



His Serene

# Somdet Phra Wanarat

A BIOGRAPHY



A BIOGRAPHY

*His Serene Somdet Phra Wanarat  
(Jun Brahmagutta)*





His Serene  
Somdet Phra Wanarat

*His Serene Somdet Phra Wanarat  
(Jun Brahmaqutto)*





*His Serene Lordet Phra Wanarat (Jun Brahmagutta)*



## *His Serene Somdet Phra Wanarat (Jun Brahmajutto)*



His Serene Somdet Phra Wanarat left a household life to enter as a Buddhist monkhood as early as age of 12. Living as a Buddhist monk for full 72 years of his life he had dedicated his full life for Buddhism and society with his multitalented skills on Buddhist education, propagation, preservation, and administration. He is currently the Acting Patriarch of the Dhammayuttika Order of Kingdom of Thailand, an Executive Member of the Sangha Supreme Council, the governing body of the Buddhist order (sangha) of Thailand and the Abbot of Wat Bovoranives Vihara royal monastery of the Kingdom of Thailand.

In his life, he was entrusted by Thai monarchy to fulfill many unique and extraordinary tasks which in general circumstances have to be fulfilled by the Supreme Patriarch of Thailand. He was also invited to deliver Buddhist sermons for Their Majesties and royal families in many very important royal ceremonies.



He is also invested by the Sangha Supreme Council of Thailand to administer the Thai sangha in various capacities from his early monkhood. His invaluable contributions to society expand in various fields such as building many Buddhist wats, public facilities (bridges etc.), schools and hospitals. He offers annual scholarships to students in various schools both in Bangkok and elsewhere.

In terms of publication, he has published many Buddhist booklets and books in Thai language covering different aspects of Buddhism.



# SOMDET PHRA WANARAT

His Serene Somdet Phra Wanarat speaks less but loud enough to be heard on different important issues of the sangha matter. His action is always straightforward, transparent and very disciplined. He is a modern Buddhist monk in his 80s who always emphasizes on pragmatic Buddhism in his teachings. Accordingly, his teachings are always refreshed and in the groove which impressed people with his erudition and pragmatism. Being at his 80s his enrollment in teaching, serving monarchy and society and administering the national sangha have not lessen in any cost but on the contrary, he is getting involved more than ever before with full of his spirit of compassion.







## Early Life

His Serene Somdet Phra Wanarat was born Jun Brahmphithaksh on September 17, 1936 in Baan Kor-ket, Chamrak sub-district, Trat City district, Trat province of eastern Thailand. He was born into the family of Mr Chand Brahmphithaksh and Mrs Hley Brahmphithaksh (Ratanasian).



At age 12, he was ordained as a Buddhist novice (*sāmaṇera*) on May 12, 1948 at Wat Giri Vihara of his hometown where he was trained as a novice for three years. Throughout his early novice-hood in his hometown monastery, he passed first and second year of the preliminary Buddhist courses as constituted by the Thai Sangha in 1948 and 1949 respectively. Seeing his talent in study, the Most Venerable Phra Vinayabandita (Thavorn Thanuttaro), his preceptor and the abbot of Wat Giri Vihara decided to send him to carry on further study in Buddhism and Pali at Wat Bovoranives Vihara royal monastery in Bangkok.



He left Trat province on May 28, 1951 on a ship sailing to Bangkok. It took him two full days of sailing to arrive in Bangkok. On May 31, 1951 he arrived at Wat Bovoranives Vihara royal monastery where he was accepted by the then abbot His Serene Prince Kromma Luang Vajiranyanavamsa, the 13th Supreme Patriarch of Thailand. With his endeavor he passed consecutive third year or the highest course of Thai ecclesiastical preliminary Buddhist courses entitled Nak-Dhamma-Eak in the first year of his acceptance into Wat Bovoranives Vihara. Three years later (in 1955), he passed the 3rd grade of Pali examination as constituted by the Thai Sangha.



He was creative from his novice-hood as it is proved that in 1955 he in collaboration with his other novice friends first initiated an annual celebration of 'Sāmaṇera Day' or novice day in Thailand Buddhist history which later developed to be a nationwide celebration among novices in Buddhist temples.



