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IN HONOUR OF  
MINGUN SAYADAW'S  
80th BIRTHDAY

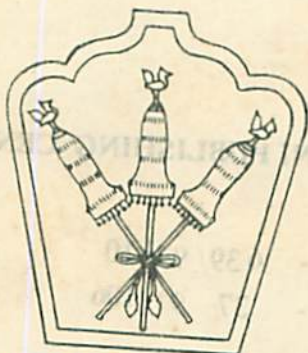
S.E.- 2535

1991

M.E.- 1353



**TIPITAKA NIKĀYA MINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION  
MYANMAR**



IN HONOUR OF  
MINGUN SAYADAW'S  
80th BIRTHDAY



S.E.- 2535

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MINGUN TIPIṬAKADHARA SAYADAW'S  
EXHORTATION

Though Lord Buddha's preachings,  
The Doctrine's vehicle, the serial Teaching,  
The victuals of the Dhamma are in your hands  
If your avoiding heart fails to apprehend,  
Can there be a bigger loss than yours?



TIPITAKADHARA DHAMMABHAṄḌĀGĀRIKA  
AGGAMAHĀPANDITA ABHIDHAJAMAHĀRATṬHAGURU

THE MOST VENERABLE MINGUN SAYADAW

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## PREFACE

On November 1, 1991, Tipiṭakadhara Dhammabhaṇḍāgārika Mingun Sayadaw Bhaddanta Vicittasārābhivamsa is 80. It has been a wonderful life of challenge, achievement and service. There have been moments of drama. Disembarking as a novice at night on the banks of the Ayeyarwady River north of Mandalay, travelling inland and hearing in the dark the recitation from the Texts and realising that he had come to a place congenial to study, Observing sadness on the faces of the President of the Union of Myanmar and his own Supporter when a Tipiṭakadhara was not successfully realised and deciding to try to become one. The Declaration on becoming the first Tipiṭakadhara Dhammabhaṇḍāgārika. The first reply to the Catechiser as Respondent at the Sixth Buddhist Council, a unique moment. The completion of the eight volume Great Chronicle of the Buddhas. Elevation to the position of Secretary General to the State Sangha Mahā Nāyaka. The award of the highest ecclesiastical title Abhidhaja Mahā Ratṭha Guru. The Dedication of the State Sāsana Pariyatti Universities at Yangon and Mandalay.

There have been periods of sustained hard work. Study to acquire by heart the two and one half million words from the Pali Texts required to become a Tipiṭakadhara and the gruelling examinations. The years as Respondent at the Sixth Buddhist Council. The years writing the Great Chronicle. Travel into all corners of the country to give the opportunity for all peoples rich and poor to ributehe State Pariyatti Sāsana Universities and the sermons delivered at every stop.





PREFACE

We have witnessed these dramatic moments and those periods of great effort. We who are part of the Most Venerable Mingun Sayadaw's time consider ourselves most fortunate to have been that witness. We have benefited from his deep and comprehensive learning. We have gained high merit to be near and to attend to him. In our deep appreciation of his kindness we have come together to inscribe these few lines to venerate and honour our Preceptor on his eightieth birthday.

May we continue to receive the benefit of his kindness till the Most Venerable Sayadaw is one hundred and twenty.



## ABHIDHAJA MAHĀRĀṬṬHAGURU ASHIN THITILA'S ADVICE

Long ago, in ancient China, there was a very learned Prime Minister who was so learned that every good quality, every good skill were simply possessed by him. For instance, who is the best orator? He said: "It is me who can speak the best." He seemed to know always everything better than anybody else in China. Therefore he was very conceited thinking that he was the best man in China. To make sure what he thought was right he asked the junior ministers. "In China, who is the best orator?" "You, sir". "Who is the best poet?" "You sir". Everything he asked, the junior ministers replied: "You sir, you sir, you sir." Then gradually he asked: "Who is the best man in China the most loved, revered and respected by the people of China". There was no answer. He asked again and again. There was no answer. Three times he asked the same question. Finally, one of the junior ministers said. "It is not you, sir, who is the most loved, revered and respected by the people of China". Then he was very angry. "If not me who is the most loved, revered and respected man? Who else can that be? There was no answer. He asked three times. One of the junior ministers replied: "The man who is the most loved, revered and respected by the people of China is an old man". The Prime Minister was really surprised and asked: "Where is that man?" "He is in the jungle. He is not an ordinary man but a *thera*, monk". "A monk may not be learned. He may know only his scripture. To know scripture is not to be really learned. A learned man must know every subject. How can that man be the most loved, revered and respected man?", He asked three times. The reply was the same. Then he asked: "Where is he living?" "In a jungle, in a very remote place in a jungle". "I must go there and see him and ask him a question" The junior ministers persuaded him not to go there. But he went there to see the monk.

- 10 The Prime Minister said to the monk: "Venerable sir, I am very eager and anxious to see you because, I heard, people of China love you, revere you, respect you. I would like to know why they love, revere and respect you. May I ask you a question. What is the most important thing for a man and woman to do? Please answer my question as briefly as possible because I am a very busy man. You monks have nothing to do. I am a Prime Minister to the Emperor. I am always busy." The old monk recited a stanza that the Buddha preached in Pali.

*Sabbapāpassa akaraṇaṃ  
kusalassūpasampadā  
sacittapariyodapanaṃ  
etaṃ Buddhāna sāsanaṃ.*

"Not to do anything evil,  
To do everything good,  
To purify the mind,  
This is the most important thing  
for a man and woman to do".

The Prime Minister laughed saying: "Venerable sir, I expected very wonderful words from you. But what you have said is very elementary, too elementary to me, a man like me. Your answer is taught to every child in China. So a child of three knows it. I am ashamed of you." The old monk said: "It may be true that a child of three knows this verse because he learned it from his parents or teachers by heart. But to practise it in daily life is the most difficult thing even for a man, a man of seventy like you. Please think of it". The Prime Minister kept quiet for a little while. He realized that to say, "Not to do anything evil, and so on" is easy, but is very difficult to practise. He apologised to the old *Thera*, asked forgiveness and took leave of his departure.



## THE NONPAREIL

**Tipiṭakadhara Dhammabhaṇḍāgarika**

(Bearer of the Three Piṭakas and Keeper of the Dhamma Treasure)

**Abhidhaja Mahārāṭṭhaguru**

( Noble Banner and Great Preceptor of the State )

**Aggamahāpaṇḍita**

( The Supremely Learned One )

**Viṣiṭṭha Vinayadhara Mahāvinayakoviḍa**

( Eminent Bearer of Vinaya, Great Possessor of Vinaya Wisdom )

**Viṣiṭṭha Ābhidhammika Mahā Abhidhammakoviḍa**

( Eminent Scholar of Abhidhamma, Great Possessor of Abhidhamma Wisdom )

**Buddhasāsana Viṣiṭṭha Tipiṭakadhara Mahātipiṭakakoviḍa**

( Eminent Bearer of the Tipitaka and Great Possessor of Tipitaka Wisdom of the Buddhasāsana )

**Sāsanadhaja Sīripavara Dhammācariya**

( Banner of the Sāsana and Excellent Splendid Teacher of the Dhamma )

**Pariyatti Sāsanahita Dhammācariya Vaṭṭamsaka**

( Benefactor of the Pariyatti Sāsana and Headgarland as Teacher of the Dhamma )

**Chaṭṭhasaṅgīti Dhamma Vissajjaka**

( Sixth Council Dhamma Respondent )

**Chaṭṭhasaṅgīti Kāraka**

( Sixth Council Editor of Redaction )

**Chaṭṭhasaṅgīti Bhāṇaka**

( Sixth Council Reciter )

**Chaṭṭhasaṅgīti Bhāranitthāraka**

( Performer of Various Duties at the Sixth Council )

**Padhāna Nāyaka Sayadaw**

**Tipiṭaka Nikāya Upaṭṭhāka Sāsanāpyu Ahpwe**

( Supreme Patron Sayadaw, Tipiṭaka Nikāya Ministrative Missionary Organization )

The boy who was to grow up to receive 31 titles such as sampled above, a few of which are extremely rare and one, the ninth is unique, was born on Wednesday November 1, 1911, to U Hson and Daw Hsin in Kyeebin Village, two kilometers south - west of Myingyan town in central Myanmar. He was the second of three children with an elder sister and a younger brother. His grandfather U Chai, a medical practitioner and an adept in astrology selected the name Maung Yan Shin but because the boy was lovable family and friends called him Maung Khin.

Maung Khin's father died when the boy was four and the boy went to live with his grandfather. At six he was sent to the local monastery and was initiated into the Order of the Sangha as a novice. He was delivered into the keeping of Minkyaung Taik Rahudaung Kyaung Sayadaw (preceptor) U Sobhita who recognized the special intellectual abilities of the young novice and helped them to develop. He named the novice Koyin Vicittasāra to emphasize the special intellectual abilities. On the Sayadaw's advice the family of the koyin's uncle presented him with a full set of the Pāli Canon and Commentaries which he kept in an almirah at the head of the bed.

At 13, the Koyin passed the township examination in the Kaccāyana Grammar reproducing it from memory with no error and no prompting. He repeated the feat next year with the Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha. At 15 the Koyin appeared for and passed the Pariyatti Examination at the primary level. At 16, he passed the Examination at the middle level.

For the next two years he was occupied in ministering to his preceptor U Sobhita who had suffered a stroke and could not take any examination. For U Sobhita's funeral he wrote the Announcement, the Invitation to Monks and the Boat - song in Pāli verse and Myanmar language to convey the relics to the funeral pyre. He was much praised for those compositions by a novice.

After the funeral the Koyin was taken to U Paññācakka of Dhammanāda Monastery in Mingun, north - west of Mandalay across the Ayeyarwady River. U Paññācakka had occasionally visited Myingyan town so he was not unfamiliar with the Koyin. Landing there at half - past nine in the night and travelling some three kilometers inland the Koyin heard in the dark the voice of a novice reciting from a gloss of the Pāli grammar and realized that he had come to the right place to advance his learning.

In this he was right. The presiding monk and Preceptor U Paññācakka valued Pariyatti Learning. He held in great reverence the books which contained the Pāli Canon. He placed them on an altar and regularly paid respect to the Doctrine. He daily read a passage from the Canon so that when the year came round he had completed reading the whole Canon. The Koyin was to acquire the same respect for the Pāli Canon.

He was also fortunate in the person of the nun Venerable Daw Dhammacārī who not only provided material support but also instructed him in conduct in keeping with the Rules. Once in a later year, she was passing by while U Vicittasāra was teaching the younger monks. Impatient with a slow monk he raised his voice. Daw Dhammacārī heard him and later said: I thought U Vicittasāra was lecturing to the monks but in fact he was driving a bullock - cart.

Daw Dhammacārī who was in her fifties at that time was herself a learned person. She came from a family of silk merchants of Mandalay. At 16 she left home and became a nun. At 20 she travelled to Sri Lanka and studied there for two years. On her return she studied under many learned monks and herself taught aspects of the Dhamma to nuns and girls. She wrote the famous Saccavādī Tīkā in Pali. Because of her learning she was well connected not only with leading learned monks but also with the leading lay personages in Mandalay

and Yangon. It was she who brought the Koyin Vicittasāra to the attention of Sir U Thwin, one of the most prominent devotees on high society.

She told Sir U Thwin about the brilliant Koyin and suggested that he sponsor the Ordination. Thus, on 23 March, 1931, Koyin Vicittasāra was ordained with his preceptor U Paññācakka as the Tutor. The Chapter was composed of Shweyaysaung Sayadaw, Nyaungyan Sayadaw, Masoeyein Sayadaw, Payargyi Sayadaw, from Mandalay; Thammathati Sayadaw, Mahathitwin - gyaung Sayadaw from Sagaing and Chanthagyi Sayadaw, Baungdaungkoo Sayadaw and Ngwetaung - tawya Sayadaw from Mingun, senior monks famed for their learning. The Sayadaws were glad that the Ordination provided them the opportunity to come together. They were never to meet like this again.

A day's study schedule for the novice was heavy.

In the morning the Presiding Monk lectured on Moggallāna's Grammar.

After the midday meal the Abhidhāna was studied. In the afternoon the Tikāthit treatise was taught.

In the early evening the Paṭṭhāna was studied.

At night one attended the lectures on Bhedacintā ( the Pāli aphorisms) and Kaccāyanasāra ( resume of the Kaccāyana Grammar).

On Sabbath days the stories from the Dhammapada had to be written in Pāli.

Rhetoric was taught and the Maghadeva *Laṅkā* was studied for facility in versification. Composition of *ratu* and auspicious eulogies was practised.

Later, more advanced material such as the text of the Pāli Canon, the Major Commentaries, Sub - commentaries, exegeses and expositions were studied.

The year he was ordained U Vicittasāra passed the Government Pariyatti Examination in the higher level. The next year he passed the National Pariyatti Examination in the higher level. In the third year he passed the Sakyasiha Student Course Examination. In the fourth year ( 1934 ) he passed the especially difficult Sakyasiha Teachers Course Examination and also the Government Pathamagyaw having stood first. For his outright success in the Sakyasiha Teachers Course Examination he won the title *Vaṭamsakā* ( Headgarland ) .

His preceptor U Paññācakka passed away in 1937 and U Vicittasāra became the presiding monk of the Mingun Dhammanāda Monastery, responsible for the management as well as for teaching. One of his favorite subjects was Moggallāna's Grammar.

In 1949 he was one of the one hundred monks invited to attend the First Tipiṭakadhara Examination held by the newly independent Union of Myanmar. He observed the President of the Union holding high the palms brought together in reverence and never lowering them throughout the Opening Ceremony. He noticed the disappointment on the President's face and on the face of his Ordination Sponsor when the result was announced that no candidate had passed. He felt that the reverent palms were directed towards all the assembled monks in search of a Sāsana hero to emerge. He felt that the debt of reverence should be repaid. He resolved then to endeavour to become a Tipiṭakadhara, Bearer of the Tipiṭaka. He informed the nun Daw Dhammacārī who was like a mother to him in religion and also declared his intention to his Ordination Sponsor Sir U Thwin.

In the Third Tipiṭakadhara Examination the Venerable U Vicittasārabhivamsa successfully recited the Vinaya Piṭaka and passed the



written examination with distinction. In the Fourth Examination he recited the first part of the Abhidhamma Piṭṭaka, the second part being recited in the Fifth Examination. In the Sixth Tipiṭakadhara Examination he successfully recited the Sutta Piṭṭaka and so a Tipiṭakadhara Dhammabhaṇḍāgarika ( Bearer of the Tipiṭaka and Keeper of the Dhamma Treasure ) was born.

The President of the Union of Myanmar presented the Ven. U Vicittasārābhivamsa with the Title, Insignia and perquisites of the Honour in a ceremony in February 1954, barely three months before the convocation of the Sixth Buddhist Council which was held in the manmade Mahāpāsāṇa Guhā Cavē on World Peace Hill, Yangon.

The Sixth Buddhist Council had been waiting for a learned monk to assume the role of Respondent. This critical role could only be filled by a monk thoroughly and completely versed in the Pāli Canon, Commentaries and Sub-commentaries, capable of immediately recalling and reproducing without error and hesitation passages under discussion and material relevant to the passage. It was a miracle that the Ven. U Vicittasārābhivamsa, Tipiṭakadhara Dhammabhaṇḍāgarika should emerge at such a time. It resembled so much the Venerable Ānanda becoming an arahat the night before the First Meeting of the First Buddhist Council in Rājagaha three months after the Parinirvāna of the Lord Buddha. It augured well for the success of the Sixth Buddhist Council.

Even while the Ven. Mingun Sayadaw U Vicittasārābhivamsa was preparing for the Tipiṭakadhara Examinations he was busy editing the texts for the Sixth Council, first as a member of a primary regional redaction committee, then as a member of higher committee. He was later to become a full member of the Central Executive Committee. Appointed the Respondent, the Ven. U Vicittasārābhivamsa's performance was awe - inspiring. His statements as Respondent were broadcast every evening when the whole country tuned - in to listen with reverence.

When he passed the Vinaya portion of the Tipiṭakadhara Examination the Prime Minister requested him to write a Great Chronicle of the Buddha. He declined saying he was preparing for the Tipiṭakadhara Examination. When he became Tipiṭakadhara the Prime Minister again requested him. He declined again saying that he was busy with the Sixth Council. When the redaction of the Pāli Canon was completed the Prime Minister requested him a third time. This time he could not refuse. He started work in 1956 and completed the six volumes in eight books of the Great Chronicle of the Buddha in 1969. The magnun opus may be seen in four parts. Part One is a chronicle of the earlier Buddhas. Part Two is a chronicle of the Buddha Jewel and provides an account of the life of Gotama Buddha. Part Three is devoted to the Dhamma Jewel and presents the principle suttas and doctrines. Part Four gives an account of the lives of the chief arahats, male and female and the main devotees. The writer drew information from the Pāli Canon, the Commentaries, Sub-commentaries and Exegeses. The information supplied is encyclopedic. The style is both literary and readable and inspires reverence, awe and comprehension.

The Ven. Mingun Sayadaw was invited everywhere. He went even into the remotest villages to give devotees the opportunity to gain merit. He wanted everyone, the rich and the poor to have a part in the meritorious deeds of building pagodas, monasteries, seats of learning and in providing the four requisites of monks. Donors came forward with offers for his own monastery but he diverted them.

A donor came forward with the proposal to put up two huge leogryphs at the entrance to his monastery. The Ven. Sayadaw suggested that it would be better to build a clinic for the village. When another donor wished to erect a big residential building for monks in the monastery he suggested that Shweyaysaung Monastery in Mandalay where there were more monks would be a more suitable location. When yet another donor wished to build a dhammasālā, he suggested that it would be better to build a township hospital. At the Ven. Sayadaw's

suggestion a school and a police station were built together with residential quarters. A school, roads, bridges, monasteries and residential buildings for monks were constructed in the Ven. Sayadaw's birthplace and where he first became a novice.

After the annexation by the British, monks and nuns in and around Mandalay were short of supplies. In 1896, the elders of Mandalay got together and formed the Malun Rice Donation Association to donate rice to monks and nuns in Sagaing, Mingun and Minwun range of hills while the Pariyatti Sāsanaḥita Association was formed a year later to do the same in Mandalay. Due to the Ven. Sayadaw's organizational efforts the Malun Association was able to distribute 5 baskets of rice to each monk, 4 to each novice and 3 to each nun. A Dhammasālā to house the Association was later erected.

The Ven. Sayadaw went wherever invited by plane, train, steamer, countryboat or bullock - cart. When delivering a sermon he would first recite the Pāli, give the paraphrase and then explain in Myanmar. When paraphrasing he would insert rhymes and parallelisms. When explaining in Myanmar his syntax would be perfect with no dangling phrases. The sermon would be supported with references from the Commentaries and Sub-commentaries. He had a full engagement year. When asked to reduce his travel and sermon schedule he replied that as a monk he was doing what a monk should do. He did not wish to be unemployed.

During the Sixth Council the Ven. Sayadaw became very ill and specialist Dr. U Tha Hla was assigned to cure the Sayadaw. Since then, Dr. U Tha Hla has looked after the Ven. Sayadaw's health and has become the Sayadaw's closest chief devotee.

About three kilometers from the Dhammanāda monastery, beside the Ayeyarwady River there was an old pagoda and near it a replica of Buddha's Footprint covered with brush and jungle. Nearby was also the tomb of the first presiding Sayadaw of the monastery, the Ven. Sayadaw's Preceptor.

The pagoda had been erected by the Prince of Momeit, son of the sixth king of the Konbaung Dynasty. The hill on which the pagoda stood was known as Momeit Hill. Dr U Tha Hla and wife Daw Khin Nyunt offered to repair the pagoda and place on it a new *htee* or finial. The hoisting of the *htee* was celebrated in 1960. Lands in the vicinity were slowly purchased and donated till the area became extensive. Buildings arose.

A Momeit Pagoda Trust Committee was formed.

To attempt the Tipiṭakadhara Examination in one try is onerous and almost prohibitive. The Ven. Sayadaw considered that it would be beneficial to have a bridging examination. There could be none better than an examination in the Five Nakāyas or Collections which covered virtually the same ground but was tested less rigorously.

The Pariyatti Sāsanaḥita ( Sakyasiha ) Association of Mandalay was already experienced in holding high level examinations. Thus, the Nikāya Examinations came to be held in Mandalay, Yangon and Bago.

The Ven. Mingun Sayadaw then considered the benefit which would accrue if an institution be established where would - be candidates for the Tipiṭakadhara Examination could dwell without anxiety about material support and study material. The Ven. Sayadaw consulted the Momeit Pagoda Trustees. They pointed out that the buildings in the area were fully utilized only a few days in the year at the annual pagoda festival. If an institution were established for would - be candidates there those buildings would be better utilized for the benefit of the Sāsana.

