



Memorial to Pha Khamfan Silasangvaro Abbot of Vat Suvannakhili

Pha Khamfan Silasangvaro, born in 1901, was Abbot of Vat Suvannakhili from 1931 until his passing away in 1987. This memorial, set up by the Buddhist Archive of Photography, honours this great monk of Luang Prabang through the exhibition of his paintings, photographs and documents. A statue of Pha Khamfan, made after his passing away, is also part of the memorial.

The objects exhibited here had been hidden for almost 20 years. They were discovered in 2006 when the research team of the Buddhist Archive of Photography was permitted to open Pha Khamfan's Kuti that had been sealed immediately after his death. Numerous photographs, negatives and albums found are now part of our archive. Only few of his paintings, though, were found. His personal library is being researched since 2012 in a project organized with Hamburg University (Asia-Africa-Institute).

Pha Khamfan was a teacher of the Dhamma and of Pali, but also an artist and an architect who designed and constructed numerous monastic buildings. He embellished historic Vat Suvannakhili and built Sala Thammaviharn in Luang Prabang. As a young monk, he had been sent to monastic institutes of Bangkok/Thailand to study the Dhamma, and Buddhist Fine Arts.

Pha Khamfan was part of the official Lao delegation at the Great Buddhist Council at Rangoon/Burma in 1956. He followed the Supreme Patriarch of Laos to the 2500 Buddha Jayanti celebration in Sri Lanka and undertook a pilgrimage to Buddhist sites in India in 1957. His extensive notes from these voyages are now a precious part of the Buddhist Archives of Luang Prabang.

During the "Secret war on Laos", Pha Khamfan showed great compassion, courage and social engagement travelling to monasteries and towns in the North and East of Laos that had been destroyed by the bombings. He reconsecrated numerous damaged Buddhist sites and comforted villagers who had been wounded or lost their loved ones. He also tried to preserve Buddhist heritage and traditions among displaced people.

For Pha Khamfan's cremation on 18th January 1987, the ancient ceremonial site of the That Luang field was used for the first time after the revolution. Important representatives of the Party and State, as well as numerous monks and laypeople, assisted the cremation.

Still today, the people of Ban Khili, and Pha Khamfan's family, preserve a vivid memory and deeply felt gratitude towards this Great Monk of Luang Prabang.

*Exhibition set up for The Buddhist Archive of Photography, Luang Prabang
under the High Patronage of the Most Venerable Pha One Keo Kitiphatto
by Hans Georg Berger and Khamvone Boulyaphonh, assisted by Bounsou Saytam,
based on research under the British Library's "Endangered Archives Programme" (2006-2010).*

*Graphics by Anna Weil, Administration by Brian Lingham, Stencils by Nithakong Somsanih.
The exhibition building has been restored by the Buddhist Heritage Project with generous funding from the Badur Foundation/London.*

.....

**If you wish to visit, please be kindly reminded that you enter a consecrated place of Buddhist worship and ceremonies.
Do take off your shoes, do cover your body, speak and behave with decency.
When speaking to monks and novices, strictly keep to questions related to Buddhism, and give preference to listening.**

**May the light of the Buddha's teaching enhance your knowledge and courage,
and alleviate suffering for you and for those you love.**