## Becoming a Bhikkhu

At age 20, His Serene got his higher ordination (Upasampadā) as a Bhikkhu (full-fledged Buddhist monk) at Wat Bovoranives Vihara on July 8, 1956 by His Serene Prince Kromma Luang Vajiranyanavamsa, the 13th Supreme Patriarch of Thailand. It was the same year when the late HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej got ordained as a Buddhist monk (three months later) by the same preceptor and resided in the same adobe. Having received a Bhikkhu ordination, he was then known as Venerable Phra Maha Jun Brahmagutto. He received the title of 'Phra Maha' due to his prior fulfilment of the 3rd grade Pali examination. At Wat Bovoranives Vihara, he carried on his study of Pali examination and gradually passed the ninth grade, the highest level of Pali examination as constituted by the Thai Sangha in 1972.





## Academic Administrative Work



Accepting his proficiency, at age 21 (in 1957), His Serene was already appointed as a Wat Bovoranives Vihara as well as a member of the Royal Preliminary Buddhist Course as constituted by the Thai Sangha. Gradually, in the following year (1958) he was again appointed as a member of the Royal Pali Examination Board as constituted by the Thai Sangha.

In 1999, he became the President of the Central Dharma Examination Board as constituted by the Thai Sangha. On the same year he became a member of Mahamakut Buddhist University Council. In the following year (2010), he became the Vice-President of the Mahamakut Buddhist University Council. In 2003, he was entrusted by the Sangha Supreme Council by appointing him as the Deputy Chairman of Education Council under the Sangha Supreme Council of Thailand.



His academic administrative work further expanded to become the Chairman of Buddhist Educational Council for Secular Education in 2011. Three years later (in 2015), he also became the Head of Wat Bovoranives Vihara Educational Institution. His responsibility expanded further to national level when he became Chair-advisor of the Central Dharma Examination Board as constituted by the Thai Sangha in 2016.

In addition, he was an editorial member for revising Pali and Thai version of Pali Canon which were continuously edited and published in various special occasions such as the 60th birthday of both HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej and HM Queen Sirikit as well as 90th birthday occasion of the late HH Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara, the 19th Supreme Patriarch of Thailand.





Within the Mahamakut Royal Academy Foundation under the royal patronage, he was the head of text production department and currently he is the Director-General of the foundation. The Mahamakut Royal Academy Foundation is a unique and old charity foundation of Thailand which was founded in 1933 in vicinity of Wat Bovoranives Vihara as the first Buddhist charity foundation of Thai history. The aims of the foundation is preservation, publication and propagation of Buddhism. One of the main contributions of the foundation has been historical editing and publishing the Pali Canon and its commentaries both in Pali and Thai translation. The foundation is also the first Thai printing press in Thai history and has been publishing all text books for the Buddhist preliminary courses and Pali examination courses as constituted by the Thai sangha from its beginning. The foundation also serves as a publication house for all kinds of books on Buddhism from its inception.



## **Sangha Administrative Work**

From 1994 onward, His Serene got in involvement with responsibilities of the national sangha administration tasks when he was appointed as an executive member of the Dhammayuttika Order. On the same year, he was also appointed by the Sangha Supreme Council as the ecclesiastical governor of Bangkok and Samutprakarn provinces of the Dhammayuttika Order.

In 1997, he became the deputy ecclesiastical regional governor of regions 4-5-6-7 of the Dhammayuttika Order. In the following year (2000), he was appointed as the preceptor who got full authority in giving ordination (Upajjhāya).

Many Wats are taken care under his abbotship. He was given the task of governing more than one Wat as the acting abbot such as Wat Trithosathep (in 2004), Wat Makutkasattriyaram (in 2007) and Wat Vajiradhammaram in Ayutthaya province (in 2012). Since 2013, he was invested as the acting abbot of Wat Bovoranives Vihara upon the demise of the late His Serene Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara, the 19th Supreme Patriarch of Thailand and the sixth abbot of Wat Bovoranives Vihara. In 2015, after the royal cremation of the sixth abbot of Wat Bovoranives Vihara he has resumed to be the abbot of this royal monastery. He is the seventh abbot of Wat Bovoranives Vihara history.