On 18 February, 1978, the Ven. Mingun Sayadaw donated all the monies awarded by the Government as Tipiṭakadhara Dhamma-bhaṇḍāgārika to the newly established Tipiṭaka-Nikāya Monastery. On Myanmar New Year Day of that year, the Momeit Pagoda Trustee Committee was enlarged and converted into the Tipiṭaka - Nikāya

Missionary Organization with the Ven. Mingun Sayadaw U Vicit-sārābhivamsa as Supreme Patron Sayadaw. The Tipiṭaka-Nikāya Monastery in Yangon was opened on 23 November, 1980.

In December 1979, the Minister for Religious Affairs toured the country and supplicated leading monks on the desirability of convoking a Congregation of all orders for the purification, perpetuation and propagation of the Sāsana. The Ven. Mingun Sayadaw agreed to help. He too toured the country and approached the Sayadaws to support the idea.

The Congregation of all Orders for the Purification, Perpetuation and Propagation of the Sāsana was held in the Mahāpāsāṇa Guhā Cave on World Peace Hill in Yangon on 26 May, 1980. The Ven. Mingun Sayadaw was elected General Secretary of the governing Sangha Mahā Nāyaka on the same day.

During the First Congregation the Sangha Mahā Nāyaka adopted a Pariyatti Education Scheme which laid down the principles for the establishment of a Sāsana Pariyatti University.

1. To perform at a higher level of effectiveness the purification of the Sāsana.
2. To develop monks replete with the following qualities.
  - ( a ) High moral behavior.
  - ( b ) Full conversance with the Tipiṭaka.
  - ( c ) Proficiency in Pāli.
  - ( d ) Skill in Myanmar writing.
3. To produce monks capable of missionary work at home and abroad and to develop the spirit to serve in areas urban or rural, poor or prosperous.

4. To alleviate the physical pain, mental suffering, anxiety and anguish by means of the teachings of Lord Buddha.

To realize these principles, the Sangha Mahā Nāyaka felt that a Pariyatti University should be instituted with one establishment in Mandalay and one in Yangon. The Ven. Mingun Sayadaw had at his disposal an experienced and widespread body in the Tipiṭaka - Nikāya Missionary Organization. So on May 10, 1982, the Sangha Mahā Nāyaka resolved to request the General Secretary in the person of the Ven. Mingun Sayadaw to undertake the task of establishing the Pariyatti Sāsana University together with the required buildings in Mandalay and Yangon.

The Ven. Mingun Sayadaw travelled the length and breadth of the country accepting donations towards the Pariyatti Sāsana University. With his Tipiṭaka - Nikāya Missionary Organization as the mainstay Upaṭṭhāka Ministrative Committees were formed to continue the work. Now, the construction work is virtually complete. The University opened in Yangon in June and Mandalay in August, 1986.

The Ven. Mingun Sayadaw always solicitous for the well being and Pariyatti learning advancement of the monks initiated a major project for the construction of a specialist Sāsana hospital in Mandalay. The hospital started accepting in-patients in November 1989.

In reverent honour and high recognition of the Ven. Mingun Sayadaw's pure moral conduct, deep and extensive learning, encyclopaedic literary effort, inspirational sermons and great service to the Sasana, the Government of the Union of Myanmar presented to the Ven. Mingun Sayadaw the title of Aggamahāpandita in 1979 and the highest title Abhidhajahamahāratthaguru in 1984.

Though he is now 80, the Ven. Mingun Sayadaw continues to travel and to preach. He is greeted by huge crowds wherever he goes and his sermons are well attended. His voice is still firm, his mind

clear, his reasoning incisive, his judgement unerring, his health good though he is still thin. His energy is unflagging, his resolve unshaken, the vision of his task undimmed as he journeys onward from his eightieth birthday.



## THE INTELLECTUAL ACHIEVEMENT OF MINGUN SAYADAW

It is three months after the All-Enlightened Buddha passed away into Parinirvāna with no more possibility of renewed birth. Five hundred monks are assembled in a cave on a hill in Rājagaha, north India. They are all arahats who have dispelled the cloud of ignorance and have totally overcome craving. They have assembled to recite the teachings of Buddha during fortyfive years, thereby to make known what they are and so preserve the Teachings.

"Come , therefore, friends, let us recite together both the Dhamma and the Vinaya before what is not Dhamma flourishes and the Vinaya is thrust aside; before those who teach what is not Dhamma become powerful and those who teach the Dhamma become weak, those who teach what is not Vinaya become powerful and those who teach Vinaya become weak."

The Venerable Mahā Kassapa is presiding. He is also the Catechizer. He is going to ask questions leading to the recital of the body of the Vinaya which comprises the rules of discipline to regulate the conduct of the disciples of Buddha admitted into the Order of the Sangha. The questions will first cover the circumstances under which each rule was laid down asking where the rule was promulgated, concerning whom, the subject of the rule and other details. The Venerable Upāli will be the Respondent.

The Venerable Mahā Kassapa brings the assembly to order.

**suṇātu me āvuso saṃgho**

"Let the assembly, friends, hear me. If it please the assembly I will question the Venerable Upāli regarding the Vinaya."

It seems agreeable to the Assembly so it remains silent.



Then the Venerable Upāli puts a proposal to the Assembly, saying:

"Let the assembly, revered sirs, hear me. If it please the assembly, I when questioned by the Venerable Mahā Kassapa regarding the Vinaya, will reply."

It seems agreeable to the Assembly so it remains silent.

Then the Venerable Mahā Kassapa speaks to the Venerable Upāli.

"Where friend Upāli, was the first expulsion rule ordained? "

In this manner the Venerable Mahā Kassapa questioned the Venerable Upāli regarding twofold Vinaya and as questioned the Venerable Upāli replied.

After the recitation of the Vinaya had been completed Mahā Kassapa put a proposal to the Assembly saying:

"Let the assembly, friends, hear me. If it please the assembly, I will question the Venerable Ānanda regarding the Dhamma."

The Assembly seems agreeable and so remains silent.

The Venerable Ānanda, cousin of the Lord Buddha, was not yet an arahat when the decision was taken to hold the First Council. He had been closely ministering to the Lord Buddha. It had been decided that members of the Council would be chosen only from among arahats. When five hundred arahats less one had been chosen, the monks spoke to the Venerable Mahā Kassapa.

"The Venerable Ānanda although still a learner is incapable of going astray through liking, through enmity, through misapprehension or through fear, and much of the Vinaya and Dhamma has been mastered by him in the presence of the Lord Buddha. Therefore let the Elder choose also the Venerable Ānanda."

The Venerable Ānanda had also been declared by the Lord Buddha to be the foremost among His disciples who were learned in the Dhamma, who was skilled in mindfulness, who was upright in conduct, who was established in enduring and who was well versed in ministering.

So the Venerable Mahā Kassapa chose the Venerable Ānanda also. But the Venerable Ananda had not let the matter lie there. He had practised with supreme effort the night before the first day meeting of the Council. But so great was his effort, he did not realise the final fruition of the arahat. As dawn broke he decided to rest a moment. As he raised his feet to lie on the couch, the distraction of his supreme effort was removed and he attained arahatship.

The Venerable Ānanda put a proposal to the Assembly saying:

"Let the assembly, revered sirs, hear me. If it please the assembly, I when questioned by the Venerable Mahā Kassapa regarding the Dhamma, will reply."

The Assembly seems agreeable and so it remains silent.

Then the Venerable Mahā Kassapa spoke to the Venerable Ānanda.

"Where, friend Ānanda, was the Brahmajāla spoken?"

"Between Rājagaha and Nālanda, revered sir, at the King's pleasure house in Ambalaṭṭhika."

"Concerning whom?"

"Suppiya the Wanderer and Brahmadata the youth".

And so the Venerable Mahā Kassapa continued to question the Venerable Ānanda.

It is two thousand five hundred years after the passing of the All-Enlightened One into Parinirvāna. Two thousand four hundred and thirtyseven monks from Myanmar and one hundred and fortyfive monks from foreign countries are assembled in the manmade cave, Mahāpāsāṇa Guhā, on World Peace Hill, Yangon, Myanmar. Over two hundred thousand lay devotees are in attendance. The monks have come together for the sixth time in the Sixth Council to recite the teachings of the Lord Buddha and thereby to make known again what they are and so preserve the Teachings.

The Venerable Abhidhaja Mahārāṭṭhaguru Nyaungyan Sayadaw is presiding. He brings the Assembly to order,

suṇātu me āvuso saṃgho

"Let the assembly, friends, hear me."

With the permission of the Venerable Nyangyan Sayadaw, the Venerable Pakokku Sayadaw Aggamahāpaṇḍita Bhaddanta Javana reports to the Assembly that he will be the Catechizer on the Vinaya.

The Venerable Tipītakadhara Dhammabhaṇḍāgārīka Mingun Sayadaw reports to the Assembly that he will be the Respondent on the Vinaya.

And so the catechism begins.

"Where, friend, was the first expulsion rule ordained?"

With no hesitation, in a clear firm voice, neither loud nor soft, the Venerable Mingun Sayadaw responds precisely.

"The rule on the first expulsion was ordained in Vesālī.

When questioned in Pāli, the Venerable Mingun Sayadaw responded in Pāli. When questioned in Myanmar he replied in Myanmar. The answers were always organised in correct syntax

however long they might be. The flow was smooth and unhesitant and well-paced. The sacred Pāli Canon was recited in measured tones as befitted their dignity.

This went on for two years till the Pāli text of the whole Piṭaka, the Three Baskets, was covered. The Catechizer changed but not the Responder. The Venerable Mingun Sayadaw responded, his measured tones never weakening, his syntax correct as ever, the texts having no error. Then after the redacted Pāli Canon had been adopted the Sixth Council continued with the recitation of the Commentaries and Sub-commentaries. The Venerable Mingun Sayadaw was again the Respondent with almost superhuman unflagging zeal and intellectual power. He was thoroughly qualified for the role and function of Responder in the Sixth Council.

In 1948, the first year of independence from British rule the Government considered the need to purify, perpetuate and propagate the Sāsana, to promote the emergence of a heroic Sāsana personality with the ability to memorize and recite by heart the whole of the Pali Canon, the Tipiṭaka, and to seek out personalities with special intellectual powers to receive the reverence and praise of the devotees. The Government decided to institute the Tipiṭakadhara Examination.

It is an oral and written examination lasting thirtythree days. The candidate is examined in the three Piṭakas: Vinaya, Sutta and Abhidhamma.

The oral examination in the Vinaya covers five volumes in five books comprising 2260 pages.

The oral examination in the Sutta covers three volumes in three books comprising 782 pages.

The oral examination in Abhidhamma covers seven volumes in twelve books comprising 4941 pages.

The oral examination on these 7983 pages or about 2.4 million words is not a viva voce, a question and answer examination. It is an examination on total recall and faultless reproduction. The Candidate will be given a point in the Pāli Canon, any point, and asked to continue reciting from there, line by line, para by para and page by page. Or he would be given a point and asked to go back from there a certain number of sections and to recite from there. There must be no error in the word form, the pronunciation must be correct, the flow must be smooth and the enunciation must demonstrate the proper understanding of the meaning of the passage being recited. A certain number of pages of text must be covered in a fixed time. A candidate who requires prompting for five or more times fails.

The written examination is not only on the Pāli Canon but also on the Commentaries and Sub-commentaries. The ten major Commentaries in ten books and the major Sub-commentaries in fourteen books cover 17917 pages. Candidates are tested on the doctrinal understanding, comparative philosophy, textual discrimination, taxonomic grouping and analysis and on the interrelationships. Though candidates are not expected to reproduce whole passages as in the oral examination, many of the questions cannot be answered without the ability to recall such passages and to compare diverse passages mentally at the examination desk.

Thus, the Tipiṭakadhara Examination is one of the longest and toughest examinations in the world.

In a sense, the Ven. Mingun Sayadaw had prepared himself for such an examination since his youthful days as a novice. The intellectual power which was to win him the highest honours was first demonstrated when at 13 at the township examination he recited the 300 pages of the Kaccāyana Pāli Grammar without error and with no prompting. The next year he recited the Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha, having learnt it by heart in one month.

His uncle presented him with a complete set of the Pali Canon and Commentaries which served as a rich pasture for his mind.

At 15, he took the primary examination, the *Pathamange*, which consisted of examination in the first section of the Vinaya, Kaccāyana Grammar, Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha, Mātikā and early sections of the Dhātukathā and translation between Pāli and Myanmar.

The next year he took the middle level examination which covered additionally the Yamaka book of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka.

He could not appear for any examinations in the following years because he was busy looking after his Preceptor Sayadaw who had suffered a stroke. After over two years, the Sayadaw passed away and the novice was sent out to study at the Dhammanāda Monastery in Mingun across the river from Mandalay. When he came of age there he was ordained a full-fledged monk with the title U Vicittasāra.

Knowing his abilities, the presiding monk made him attend classes in the Vinaya and commentaries, the Abhidhamma and commentaries and the Shweyaysaung Grammar together with study of exegeses incorporating the views of famous Sayadaws and conclusions on the issues.

Before he had been a monk for one vassa, U Vicittasāra took the Government Examination at the higher level. The next year he took the National Examination at the higher level.

One of the more difficult Pariyatti doctrinal examinations is held by the Pariyatti Sāsanaḥita Association of Mandalay. Candidates are examined in the Vinaya, Grammar, Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha, Abhidhammattha-vibhāvanī (Ṭikākyaw), Kaṅkhāvitaraṇī (Commentary on the Pātimokkha of the Vinaya Piṭaka), Saddatthabhedacintā (Kaccāyana's Pāli aphorisms and Sanskrit authorities), Kaccāyanasāra (resume of textbook on Kaccāyana Pāli Grammar),

Abhidhānappadīpikā (Moggallāna's Dictionary of Pāli), Mātīkā of the Dhammasaṅgani, Dhātukathā, Yamaka, these last three texts in extended and profound sense, and rhetoric. U Vicittasāra passed the oral and written examinations in one attempt which is a rare achievement.

U Vicittasāra stood first in the Government Examination at the higher level and was awarded the title, *Pathamagyaw*.

The year after passing the Sakyasiha Examination he sat for and passed the Sakyasiha Teachers Course Examination, something never achieved before. He was awarded the title of *Vutaṃsakā* (Headgarland) which permitted him to add *Abhivaṃsa* after his name.

Six years later when the First Government Examination on the teachers course was held in 1934, U Vicittasārābhivaṃsa passed the examination with credit and was awarded the title *Sāsanadhaja Sirīpavara Dhammācariya*.

By then he was the presiding monk at the Dhammanāda monastery at Mingun, the previous monk having passed away three years earlier. The Ven. U Vicittasārābhivaṃsa undertook the management of the monastery as well as the task of teaching. His special classes on Moggallāna's Grammar, *Atṭhasālinī* Commentary and *Sam-mohavinodanī* were famous and well-attended.

When the first Tipitakadhara Examination was held, the Ven. Mingun Sayadaw was one of over one hundred monks invited to observe the proceedings. When the result was a disappointment with no candidate successful, he resolved to repay the nation's debt in search of a hero of the Pariyatti Sāsana.

He set about the task systematically. He took up the Pāli Canon passage by passage, book by book. He first set out to understand the passage thinking in Myanmar and in Pāli. He broke the passage into sentences, paragraphs or sections according to the degree of difficul-

ty. If necessary, he noted the number of modifications and variations in the selected pieces. He read aloud each section five times, then closing the book, he repeated what he had just recited. If he was hesitant or felt he had not mastered the passage he would open the book and read aloud five more times. If it was recalled smoothly he would recite it ten times and then pass on to the next passage. In the evenings when reciting the day's passages he would not do it alone but request some other monk to check with the open book. This ensured that he did not pass over any word, phrase or sentence and that each declension was correct.

When two or three books had been mastered he would set aside each evening two or three periods required for their recall and recitation. The intention was to go through the finished books simultaneously so that the mind would be active in all the books at the same time and all interrelationships would be discerned.

The Ven. Mingun Sayadaw also trained for the physically gruelling examination. Where an oral session would last for three hours he would practice reciting for five, thus accustoming himself to a test of ten hours a day. And he would do this for longer than the stretch of 33 days of the examination. He trained likewise for the written examination.

When the Third Tipiṭakadhara Examination came around in 1950, the Ven. Mingun Sayadaw was ready to repay the debt to the devotees of the nation. He appeared for the oral examination on 2260 pages of the Vinaya Piṭaka.

In a clear, firm voice, unhesitatingly, without error, without prompting, with full understanding, he precisely enunciated each word and phrase audible to the whole audience. When there were different versions he pointed each out and suggested the most suitable one. The virtuoso performance received the appreciation and acclamation of the audience.



In the written examination in the Pāli text, Commentaries, and Sub-commentaries on the Vinaya, the Ven. Mingun Sayadaw received the following marks out of a possible 100.

Pārājika	98
Pācittiya	99
Mahāvagga	92
Cūlavagga	98
Parivāra	100

In the Fourth and Fifth Examinations, the Ven. Mingun Sayadaw appeared for the oral and written examinations on the Abhidhamma and passed with equal facility. By that time preparations for the Sixth Buddhist Council were underway. The Ven. U Vicittasārābhivamsa was a member of the Regional Mūla Pāli Visodhaka, Primary Redaction Committee responsible for the Mahāvagga section of the Vinaya Piṭaka. He completed the work in 19 days so his regional committee was further assigned the Parivāra. This too was finished expeditiously.

In undertaking the assignments, the Ven. Sayadaw did not just read through the texts with the committee but sought out the different versions, brought out the reference in the Commentaries and Sub-commentaries, explained the implications to the clear understanding of the committee members, sought a unanimous conclusion and wrote the report.

The Ven. Sayadaw also participated in next higher redaction Committee, the Paṭi Pāli Visodaka Committee. In sessions of the Committee, Myanmar monks who were well-versed in the Pāli texts but not proficient in the language and Sri Lanka monks who were proficient in the language but not so well-versed in the texts could not get the understanding of each other. When such occasions arose the Ven. Mingun Sayadaw would respectfully and pleasantly explain the issue and possible solution to each side and thus arrive at a satisfactory understanding. Observing the performance of the Sayadaw, the Sri

Lanka monks would say, "There is none such in Sri Lanka, there is none such in Jambudīpa."

The Ven. Sayadaw returned to his monastery in Mingun and worked on the Commentaries and Sub-commentaries. He foresaw that after redacting the Pāli Canon, the Commentaries and Sub-commentaries would follow. At the same time he had to prepare for the Tipiṭakadhara Examination on the third and final Piṭaka. He was not unduly worried. After the voluminous prescriptions of the Vinaya and Abhidhamma, the less than 800 pages of the Sutta Piṭaka were not onerous.

On a January afternoon in 1954, the Venerable U Vicittasārābhivamaṣa successfully completed the recitation of the Pāthika Vagga of the Sutta Piṭaka and a Tipiṭakadhara Dhammabhaṇḍāgārika was born in Myanmar.

Homage was paid to the Ven. Sayadaw in an official ceremony on February 13, 1954 when the President of the Union of Myanmar presented him with the title Tipiṭakadhara Dhammabhaṇḍāgārika and with the Seal, the Ivory Fan and the three white Umbrellas.

The Venerable Tipiṭakadhara Dhammabhaṇḍāgārika Mingun Sayadaw Bhaddanta Vicittasārābhivamaṣa was invited all over the country and homage was paid by hordes of devotees. In spite of the pressure of duties, for the Sixth Council was imminent, the Ven. Sayadaw visited even the remotest villages for the benefit of the devotees.

The Guinness Book of Records of 1985 has this entry.

**Human memory:** Bhandanta Vicitsara recited 16,000 pages of Buddhist canonical texts in Rangoon, Burma in May 1954. Rare instances of eidetic memory - the ability to reproject and hence "visually" recall material are known to science."

From the Ven. Mingun Sayadaw's study practices it will be noted that Myanmar monks accord much importance to reading aloud and recitation when handling material for memorizing. Hence it may be considered that auditory aid to retention and recall play as important a role as the visual.

When the Sixth Council was first being mooted some monks from Sri Lanka expressed anxiety about the availability of a qualified personage for the critical role of Respondent. Now, barely three months before the First Day Meeting of the Sixth Council, a person fully qualified for the role of Respondent had emerged in the person of the Tipitakadhara Dhammabhaṇḍāgārika Mingun Sayadaw. This happening was similar to the realisation of arahatship by the Venerable Ānanda in time for the First Day Meeting of the First Council.

