



Thursday's Lotus: The Life and Work of Fuengsin Trafford

By Paul Trafford

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Fuengsin Trafford (née Sarayutpitag) is brought up in Thailand in a traditional and ambitious family of devout Buddhists. She shows aptitude as a child, but is desperate to escape the confines of home, making a resolution to leave and never return. It is only when a monk suggests that she learn to meditate that she finds stability. Encouraged, she develops her practice, later arriving at Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen, a famous temple that becomes her spiritual home as she pursues Vija Dhammakaya, advanced meditation of the Middle Way. However, her karma catches up with her: whilst studying in London, a fateful encounter with Tony leads to marriage and settling in the UK. It's an outcome no-one in Thailand approves except for Ajahn Gaew, her meditation teacher, who declares she will now teach Buddhism in the West. Thursday's Lotus reveals how she gradually fulfilled that prophecy - as a wife, mother and lay teacher in England. Remarkably it was to Fuengsin, not monastics, that her Ajahn gave his handwritten book on advanced meditation practice. Through her own contemplative experience and by learning to draw on many spiritual traditions and secular customs, the biography describes how she applied her training to help people from all walks of life.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Paul Trafford lives in Oxford, where he works at the Museum of the History of Science. He holds postgraduate degrees in mathematics, computer science and the study of religion, and has spent most of his working life in higher education. His career has been mainly in the field of I.T., where he has created bespoke Web applications for language-learning and conducted research in e-learning and mobile technologies, including collaboration with Gakushuin University in Tokyo on teaching mathematics to business students. In the heritage and culture sector, he has developed Web interfaces to museum collection management systems, particularly for the Qatar Museums Authority, living in Doha between the summers of 2012 and 2014. Following a little in his mother's footsteps as a 'second-generation' inter-faith worker, Paul has offered his services, mainly as a volunteer, in Buddhism and interfaith. He served as a member of the fundraising team for the University of Derby's Multi Faith Centre, where he was also Buddhist Faith Advisor, and went on to act as a Trustee of the International Interfaith Centre in Oxford. With their help he has given presentations on the use of technology to support online communities, encouraged young people to explore interfaith, and shared reflections on aspects of palliative care. He is also a founding Director of the Dhammakaya International Society of the UK, which promotes meditation for inner peace as a means to world peace. Presently he is conducting interdisciplinary research in the application of Buddhist ethics to the design of social networking sites.

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