Since his abbotship, Wat Bovoranives Vihara went going through a great renovation of the whole monastery while preserving many historical buildings into its pristine conditions and he has also built many new majestic buildings for common uses.

In terms of the national ecclesiastical field, on June 11, 2002, he was appointed as an executive member of the Sangha Supreme Council of Thailand which is the governing body of the Buddhist order (sangha) of Thailand and is the ultimate authority for all ecclesiastical matters within the Thai sangha. He is the Chairmen of the Monk-Preacher Training Committee and Preceptor Training Committee of the Dhammayuttika Order. In 2010, he was invested as the Chairman of Central Buddhist Budget Consideration Committee under the Sangha Supreme Council.



Later on, in 2007 he became Acting Patriarch of the Dhammayuttika Order of Thailand and in 2012 he became the Patriarch of the Dhammayuttika Order. However, upon the royal appointment of the 20th Supreme Patriarch of Thailand he had resigned from the position of the Patriarch of the Dhammayuttika Order on June 20, 2017. But only nine days later, the newly appointed the 20th Supreme Patriarch of Kingdom of Thailand reinstated him as the Acting Patriarch of the Dhammayuttika Order once again.

As the Acting Patriarch of the Dhammayuttika Order, His Serene Somdet Phra Wanarat is currently working in the capacity of taking in-charge of the Dhammayuttika Order of Thailand in proxy of His Serene Somdet Phra Ariyavongsagatanyan, the current Supreme Patriarch of Kingdom of Thailand.

## Honorary Awards



As a result of his contributions to various fields in sangha and society, many national and international universities and institutions awarded him with different awards as an international recognitions. The list of awards as follows:

In 2009, Rajabhat Mahasaragam University conferred on him a Doctorate Honoris Causa in Social Sciences for Development.

In 2010, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University conferred on him a Doctorate Honoris Causa in Buddhism.

In 2011, Rajabhat Phra Nakhorn University conferred on him a Doctorate Honoris Causa in Development Strategy.

In 2013, HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn awarded him with the Royal Award of the best conservative of Art and Architectures of Thailand.

In 2014, Mahamakut Buddhist University conferred on him a Doctorate Honoris Causa in Educational Administration.

In 2015, HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn awarded him with the Sema Dharmacakra Award on Propagation of Buddhism in Thailand.

In 2016, Government of Myanmar conferred on him the ecclesiastical title of “Aggamahāpaññita.”





PUBLIC APPRICIATION

## Extraordinary Duties towards Thai Monarchy



Leading Procession of the Royal Cremation Ceremony  
for the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej

His Serene Somdet Phra Wanarat is considered to be a unique Buddhist monk of Thailand who happened to get unprecedented royal invitations to lead funeral processions in so many important and unprecedented royal ceremonies.

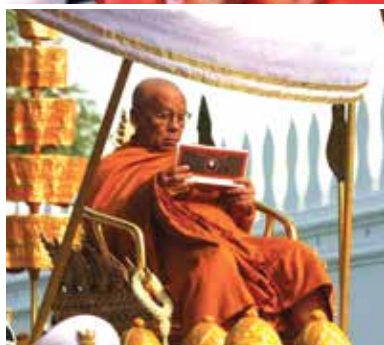
In 1973, he was invited by HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej to lead the royal cremation procession of HRH Princess Hemavadi, daughter of the HM King Rama V on February 18, 1973 who had sponsored him throughout his monkhood.

In 1978, he was chosen to be one of the instructors for HM King Maha Vajiralongkorn Bodindradebayavarangkun when HM King was ordained as a Buddhist monk and studied and practiced Buddhism according to royal custom for two weeks in Wat Bovoranives Vihara from 6-20 November 1978.

In 2008, he was invited by HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej to lead the royal cremation procession of HRH Princess Galyani Vadhana, elder sister of the King on November 15, 2008.

In 2012, he was invited by HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej to lead the royal cremation procession of HRH Princess Bejaratana Rajasuda, the only child of the King Vajiravudh of Thailand and was a first cousin of King Bhumibol Adulyadej on April 9, 2012.

In 2017, he was invited by HM King Maha Vajiralongkorn Bodindradebayavarangkun to lead the royal cremation procession of the late HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej on October 26, 2017.