In the conduct of the Catechism there was no prior consultation between Catechizer and Respondent. The Catechizer questioned on whatever was required by the situation and the Respondent answered directly, precisely and without hesitation. The Catechizer once put a question on a difficult issue in the Sutta Piṭaka and was anxious about how the Ven. Sayadaw would respond. But just as a whale receives the opportunity to frolic freely in the deep sea so also the Ven. Mingun Sayadaw's mind took the opportunity to range freely in the deep and difficult matter. The Ven. Mingun Sayadaw replied fully and completely to the question.

When the Most Venerable Nyangyan Sayadaw, President of the Sixth Council passed away the Most Venerable Abhidhajamahāratthaguru Masoeyein Sayadaw was elected President and the Ven. Mingun Sayadaw was elected to fill the vacancy in the Executive Committee of the Sixth Council.

When the Ven. Mingun Sayadaw had successfully passed the examination on the Vinaya, the Prime Minister requested him to write a Chronicle of Buddha. The Sayadaw declined as he was engaged with

the Tipiṭakadhara Examination. Three years later the Prime Minister repeated the request but the Sayadaw requested postponement till after the redaction of the Pali Canon in the Sixth Council. After the successful conclusion of this portion of the Sixth Council, the Ven. Mingun Sayadaw began work on the Great Chronicle of Buddhas.

When completed this magnum opus of 5516 pages was in six volumes to commemorate the Sixth Council, in eight books for the Eightfold Path and in 45 chapters for the 45 years the Lord Buddha promulgated the Dhamma.

The first volume which is of two books deals with the story of Sumedha, the Future Buddha when he asked for and received the Prophecy uttered by Dīpaṅkara Buddha. The second book is devoted to the various aspects of Pāramī, "Perfections", to be fulfilled by the Bodhisattas and with the life stories of twenty four earlier Buddhas.

The volumes from the second to the fourth and the first book of the fifth volume are devoted to the Buddha Jewel. The second volume contains the events leading to the birth of the Buddha, seeing the Four Signs, Renunciation, the Ascetic Practices, Enlightenment, the conversion of the Kassapa brothers and the visit to Rājagaha.

The third volume presents the attainment of arahatship by the Venerable Sāriputta and Mahāmoggallāna, the visit to Kapilavastu, the initiation of cousin Venerable Ānanda into the Order, the establishment of the Jetavana monastery, the founding of Vesālī, the recitation of paritta and the rule prohibiting display of supreme powers.

The fourth volume contains many suttas preached by the Buddha while travelling widely in the middle country.

Part One of the fifth volume contains the events leading to the final passing away of the Lord Buddha into Parinirvāna with no more birth. It also contains an account of the distribution of the holy Relics.

Part Two is devoted to the Qualities of the Dhamma Jewel and expositions of the Paṭiccasamuppāda, "dependent origination", the Dhammacakka and the Anattalakkhaṇa Suttas.

The two books of the sixth volume are devoted to the Sangha Jewel and provide accounts of the male and female arahats and famous lay devotees.

This is the general framework. Within that framework, the Ven. Sayadaw has supplied so much information from the Canon, Commentaries and Sub-commentaries touching on so many topics that the Great Chronicle is virtually encyclopedic. The Ven. Mingun Sayadaw has applied a literary style that is appropriate to the topic being presented. He arouses reverence, devotion and awe when describing the qualities, endeavors and accomplishments of the arahats and noble personages. Deep religious feelings suffuse the reader when the Ven. Sayadaw propounds the profound aspects of the Dhamma. The reader is pleasantly calmed by descriptions of natural beauty and wonderment is aroused by the splendor of cities. To read the Ven. Sayadaw's Great Chronicle is to set forth on a valuable journey of edification, illumination and bliss.

The Ven. Tipiṭakadhara Dhammabhaṇḍāgārika Mingun Sayadaw U Vicittasārabhivaṃsa continues to write and preach at 80. His sermons are famous for their facility of language, value of information not easily accessible even to a person familiar with the literature of Buddhism, for the power to help people understand the Dhamma and power to stimulate religious endeavour. Four volumes of sermons have been published; dozens of audiocassettes await transcription. A month before the Ven. Sayadaw was to appear for the oral examination in Abhidhamma, the Ven. Sayadaw preached a four-hour sermon on the Dhammacakka at the laying of the foundation stone of the Sāsana Vimāna hall of the Mandalay Pariyatti Sāsanaḥita Association. That famous sermon too awaits publication.

Intellectually, the Ven. Mingun Sayadaw as Tipiṭakadhara Dhammabhaṇḍāgārika has the marvelous power to retain, recall and reproduce a truly voluminous amount of material in a language, Pāli, which is not only not his mother tongue but also a language not used in daily commerce. He is able to see interrelationship between diverse elements and produce references over the vast territory of the Canon, Commentaries, Sub-commentaries, exegeses and expositions. His expression even in extempore sermons is clear, firm, syntactically correct, logical, building upon each thought and moving inexorably towards an edifying, memorable conclusion. This intellectual achievement is possible only through training in the Perfections through saṃsāra, "round of births" and through the most rigorous moral and mental discipline in this life such as in the case of the Most Venerable Ānanda, Buddha's cousin, whom the Ven. Mingun Sayadaw so much resembles.



## PARENT, THE FIRST AND FOREMOST TEACHER

Maung Htin

At school-going age, I was sent to a vernacular school founded by U Khanti, an ex-monk, with a grant-in-aid sanctioned by the Myaungmya District Council through one of its Circle Boards. Before my time, there were no schools, the government of the day being more interested in collecting revenue than in education. My mother told me that in those days all boys and girls of the village learnt their reading, writing and arithmetic at village monasteries, which were five or six in number. Girls were also taught there up to the age when they attained puberty. Boys usually continued to take up "higher learning" in astrological calculations, generally termed *Bedin*, and also in the nine chapters of the *Thingyo*, or Abhidhamma until they were about sixteen. The products of monastic education fared quite well in life despite their ignorance of the English language. I had the rare opportunity of being trained in the art of administration of justice under a Headquarters Magistrate, known to his contemporaries as "a vernacular hand", who could quote the Indian Penal Code (Myanmar version) chapter and verse, although he did not know ABC.

Saya U Khanti ran the school strictly following the method of teaching prevalent in monastic schools, although he had to expand his curricula, as required by the authorities giving him aid, to teaching the rudiments of history and geography, and also knitting and embroidery for girls in which subjects he was helped by his wife.

The accent was however on religious instruction. Unless a pupil could satisfy Saya U Khanti with his or her recital of Maṅgala Sutta, he or she could not hope to be promoted.

From this system of education it may be surmised that we were initiated into Buddhism and Buddhist way of life by school-teachers teaching us Myanmar ABC in our childhood.

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From this system of education it may be surmised that we were initiated into Buddhism and Buddhist way of life by school-teachers teaching us Myanmar ABC in our childhood.

There is a Myanma saying that parents are the first teachers to their children. At home, my parents were the first to teach me to say prayers beginning with the word *okāsa* (making a request) and to take refuge in Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. They were the first to let me know what is goodness and what is badness which ultimately leads one to understand the Buddhist concept of merit and demerit.

In retrospect, I would like to assert that that moment when I was first taught to say prayers taking refuge in the Three Gems was the moment when I got initiated into Buddhism.

In Buddha's time, brahmins used to have interviews with the Buddha in order to stage ideological contests. They put forward their views on salvation which they held as the most correct. After some catechism with the Buddha, they saw the light of the Truth as propounded by the Buddha. They came with doubts; they went away with faith and confidence in the Dhamma. As they took leave of the Buddha they would say: "From this day on, please take me into your fold and regard me as your *upāsaka* (devotee). I take refuge in Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha." So, having recited:

Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi;

Dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi;

Saṃghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi;

"I felt that I had become a Buddhist. Later faith and confidence became rooted in me as I became mellower with age.

My maternal grandmother was also responsible for my religious education. On sabbath days she took me to her *zayat* donated to the Laydat Kyaung in memory of her deceased husband. She taught me how to take the precepts. I was quite familiar with the five precepts she had taught me earlier. But when she expanded them into eight, I felt that they were too much for me. Even with the five precepts, I was rather baffled, especially by that relating to *kāmesu*. My parents,

my uncles and my aunts took pains, each with his or her own version of the meaning and purport of the Pali word. Finally, the whole import of the matter crystallised into my small head as a misdeed which causes homes to be broken up when a husband or a wife elopes with other people's spouses.

As I began to understand the meaning of the five precepts, I considered them as not very demanding. But when it came to the eight precepts, I became afraid because I would have to forgo evening meals. I told my grandmother that I could not remain starved. My grandmother was very indulgent towards me, unlike my father. She said that I could keep sabbath for half a day, till noon. This pleased me a great deal. I had a hearty meal in the evening while all the elders in the *zayat* went without it.

Next morning my grandmother prepared rice cooked together with pop-corns and gram and fed me. What a grand feast I had. I would keep sabbath every time I was taken to her *zayat*!

After a few years schooling under the charge of Saya U Khanti, I prided myself in my ability to work out how much money could be realized by the sale of a stated amount of paddy at a rate of so many rupees per hundred baskets. By then I had learnt Maṅgala Sutta and a few Parittas. My father considered all this learning as adequate for me to take the robe as a *sāmaṇera*. But he advised me to wait for another year, for, he said, I had not reached that age when I could appreciate the merits of being a *koyin*.

Having made his intention known to me, he took me regularly to the Laydat Kyaung on days when he took sabbath. I thought that to do good and shun evil is no difficult matter, not warranting visits to a monastery. One day, with this great revelation I came home, having taken the vow before the presiding monk to observe the ten precepts sanctioned for *koyins*. At nightfall when I was about to go to bed hunger gnawed at my stomach. I noticed a tray of sweet potatoes in the kitchen. I picked the choicest of them. At first I nibbled at it.

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"I felt that I had become a Buddhist. Later faith and confidence became rooted in me as I became mellower with age.

My maternal grandmother was also responsible for my religious education. On sabbath days she took me to her *zayat* donated to the Laydat Kyaung in memory of her deceased husband. She taught me how to take the precepts. I was quite familiar with the five precepts she had taught me earlier. But when she expanded them into eight, I felt that they were too much for me. Even with the five precepts, I was rather baffled, especially by that relating to *kāmesu*. My parents,

my uncles and my aunts took pains, each with his or her own version of the meaning and purport of the Pali word. Finally, the whole import of the matter crystallised into my small head as a misdeed which causes homes to be broken up when a husband or a wife elopes with other people's spouses.

As I began to understand the meaning of the five precepts, I considered them as not very demanding. But when it came to the eight precepts, I became afraid because I would have to forgo evening meals. I told my grandmother that I could not remain starved. My grandmother was very indulgent towards me, unlike my father. She said that I could keep sabbath for half a day, till noon. This pleased me a great deal. I had a hearty meal in the evening while all the elders in the *zayat* went without it.

Next morning my grandmother prepared rice cooked together with pop-corns and gram and fed me. What a grand feast I had. I would keep sabbath every time I was taken to her *zayat*!

After a few years schooling under the charge of Saya U Khanti, I prided myself in my ability to work out how much money could be realized by the sale of a stated amount of paddy at a rate of so many rupees per hundred baskets. By then I had learnt Maṅgala Sutta and a few Parittas. My father considered all this learning as adequate for me to take the robe as a *sāmaṇera*. But he advised me to wait for another year, for, he said, I had not reached that age when I could appreciate the merits of being a *koyin*.

Having made his intention known to me, he took me regularly to the Laydat Kyaung on days when he took sabbath. I thought that to do good and shun evil is no difficult matter, not warranting visits to a monastery. One day, with this great revelation I came home, having taken the vow before the presiding monk to observe the ten precepts sanctioned for *koyins*. At nightfall when I was about to go to bed hunger gnawed at my stomach. I noticed a tray of sweet potatoes in the kitchen. I picked the choicest of them. At first I nibbled at it.

It was so sweet and appetizing. I munched and chewed it. Father heard the sound of my jaws at work. He enquired. I told him the truth. He reminded me of the precept that forbids "eating rice" in the afternoon, evening and at night. I said I was not eating rice, but eating sweet potato. Father then made a long commentary on the meaning of the word "eating". It meant, he said, eating anything that is eatable. He warned me that strict discipline must be observed if I were to don the yellow robe. Observance of discipline is good; non-observance bad. That was a lesson learnt by me, an aspirant to becoming a *koyin*. So, it was not so easy as I thought to discriminate between good actions and bad.

At 11, I was sent to the Laydat Kyaung under the care of my preceptor, U Indriya, who taught me all the Dhamma that a young Buddhist should know and introduced me to the rules of discipline to be observed by a novice. I spent a month or two in the company of my fellow *phongyikyaungthas* (school-mates in a monastery). Among many things that struck me most was the way I was taught in the proper use of a *Kuṭi* (lavatory for monks). That was my first lesson in personal hygiene. Then I was made a *koyin*.

This, briefly, is the story of how I grew up to be a Buddhist to remain so throughout life.

Looking back at the past when I was raising a family, I was greatly mortified at my failure to follow in the footsteps of my father in bringing up his children to become Buddhists. I have never been able to take my children to any *phongyi-kyaung* (monastery) for the express purpose of introducing them to the Sangha imparting the knowledge of Buddha-dhamma to the laity. Nor can I find time to give religious lessons at home. The utmost that I can do is to buy prayer books for them to read and discover for themselves the essence of Buddha's teachings. I have been engrossed solely in *pariyesana*, eking out a living, as my Sayadaw used to chide me. My children and my children's children are left to themselves without any parental guidance in Buddhist morality.

But I take comfort in the fact that I was able to persuade my eldest grandson to become a *phongyi-kyangtha* for a fortnight or so before he actually took the robe. All my sons have been ordained as *dull-bha rahans* twice in their lives. One of them won a certificate of competency in the Abhidhamma. He often goes to meditation centers for Vipassanā practice. But I consider that I am still found wanting.

I do not think that I am alone in this particular failing that I have described. There might be many among my contemporaries who cannot be as dutiful towards their children as they would like to be, because of this factor of *gharāvāso bahukicco*, multifarious duties of a householder. But I hope that this brief note will serve them as food for serious thought.



## A HOMAGE TO TĪPĪKADHARA SAYADAW

Tet Toe

First, I feel I must confess that I am an 'outsider' -- outside the increasingly widening circle of Sayadaw's lay disciples. Yet I feel I may claim to be among the thousands of devout Buddhists in this country sitting around radio eagerly absorbing the words voiced by the two Venerable Sayadaw's broadcast every week on *Myanma Athan* (the then Burma Broadcasting Service); the two: one the questioner and the other the answerer of the facts of the Buddhist Scriptures. The questioning Sayadaw was the most revered Mahāsi Sayadaw, and the answering Sayadaw, equally revered Tīpīkadhara Sayadaw.

The Q&A Section was part of the programme of the Sixth Buddhist Synod. I felt while listening-in, that the voices of both the Sayadaws were deep, dignified and mellow. It was some forty years ago, and even now I could hear mentally the resonant voices, one after the other, in measured tones. The Sayadaws must have then been in their mid-forties, yet their voices were remarkably mellow and mature, somewhat in an advanced stage quite ahead of their years. In my weekly listen-in, I was deeply impressed by their voices. I didn't then have a chance to pay obeisance to them in person. The wellknown, well-revered Series ran for three years from 1316 B.E. (1955 A.D.).

Since then I have had just a few glimpses of the Tīpīkadhara Sayadaw, the Venerable Bhaddanta Vicittasārābhivamsa, the first recipient of the title of Tīpīkadhara Dhammaḥbhaṇḍāgārika, at the sermon-sessions which I seldom attended. It is one of the failings of mine, for which I owe an apology to one and all, for truancy from sermon-sessions. If I have not become one of the close lay disciples of the Sayadaw, it is entirely my fault for which I have only to apologize. It is due to my rather reclusive nature. I can, however, say to my friends and well-wishers that I have never failed to admire and adore the outstanding achievements of the Sayadaw. I have had a rather



vague idea of the extent of his achievements in Buddhist studies. I had to resort to the writings of his close disciples, and I have now been able to view a long vista of the Sayadaw's work in the study of the Tipiṭaka, the three "Baskets" of the Buddha's Word.

Sayadaw Bhaddanta Vicittasārābhivaṃsa's career started at an early age of thirteen when he fluently recited the great Grammar of the Pali language, a 300-page book of the normal size of the sacred books. Since then, within the shortest of time, the novice who was to become the Sayadaw achieved success in Buddhist examinations, usually taking the first position. The apex of his career as a Buddhist bhikkhu was reached when he recited without halt or hesitation all the books comprising the three parts of the Piṭaka; he had also written up all the necessary commentaries on them. For this unprecedented intellectual feat he was respectfully conferred with the title of Tipiṭakadhara Dhammabaṇḍāgarika Bearer of the Three Piṭakas and Keeper of the Dhamma-Treasure. He was the first to be so honoured.

The Tipiṭakadhara Examinations are the longest not only in this country but perhaps in other parts of the world also. It must be long, for otherwise how could an examinee recite a total of 8000 pages covering the three sacred scriptures of Buddhism. There have been examinations for the Three Piṭakas, especially the three-graded examination called "Pathamabyan Examination" which had been instituted since the days of the Myanmar Kings. Then a new idea was posed for an integrated examination requiring a recital of all the Pali texts of the three Piṭakas, viz., Suttanta Piṭaka, Vinaya Piṭaka and Abhidhamma Piṭaka. It is a stupendous task, and few would dare take the challenge.

The Tipiṭakadhara Examination, sponsored by the Religious Affairs Ministry, was first held in 1948. The 8000 pages or over two million words of the Pali text of the three Piṭakas had to be coped with by the few candidates who dared take the examination; so it must necessarily take several years for a fully successful candidate to emerge. Five years later, in 1953, a 42-year-old bhikkhu named Bhaddanta (the

Venerable) Vicittasārābhivamsa was conferred upon with the most reverential and prestigious title of "Tipiṭakadhara-Dhammabhaṇḍā gārika" Bearer of the Three Piṭakas and Keeper of the Dhamma-Treasure.

The Examination which demands the candidate's highest level of intellectual endeavour, comprises not only a recital of all the Pali texts of the Tipiṭaka but a thorough test of his critical ability through written examinations on all features and aspects of the Buddha's Dhamma. The Venerable Tipiṭakadhara Sayadaw's ability is manifest in his prompt answers to all the questions put orally during the sessions of the Sixth Buddhist Council held in 1949 through 1951. The Question-Answer part of the sessions of all the five previous Buddhist Synods is a major feature in the process of re-affirming all the Pali texts of the Dhamma for the sole purpose of keeping the Buddha Dhamma pure. The Sayadaw's unhalting answers impressed the devotees; since then his fame and prestige has soared. In a way, this has helped the Sayadaw to carry out his projects of spreading the Dhamma and expanding the influence of Buddhism. He set out to extend the propagation of the Dhamma by founding an institute for candidates of Tipiṭakadhara Examinations and sponsoring construction of various religious edifices including the recently-established the State Pariyatti Sāsana University in Yangon and Mandalay, the institution for promoting the higher learning of the Dhamma by Buddhist bhikkhus. Despite his eighty years, the Sayadaw has been actively engaged in the purification, preservation and propagation of the Buddha Sāsana. He has been holding, since its inception, the post of the Secretary-General of the State Sangha Mahā Nayaka committee.

The Sayadaw is always busy: when he is not preaching his favourite sermon, the Metta-Sutta, a discourse on Loving-kindness, or attending a Sangha meeting or discussing religious matters, he is at his typewriter putting out treatises and commentaries. One of his wellknown works is *MahāBuddhavam* (The Great Chronicle of Buddhas). The book is in eight volumes running to 5000 pages. The

detailed descriptions of the life of the Buddha are purported to inspire piety in the hearts of all readers.



## WHAT IS TIPITAKA?

U Ko Lay (Zeya Maung)

The most Venerable Mingun Sayadaw Bhaddanta Vicittasārābhivamsa is the first and foremost recipient of the title "Tipitakadhara Dhammabhaṇḍāgārika." It took him four years to sit for whole Examination that earned him in 1953 this unique title which means "Bearer of the Three Piṭakas and Keeper of the Dhamma-Treasure".

This article, it is hoped, will give the reader a clear idea of the magnitude of the task undertaken by the Venerable Sayadaw to achieve the titles. The immense field of Pali Texts which form the Tipitaka enshrining the original teachings of the Buddha is described, including the historical background of its formation and later developments till present day.

### I The Buddha and his Teachings

#### (a) *The Buddha*

Tipitaka is an extensive body of Canonical Pali literature, in which are enshrined the Teachings of Gotama Buddha expounded during the course of his ministry which lasted forty five years.

A Buddha is one who has become the model of perfection in every aspect, physically, morally, intellectually, after a long period of training stretching over innumerable world cycles. He trains himself by fulfilling the ten pāramīs, virtues of perfection, or noble qualifications pre-requisite for Buddhahood such as selfless service, peerless generosity, perfect purity, loving-kindness, boundless compassion, profound wisdom, intense intelligence and unparalleled forbearance.

