet together with a Dhamma book that he has authored so as to pass on the message, "Keep the Buddha near you and keep the Dhamma close to your heart." Thus his compassion and loving kindness extend to all without exception. He truly lives the Dhamma and genuinely lives for others. He is a living example whose very life reveals the wealth of inner peace and skilful means he uses to channel his physical and mental resources for the happiness of the people.

# Supreme Patriarch of Patriarchs

*I met the late Supreme Patriarch many years ago and had the deepest respect and admiration for the way he fulfilled his religious responsibilities. Throughout his long and meaningful life he remained thoroughly dedicated to the service of humanity.*

*-- H.H. Dalai Lama*

*His Holiness' sincere endeavor and great achievements, truly worthy of the honorary title of Supreme Holiness of World Buddhism, will be greatly praised from all over the world and will shine in the Buddhist history forever.*

*--Most Venerable Dr. Kyuse Enshinjoh*

Since the day of his ordination as a disciple of the Lord Buddha, His Holiness Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara, the Supreme Patriarch piously practiced Buddhist disciplines and doctrines. He studied the sacred texts enthusiastically and followed all disciplines strictly like a meditator monk who seeks understanding of content and lives by knowledge and example. He diligently taught theoretical Buddhism and meditation practice to both monastics and lay people, both Thais and foreigners, in Wats, schools and on radio broadcasts nationwide. Likewise, he taught Buddhism in colloquial language to the general public through his own personal example, preaching, and writing. As the head of the sangha of Thailand he managed the Ecclesiastical affairs efficiently.





1998: (From left) the Most Ven. Dr. Kyuse Enshinjoh, the Dalai Lama and His Holiness in Kyoto, Japan.

In many countries, he also helped revive Buddhism and encouraged establishment of mutual relationships with Buddhists all over the world. He compassionately founded a multitude of educational institutions and hospitals. His loving-kindness radiated far and wide to victims of all kinds of natural disasters in Thailand and abroad.

All these activities were not just occasional incidents in his life because he dedicated his entire life to people. Accordingly, he was indeed the 'people's monk' who was always present with full of loving-kindness and compassion for every being everywhere.

At the age of 90 in year 2000, his physical condition weakened and he was admitted to the Samakkhi-Phayabarn building in King Chulalongkorn Memorial Hospital to receive proper medical treatment. Initially, His Holiness occasionally returned to Wat Bovoranives Vihara to attend the Patimokha ceremony on each full moon and new moon day at the Uposotha Hall. Later, when his health gradually deteriorated, doctors asked him to remain in hospital for continuous treatment rather than commute back and forth to the monastery. Consequently, since 2007, His Holiness was hospitalized permanently.

While His Holiness was getting medical treatment in the hospital Buddhists were anxiously awaiting news of his condition. Every year on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of October, his birthday, Buddhists from Bangkok and up-country went to Wat Bovoranives Vihara to pay him homage and wish him Happy Birthday. Every year hundreds of thousands of people signed their names to greet him on his birthday; simultaneously, in many provinces, people

## THE PEOPLE'S MONK

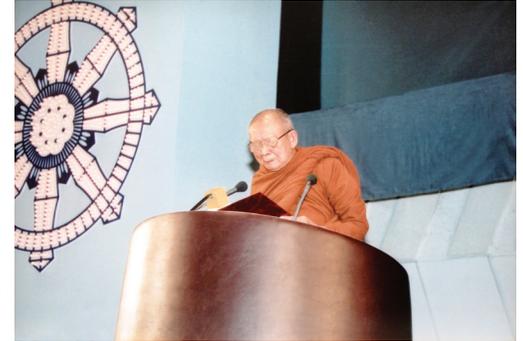
*Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara, Supreme Patriarch of Thailand*

gathered together to chant for his speedy recovery. People who could travel to the hospital by themselves used to visit to pay him homage up in person—though through a glass doors which was medically sealed to prevent infection. Although it was just a glimpse of His Holiness, and only once a year, people were still overjoyed to get a chance to pay homage to this superlative monk of unsurpassed compassion and understanding. People miss his sincere loving-kindness and clarity of instruction. His teachings are widely available both in book form and audio compact discs. People continuously re-read his books to recall one's mindfulness and to cleanse one's mental defilements.

The longest reigning Supreme Patriarch of Thailand with 24 continuous years of service, His Holiness reached 100 years of age in 2013. On such an unprecedented occasion, His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej patronized celebration of the 100th Birthday Anniversary of His Holiness Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara, the Supreme Patriarch of Thailand which was organized at Wat Bovoranives Vihara. Furthermore, His Majesty the King graced Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn with the honour of presiding over the special royal ceremony organized in the Main Shrine of the Emerald Buddha Royal Monastery, the Grand Palace.

Just ten days after the 100th birthday anniversary, His Holiness' physical condition worsened. His team of physicians, after discussing his case, decided that he required an operation on his large and small intestines. The operation was successful and stabilized his condition; however, his overall condition did not improve. Septicaemia dropped his diastolic blood pressure drastically. On October 24, His Holiness was not responding to any medications and his respiration weakened. Finally, at 7.30 pm, His Holiness stopped breathing completely. He was 100 years and 21 days of age.