## **Special Ecclesiastical Duties**

In 2011, His Serene became the founding President of Somdet Phra Nyanasamavara Somdet Phra Sangharaja Foundation. And also Chairman of casting of the Golden Buddha on the auspicious occasion of His Majesty King's 84th Birthday.

In 2013, he became the President of Phaendin Dhamma Foundation, a foundation working on production of Buddhist TV programs.

In 2014, he was Chairman of casting of the Golden Buddha on the auspicious occasion of Her Majesty Queen's 84th Birthday.

In 2015, he became the President of Piyamaharaj Ramaniyakhet Hospital and School Foundation in Kanchanburi province.

With his exceptional skill on lunar calendar, the Sangha Supreme Council invested him in calculating and publishing annual lunar calendar for national uses.





## **Ecclesiastical Rank Promotions bestowed upon him by the late HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej**

‘Holy water is not sacred as we believe. To be sacred we have to do it by ourselves. In fact, holy water is a symbol of ‘harmony.’ By nature, water does not differentiate among waters. Regardless of its origin, all water when it mixed together it becomes the same water. Accordingly, ritual of sprinkling holy water in Buddhist tradition actually symbolising to be harmonious among people who received the holy water and encourage to develop one’s mind to be cool just like water. Only then it becomes sacred.’

*His Serene Somdet Phra Wanarat*

In 1974, His Serene was bestowed upon him with a preliminary royal ecclesiastical titular name of Phra Amaramoli.

In 1988, he was promoted to a higher royal ecclesiastical titular name of Phra Rajasumontnmuni.

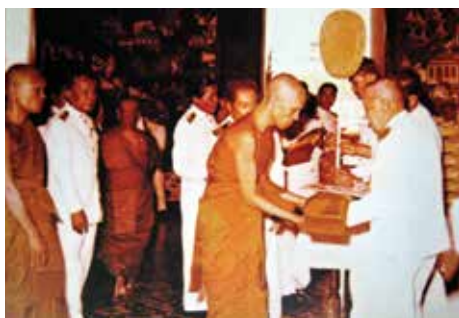
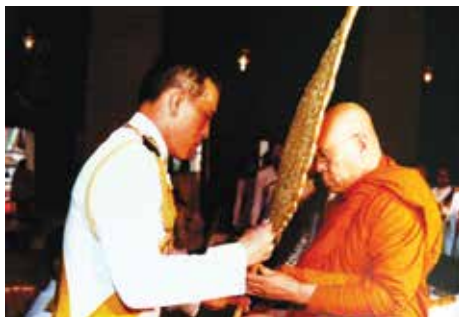
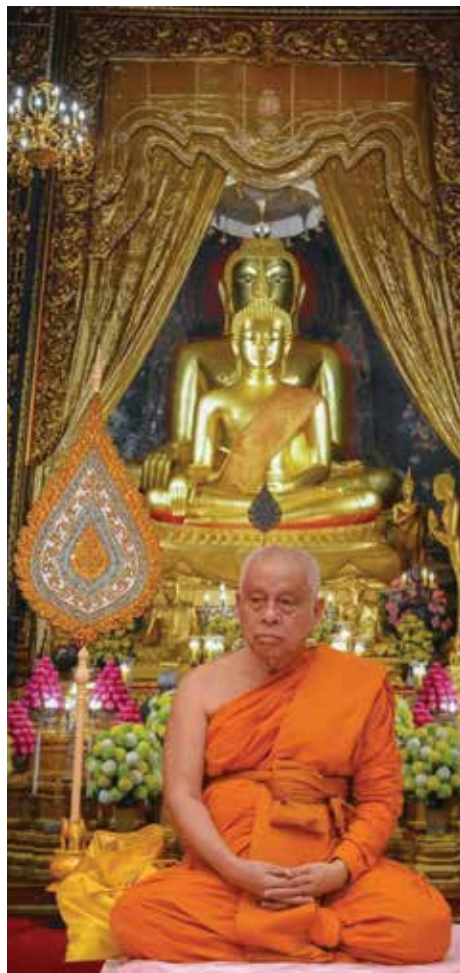
In 1992, he was promoted to a higher royal ecclesiastical titular name of Phra Devakavi.

In 1998, he was promoted to a higher royal ecclesiastical titular name of Phra Dhammakavi.