The aspirant for Buddhahood sets himself to the arduous task of fulfilling these pāramīs, with strong will for the sole purpose of discovering a way to escape from Death, to get out of the cycle of

existence and of showing this way to the others who are being swept into this vortex of life which is nothing but one continuous round of *dukkha*, ill and suffering.

At last the labourious and Herculean preparatory period of a Bodhisatta, the aspirant for Buddhahood comes to an end. The Bodhisatta attains supreme Self-Enlightenment for which he has striven over a period of countless world-cycles and becomes a Buddha, the Homage-Worthy, the Supremely Self-Enlightened.

The last Buddha, namely Gotama Buddha gained his Supreme Enlightenment on the night of the full moon of *Kason* (May), in the year 103 of the Great Era. On that evening, sitting cross-legged under the Bo tree, with concentrated mind, he had discovered, unaided by any person, the supreme knowledge which enabled him to uproot all the *kilesas*, mental impurities, which defile Beings and thus to escape from Death and the rounds of re-birth.

He started showing the Dhamma, the Truth he had discovered, to a group of five bhikkhus who had once attended on him. Two months after his discovery of the four Noble Truths, otherwise known as the Middle Way, he gave them his first sermon as a Buddha by teaching the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta, the great discourse on the Wheel of Dhamma. With this turning of the Wheel of Dhamma, began his long career of selfless service, for the welfare of all beings, which lasted for forty five years and terminated only with the delivery of the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta, his final act of compassion for men as well as devas.

They were the first five of the many hundreds of thousands of beings, Devas and Brahmas, who heard the discourse on the four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path. His Teaching and Instructions transformed the lives of men and women who listened and followed his guidance by steadfast practice. For them the Path opened up a life of purity and loving-kindness which led them to the Great Peace of Nibbāna, the end of all *dukkha*.

*Yasa*, the son of a millionaire was his sixth disciple who forsook the household life to follow his Way. His parents were the first lay disciples of the Buddha. *Yasa's* friends and other young men of high social class quickly followed him into homeless life and became ordained as members of the Order of Buddha Gotama. Soon he had gathered around him sixty disciples, all of noble families, whom he had instructed and guided and who had become established in the holy life and the knowledge of the Path, being liberated from all mental defilements. He assembled these accomplished disciples in whom the spotless, immaculate eye of the Dhamma had appeared, in the Pleasance of *Isipatana*, the deer Sanctuary in the township of *Vārāṇasī*. He roused and encouraged them with the talk on Dhamma and urged them:

"I am free from all bondage and shackles; You all are free from bondage and shackles too. Go now, *Bhikkhūs*, wander through the land as teachers out of compassion for the pain-ridden world, for the good of many, for the welfare and happiness of many, for the benefit of men and devas. Let not two of you go the same way. Wherever you go, teach the Dhamma which is glorious in the beginning, glorious in the middle, and glorious in the end, rich in meaning and words. Show them how to lead a holy life which is utterly perfect and pure. There are beings with dust in their eyes who will be lost through not hearing the Dhamma. When they hear, they will understand. I shall myself go to *Uruvela*, where there is the market town of *Senā* to keep the wheel of Dhamma in motion."

Thus began the life long mission of the Buddha Gotama sharing knowledge of the Truth, helping men and devas from the dukkha of existence and leading them along the Path of liberation, a labour of love for which he had trained and perfected himself over many aeons. He went first to *Uruvela*, then to *Rājagaha*, *Kapilavatthu*, *Vesālī*, *Sāvathī*, *Kosambī*. He visited the Kingdoms of *Magadha*, *Aṅga*,

*Kosala, Kāsi*, the confederancy of *Vajjians*, the lands of the *Kuru* clan and lived amongst the *Mallas*, the *Sakkas*, the *Koliyas* and *Bhaggunas*.

The sixty Arahats who were well accomplished and established in the Dhamma also went on their separate ways, roaming all over the lands of the Middle country, the North East part of India. They kept the wheel of Dhamma turning wherever they went spreading the Dhamma as taught by the Buddha and leading the Way as instructed by the Buddha.

*(b) The Dhamma*

The Buddha's injunction to his disciples was very simple and straight forward;

*"Abstain from all that is evil,*

*Develop and promote good deeds,*

*Purify the mind,*

*This is the Teaching of all Buddhas."*

He explained this simple aphorism in diverse ways, adapting his thoughts and words to the needs and stage of development of his audience. To the group of five bhikkhus, the wise sages who had attended upon him while he was searching the Truth and who were already established in good moral conduct with prolonged training in mental concentration, he delivered his first sermon announcing that he had discovered the Deathless four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path:

"Listen, Bhikkhus, the Deathless has been won. I shall instruct you; I shall teach you the Dhamma. By practising as you are instructed, you will, by realising it yourself here and now, through direct knowledge, achieve and remain in that supreme goal of the holy life, the Deathless for the sake of

which young men of noble families go forth from the homelife into homelessness."

The discourse on the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta which shows the Middle Way avoiding the two extreme practices was followed by the discourse on the Anatta Lakkhaṇa Sutta, doctrine of Soullessness, which is profound and forms the very core of the Buddha's Teaching. Then there were more discourses such as the Law of cause and effect, the Paṭiccasamuppāda, about which the Buddha told the Venerable Ānanda, his close personal attendant, that it was really very deep and profound and that because of lack of understanding and penetrative comprehension of this doctrine, the minds of beings were confused, bewildered and they were unable to extricate themselves from the realm of continuous suffering and escape from the round of existence.

To beings of superior and penetrating intellect such as the devas of the *Tāvatiṃsa* realm of the devas or the Venerable Sāriputta, one of his two chief disciples, the Buddha expounded the Abhidhamma, the Higher Teaching, which deals with ultimate realities, the analysis of mind and matter into their absolute components and which explains the system of causal relationships.

But the Buddha's teaching was meant not just for the bhikkhus who were members of the Order established by the Buddha and who practised the Dhamma full time, leading a life of retirement in remote places, cutting themselves off from the society. The tremendous accumulation of his pāramīs (efforts for self-perfection) was not to be expended on the bhikkhus only; it was handed out to ordinary lay men and women as well who lived at home with their families. The Noble Eightfold Path, which is the Buddhist way of life, is meant for all mankind as well as devas without distinction of any kind.



Within a short time after his Enlightenment, after he had turned the wheel of Dhamma and visited some royal cities such *Rājagaha* and *Kapilavatthu*, his fame had spread far and wide: "The Buddha is an Arahāt and he is worthy of the highest veneration. All beings pay their respect to the Buddha because Buddha is the supreme One who has extinguished all defilements, who has been perfectly self-enlightened in the Four Noble Truths, who is the incomparable teacher of men who need to be tamed, the teacher of devas and men, and who is endowed with glory and qualities of greatness.

"Knowing the world of devas, Māras, and Brahmās and the entire race of beings together with Samaṇas, Brāhmaṇas, kings and people through supernormal knowledge acquired by himself, he preaches for their welfare the Dhamma which is good in the beginning, good in the middle and good in the ending, clear and rich in meaning and words, showing them how to live a holy life which is utterly perfect and pure. Let us go to see such a person worthy of veneration."

Attracted by such report or accounts of the Buddha, people from all walks of life came to him, wherever he went or was residing to pay homage to him, to listen to his discourses, to be guided and led along the Path to deliverance. Rulers, kings, ministers, millionaires, merchants, all men of intelligence and affluence flocked to him to seek the knowledge of the Path. Men from lower stations in life saddled with the miseries and woes of existence also came in search of a way out their unhappy circumstances. People of different faiths, well versed in the Vedas, also approached the Buddha to contest with him in matters of faith and belief.

They also belonged to various age groups, ranging from wise Brahmins of ripe age and maturity to youths like Siṅgāla, and young boys of age eight or so as in the case of Buddha's own son, Rāhula, and Sopāka Sāmaṇera who became an Arahāt at the age of seven.

The exhortations given by the Buddha for the guidance and development of Sāmaṇera Rāhula were examples of Buddha's perfect wisdom and skill to fit the Dhamma to the needs and intellectual capacity of his listener.

The first exhortation given to Rāhula at the age of seven when he became a sāmaṇera, a novice, the Ambalaṭṭhika Sutta dealt with truthfulness and mindfulness which form indeed the foundation for building a character and for developing faculties of the mind. The Buddha made use of simple similes in the discourse to impress his teaching on the young mind of Rāhula.

The second exhortation given to Rāhula, Mahā Rāhulovāda Sutta, the Great Discourse of exhortation to Rāhula, when he was eighteen years old contained chiefly instructions on meditation, starting with mindfulness on respiration and leading on to Insight Meditation ( vipassanā meditation ). Rāhula was taught also the insubstantiality of the five groups of grasping and the importance of maintaining equanimity on all occasions.

The third discourse, the shorter discourse of exhortation, Cūla Rāhulovāda Sutta, given to Rāhula when he was in his twenty first year, after completing a full year after Higher Ordination, dealt with three characteristics of all conditioned existences ( impermanency, unsatisfactoriness, insubstantiality ). Contemplating on these characteristics, Rāhula finally attained Arahatta Phala, the highest goal of a recluse's life.

The Buddha's discourses also provide lessons of direct practical applications capable of immediate and fruitful use by people in all walks of life, irrespective of age or sex or status or race. In a great number of discourses addressed to the lay audience leading a household life, he laid stress on social obligations, family responsibilities and adequate discharge of duties to society founded on individual good conduct and moral purity. In Siṅgālovāda Sutta, for instance, he describes the obligations and responsibilities in the

relationships between parents and children, between teacher and pupil, between husband and wife, between friends, relatives and neighbours, between employers and employees. He explained how the laity should look after the essential needs of bhikkhus of the Order of the Sangha with love and respect and how bhikkhus in turn should satisfy the religious emotions and needs of those who are less advanced intellectually and spiritually by imparting knowledge of the Dhamma to them and helping them along the right Path leading them away from evil.

Generally, the Buddha gave his discourses in successive regular order, starting with discourse on charity (alms-giving) followed by discourse on moral conduct and discourses on the realm of celestial beings. Then he dealt with the dangers and depravity of extreme enjoyment of sensual pleasures and advantages accruing from abandonment of these sensual pleasures. When the Buddha perceived that his audience had become calm in mind, being now free from mental hindrances, readily receptive, gentle and pliant, exultant and filled with pious devotion, he launched upon the exposition of the Exalted Doctrine of the Buddhas, namely the doctrine of the Four Noble Truths which he had discovered and realised by himself. He then revealed to them the fact of dukkha, the cause of dukkha, the cessation of dukkha and the way leading to the cessation of dukkha.

*(c) The Sangha*

Then his listeners having seen the Truth in its surpassing beauty, expressed their profound gratitude to the Buddha for having shown them the way and declared, "We take refuge in the Buddha, We take refuge in the Dhamma, We take refuge in the Sangha". In this manner thousands of his audience became his devoted followers. And many hundreds of his audience with sufficient accumulation of pāramī (self perfection) "having understood the Truth, having attained the Truth, having found out the Truth, having penetrated the Truth, having overcome all doubt, having left uncertainty behind, having gained

perfect confidence and not dependent on others in the doctrine of the Buddha", requested the Buddha (like Koṇḍañña, for example ) for permission to lead the holy life under him and to be admitted into the Order of the Sangha (to be ordained as a bhikkhu).

The sixty Arahats who took to the road as exhorted by the Buddha also expounded the Dhamma in a similar manner and gathered round them thousands of disciples both lay and the bhikkhus who had declared to have taken refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. In the initial stages, each of these Arahats had to journey back to where the Buddha was, whenever some one requested him to be admitted to the Order. In order to relieve these Arahats of the burden of returning to him from long distances, the Buddha laid down a certain procedure by which a small congregation of ordained bhikkhus could admit qualified candidates into the order without any further reference to the Buddha.

In no time the communities of bhikkhus sprang up near towns and villagers where they had gained lay followers who would support them with their essential needs of food, clothing, shelter and medicine. They would in turn administer to the spiritual needs of their followers imparting to them the knowledge of the Dhamma. In course of time, the Buddhist monastery had become not only a spiritual centre but also a centre of learning and culture.

The Teachings of the Buddha described by him as the Dhamma spread in this way far and wide into the towns and villages of North East India. There, in the monasteries and in the homes of the lay people, the discourses and saying of the Buddha were learnt by rote, memorised and repeated day in and day out until they had learnt word perfect each discourse together with the explanations given by their teachers.

In the India of those times it was not customary to put in writing religious and philosophical teachings of the Sages. They were handed down from teacher to pupil, recorded most tenaciously in the

memory by continued repetition, word by word, sentence by sentence. In this manner their teachings were transmitted from generation to generation. The Buddha's teachings were also handed down orally in this manner uninterruptedly from one Arahant to another and his disciples until many centuries later they were written down on palm leaves in Sri Lanka during the reign of King Vaṭṭagāmaṇi. But even after the Buddha's teaching had become recorded in writing, the tradition of committing them to memory continued. It still survives in countries like Sri Lanka and Thailand and with even renewed vigour in Myanmar.

Spread over forty five years of his mission and imparted to various audiences at different places and times, the discourses of the Buddha covering a wide field of subjects with numerous similes, anecdotes and parables and made up of injunctions, exhortations and expositions formed into the body of his Teaching known as the Dhamma.

*(d) The Vinaya.*

In the initial stages of the Buddha's ministration, there was no special Teaching, nor injunction nor rules of training for the ordained bhikkhus of the Order. There was no need of such regulations for the bhikkhus of the early days.

Having come from high noble families they were of good personal behavior, good manners and well-versed in the social graces of those days. Being ordained by the Buddha by the "Come, Bhikkhu" formula of ordination, they were endowed with great insight or direct knowledge of the Dhamma and well established in the practice of the holy life. There was only a small number of them, living in isolation or small groups scattered among groves and forests. At one time, it was said, that the bhikkhus were all Ariyas, the most backward amongst them being a Stream-winner, one who has attained the first Path and its Fruition. There was therefore no need for rules to

regulate their outward behavior and no organizational problems had arisen yet in the order.

But as years went by the Sangha grew in strength with increasing number of people coming into the fold of the Buddha's teaching. Although checked by certain regulations for admission to the Order, it was inevitable that undesirable elements not having the purest of motives but attracted only by the fame and gains of bhikkhus began to creep into the order. It was the Venerable Sāriputta who first felt uneasy about the danger of pollution and corruption that might arise amongst the Sangha as a result of its expanding membership. He urged the Buddha to start laying (setting) down or device a rule of training for the bhikkhus so that the life of purity may last long and endure. But the Buddha had no intention of formulating any rule unless the need had arisen for it. He said, 'Wait, Sāriputta; wait Sāriputta. The Tathāgata will know the right time for it. The Tathāgata does not make known the training rules for the disciples and appoint (lay down) the Pātimokkha until some events causing pollution amongst the Sangha appear". But some twenty years after the founding of the Order, it became necessary to begin establishing rules of training and conduct for the bhikkhus.

These rules which are known as Vinaya rules of discipline were made for the regulation of the outward conduct of disciples who had been ordained as bhikkhus and bhikkhunis of the Order. The Buddha initiated these rules not so much to restrain the personal liberties of the bhikkhus as to prevent censure and disgrace falling on the community of bhikkhus through misdemeanour and misconduct on the part of unruly and corrupt bhikkhus who had entered the Order with ulterior motives.

During the initial period when the Sangha remained more or less pure and free of serious faults, only minor rules were established from time to time as need arose. Over the years however there grew to be sizeable number of rulings on behaviour as more and more

cases of bad moral conduct and depraved character were brought to the notice of the Buddha.

From the earliest days the Buddha had made it a rule that novices should undergo a period of probation and work under a preceptor who could instruct and guide him. Then the Buddha instituted the Uposattha day as requested by King Pasenadi, one of his illustrious lay disciples. Uposatha day observance was an ancient custom, being followed by other sects, of teaching the dhamma to the lay people who had gathered together on that day. The Buddha permitted his bhikkhus to meet together on the fourteenth or fifteenth and the eighth days of the (lunar) half month. Lay men and women would come to the monastery on those days both to meditate and to listen to the Dhamma-talk. And the bhikkhus were to remind themselves of the need of purity of holy living, of loving-kindness towards all beings, of truthfulness and not taking what is not given to them and of decorous manners by an act of observance (on the full moon and new moon days) of Uposathakamma i.e., a recital of Pātimokkha which was a collection of as many of the rules of training as had been established by that time. All the bhikkhus of a particular district (whose boundaries had been previously agreed upon among the bhikkhus) would meet together for this purpose. The assembly would not be complete if so much as one were absent. By this means, purity of holy life was maintained amongst the community of bhikkhus.

There was another important rule -- observance of the *vassa*, which required all bhikkhus not to travel during the rainy season but to remain in one place only. After the rains, before their departure, the bhikkhus met in concourse and admitted any offence they might have been suspected of committing. This was another opportunity of promoting concord and harmony amongst the Sanghas and of keeping their holy life pure, unsullied.

These were the few main rules that were laid down by the Buddha in the earlier period of his ministrations. As offences were committed by miscreants from amongst the growing members of the bhikkhus, other

rules were made from time to time. Thus as rule added to rule, and precept to precept, Vinaya, together with expositions on each rule, developed into a large body of disciplinary. They formed an important sector of the Buddha's Teachings, which came to be described then as *Dhamma and Vinaya*.

In this manner there was a gradual accumulation of the rules of training during the life time of the Buddha. At that time these rules were not yet codified and classified as we find them to - day and according to the Commentary, numbered only one hundred and fifty. These training rules were designated as teachings and discourses of the Buddha. As it is truly said, Vinaya is the life of the Buddha's Teachings.

*(e) The two duties of the Bhikkhus*

Those who joined the Order, gave up everything, their homes, pleasures of the world, and sensual delights, so that they could walk along the Path unencumbered towards Peace and Nibbāna and could give the greatest of gift, the gift of Dhamma to the lay people who in turn supported them with the means of living. It was incumbent upon each bhikkhu to undertake one of the two duties once he had given up the household life, put on the yellow robe and entered the order of the Buddha - namely *ganthadhura*, the duty of study and *vipassanādhura*, the duty of meditation for attainment of the Path and Fruition.

Newly ordained bhikkhus stayed with their *Upajjhāya* and *Ācariyas* in the monasteries learning the Dhamma and Vinaya, the Dhamma being made up of the discourses, exhortations made by the Buddha over the years and Vinaya being injunctions, training rules and precepts laid down by him till the time of his passing away.

Old Bhikkhus, having completed their study of the basic teachings and having been trained in the practice of meditation usually removed themselves from the crowded monastery, noisy with talks



and recitations on Dhamma and repaired to quiet groves and the forest glades to take up meditation.

*(f) Prefect dispensation*

Within a short time, " the dispensation of the Buddha had fully developed, had become prosperous, widespread, and well known and had been well proclaimed in the human as well as deva world and had reached the foremost place with regard to fame, gain and followers."

The Buddha himself had described his own Teaching in these words:

"Cunda, if someone wishes to describe a Teaching as Perfect in every sense, complete in every detail, which requires nothing to add to or subtract from, completely and well taught, well explained, then he can describe only this Teaching of mine as perfect in every sense, complete in every detail.

Therefore, Cunda, there is this Dhamma, I have perceived through Superknowledge, Ommiscience, which I have taught you. All of you, my disciples, should come together, assemble in congregation and recite together these Dhammas, checking and comparing the meaning with the meaning, points on grammar with points on grammar, in order that this Teaching endures and lasts long."

It is in compliance with these injunctions of the Buddha, that his Teachings were taught to the lay men and women as well as Sangha (in the monasteries) who committed the discourses and the disciplinary rules to memory and passed them on to the ensuing generations.

(g) *Classification and Codification  
of Dhamma and Vinaya*

Even during the life time of the Buddha, classification of the Dhamma in accordance with the length of the discourses, the subject matter they dealt with, the kind of audience they were meant for etc., must have been carried out. Terms like *Dhammakathika*, one who preaches the Dhamma; *Dīghabhāṇaka*, One who recites the long discourses, *Vinayadhara*, one who has memorized the Vinaya etc., suggest that even in those early days attempts had already been made to systematize the Buddha's Teachings, co-ordinate and correlate the numerous Teachings of the Buddha by classifying them and arranging them in some form of system. Such systematization was obviously inevitable if only to facilitate memorization since only verbal transmission was employed to pass on the Teaching from the Master to the people.

Although there is evidence that the art of writing was definitely known and well established during the Buddha's time, no scriptures as such were then put down in writing and recorded in any form of script. According to custom, the teaching of each spiritual teacher was regarded as sacred and imparted only to those who had shown genuine interest in the Teaching by undergoing a long period of studentship. Teachers of religion, unlike other educationists of the day who used written treatises for vocational or literary education, chose only this method of personal communication and popular preachings. The method of oral transmission played a vital part in religious Teachings at the monasteries where not only the resident monks got their education but also religious discourses were given to the laity.

