

Brief Biographical Sketch of the Author of the Books: Phra Suratano Bhikkhu (otherwise affectionately called Archarn or Luang Phor or simply, Phra Terry by his disciples) 1929-

Phra Terry was born Terence Barnett Magness on May 1929 in Penang, then British Malaya into an English Catholic family. He attended school at St. Xavier's Institute and, the church nearby. The idyllic life as a youth came to an abrupt end with the Japanese invasion of Malaya and with it, his education as well.

By February or March of 1946 at about 16-17 years old, he and an elder sister fled Penang for Thailand seeking safety from Japanese bombardment. His parents had already been stationed in Southern Thailand as his father was employed by a British company there. One sister, however, chose to stay in Penang. This sister, who was a Catholic nun, subsequently became the Mother Superior there. She died some 30 years ago.

His parents were tragically killed by Japanese bombs like so many others. The sister, who fled with him, was interned in a camp in Thailand, but managed to survive the war, and married a Thai of royal lineage. His brother-in-law owned an interior decoration business when peace arrived, and Phra Terry worked for him until he became a monk. Both his sister and brother-in-law were lost in a tragic car accident in 1971, a year after Phra Terry was ordained.

With his formal education ended precipitously, Phra Terry taught himself the 3Rs, if you will. He delved into humanities and the arts and, indeed, all matters metaphysical, esoteric, social and scientific and so forth that could occupy an enquiring mind. He spent his time at bookshops and libraries exploring the philosophies and thinking of the ancients. He had a voracious appetite for religion, philosophy, history, literature and cultures of the Romans, Greeks, Indians, Chinese, and the Europeans and others.

Apart from his apparent love of books and knowledge; he led a pretty normal life of a young man, sometimes going to the movies and partaking of fine foods, music and such like with friends. However, one group of his friends – 3 of them were of a different bent, they were interested in meditation and the Dhamma. One of these friends, Archarn Charoen Phanrat, an engineer by profession introduced him to Wat Paknam in 1958, along with the other two who were architects.

This small group of friends would go to Wat Paknam by bus and learn meditation there on a regular basis from a Mae Chi (an 8-preceptor, upasika), Archarn Kalayawadee. She was an outstanding student of the great sage Luang Phor Mongkol Thepmuni and she taught Phra Terry meditation. She subsequently founded the Mongkol-Dham Group, Bangkok with her husband Archarn Charoen (since deceased in 1992). Phra Terry and their other friends were foundations members as well.

Phra Terry learnt and practised the Vijjā Dhammakāya and the Method of Meditation for 12 years before he was ordained as a monk at Wat Doi Suthep, Chiangmai. After his ordination he went to spend some months at Wat Djittabhawan, Pattaya in 1971. From May 1971, he went to Wat Paknam and remained there from some years before returning to Wat Doi Suthep. Phra Terry spent more than 20 years in Chiangmai and still lives there.

Phra Terry's writing career was prompted by the total lack of an English translation of Luang Phor's Teachings on the Vijjā Dhammakāya in the 1950s. His first book, *"The Dhammakāya – Metaphysical Implications"* was published in 1960 and it was later expanded and renamed *Sammā Samādhī I*, in 1961. His second book, *The Life and Teachings of the Venerable Chao Khun Mongkol Thepmuni* was published later in the same year, 1960.

Then *Sammā Ditṭhi – A Treatise on Right Understanding* was published in 1962; another book, *Sammā Samādhī II (Right Concentration)* in 1963; and, *The Altitude & the Buddhist Experience*, in the early 1970s after he became a monk. A couple of these books were expanded, re-arranged and renamed in later editions. For instance, *The Vistas – Buddhist Insights into Immortality* (is the enlarged and renamed *Sammā Samādhī I*) and *Samatha Vipassanā: An Exposition of Attainments*, is the enlarged *Sammā Samādhī II*.

Phra Terry's books exhibit a rare quality of an in-depth personal understanding and knowledge of the Sublime Dhamma and an appreciation of ancient religion and philosophies. His explanations of how the law of kamma works in ancient as well as contemporary societies are instructive and enlightening. From his works, a reader can see that he knows the Vijjā Dhammakāya and the Method of Meditation, for he is a meditator himself.

As disciples of Luang Phor and Phra Terry, we have, with the aid of his books, come to understand a little of the Sublime Dhamma in its original condition and pristine purity and are profoundly grateful to them both.

The central message of the Buddha is communicated clearly by his works: that all earnest seekers who are upright, without guile and deceit and intelligent, would be able to achieve to the Ultimate Release. And, the unique Dhammakāya Method of Meditation is the means to cultivating the Noble-Eightfold Path in full scope and measure and to comprehending the Four Noble Truths in perfect clarity, without taint or distortion.

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