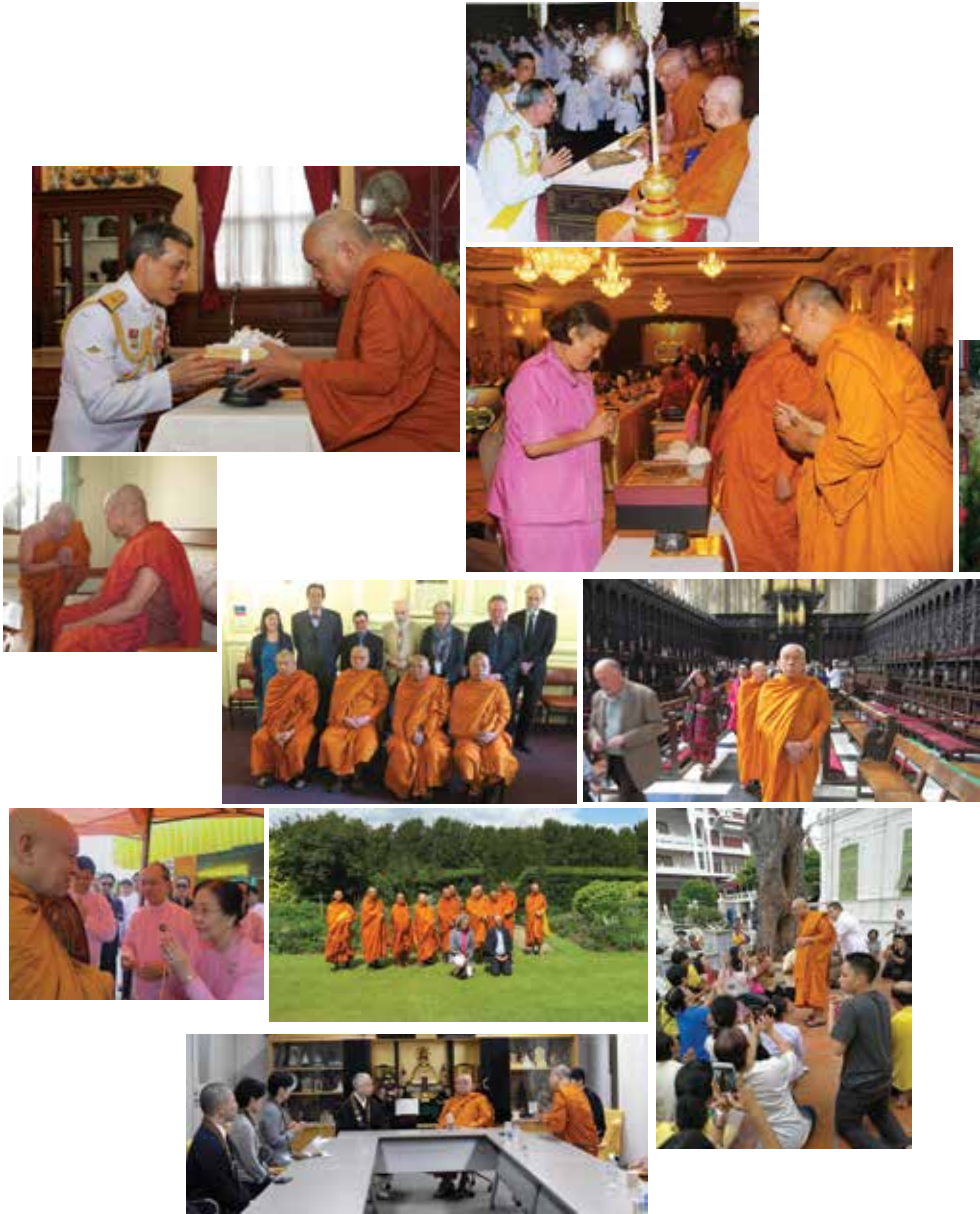
In 2000, he was promoted to a higher royal ecclesiastical titular name of Phra Brahmamuni.

In 2009, he was promoted to a highest royal ecclesiastical titular name of His Serene Somdet Phra Wanarat.











# His Serene Somdet Phra Wanarat





His Serene  
Somdet Phra Wanarat