The teachers taught their pupils not just to remember the words and lines of the discourses of the Buddha; the students had explained to them the meaning of words, phrases, and sentences in the discourse, together with the method of learning it by rote and the proper manner

of its recital. In Mahāvagga is found an account of how Sāmanera Sona, the novice under Uppajjhāya Mahākaccāna recited, on the injunction of the Buddha, the whole Aṭṭhakavaggika section of the Vinaya, in accordance with the accepted norm of rhythm and tune for proper recitation. He was praised by the Buddha for his good performance, saying that his manner of recital testified to the fact that he remembered and understood the true meaning of 'Aṭṭhakavaggika'.

That, from the earliest days, some form of classification and systematization of the Teachings had taken shape already was apparent from Textual references such as the Vinaya accounts of a clear cut distinction and division of the Teachings into Sutta, Vinaya and Dhamma and the experts specializing in one particular branch of scripture being given separate seats and beds etc. But it was only at the time of the convening of the First Council that formal compilation of the Teachings as a whole and arrangements into separate divisions took place.

## II The Pali Cononical Book The Three Piṭakas or Baskets

### ( a ) *The First Great Council*

As stated above, there was no written record of the Dhamma and Vinaya left by the Buddha when he passed away: whatever he had bequeathed to humanity in the way of his teaching was stored up in the extraordinary memory of his distinguished disciples, the accomplished Ones. After the Mahāparinibbāna of the Buddha, these great disciples decided to bring together all the Teachings, retained separately and in specialized sections in the memory of the talented experts by reciting them all together. Besides this general consideration there was also an immediate reason for the need to collect and preserve the Teaching as a whole in its pristine purity.

On his way to Kusinārā, after hearing of the Buddha's passing away, the great disciple Ven. Mahākassapa met a certain elderly bhikkhu

named Subhadda who had gone forth only in his old age. Seeing some members of the community weeping miserably at the thought of the Buddha's demise, this old Subhadda said to them in impatience: "Enough, friends, do not weep, do not lament. We are well rid of the Great Samāṇa who always said: " This is allowable, this is not allowable." But now we will be able to do as we please and we won't do what we don't like." When he heard this Ven. Mahā Kassapa was greatly alarmed, because he saw at once in this utterance an immediate danger to the Teaching. Bhikkhu Subhadda was attacking the very basis of Vinaya, the disciplinary rule, without which the Dhamma, the Teaching would soon cease to exist.

As soon as the cremation was over, he assembled the bhikkhus and urged that a Council be called to collect and recite together the words of the Teacher. He said, " Come friends, let us recite together both the Dhamma and Vinaya, the Doctrine and Discipline before what is not the Dhamma flourishes and the Dhamma is disregarded; before what is not the Discipline flourishes and the Discipline is disregarded; before these who teach what is not the Dhamma, and what is not the Discipline become powerful and those who teach the Dhamma and Vinaya become powerless."

The bhikkhus consented to his proposal and requested him to organize the Council after selecting 500 Arahats to form the Convocation. The elected members of the Sanghas consisting of 499 Arahats and the Ven. Ānanda who had not yet become an Arahat, then met in Rājagaha for the vassa period of the Rains, during which the Convocation was held.

The first month of their stay in Rājagaha was devoted to repair of the delapidated monastic buildings. King Ajātasattu, by then an ardent devotee, lent every support to the bhikkhus in their preparations to make the *Sattapāṇi Cave* on the side of the mountain *Vebhāra*, the venue for the Convocation of the elders.

At last the repairs and preparations were over. The time drew nearer for the assembly to meet in the Great Sattapāṇi Cave. Ānanda spent much of the night before ( the day of ) the meeting in contemplating of the body. He was striving to attain the Arahatsip, without which it would not be proper for him to join the company of the Arahats. Just as dawn approached for the great day, the Venerable Ānanda laid himself down on the bed, despaired of his failure to achieve Arahatsip. But before his head touched the pillow and as his feet left the ground, during that short interval of time, his mind was released from all moral intoxicants with no further clinging. The Ven. Ānanda went to take part in the proceedings of the Convocation as a full-fledged Arahats like the rest of the members.

The Venerable Mahākassapa, acting as the President, opened the Convocation by addressing the elders: " Friends, what shall we recite first, the Dhamma or the Vinaya ?" The elders replied, " Venerable Mahākassapa, the Vinaya is the very life of the dispensation of our Master, the Buddha; so long as the Vinaya endures, the Dispensation endures; therefore let us recite the Vinaya first. "

With the unanimous consent of the assembled bhikkhus, the Venerable Upāli was placed in charge of reciting the Vinaya, because while the Buddha was still living, he considered the Venerable Upāli as being the most pre-eminent in matters connected with the learning of Vinaya. He had said, " Bhikkhus, Upāli is the most pre-eminent amongst my bhikkhus disciples in the retention of Vinaya."

The Venerable Mahākassapa seated himself in the president's seat and questioned the Ven. Upāli on the Vinaya:

'Friend Upāli, where did the Buddha lay down ( declare ) the first Defeat, the first Pārājika ?'

' At Vesāli, Sir'

' On whose account ?'

‘ On account of Sudinna, son of Kalandaka.’

‘ In connection with what subject ?’

‘ In connection with Sexual Intercourse.’

Then the Ven. Mahākassapa questioned the Ven: Upāli on the subject of the first Pārājika, the occasion, the person, the rule, the corollaries, on what constitutes an offence and what does not. In the same way, he interrogated him about the other three Pārājikas -- the second on stealing, the third on killing of human beings, and the fourth on making false claims to spiritual attainments. Ven. Upāli explained whatever was asked of him.

Then having classified these four Pārājikas under the Chapter on the Pārājika, the Convocation established the thirteen Saṅghādisesa rules, the two rules called the Aniyata, the thirty rules called Nissaggiyapācittiya, the ninety - two rules called the Pācittiya, the four rules called the Paṭidesanīya, the seventy five rules called the Sekhiya, and the seven rules for the settlements of questions that have arisen Adhikaraṇasamatha."

Having thus classified these rules for the Bhikkhus they proceeded to establish rules for the Bhikkhunis. They finally established the Khandhaka and the Parivāra rules. Thus was compiled the Vinaya Piṭaka which consists of the two Vibhaṅgas - Bhikkhuvibhaṅga and Bhikkhunī vibhaṅga, the Khandhaka and Parivāra.

Whatever the Ven. Mahākassapa asked, Ven. Upāli had explained. At the conclusion of the explanation of the questions, the 500 Arahats recited together the Vinaya Piṭaka as a whole according to the exact way in which the compilation had been fixed.

Having recited the Vinaya, the Ven. Mahākassapa next paid his attention to the Dhamma. The Congregation approved of his proposal to put the Ven. Ānanda in charge of the reciting of the

Dhamma. Then the Ven. Mahākassapa questioned the Ven. Ānanda on the Dhamma: " Friend Ānanda, where was the Brahmajāla sutta preached?"

" Venerable Sir, at the King's mansion at Amblatthika between Rājagaha and Nālanda."

" On account of whom ?"

" On account of Suppiya, the wandering ascetic and the brahman youth Brahmadata."

" On what subject ?"

" On praise and blame ?"

In this manner, the Venerable Mahākassapa interrogated Ānanda about the source of the Brahmajāla discourse, the occasions and the persons concerned. After that he interrogated him about the Samannaphala discourse in the same way. In this manner he interrogated Ānanda on all the appropriate discourses in all five Nikāyas, the main collection of the Buddha's Teaching.

The Ven. Mahākassapa brought the proceedings of the Congregation to an end with the resolution: " Friends, let the assembled bhikkhus hear me. If it is agreeable to the assembly, let not what is undeclared in the Teaching be declared, and let not what is declared be deleted. Let the community of bhikkhus remain devoted to the training rules according as they have been declared." The resolution was unanimously passed by the Sangha and the Convocation terminated.

All that was compiled at this First Council constituted the Buddha's words or Teaching. A unique system of classification was employed by the Canonical Compilers to reduce the immense accumulation of the Buddha's words into manageable divisions or sections for easy memorization and study.

All forms of Buddha's Teaching fall into a single category - that of having a uniform taste. Throughout the interval of forty - five years from the time of realizing perfect enlightenment until he passed away, whatever the Buddha had said as instruction, injunction, or teaching to devas and men, has only one taste, one flavour that of emancipation.

It is twofold being made up of two components: - the Dhamma and the Vinaya. Disciplinary rules formulated and laid down for regulating the outward behaviour of ordained disciples form the Vinaya. The rest of the words of Buddha was found in the Dhamma.

It is threefold according to the first, intermediate and last words. According to tradition the first word, that came to Buddha ( although not spoken aloud ) were:

" For many births have I run my course in this round of existence, seeking in vain, the builder of the house; painful in incessant birth.

You are now seen, O builder of the house, you shall not build the house again. All your beams are broken, all your rafters shattered. My mind has reached Nibbāna, and the end of all craving."

According to another tradition, the first word, actually spoken aloud were those in the first of the three stanzas beginning, " When things become manifest to the ardent, meditating Brahman, then all doubts fade away since he understands that have a cause", this being the stanza of joyous utterance on the attainment of Omniscience after contemplating on the law of Causality.

The last statement made by the Buddha before his parinibbāna were " Now, bhikkhus, I exhort you; all compounded things are subject to decay. Apply yourselves diligently."



What was said during the interval between the first and last statements constitute the intermediate words of the Buddha. Thus the division of the Buddha's Teaching is threefold according to the first, intermediate and the last words.

It is threefold also according to the Piṭakas. Piṭaka is a term used with reference to learning and a receptacle such as a vessel or a basket. All teachings that were compiled and rehearsed -(recited) at the Council were sorted out and placed in three separate baskets, namely the Vinaya Piṭaka, the Discipline basket in which Vinaya learning was kept; the Sutta Piṭaka, ( The Discourse or Sermon basket )the Sutta learning was kept and the Abhidhamma Piṭaka (The Higher Teaching Basket) in which the Abhidhamma learning was kept. The Teachings kept handily in such separate baskets are then handed on from generation to generation till the present time.

The Vinaya Piṭaka incorporates many injunctions of the Buddha on modes of practices and restraints on both bodily and verbal acts; prohibiting physical and verbal transgressions. They embody the authoritative injunctions of the Buddha, laying down the discipline on transgression, the various categories of restraints and admonitions in accordance with the nature of offence.

Vinaya Piṭaka is made up of five books; Sutta Vibhaṅga

Parājika Pali ...Major Offences ( 1 ) Bhikkhu Vibhaṅga

Pācittiya Pali...Minor Offences ( 2 ) Bhikkhunī Vibhaṅga

Mahāvagga Pali...Greater Section( 3 ) Khandaka

Cūlavagga Pali...Shorter Section( 4 ) Khandaka

Parivāra Pali ...Shorter Section( 5 ) Epitome of the Vinaya

The Sutta Piṭaka is made up of all the discourses in their entirety delivered by the Buddha on various occasions. ( There are also a few

discourses delivered by some of his distinguished disciples such as the Venerable Sāriputta, Moggallāna, Ananda etc ). The sermons which form the Sutta Piṭaka were expounded to suit different occasion or various persons with different temperaments. Although the sermons were mostly intended for the benefit of the Bhikkhus and dealt with the practice of the holy life and with the exposition of the Teaching, there are also several other discourses which deal with the material and moral progress of his lay disciples.

Sutta Piṭaka points out the meaning of the Buddha's sermons, expresses them clearly, protects and guards them well. Just like a thread which serves as a plumb-line to guide the carpenters; just like a thread which protects flowers from being scattered or dispersed when strung together by it, likewise by means of Suttas, the meaning of the Teaching may be brought out clearly, and grasped and understood correctly and given perfect protection from being misconstrued. The Sutta Piṭaka is further divided into five collections known as Nikāyas, as will be explained in the following paragraphs.

The Abhidhamma Piṭaka forms an important and interesting basket of learning containing as it does the abstract and philosophical aspects of Buddha's Teaching, profound and deep in contrast to the more comprehensible and simpler discourses of the Sutta Piṭaka. Whereas Sutta Piṭaka touches on the conventional teaching (vohāradesanā), Abhidhamma Piṭaka deals with ultimate Truths, the exposition of the ultimate Truths. The Abhidhamma investigates mind and matter, the component constituents of a so-called being the relationship between mind and matter and helps to understand things as they truly are. A Philosophy and an ethical system have been developed from these investigations. The Abhidhamma Piṭaka consists of seven books.

1. Dhammasaṅgani ... ( Classification of Dhamma )
2. Vibhaṅga ( The Book of Divisions )
3. Kathā Vatthu ( Points of Controversy )

4. Puggala Paññatti ( Discription of Individuals )
5. Dhātu Kathā ( Discussions on elements )
6. Yamaka ( The Book of pairs )
7. Paṭṭhāna ( The Book of Realations )

The Teaching is fivefold according to the divisions into five separate collections called Nikāyas or Āgama. They are Dīgha Nikāya, Majjhima Nikāya, Saṃyutta Nikāya, Aṅguttara Nikāya and Khuddaka Nikāya.

Dīgha Nikāya is the collection in which long discourses are placed together. There are thirty-four long suttas commencing with Brahmajāla Sutta arranged in three vaggas ( groups ).

Majjhima Nikāya is made up of 152 suttas of medium length commencing with the Mūlapariyāya Sutta and arranged in fifteen vaggas.

Saṃyutta Nikāya is the collection of 7762 Suttas commencing with Oghatarāṇa Sutta. They are classified according to Kindred subject-matter such as Devatā Saṃyutta and Bojjhaṅga Saṃyutta etc. arranged in five vaggas.

Aṅguttara Nikāya consists of 9557 Suttas, generally of short lengths, arranged into II divisions ( sections ) known as Nipātas. The first Nipāta deals with subject matter which can be considered only from a single point of view, the second Nipāta from two angles. In this way all are systematically arranged, the IIth Nipāta containing matters which can be expounded in eleven different ways.

Khuddaka Nikāya is made up with the rest of Buddha's word, including the entire Vinaya Piṭaka ( as enumerated above ), the Abhidhamma Piṭaka ( explained later ) and miscellaneous collection

of 15 separate divisions of discourses. Thus it is fivefold according to division into Nikāyas.

The teaching is ninefold when the Canon is divided into nine divisions according to form and style.

They are

1. Sutta - Discourses such as Maṅgala Sutta, Ratana Sutta etc. in plain prose.
2. Geyya - Discourses interspersed with many verses such as these in Saḥayātana Samyutta.
3. Veyyākaraṇa - Teachings without any verses such as Abhidamma Piṭaka.
4. Gathā - Teachings with verses only such as Dhammapada, Thera gathā, Therī gathā.
5. Udāna - Joyful utterances in 28 discourses such as ' Anekajāti Saṃsāraṃ '
6. Itivuttaka - 118 discourses beginning with the expression 'Thus said the Bhagavā'.
7. Jātaka - 550 birth stories.
8. Abbhuta Dhamma - Discourses describing the marvellous attributes of such persons as Ānanda etc.
9. Vedalla - Discourses with questions and answers such as Cūḷa, Mahā Vedalla Sutta, Sammaditthi Sutta.

The teaching is eighty thousandfold when considered in terms of units of Dhamma - Dhammakkhandhā-individual sections or units. Each category of Dhamma, in the entire Teaching, forms a separate

unit of the Dhamma. Thus it has 84,000 divisions according to the Units of the Dhamma.

*(b) The Second Great Council*

A hundred years after the Parinibbāna of the Bhagavā, a second Council was held at Vesāli. At that Council, the sacred Canon was once again recited for 8 months and its Authenticity re-affirmed by seven hundred Arahats endowed with Paṭi Sambhidā Nāna under the presidenship of Ven. Sabbakāmi Mahā Thera. King Kālāsoka was the chief lay supporter.

The Council was necessitated by a dispute which arose in connection with ten points of the Vinaya. Some Vajjī bhikkhus wanted to modify certain rules of monastic discipline to suit their lax way of living. For example they wanted to handle and possess money, to carry salt in a horn for improving the taste of their food, to drink fermented drinks and introduce certain indulgences which would nullify the basis of the holy life to safeguard which the Buddha had laid down the Vinaya rules.

Ven. Yasa, one of the early monks ordained by the Buddha (and now 165 years of age), seeing the decline among some of the Vajjī monks, created a public opinion against their degenerate practices and eventually with the support of the Sangha and the King, convened a Council and settled once and for all, questions of discipline of the Order.

*(c) The Third Council*

250 years after the Parinibbāna of the Buddha, the Third Council was held under the patronage of the Great Buddhist Emperor Asoka at Pāṭiliputta (Patna) in which one thousand Arahats endowed with supernormal attainments recited the entire Teaching of the Buddha for nine months. Ven: Moggaliputta Tissa Thera, the Emperor Asoka's preceptor, presided over the proceeding.

The Third Great Council was called because of the impurity that had crept into the Sangha as a result of a large number of persons falsely donning the yellow robe of a bhikkhu, to acquire the gains and honours lavishly offered by the Emperor and his people.

Their illegal entry into the Sangha with such motives had not only debased the holy life but also occasioned the introduction of many pernicious, heretical views into the Dhamma, negating the very basis of the pure teaching. The Ven. Moggliputta Tissa compiled a treatise entitled Kathāvatthu in order to counteract and refute the heretical views of perverted Bhikkhus.

During the Council proceedings, as part of an effort to purify the Teaching as well as the Order, it is recorded that sixty thousand false bhikkhus were disrobed and ordered to go back to lay life. One thousand selected Arahats recited the Tipiṭaka under various heads such as Sutta, Vinaya, Abhidhamma, Nikāyas, Anga etc. The Ven. Moggliputta Tissa's Treatise, the Kathāvatthu was also recited then and adopted as part of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka.

The distinguishing feature of this Third Council was that it was not only successful in purifying the Dhamma, eliminating bad elements out of Order, but also in spreading the Dhamma far and wide, both in and out of India. Under the patronage of Ven. Moggliputta Tissa, the Emperor Asoka sent messengers of Dhamma (Dhamnadūtas) abroad, who promoted the cause of the Teachings of the Buddha, at the same time contributing to the development of civilization in wide regions of the earth and amongst many races. This noble undertaking is a unique one in the history of the World. It was through efforts of such messengers of Dhamma that Buddha's Teaching came to be embraced and established in countries like Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand etc.

(d) *The Fourth Great Council*

It was the Ven. Mahinda, the son of the Emperor Asoka, who headed the team of Dhammadhūtas to the country of Sri Lanka. Through their efforts, actively supported by successive kings, the Buddha became firmly rooted in the soil of that island country. Ven. Mahinda and his colleagues, experts in various divisions of the Tipiṭaka, caused the spread of Dhamma by teaching them the Tipiṭaka in all its divisions and sections. The long line of Arahāt teachers handed down the canon in the original form by oral tradition to their pupils and pupils' pupils. In this manner Buddha's Teaching became established and flourished in Sri Lanka. But a hundred and twenty years after Ven. Mahinda's original missionary endeavours, the invasion of Sri Lanka by the Chola rulers of Southern India brought in its trail, famine and pestilence which forced the Sangha to flee from the royal city of *Anurādhapura* and retire into the solitude of the *Kandyān* hills. Sensing the danger that would come to the Buddha *Sāsana* and the practising bhikkhus through the persecutions and turmoils of war, five hundred Arahats who had preserved intact the oral tradition of Tipiṭaka brought to the country by Mahinda and his companions, gathered in a convocation in a remote mountain cave called *Alu Lena*, presided over by the Ven. Rakkhita Thera. The Assembled Arahats decided to commit to writing the sacred Pali Canon on palm leaves. King *Vatṭagāmaṇi Abhaya* rendered his assistance to implement this far reaching decision. Thus it was that the sacred Teachings, Tipiṭaka and their commentaries, preserved in their original by a long line of teacher - pupil tradition were recited in the *Alu Lena Cave* by 500 assembled Arahats and committed to writing for the first time. The scripts on palm leaves, made under the direct supervision of the King's Chief Ministers, were checked and rechecked by the Congregation before they were passed as authentic records of the original Pali Canon and its commentaries. This original version had been preserved till our time with utmost care by successive generations of Kings and Sangha *Nayāka* Theras.

*(e) Fifth and Sixth Saṅgāyanā*

In 1871, King Mindon of Myanmar convened the Fifth Synod in which two thousand and four hundred distinguished Theras of the country gathered, in the capital city of Myanmar, Mandalay, and recited the Sacred Canon (and the Commentaries) in its entirety which were then inscribed on seven hundred and twenty nine slabs of marble (Dakkhināyāma Payagyi Sayadaw Jāgarābhīdhaja Thera and Chibanni Sayadaw, Mahā Thera of Myinwuntaik presided at the meeting.) Each of these slabs is separately housed in a small pandal of brick and meticulously cared for to this day.