All media nationwide promptly announced the official statement of His Holiness' demise made by the physicians of King Chulalongkorn Memorial Hospital. The next day, people gathered solemnly along the roads as his holy body was moved from the hospital to the temple shortly after





noon. Several hundreds of mourners lined the busy road outside the hospital, from where the holy body was due to be shifted to the temple for religious ceremonies. People of all ages - from school students to frail old women kneeled and bowed respectfully next to the heavy traffic. Most were dressed in the mourning colours of black or white.

His Holiness' holy body was transported in a motorcade from the hospital to Wat Bovoranives Vihara, his residence monastery. Legion of Honour of HRH Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn military and police cadets, in white suits, lined both sides of the road from the Wan Chat intersection to the Wat. Behind the cadets were large groups of mourners. The Crown Prince personally gave the royal command to the staff under HRH to take part in the Ceremony of Conveyance of the body to Wat Bovoranives Vihara with full honour and beautification.



## THE PEOPLE'S MONK

*Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara, Supreme Patriarch of Thailand*



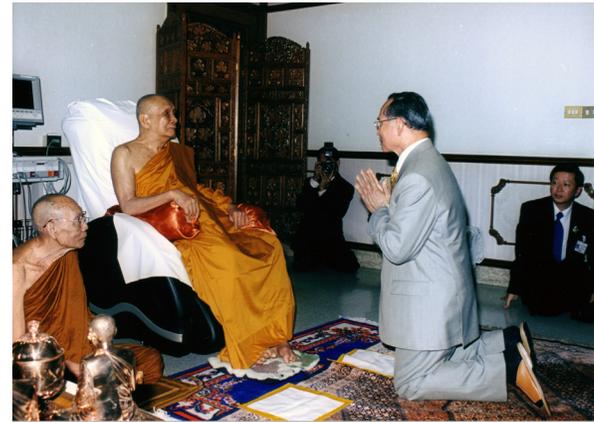
At Wat Bovoranives Vihara, people waited to receive H.R.H. who had arrived at Wat Bovoranives Vihara to preside over the Ceremony of the Royal Bath and to pay respect to his holy body. Disregarding hot weather and very long queuing, people were determined to use this opportunity to pay their last respects to His Holiness.

Not even a month has passed since the 100th birthday anniversary of His Holiness but an atmosphere full of joy and happiness has changed to sorrow and melancholy. Many pilgrims travelled from afar; many visited every day; but, every one prostrated himself before his holy body with the greatest respect and chanted Buddhist sutras as a dedication to His Holiness the Supreme Patriarch.

His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej graciously entrusted HRH Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn to represent His Majesty in presiding over the royal bathing ceremony of the holy body. His Majesty the King graciously received the royal funeral ceremonial procession under the royal patronage for seven days. His Majesty the King gave the royal command to have the funeral ceremony performed by Buddhist monks both day and night--and offered His Holiness every honour according to the ancient royal traditions. Moreover, all government sectors and the general public sponsored the funeral ceremony every day and night throughout the years. People the length and breadth of the Kingdom visited at Tamnak Phet to pay their respect to the holy body of His Holiness. Equally, there were merit making ceremonies in several provinces nationwide to dedicate merit to His Holiness.

The Thai people's mourning is echoed by representatives of many countries, heads of state, and various religious organizations from abroad. Many travelled to attend His Holiness' royal funeral and expressed their condolences overwhelmingly. Diplomats from 23 countries participated in the royal seventh day funeral ceremony. The Republic of India's Minister of Culture and the Indian Ambassador to Thailand offered a Vajrayana Puja ceremony in the highest tribute to the late His Holiness. The Holy See represented by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Thailand performed a Mass and prayed the funeral liturgy in front of the holy urn. The Chinese Buddhist Lineage of Thailand organized and performed the Kong-tek funeral ceremony honouring His Holiness.

In many other countries, special Buddhist chanting ceremonies dedicating to His Holiness were organized widely including such places as Mexico, Sri Lanka, and Japan. The Nenbutsushu Buddhist Sect of Japan organized an especially grand memorial service chanting with 1,000 monks at their headquarters temple.





The Most Venerable Dr. Kyuse Enshinjoh, the founder priest of Nenbutsushu Buddhist Sect of Japan and President of the Buddhist Summit travelled to Thailand to pay homage to the holy body of the late His Holiness. At Wat Bovoranives Vihara, the Most Venerable Enshinjoh brought condolence messages from 17 Buddhist Summit member countries out of 33 countries; specifically, they include condolence messages from Belgium, Finland, Switzerland, Mexico, United Kingdom, United States of America and Nepal. The Most Venerable also praised His Holiness as truly the Supreme Holiness of World Buddhism--the "Supreme Patriarch of the Patriarchs."

His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of Tibet, expressed his condolences through his web site and stated that 'in his passing we have all lost a remarkable spiritual friend. I met the late Supreme Patriarch many years ago and had the deepest respect and admiration for the way he fulfilled his religious responsibilities. Throughout his long and meaningful life he remained thoroughly dedicated to the service of humanity.'

This commendation exemplifies the deepest respects by Buddhists from around the world. Indeed, it is rare to have a Buddhist leader who is universally recognized as the paramount example of Buddhist piety like the late His Holiness Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara Sakalamahasanghparinayaka, the 19<sup>th</sup>

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*Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara, Supreme Patriarch of Thailand*

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Supreme Patriarch of Kingdom of Thailand, the “Supreme Patriarch of the Patriarchs,” the “People’s Monk,” the monk of Supreme Veneration and the mental refuge of all Buddhists forever.



# THE PEOPLE'S MONK

Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara, Supreme Patriarch of Thailand