In May 1954, in commemoration of the 2500th Buddha Jayanti, the Mahā Sangha of distinguished bhikkhus from the various Buddhist countries of Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Laos and also from other countries such as China, Japan, India, Nepal and Pakistan congregated in Yangon to hold the Sixth Great Buddhist Council. The Myanmar Government played the major role in organising this Saṅgāyanā which resulted in the latest recension of the Tipiṭaka, its Commentaries and Sub-Commentaries.

2473 bhikkhus, Theras of Myanmar and 144 elder Theras from other Theravāda countries participated in the recitation which started on the 17th May, 1954 and came to a successful conclusion on the full moon of Kason May 24, 1956, the 2500 th Buddha Jayanti.

To summarize, the First Saṅgāyanā authoritatively collated the Pali Canon and classified them into well - ordered divisions and sections and groups in order to preserve the purity of the Buddha's Original Teachings. In the Second Saṅgāyanā the controversial issues regarding monastic discipline were firmly resolved in accordance with the injunction of Vinaya Piṭaka and the entire Pali Canon was recited. In the Third Saṅgāyanā all heretical views, metaphysical interpolations and speculations that had begun to spring up were weeded out and the purity of Buddha's Doctrine maintained. The Fourth Saṅgāyanā committed the Buddha's Teachings to writing for



the first time, thus laying a strong foundation for a flourishing canonical Pali literature and making it enduring.

The Fifth and the Sixth Saṅgāyanā brought together the leaders of the Theravāda Buddhists of the various Buddhist countries who conjointly brought out the latest recension of the Tipiṭaka, its Commentaries and Sub - Commentaries (of modern time).

### *Various Classifications*

Buddha's Teachings' as collated and classified by the Theras of the Six Saṅgāyanās may be summarized as consisting of:

1. Pariyatti Sāsanā - Discourses, teachings.
2. Paṭipatti Sāsanā - Actual methods of Practice of the Teachings.
3. Paṭivedha Sāsanā - Result thereof. Attainment of Knowledge of Four Truths and finally Nibbāna.

Pariyatti Sāsanā from which originated the Pali Canon has been classified as described above into :-

- 1.....  
single fold, uniform in its entirety with regard to flavour - having only one taste of emancipation.
- 2.....  
twofold being made up of two components: Dhamma and Vinaya.
- 3.....  
threefold, in terms of words uttered by the Buddha at different times: First word, Intermediate word, Last words.

4.....

three fold, in terms of Piṭakas:  
Sutta, Vinaya, Abhidhamma.

5.....

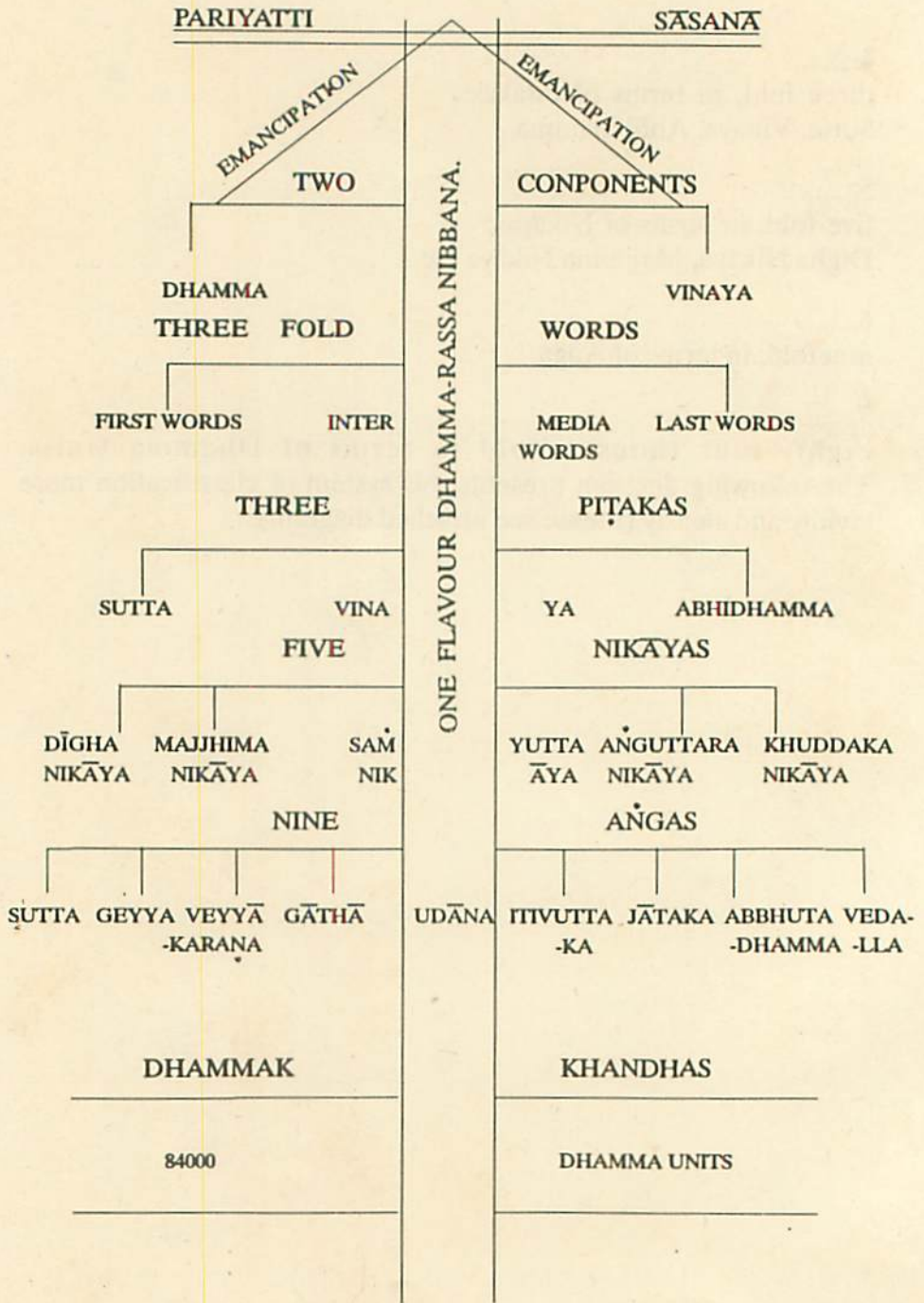
five fold, in terms of Nikāyas:  
Dīgha Nikāya, Majjhima Nikāya etc.

6.....

ninefold, in terms of Aṅga.

7.....

eighty-four thousandfold in terms of Dhamma Units.  
The following diagram presents this system of classification more vividly and clearly (Please see attached diagram).



The Printed Books published in accordance with the latest Sixth Synod recensions are made up as follow:

**52 Treatises of Piṭaka Cannon.**

	Treaties		Printed Volumes
1. Dīgha Nikāya	3	-	3
2. Majjha Nikāya	3	-	3
3. Saṃyutta Nikāya	5	-	3
4. Aṅgutta Nikāya	11	-	3
5. Khuddaka Nikāya			
(a) Vinaya 5 treaties 5 books			
(b) Abhidhamma 7 treaties 12 books	30	-	28
(c) Sutta 18 treaties 11 books			
	52	-	40



## PAGODAS AND WHAT THEY MEAN TO BUDDHISTS

Daw Khin Myo Chit

### Pagodas: romance and legend

It all began, long before I was old enough to understand that stupas and pagodas symbolize the great wisdom and compassion of the Buddha to whom we owe our way of life, our philosophy, our culture and above all, our fortitude that helps us to survive all trials that life has to offer.

My earliest memories are of the green wooded hills rising out of the wide flowing river Irrawaddy. On every hill top I saw one lone pagoda or a group of threes and fours, some gilded, others whitewashed and gleaming. Since I had many opportunities to make trips up and down the river, pagodas on hill tops remain one of my happiest recollections of childhood.

Of the first things I learned about pagodas nothing had to do with the intellectual side of Buddhism but all was full of colour and romance. Once, while we were crossing the river from *Mandalay* to *Sagaing* in a small flat-bottomed boat-it was long before the beautiful *Ava* Bridge was built- we headed towards the long dark range of thickly wooded hills, crested with shining pagodas, and the tinkling bells from their *hti*, as the fretted wrought iron spires on top of the pagodas are called, chimed welcome to us. Colonnaded stair-ways zig-zagged through the flowering foliage. They looked so inviting that I could hardly wait to run up the steps and reach the pagodas up there.

### Why the pagoda was guarded: the story

It was then that my grandfather drew my attention to the twin pagodas on the high rocky cliff, on the *Mandalay* side, "Raise your hands in prayer", grandfather said, "and make a wish, for any wish made at these pagodas will be granted." I did as I was told, and made a wish that guavas and mangoes in my grandfather's orchard might be ripe and sweet, ready for eating.

Grandfather smiled and said: "Well done my child, You know, in the days of the ancient Burmese kings, these pagodas were heavily guarded."

Naturally, I asked why, and as usual this led to my grandfather telling a story which runs like this:

Once a prince, feeling ill-used by his elder brother the reigning king, planned a revolt. He came to the twin pagodas and made an offering of robes to the Buddha image there. When he did so, the image suddenly moved and stretched out its hands to receive the gift. Later the prince won the struggle and became king. One of the first things he did on ascending the throne was to put guards round the pagoda because he did not want anyone else to go there and make a wish to dethrone him.

#### **Pagodas in War**

If, at one time, these same pagodas were involved in war, they were at another time instrumental in bringing peace. It was on the precincts of the same pagoda that *Rajadirit*, the Mon king who had marched up there with his invading forces, decided to go home in peace. *Rajadirit* was within a few minutes march to Ava, the Burmese capital, and he was just waiting for zero hour to strike. From the pagoda platform, the king took a view of the beautiful land he was going to conquer; the range of hills skirted with sand banks rested on the river; high on the hills were spired pagodas gleaming in the pale moon-light; there was no sound but the tinkling of bells from pagoda spires. It was a pity that the same sweet, solemn air would be filled with fierce war cries, and the soft silvery sands would be stained with blood and strewn with the slain, the noblest and the bravest of the country's people. Thus, when the emissaries from the Burmese king came, *Rajadirit* accepted the peace terms and went home. Before he departed, he built a rest house on the hill, where the twin pagodas now stand as a gift to pilgrims and devotees, a Buddhist way of showing loving kindness.

### Good deeds at the pagodas

The earliest lessons I ever had on Buddhism were from the visits to pagodas. Here, in front of the Buddha image, I first learned to recite: "I take refuge in the Buddha; I take refuge in His Teachings; I take refuge in the Sangha, His order of the Yellow Robe". And as I wandered on the precincts of pagodas, I could not help but notice the sculptures and paintings. Of course, I asked questions. All the works of art depict scenes from the Buddha's life and birth-stories, called the Jātakas. With no comic strips to read in those days, visits to pagodas with my grandfather telling stories were treats. I did not realize the principles of the Buddha's teachings were instilled into my young mind then and there. They were given in almost imperceptible doses in the stories and parables depicted in paintings and sculpture round the pagodas.

### Religious lessons

As I helped my grandparents sweep the pagoda grounds, I knew I was doing a meritorious deed that would help me to go up the ladder of life, in the unending round of rebirth. The round of rebirth meant to me that what I did in this present life would determine what I would become and I felt hopeful. Never mind, if I were a plain girl with nondescript looks; no use moaning over it; I might be reborn a statuesque beauty, if I did deeds of merit like helping older people sweep the pagoda grounds, and offering flowers and candles to the memory of the Buddha there. I was taught to be responsible for what I would be in the future. This sense of responsibility for using the present moment of life the right way lasted all through my life, and the same has sustained me in times of stress; after all, I, no one but I, myself, would have to answer for my own actions, good or bad. The past is past, it is my privilege and responsibility to make the best of the present and the future will be taken care of. This after all, is the basis of Buddhism.

### **Recreation, education and refuge**

So much for childhood impressions. We do not outgrow the pagodas, even as the years creep upon us; pagodas remain very much an integral part of our life. As teenagers we wallow in songs and poems where lovers sing of the troth plighted at "the golden pagoda on the hill"; and we shed tears over the stories of broken-hearted ladies who built pagodas in memory of their loved ones. Then the pagodas opened out to us a vast wonderland of romance, colour and lyrical beauties; there seemed to be no limit to fancy and imagination.

In real life too, it is at the pagodas that lovers plight their troth and it is there that a newly-married couple will make offerings of flowers and candles. In their hearts is the belief that they meet and love in this life, because of the good deeds they had done together in their past lives.

By doing good deeds together again in this life, they strengthen their bond of love, and they feel blessed and secure in the refuge of the Buddha and His teachings. Sitting on the pagoda platform side by side, each with offerings of flowers and candles in hand, a married-couple or plighted lovers often feel that their love for each other has risen from the common and the earthy to spiritual heights.

### **Pagodas in adult life**

As children, pagodas offer us recreation as well as education; as youths, the sylvan fields of romance and poetry; in our years of maturity, they give us relaxation and a sense of security and refuge; in our old age, solace and comfort. One of our greatest pleasures at this time is to lead our grandchildren once again down the familiar paths in the wonderland of stories and parables, coping with their eager questions, as they point their little greasy fingers at the sculptured figures and paintings. Yes, as Buddhists, we go to pagodas, at all times of our lives, in all moods, in joy or in sorrow, or to seek peace and quiet from the stress and strain of life.



### Centres of social and cultural activities

Pagodas are also centres of social, cultural and commercial activities. They are often the rendezvous for communal alms-giving to the monks, wherein people contribute their share. There are annual festivals, which are, especially in country areas, trade fairs; people kill two birds with one stone, so to say, by marketing their wares and at the same time, gaining merit by paying respect to the memory of the Buddha at the shrines, and making contributions towards the repair and upkeep of the pagodas.

### Why no monuments for kings and great men?

Although we have thousands of pagodas, built during more than ten centuries of history, we do not have statues of kings and great men, with the exception of the statue of King *Kyansittha* in *Ananda* temple, *Pagan*; and even he, it must be noted, is represented not in all his power and glory, but kneeling with his hands raised, a true disciple of the Buddha. We also do not have grand tombs and monuments in memory of our great men in history; the only ones we have are of King *Alaungpaya* in *Shwebo* and King *Mindon* and his queen, in *Mandalay*. Why no tombs of *Anawratha* or *Kyansittha*?

### No storied urns or animated busts

Why indeed! Perhaps I may be allowed to make a guess, which might be no worse than the next person's. Lack of objects like statues and tombs of kings and great men might be attributed to the doctrine of impermanence. It is not in our national character to glorify the dead, neither is it neglect or callousness, but that idea which may be summed up in *Thomas Gray's* famous lines;

*"Can storied urn or animated bust  
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?  
Can honour's voice provoke the silent dust  
Or flattery soothe the dull cold ear of death?"*

Since kings in their glory, soldiers in their triumphs, artists in their renown, all must die and turn to dust, Buddhists see no point in raising monuments in their memory, or casting their likeness in sculpture. All that glory, all that wealth, all that fame, being the result of what a man had done in his past lives, it is more sensible to do deeds of merit like building pagodas in his memory so that he can have a share of the deed of merit and go up the ladder of life. There is also the underlying humility, with which Buddhists accept the fact that however glorious one's own present life may be, it is nothing compared to the greatness of the Buddha, and that if one at all were to achieve greatness, it is only through following His teachings.

### Unifying element

Pagodas are also a unifying element in Burmese Buddhist life. People may have differences over many things, but these differences disappear when there is a pagoda to be built or repaired, or a festival to be organized. Everybody rallies round, rich and poor, high and low, giving whatever they can, either in cash or in kind or in labour towards the deed of merit.

Historically no less than in the present, pagodas provide a quiet centre in the midst of life's turbulence.



## VIRTUES OF VIPASSANĀ

Daw Myint Than (*Kahtika Daw Myint Than*)

Nowadays, in the Myanmar Nainggan there is wide spread effort to propagate the practice of Vipassanā. Many persons have spent one or two months at the Meditation Centre to practise Vipassanā. However, on their return home their efforts to practise Vipassanā gradually wind down to a stop.

To practise Vipassanā it is not essential that you go to the meditation centre. It can be practised in your own home, in the shrine room of your home, or if there is no place in your house, at the Dhammasālā or any pagoda or any suitable place. It is the will that counts and Vipassanā can be practised anywhere. The time and place should not be any barrier and the advantage gained will be dependent on the extent of practice of Vipassanā. Even five or ten minutes or any available time to practise Vipassanā will be beneficial.

Only on the attainment of Enlightenment of a Buddha, can Vipassanā be understood and practised. Even during the period before the attainment of Enlightenment by a Buddha, the opportunity exists to resort to Dāna, Sīla and Samatha which however are many times lower in level and of lesser benefit and virtue.

The practice of Vipassanā is definitely on a higher plane than Dāna, Sīla, and Samatha. It will certainly close the doors of The Four Woeful States and provide freedom from all sufferings. The Lord Buddha in His teachings on Buddhism emphasized the attainment of Nibbāna as the apex of every Buddhist's aim, in other words, the practice of Vipassanā is the best, most truthful, and the shortest and most effective way to the attainment of Nibbāna. That was preached again and again by Lord Buddha in His sermons.

One may be able to live one hundred years but if one fails to notice the five aggregates of mind and matter as a cycle of creation and destruction of the law of impermanence from the perspective of Vipassanā one would derive no benefit at all. If one can live longer

by one day with the realisation that the Five Aggregates of mind and body constitute a cycle of creation and destruction of the law of impermanence one would benefit. That was an example of Lord Buddha's teaching to Paṭācārī.

In this world, human beings can be classified into nine types viz.(1)Arahat (2) Trainee or learner to become Arahat.(3) Non-Returner(Anāgāmi) (4) One practising to become Non-Returner.(5) Once Returner (Sakadāgāmi).(6)One practising to become Once Returner (7) Stream-Winner (Sotapanna) (8) One practising to become Stream-winner (9) Ordinary people (Puthujjana).

Out of these nine types the first eight belong to people who are practising Vipassanā to attain Sotāpatti-magga are free from being worldling, ordinary people. (Puthujjana)

At anytime of the day while remaining silent without talking, the person practising Vipassanā should continuously observe and meditate vipassanā. It is not sufficient to go to meditation centre, monastery, cave or forest to practise vipassanā for about a month or two. On the return home, at any time of the day and at any place at the first available opportunity to practise Vipassanā continuously without losing the tempo. The Venerable Mahathera Waibu Sayadaw preached that just as the roof of a house should be covered continuously, it is essential that similar efforts be made to erect the vipassanā roof.

To be able to study and understand Vipassanā one should approach good and qualified teachers for systematic learning with the help of good reference books. Sustained efforts are needed to repetitively and continuously study the prescribed reference books until the subject matter is mastered and digested. Studying vipassana is not sufficient, it is the practice that counts. In one of His sermons, Lord Buddha emphasized the importance of practice of Vipassanā over and above, reading, learning and teaching of Vipassanā. Also in the "Magga Vagga of the Dhammapada" Lord Buddha preached again

that in reality it is one's own effort that will enhance one's own education and knowledge will degenerate and fade away.

In the **Mahā Sati Paṭṭhāna Sutta** Buddha instructed as follows-

(a) If you wish physical deprivation and mental unhappiness to cease, observe and practise meditation.

(b) If you wish your wisdom and intellect to advance to the pinnacle, observe and practise meditation.

(c) If you wish to attain the Path (Magga), the Fruition (Phala) and Nibbāna, observe and practise meditation.

Therefore if you wish to escape from the physical woes and mental unhappiness and all kinds of troubles in life observe and practise meditation.

In the **Mahā Sati Paṭṭhāna Sutta** it is stated that while eating, moving, living irrespective of various postures at any time and place, one must be mindful of and observe and practice to be noble. If one questioned why, the answer is because destruction of Ignorance and Craving is achieved.

In a way, one who is mindful of vipassanā and concentrates and meditates on it at all times, at any place, while eating, moving and living, is overcoming physical woes, and mental unhappiness to a certain degree at these times of mindfulness and meditation also, enhancement and progress of his intellect is also achieved and finally attainment of Nibbāna gets closer.

In the **Cakkavatti Sutta** of **Pāthika Vagga** the Buddha stated that one should have a firm belief in dependability and reliability of Dhamma and to exert unflinching effort to meditate, propagate and practise. The Buddha had preached that if mental development is exercised and meditated continuously with unflinching effort then longevity,

personal beauty, physical and mental happiness, prosperity and physical and intellectual enhancement will be the benefit.

Therefore in mundane or in super-mundane or in both, if you wish to have progress and successful advancement to a higher level, meditation and mental development should be a must and if physically practised in this manner success and progress will certainly be achieved. If asked why should it be so, the answer is because these methods are as preached and instructed by Buddha.

If you wish to have all your desires fulfilled and if you and other people are to benefit you will have to observe and practise in the following manner as prescribed in the **Ākaṅkheyya Sutta** of **Mūlapaṇṇāsa**.

(a) (For monks) If you wish to win love and respect from the fellow monks meditate and practise Vipassanā accompanied by Sīla (morality) (For Laymen) If you wish to win love and respect from people around you and from your friends meditate and practise Vipassanā, accompanied by Sila.

(b) (For monks) If you wish to be well supported for food, robes and shelter meditate and practise Vipassanā accompanied by Sīla (For Laymen) If you wish to be well supported for food, clothing and shelter meditate and practise Vipassanā accompanied by Sīla.

(c) (For monks) For the well being and beneficial merits for the good deeds of your supporters who have contributed generously to your food, robes and shelter meditate and practise Vipassanā accompanied by Sīla (For Laymen) for the generous and good deeds of your supporters who have contributed to your food, robes, and shelter, if you wish them to enjoy beneficial merits for their good deeds, meditate and practise Vipassanā, accompanied by Sīla.

The Buddha, in this way delivered sermons that meditation and practice of Vipassanā accompanied by Sīla will bring meritorious

benefits both in mundane and supermundane worlds not only to those who practise and meditate Vipassanā but also for others.

Translated by

TUN AUNG.

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## A BUDDHIST ECONOMIST

U Thet Tun

In this "*Age of Refugees*", political refugees is a long-accepted notion with endless living examples seem daily in the media. Along with the political refugees came the "*economic refugees*", dramatically exemplified recently by the "*boat people*" from Vietnam. Less well-known, however, are the "*culture refugees*" and the "*spiritual refugees*". An example of the former are the wealthy American dowagers taking refuge from the brash culture at home in the "*old world*" civilization of Europe. More easily recognizable are the Western individuals seen at various meditation centres in India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand. These are the people who in economic language are not satisfied merely with the material infrastructure of their lives in their developed countries but seek the spiritual superstructure in countries of ancient civilization in the East.

Recently, I came across a book, known in the United Kingdom as *Alias Papa: A life of Fritz Schumacher*, and in the United States Simply as *E.F. Schumacher, His Life and Thought*, written by his eldest daughter Barbara Wood in 1984. Schumacher was a political refugee from Nazi Germany who settled in pre-war England. His profession was economics like fellow refugees Frank Burchardt, Kurt Mandelbaum, Nicholas Kaldor, Thomas Balogh and Michal Kalecki who assembled at the Oxford Institute of Statistics during the Second World War.

" In November 1949 three offers came Fritz Schumacher's way. The first was another U.N. post, this time in Geneva. Fritz turned it down, it was not what he wanted. The second was an invitation from the President of Burma asking Fritz to become his economic adviser. Again, Fritz turned it down. It was not what his family wanted. The third job fitted his hopes and aspirations exactly. It was from the British Government. Fritz was asked to return to England as Economic Adviser to the National Coal Board."



This was the official position Fritz was to occupy for the next 20 years.

Gandhism, Buddhism, energy supplies of the future, industrial development, the "war on poverty" - all these separate strands of thought occupied Fritz's mind and -as the different elements in the soil come together to produce a beautiful flower after the seed has been planted-were waiting to come together to nourish a new, more complete idea.

The "seed" which was to draw all these elements together was an invitation from the government of the Union of Burma to come to Burma as an Economic Adviser. The job was for a high-level economist, with considerable experience in the planning and execution of economic development plans, and a specialized knowledge of modern fiscal theory and practice. It was well paid, and funded by the United Nations. Fritz wanted very much to accept and the pressure from Burma was steady, with a constant stream of telegrams and letters. Eventually the Burmese Prime Minister approached the British Minister of Power, Hugh Gaitskell, directly. Fritz was given unpaid leave from the National Coal Board for 3 months at the beginning of 1955.

On January 2nd, 1955 Fritz left on his Oriental adventure, accentuating the change of lifestyles he was about to experience by stopping off first in New York... There in the cold he was prepared by the U.N. for his work in the heat of Burma... Spiritually he felt that the last 4 years had been preparation for this pilgrimage. ..The impact of Burma was far greater than he had expected ... He wrote to his wife Muschi:

" The people really are delightful. Everything I had heard about their charms and cheerfulness proves to be true. They move about in a very strange way. There is an innocence here I had never seen before-the exact contrary of what disquieted me in New York. In their gay dances and with their dignified and composed manners, they are lovable and one really wants

to help them, if one but knew how. Even some of the Americans here say: "How can we help them, when they are much happier and much nicer than we are ourselves?"

Fritz saw that the effect of economic contact between East and West had not been to transfer Western economic philosophy, which had made the economic development of the West possible, but had merely transferred Western demands. He realized that economic development in Burma was not a question of matters such as trading arrangements, it was far more fundamental, it required a different kind of economics altogether, a "*Buddhist economics*". Fritz discussed this approach in a paper entitled "*Economics in a Buddhist Country*". A Buddhist approach to economics would be a "*middle way*", Fritz suggested, based on two principles. The first was definition of limits. A Buddhist approach would distinguish between misery, sufficiency and surfeit. Economic progress is good only to the point of sufficiency, beyond that, it is evil, destructive, uneconomic. Secondly, a Buddhist economy would make the distinction between "*renewable*" and "*non-renewable*" resources. A civilization built on renewable resources, such as the products of forestry and agriculture, is by this fact alone superior to one built on non-renewable resources, such as oil, coal, metal, etc. This is because the former can last, while the latter cannot last. The former co-operates with nature, while the latter robs nature. The former bears the sign of life, while the latter bears the sign of death.

These two principles, inseparably linked, were an astonishing statement for a Western economist to make in 1955 when the emphasis everywhere was on growth, increasing exploitation of seemingly unlimited supplies of natural resources, when the only bottleneck that was recognized was that much needed resources could not be got out of the ground fast enough. It was some 15 years late before Limits to Growth shocked the world by announcing that non-renewable resources were not only limited but were fast running out.

The Economic and Social Board of Burma was not impressed by this exposition. Fritz had also recommended that the Burmese Government should reverse all its development policies and reduce its dependency on Western advisers. No Western adviser should be without a Burmese counterpart and steps should be taken at once to train young economists.

The Executive Secretary to the Economic and Social Board, U Thant, later Secretary General of the United Nations, with whom Fritz was supposed to work, had only taken up his post the day Fritz arrived in Rangoon. According to Fritz, U Thant, in spite of his exceptional qualities in many other directions, had neither the time nor the inclination, nor indeed the ability and background knowledge, to fill the post effectively. He was himself fully aware of all this; as it happened he held the post only for 3 months, but these were precisely the 3 months of Fritz's stay in Rangoon. It was a period during which, as one might say, "*Hamlet*" was played without the Prince of Denmark. The centre piece of the economic planning machine (apparently referring to ICS U Hla Maung) had been removed and had not been effectively replaced."

If I may strike a personal note here, one could also say that, the Assistant to the Prince of Denmark was also missing. As the ranking economist in the Burmese Government, I would certainly have been made Schumacher's technical counterpart but for the fact that I was at that juncture about to leave for Bangkok for a year's service with ECAFE.

" Fritz confided in his mother what was to be the highlight and real purpose of his visit to Burma. He had come to learn Buddhist meditation. .. Buddhists were all around him and yet it was difficult at first to make the contacts that would lead him to a "master", to gain him entrance into inner or higher circles. Strangely it was two Germans who opened the doors for him. The first was a 60-year-old German by the name of Georg Krauskopf. He had been a Buddhist

for 40 years and was the German representative of a World Buddhist Congress that had just been held in Burma. He had stayed on to study meditation and as soon as Fritz heard about his presence in Burma he looked him up. Fritz managed to find him in a very lonely place, looking very strained and somewhat exhausted. He had just finished his course and not knowing any English felt utterly lost and lonely. The astonishment and delight on his face as Fritz approached him cannot be described. Fritz said that during that week he had learned many things from him which it would have taken months to discover otherwise.

The other German was a Buddhist scholar, Frau Dr Kell. Fritz described her as his "best contact here... she has real knowledge, has been here for a year, and works with some of the greatest Buddhist scholars... I have met more Burmese through her than through the job."

Through her eventually it was arranged that he should spend every weekend in the most highly respected monastery of Burma. It was the most difficult and most rewarding task he had ever undertaken. Slowly he was taken through the steps of meditation. At first, sitting in his monk's cell, he was allowed only to watch the rising and falling of his abdomen, mentally repeating, "*rising, falling, rising, falling*", as he breathed. His intellect which was normally never still, had to be pushed to one side. His mental effort had to be directed towards a concentration on what seemed essentially to be nothing. His quarter of an hour's "*work*" had already shown him how difficult this could be. His intellect, which he had thought was a tool he could direct wherever he pleased, shows itself to be a completely untrained, undisciplined intruder into the silence, roaming around introducing distractions. The monks taught him how to cope with the distractions, how to still his restless mind. He was taught not to worry; merely to note the distractions but not to follow them or fix on them, and then to return to his task of attending to the movement of his abdomen.

After some time the monks allowed Fritz to progress to the next stage. He left his cell to pace up and down the monastery garden, concentrating on each movement of his body as he walked, noting his distractions and returning his attention to his body.

At last he was deemed ready to be initiated into the deeper secrets of meditation and instead of fixing his mind on his body he was given a prayer, or mantra, to repeat. As he persisted in these exercises he found that their effect was quite unexpected. Not only did he feel a profound peace and stillness afterwards, much greater than he had experienced with his daily "work", but he found he had a new clarity of thought which made him realize that what he had regarded as clear thinking before was in fact nothing of the kind. It was only when he had stilled his ever- restless intellect that he began to feel true understanding. He realized he had found the gold he was seeking. With words paraphrased from scripture he described the experience: "I came to Burma as a thirsty wanderer, and there I found living water."

On my return from ECAFE, I came upon Schumacher's papers and was enthralled by them. Among other things, they reassured me in my differences with the American advisers. Still later, in 1973, I read his epoch making book *Small Is Beautiful*. In it Schumacher argued that since " *Right Livelihood* " is one of the requirements of the Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path, there must be such a thing as Buddhist economics.

"The Buddhist point of view takes the function of work to be at least threefold: to give a man a chance to utilize and develop his faculties; to enable him to overcome his ego-centredness by joining with other people in a common task; and to bring forth the goods and services needed for a becoming existence. Again, the consequences that flow from this view are endless. To organize work in such a manner that it becomes meaningless, boring, stultifying, or nerve-racking for the worker would be short of criminal; it would indicate a greater concern

with goods than with people, an evil lack of compassion and a soul-destroying degree of attachment to the most primitive side of this worldly existence. Equally, to strive for leisure as an alternative to work would be considered a complete misunderstanding of one of the basic truths of human existence, namely that work and leisure are complementary parts of the same living process and cannot be separated without destroying the joy of work and the bliss of leisure.

From the Buddhist point of view, there are therefore two types of mechanization which must be clearly distinguished: one that enhances a man's skill and power and one that turns the work of man over to a mechanical slave, leaving man in a position of having to serve the slave. The craftsman himself can always, if allowed to, draw the delicate distinction between the machine and the tool. The carpet loom is a tool, contrivance for holding warp threads at a stretch for the pile to be woven round them by the craftsman's fingers; but the power loom is a machine, and its significance as a destroyer of culture lies in the fact that it does the essentially human part of the work.

The very start of Buddhist economic planning would be a planning for full employment, and the primary purpose of this would in fact be employment for everyone who needs an "outside" job: it would not be the maximization of employment nor the maximization of production. Women, on the whole, do not need an "outside" job, and the large-scale employment of women in offices or factories would be considered a sign of serious economic failure. In particular, to let mothers of young children work in factories while the children run wild would be as uneconomic in the eyes of a Buddhist economist as the employment of a skilled worker as a soldier in the eyes of a modern economist.

While the materialist is mainly interested in goods, the Buddhist is mainly interested in liberation. But Buddhism is "*The Middle Way*" and therefore in no way antagonistic to physical well-being. It is not wealth that stands in the way of liberation but the attachment to

wealth; not the enjoyment of pleasurable things but the craving for them. The keynote of Buddhist economics, therefore, is simplicity and non-violence. From an economist's point of view, the marvel of the Buddhist way of life is the utter rationality of its pattern—amazingly small means leading to the extraordinarily satisfactory results.

The modern economist is used to measuring the "*standard of living*" by the amount of annual consumption, assuming all the time that a man who consumes more is "*better off*" than a man who consumes less. A Buddhist economist would consider this approach excessively irrational: since consumption is merely a means to human well-being, the aim should be to obtain the maximum of well-being with the minimum of consumption.... It is easy to see that the effort needed to sustain a way of life which seeks to attain the optimal pattern of consumption is likely to be much smaller than the effort needed to sustain a drive for maximum consumption. We need not be surprised, therefore, that the pressure and strain of living is very much less in, say, Burma than it is in the United States, in spite of the fact that the amount of labour-saving machinery used in the former country is only a minute fraction of the amount used in the latter.

From the point of view of Buddhist economics, therefore, production from local resources for local needs is the most rational way of economic life, while dependence on imports from afar and the consequent need to produce for export to unknown and distant peoples is highly uneconomic and justifiable only in exceptional cases and on a small scale. Just as the modern economist would admit that a high rate of consumption of transport services between a man's home and his place of work signifies a misfortune and not a high standard of life, so the Buddhist economist would hold that to satisfy human wants from faraway sources rather than sources nearby signifies failure rather than success.

It is in the light of both immediate experience and long-term prospects that the study of Buddhist economics could be

recommended even to those who believe that economic growth is more important than any spiritual or religious values. For it is not a question of choosing between "modern growth" and "traditional stagnation." It is a question of finding the right path of development, the Middle Way between materialist heedlessness and traditional immobility, in short, of finding "Right Livelihood."

According to Vermont state senator John McClaughry (Ronald Reagan's senior policy advisor in the 1980 presidential campaign), *Small Is Beautiful* sub-titled "*Economics as if People Mattered*" became a rallying cry, and its author became a sudden hero, almost a cult figure. "In the 4 years left to him (he died in September 1977 at the age of 66) Fritz saw many of his ideas become commonplace, and a legion of new voices raised to carry on his work in E.F.Schumacher Societies and the Intermediate Technology Development Groups throughout Europe and America. His Buddhist economics prodded Westerners to reexamine their underlying beliefs about man's domination of nature and the utility of ever-increasing production. His advocacy of appropriate technology gained considerable currency, especially in the United Nations system of technical assistance. His concern about the exhaustion of the planet's resources amplified earlier works, such as Harrison Brown's *The Challenge of Man's Future* (1954) and gave new impetus to a whole generation of environmental defenders. His theory of large-scale organization was echoed in such best-selling works as Thomas Peter's and Robert H. Waterman's *In Search of Excellence*, and his argument for the importance of human entrepreneurship predated George Gilder's more expansive *Wealth and Poverty*.

To go back to my original theme of refugees, Buddhist Myanmar should be proud to have received such a discerning spiritual refugee as E.F.Schumacher and to have relaunched him as the world famous Buddhist economist.



## GO FORTH, O BHIKKHUS

Chit Hlaing

More Myanmar Bhikkhus have travelled abroad more frequently since Taungpulu Sayadaw travelled to the United States in 1978 and Mahāsi Sayadaw to the U.K. and the United States in 1979.

To our knowledge it was Sayadaw Ashin Thittila, Aggamahāpaṇḍita Abhidajamahāraṭṭhaguru, who first ventured abroad in 1933. Sayadawgyi first went to India. From there he proceeded to England in the summer of 1938. He studied English and Sanskrit in India and Ceylon (Sri Lanka). Later he attended a course at the London polytechnic to improve his English. That was in 1938-39.

"So far as the Dhamma is concerned, perhaps the most outstanding feature was his introduction of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka to the West by way of commencing to teach the small manual Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha, to a class of students interested in the Buddhist Teaching and who had specifically requested him to deal with that section." (*Essential Themes of Buddhist Lectures*)

Sayadawgyi travelled extensively covering the U.S.A., Canada, Australia, Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Cambodia, Nepal, Thailand, Belgium, Switzerland, Italy, Germany, Holland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark and France. In fact no Myanmar Bhikku has travelled as extensively as Ashin Thittila. Sayadawgyi translated Vibhaṅga, the second of the seven books of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka. It was published by the Pali Text Society in 1969 under the title of *The Book of Analysis*.

Sayadawgyi's teaching of Abhidhamma laid the foundation stone for later Masters to teach Vipassanā meditation. There are now more than fifty Myanmar Buddhist monasteries around the world. Many

Myanmar Bhikkhus remain permanently in their countries of adoption.

During the first vassa of His Enlightenment the Buddha was able to enlighten sixty disciples. There were then sixty Arahants. He sent them as Messengers of Truth to teach Dhamma to all without distinction. He exhorted them as follow.

"Freed am I, O Bhikkhus, from all bonds, whether divine or human.

"You, too, O Bhikkhus, are freed from all bonds, whether divine or human.

"Go forth, O Bhikkhus, for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, benefit, and happiness of gods and men. Let not two go by one way: Preach O Bhikkhus, the Dhamma, excellent in the beginning, excellent in the middle, excellent in the end, both in the spirit and the letter. Proclaim the Holy Life, altogether perfect and pure.

"There are beings with little dust in their eyes, who, not hearing the Dhamma, will fall away. There will be those who understand the Dhamma.

"I too, O Bhikkhus, will go to Uruvela in Senanigama, in order to preach the Dhamma." (*Vinaya Mahāvagga*)

Taungpulu Sayadaw travelled to America at the invitation of Dr Rina Sircar. He taught Vipassanā meditation to Dr Sircar's students in California. Later his followers grew and Sayadawgyi's followers have built a pagoda and a monastery near San Francisco. One of Sayadawgyi's chief disciples Hlaingdet Sayadaw, and a few other Myanmar Bhikkhus are teaching Dhamma around San Francisco

area. Vipassanā retreats are conducted by the Sayadaws occasionally. Other Myanmar Bhikkhus too teach Pariyatti (scriptures) and Paṭipatti (Vipassanā meditation) to people within their reach. This is the primary task of a Bhikkhu.

Mahāsī Sayadaw travelled to the United Kingdom in 1979 at the invitation of U Myat Saw. Mahāsī method of Vipassanā meditation preceded the great Master's visit by several years. Sayadawgyi later proceeded to the United States to conduct a meditation retreat at the invitation of Insight Meditation Society, Barre, Massachusetts. These two great Masters taught meditation each according to his own method.

Sayadaw U Ñyānika went to England in 1982. His sponsor was Mrs. Claudine W. Iggleden, a pupil of Sayadaw Ashin Thiṭṭila. After a few years' stay in England Ashin Ñyānika wrote to this writer and other disciples asking whether he should come back or remain in England.

We have in Myanmar many learned Sayadaws who can teach Pariyatti and Paṭipatti. But we have very few Myanmar Buddhist Bhikkhus there. We need even more Bhikkhus in England to spread the Dhamma in Theravāda tradition. So we requested the Sayadaw to continue his Dhamma-Dūta mission abroad.

There are three main tasks the Myanmar Bhikkhus can perform abroad.

Earlier Masters have sown the seed of Dhamma in the West. It is for learned Sayadaws like Ashin Ñyānika to follow the leaders to quench the thirst for further knowledge in Dhamma of the new converts. We need to have follow ups to help the students of Dhamma in their quest for the Buddha's Teachings.

Secondly it is only the Bhikkhus who can ordain Bhikkhus. Some learned laymen can teach Dhamma, Pariyatti as well as Paṭipatti. But

not even a king can ordain a Bhikkhu. Ivan P. Oliver in his *Buddhism in Britain* said,

"A Sangha, living strictly by all 227 rules of Paṭimokkha in the West is no mean feat as was witnessed when the Hampstead Buddhist Vihāra came into being. However, all this took place when, in 1956, the English Sangha Trust was established with the firm intention of forming an actual Theravadin Sangha in England. This was the major preoccupation of one man, William Purfurst. Purfurst had earlier received the novice ordination under the Ven. Sayadaw U Thiṭṭila as the Sāmaṇera Dhammānanda. In 1954 he travelled to Thailand with several disciples and was duly ordained into the Sangha as Bhikkhu Kapilavaddho at Wat Paknam in Bangkok."

A Bhikkhu can ordain a Sāmaṇera. But five Bhikkhus are needed for higher ordination as a Bhikkhu. Hence, Sāmaṇera Dhammānanda had to go to Thailand to get ordination as a Bhikkhu.

Nowadays we do not have to send a person to Thailand or bring him to Myanmar if the purpose is just to get higher ordination. Sayadaw U Paṇḍitābhivaṃsa was able to ordain an Australian in Sydney, Australia. Sayadaw was accompanied by a Myanmar Bhikkhu when he went to Australia. He was later joined by U Ñyānapoṇṇika of Nepāl. An American Bhikkhu U Buddharakkhita had gone ahead to join Sayadaw in Australia. And there was presiding monk Sayadaw of Sydney monastery to make five. So, these five Sayadaws ordained an Australian there in Sydney. A Korean Mahāyāna monk was also ordained as a Theravāda Bhikkhu in Malaysia by Sayadaw Ashin Paṇḍitābhivaṃsa. This is the second important task of Myanmar Bhikkhus who go on Dhamma-Dūta missions abroad. Only Bhikkhus can spread the Sāsana. Lay teachers can teach Vipassanā no doubt.

The third duty that a Myanmar Bhikkhu can perform is teaching Myanmar culture and basic principles of Buddhism to the Myanmar

children living abroad. Basic principles of Buddhist culture are now widely taught in Myanmar. Myanmar children living abroad should get the same privilege. This, the Bhikkhus who go on Dhamma-Dūta missions can perform.

Some people ask why some Bhikkhus want to go abroad so frequently.

When we lay persons go abroad, we put up at grand hotels, eat at expensive restaurants, visit amusement parks, visit friends and enjoy life. Bhikkhus do not enjoy life as we do. They observe the same rules of Vinaya as they do here at home. They are only serving the Sāsana. They are spreading the Dhamma as good sons of the Buddha.

The Buddha exhorted, "Go forth, O Bhikkhus."



## PUKAṂ SĀSANAṂ

( History of the Buddha's Religion in Bagan,

11th-13th centuries A.D.)

Than Tun, M.A., B.L., Ph.D., D.Lit. ( London )

THERE are about 610 Myanma inscriptions belonging to the Bagan period. They were estempaged and photographic reproduction of these estampages were arranged in chronological order by Professors P.M. Tin and G.H.Luce, printed in five portfolios ( 1933, 1939, 1939, 1956 and 1956 ) by the London Oxford University Press and published as Nos 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 of University of Yangon Oriental Studies Publication. These inscriptions are used as contributions on the history of Buddhism in Myanma, A.D. 1000-1300. Reference to any inscription is given in plate number and a raised numeral above the plate number indicates the line number of that inscription. For example Pl .234<sup>1</sup> is a reference to plate number 234 and line number one. The same method to romanize Pali is used to transliterate old Myanma names and words; for instance Sithu Min is *Cansū Mañ*, Myanma is *Mranmā*, Bagan is *Pukaṁ*, etc. Raised numerals after a word or sentence give the end-note numbers. Some accounts might vary vastly from the popular stories which have no contemporary evidence to support them. Some inscriptions claim to be old but they are just fabrications purported to support an imagination. Care was taken not to use them.

Many interesting articles were unearthed by the archaeologists in Hmawza, old city site of *Śrīkṣetra*, near Pyay Myo. The most important find was made in 1926 when twenty gold-leaf Pali manuscripts were found<sup>1</sup>. These leaves contain eight extracts from the Pali *Pitaka* texts. The first extract is on *Nidāna* or *Paṭicca Samuppāda*<sup>2</sup>; the

second enumerates the seven kinds of *Vipassanāñāna*<sup>3</sup> ( contemplative knowledge ); the third gives the thirty seven *Bodhipakkhiya dhamma*<sup>4</sup> ( elements of enlightenment ); the fourth clarifies the four perfections of the Buddha<sup>5</sup>; the fifth enumerates again the fourteen kinds of knowledge possessed by the Buddha<sup>6</sup>; the sixth is a verse from the *Dhammapada*<sup>7</sup> telling the best things in this world; the seventh describes the journey to *Rājagaha* by the Buddha and his disciples<sup>8</sup>; and the eighth is in praise of the Buddha<sup>9</sup>. The gold-leaf manuscripts<sup>10</sup> together with some more of the same kind found in the same vicinity<sup>11</sup> strongly indicates that the Pyus were quite familiar with Pali Buddhism and their knowledge of Pali was by no means slight<sup>12</sup>. One might even assume that the Pali Buddhism thriving in *Śrīkṣetra* spread and reached the Myanma at Bagan. It is possible that the Pyus after the destruction of their capital mixed freely with the Myanma and were absorbed by that more virile race<sup>13</sup>. There are three inscriptions in the Pyu script at the Bagan Museum, viz. No. 96 ( Pl. 357a, from Halingyi antedating Bagan )<sup>14</sup>, No. 10 ( Pl. 363a, the *Rājakumār* inscription c. AD 1113 ) and No. 3 ( Pl. 555 in Pyu and Pl. 556 in Chinese )<sup>15</sup>. Myanma used some of Pyu and Mon cultures and they wrote their early records in Mon, Pali, Pyu and Sanskrit until the last quarter of the 12th century when Myanma was used almost exclusively for records<sup>16</sup>. As regards Pali Buddhism, it seems that due to their proximity Myanma were more indebted to Pyu than Mon to learn it long before Myanma overran the lower part of the country called *Rāmaññadesa* in the middle of the 11th century.

The Mons were in Kyaukse area before the Myanmas came to settle there<sup>17</sup> and the Mons would have certain cultural influences on them. In all probability they learnt cultivation by irrigation as well as Buddhism from the Mons. The Myanma inscriptions between 1211 and 1262 made three references to *Taluin rwā ma*<sup>18</sup> main village of Mons, at *Khamlhū* or *Khabu* near the junction of the Samon and the Myitnge. An old Mon inscription<sup>19</sup> which still stands on the northwest side of the Kyaukse hill<sup>20</sup> mentions that a local Mon *mahāthera* informed the Bukam *mahāthera* that he had had a *śīma* built. This is

enough evidence that the Mons and Myanmas were in close contact in religious affairs. In addition to this, most of the records left by early Bagan kings are in the Mon language. In the Great Shwezigon inscription<sup>21</sup> of *Thiluin Mañ* (1084-1113), we have the eulogy of the king who shall rule Bagan after AB 1630 ( AD 1086 ) when he was coronated<sup>22</sup>. According to it the principal religion then practised was Buddhism. But there are references to other religions as well. *Śrī Tribhuvanādityadhammarājā* ( *Thiluin Mañ* ) the Buddhist king is mentioned as a reincarnation of *Viṣṇu*<sup>23</sup>. Obviously there is a good deal of Brahmanism in the Buddhism that they practised. The king, however, claimed that his adviser who helped him rule righteously and purify the religion was a *mahāthera*.

A lord *mahāthera*, who possesses virtue, who is the charioteer of the Law, King *Śrī Tribhuvanādityadhammarājā* shall make ( him ) his spiritual teacher. In the presence of the Lord *Mahāthera*, abounding in virtue, who is the charioteer of the Law also, " Together with my lord will I cleanse the religion of the Lord Buddha ", thus shall King *Śrī Tribhuvanādityadhammarājā* say<sup>24</sup>.

The same inscription continues to mention that Buddhism prospers well in the kingdom.

The city of *Arimaddanapūr*, which is the dwelling place of King *Śrī Tribhuvanādityadhammarājā* shall glow and glitter with the Precious Gems. King *Śrī Tribhuvanādityadhammarājā* shall pray for omniscience.

All those who dwell in the city of *Arimaddanapūr*, together with King *Śrī Tribhuvanādityadhammarājā*, shall delight worthily in the Precious Gems, shall worship, revere, ( and ) put their trust in the Lord Buddha, the Good Law and all the lords of the Buddhist Order of Monks<sup>25</sup>.



It is surprising to note that orthodoxy went side by side with religious toleration.

In the realm of my lord all those who were heretical shall become orthodox entirely. All the monks shall be full of virtue and good conduct. All the Brahmans, who know the Vedas, they shall fulfil all the Brahman law<sup>26</sup>.

We have further evidence of the king's religious interests in another inscription<sup>27</sup>. It is said that he built a pagoda called *Jayabhūmī* (Shwezigon) on the northeast of Bagan, collected and purified the three holy *Piṭaka* which had become obscure, sent men, money and material to effect repairs at the holy temple of 'Śrī Bājṛās (Bodh Gaya), offered the four necessities (i.e. shelter, robes, food and medicine) to the monks frequently and converted a *Colī* prince to Buddhism. In spite of his devotion to Buddhism his palace inscription<sup>28</sup> (of 6 May 1102) proves beyond doubt that Buddhism practised at the court of Bagan was far from pure. This inscription shows "a mixed ceremonial proceeding under the very eye of the *mahāthera* Arahan"<sup>29</sup>. The whole affair was left in the hands of "the Brahman astrologers who were versed in house-building"<sup>30</sup> except when the Buddhist monks were invited to bless the site by reciting the *Paritta*. Even then the water used for the occasion was drawn and carried by the Brahmans and the conch which is supposed to be the symbol of *Viṣṇu* was used to hold the water. It is also surprising to note that a total of 4108 monks attended the ceremony, yet one gets the impression that the Brahmans were the more important. The worship of *Viṣṇu* precedes all important ceremonies. Offerings were also made to *Indra*<sup>31</sup>. Another important thing of note is that the Brahmans also performed the *Nāga* worship<sup>32</sup>. Even in the Myanma inscriptions of the 13th century we find traces of Brahmanical influence. A village named *Lintuiñ* (*Liṅga*) mentioned in an inscription<sup>33</sup> dated AD 1235 suggests the presence of phallic worship at one time. Another village called *Kulā Nat*<sup>34</sup> in an inscription of AD 1256 also suggests that the

villagers once worshipped an Indian diety. God *Mahāpinnai* (*Mahā Vināyaka*) i.e. *Gaṇeśa* is mentioned in an inscription<sup>35</sup> dated AD 1279. In the Bagan palace the image of *Gavaṃpati* was placed next to the image of the Buddha<sup>36</sup>. *Gavaṃpati* was "the patron saint of the Mons" as well as of Bagan<sup>37</sup>. In the Tainggyut inscription<sup>38</sup> (AD 1279) *Gavaṃpati* is mentioned together with the Buddha and his two chief disciples<sup>39</sup>. The Great Shwezigon inscription<sup>40</sup> mentions *Gavaṃpati* as the son (disciple) of the Buddha. But he is really a pre-Buddhist Shaivaite deity, the Lord of Oxen, and "perhaps a god of drought and wind"<sup>41</sup>. One wonders whether the *Gavaṃpati* of the Bagan inscriptions was the *Gavaṃpati thera* or *Gavaṃpati* the Shaivaite deity.

*Ratanā suṃ: pā:* is the Myanma phrase for the Three Gems, viz. *Purhā* - the Lord, *Tryā* - the Law, and *Sarighā* - the Order of Monks; They were as important to the medieval Myanma as they are to-day. *Sāsanā* - the Teachings of the Buddha, was equally important to him and he considered himself to help people who study it, practise it and propagate it. He gave land, slave, cattle precious metals, food and various other articles of daily use from a costly robe to a spittoon, as a means of support to them (*ratanā 3 pā sa tui e' pacceñ phlac cim sa nhā*)<sup>42</sup> in all the five thousand years of the Religion (*sāsanā anhad 5000 mlok oñ tañ rac cim, so nhā*)<sup>43</sup>. The Religion also taught him that nothing was permanent in this world and that wealth accumulated in this life cannot buy longevity and when he dies he leaves everything behind. The only thing that would help him in his journey through *saṃsāra* was to spend his wealth in charity and thereby accumulate merit to attain *nirvāna*. The following excerpt from an inscription illustrates this very well.

On 9 May 1291, the founder of *Acaw Rācasū* pagoda, mother of Lord *Rācasū* was startled at heart and she said : "My parents, my grandparents and my great grandparents had all gone, abandoning their inherited property. Now my beloved and handsome son had gone likewise abandoning his inherited property and myself, his own mother. Knowing that I

too cannot take away with me (this) inherited property which they had left behind because they could not take, I dedicate it so that it may be one of the attributes for my mother, my father, my son and all my relatives to attain nirvāna<sup>44</sup>.

Thus giving away one's own property in charity without limit or possibility of an equal return (*asadisadāna*) if possible was believed as one of the ways to *nirvāna*. After every act of merit the donor would pray

For the benefit of this act of merit I made, may I get the boon of arahantship when *Maitreya* becomes the Buddha<sup>46</sup>.

This is the typical prayer one finds in the inscriptions of our period. Donors wanted *nirvāna* in the form of a mere *arahā* when *Bodhisattva Maitreya* becomes the Buddha. But there were a few exceptions to this rule; the most ambitious asked for the boon of Buddhahood.

We may safely assume that the *Sāsanā* had a great influence over the Myanma of our period. What the *Sāsanā* taught him, how he understood it and how it influenced him in his daily life is best illustrated in the following excerpt from an inscription of AD 1266.

I, the granddaughter of *Mathi Luiw*, the daughter of Singhasu (one of King *Klacwā's* sons) and the queen of King (*Tarukplyi*), wish to abandon (this) body oppressed by countless miseries - the misery of birth, old age and death, the misery of living with those one does not love, the misery of being separated from those one loves, the misery of wanting a thing and not getting it, etc. I want the bliss of *nirvāna* which is the end of all miseries. For the fulfilment of this desire I relinquish gold, silver and other treasures which are dear and precious to me and build a monastery for the monks - the pupils of the Lord, pure in piety and ever seeking the three

graces of self-restraint, self-possession and wisdom. In order that these monks be well provided, I offer (all my) fields, gardens and slaves, excepting none. May the merit of our meritorious deed go (first) to the king, ruler of us all and lord of the land and water. By virtue of this act of merit may he live long, seeking the prosperity and happiness of all those who live in the realm and upholding this foundation. May the queens also, and all the ladies-in-waiting share it. May they look at one another with eyes of love, without one speck of anger or cloying. Starting with the present reigning king, the future kings, the princes, the ministers, may all of them also share the merit. May they uphold this foundation. May all beings beginning with King *Yama* also share it. May those who desire worldly prosperity get it. May those who prefer to do good deeds, do them. For myself I pray that I may never be covetous, insatiate, wrathful, bullying, ignorant, stupid, mean, uncharitable, faithless, frivolous, forgetful, not ungrateful. But I would cross *saṃsāra* full of these good graces - modest in my wants, easily satisfied, mild of temper, pitiful, wise, conscious of causes, generous, large-handed, faithful, earnest, unforgetful and considerate; and may I win deliverance in the very presence of the Lord *Maitreya*.<sup>47</sup>

Whether they received the *Sāsana* from Pyu or Mon or both, the people of Bagan or old Myanma knew well that India was the birth place of the Religion that they had adopted. King *Thihūn Mañ*; 1084-1113, sent men, money and material to repair the holy temple at Bodh Gayā<sup>48</sup>. Probably the pilgrims from Myanma frequented the places in India associated with the life of Buddha. The following inscription in Myanma dated AD 1298 and found in Bodh Gayā, Bihar, India illustrates how much Myanma appreciated India as the home of the Buddha and his Religion.

After the lapse of 218 years of the Religion (326 BC) the great king *Śirīdhammāsoka* (Asoka) who was the ruler of *Jambū-dīpa* island (built) 84,000 *ceti* among which one was on the spot where the Buddha ate (the milk rice given him by *Sujātā* immediately before his enlightenment). Due to the march of time it became dilapidated. One Lord *Paṃsukūlika* the Great repaired it. When it again became ruined King *Satuiw* made (repairs). When it again became ruined the great just king *Charī Phlū` Skhiñ* sent his teacher *Śirīdhammarājakuru* (to effect repairs) on his behalf. Because *Sirī Kassapa* the disciple who accompanied (*Sirīdhammarājakuru*), though he had the treasure (or funds) would not do it, *Vanavāsī Thera* had to beg alms (or seek permission from) King *Putasin* (who) said, "(You may) do it" to the reverend *thera* through Lord *Nai*. On Friday 16 December 1295 (they) did it. On Sunday 13 October 1298 (the repairs were done and) many flags and streamers were offered (to mark) the dedication (ceremony). One thousand almsfood, (and) one thousand lamps were offered several times. Two children treated as (one's) own off-spring, a wish-tree for hanging flowers of gold and silver, trays and loin cloths were offered. That there may be almsfood at all times, land, slaves and cows were bought and dedicated. May this meritorious deed be an attribute for attaining *nirvāna* in the form of an *araha* when *Maitreya* became the Buddha<sup>49</sup>.

From what we have seen it is evident that the old Myanmas were conversant with Buddhism even before *Aniruddha's* conquest of the *Rāmaññadesa* in lower Myanma. The Pyu of *Śriḷḷsetra* or the Mon of *Kyaukse* or both may have been their teachers. Whatever the chroniclers may have said the Buddhism introduced from lower Myanma was by no means pure. Buddhism practised in Bagan was a mixture of *Nāga* worship, Vaisnava Hinduism and Buddhism. The people by ambivalence retain some of their old beliefs and practised

the Religion according to their own lights. On the other hand they believed that the Religion shall last for five thousand years after the death of the Buddha and that they were to support it to their utmost capacity, hence a great deal of property were given to the Religion. They extended their dedications even to Central India.

Notes :

1 *ASI*, 1926-7, p. 200 \$ Pl. XLII, g; *ASB*, 1938-9, pp. 12-22 & Pl. *IVc*, *V ab* & *VI ab*

2 *Majjhima Nikāya*, I, pp.261, 263-4; III. pp. 63-4; *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, II, pp. 63-4; III, p.135; V, p. 388; *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, V, p. 184; *Vinaya Piṭaka*, I, pp. 1-2, *Dhammasaṅgani*, p.229, *Vibhaṅga*, pp. 135, 138-9, 165-8

3 *Visuddhi Magga*, II, p. 639, (it gives eight kinds; our text omits the *paṭisaṅkhānupassanāñāna*): *Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha*, (it gives ten kinds; our text omits the *sammasanāñāna*, *paṭisaṅkhāñāna* and *anulomañāna*).

4 *Dīgha Nikāya*, III, 102; *Majjhima Nikāya*, II, 245; *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, IV, 125-6; *Udāna*, 56

5 *Mijjhima Nikāya*, I, 71-2; *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, I, 8-9

6 *Khuddaka Nikāya*, I, 133

7 *Dhammapada* (Verse 273) (P.T. 1914), p. 40

8 *Vinaya Piṭaka*, (Mahāvagga, I), 38; *Jātakaṭṭhakathā*, I, 84

9 *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* (*Dīgha Nikāya*)

10 *ASB*, 1938-9, pp. 17-22; edited and translated by L.P. Win

11 Maunggan gold plates discovered in 1897 (*Ep, Ind.*, V, pp. 101-2; M. Louis Finot : "Un nouveau document sur le Bouddhisme Birman",

*JA*, XX, 1912, pp. 121-36); Bawbawgyi stone inscriptions discovered in 1910-11 (*ASB*, 1924, pp. 21-6); Kyundawzu gold plate discovered in 1928-9 (*ASI*, 1929-30, pp. 108-9).

12 Ray, N., *Theravada Buddhism in Burma*, 1946, p. 84

13 The name Pyu is mentioned last in 1510 in a Myanma inscription (List 1050<sup>70</sup>)

14 See *ASB*, 1915, p.21

15 Chen Yi Sein: "The Chinese Inscription at Pagan", *BBHC*, I, ii, December 1960, pp. 153-7: the date of the inscription probably is 20 March 1297 when the Chinese Emperor Ch'eng Tsung appointed *Klawcwa* king and *Singhapati* heir apparent in Bagan.

16 The Shwezigon inscription (*Ep. Birm.*, III, pp. 68-70) is in Mon, the Shwegugyi (Pl. 1 & 2) in Pali and Sanskrit, and the *Rājakumār* (*Ep. Birm.*, I, i) in Myanma, Mon, Pali and Pyu

17 Luce, G.H., "Mons of the Pagan Dynasty", *JBRs*, XXXVI, 1, pp.1-20

18 Pl. 38b<sup>6</sup>, Pl. 205<sup>12-17</sup>, Pl. 212<sup>4</sup>

19 *Klok Sa Baddhasima* inscription, *Ep. Birm.*, III, i, 70-3

20 Luce, "Mons", p. 3

21 The Great Inscription of Bagan Shwezigon, *Ep. Birm.*, I, ii, pp.90-130

22 Shwezigon A<sup>13-20</sup>, *Ep. Birm.*, I, ii, p. 113

23 Shwezigon A<sup>48</sup>, *Ep. Birm.*, I, ii, p. 117

24 Shwezigon B<sup>45</sup>, *Ep. Birm.*, I, ii, p. 117

25 Shwezigon D<sup>15-21</sup>, *Ep. Birm.*, I, ii, p. 121

- 26 Shwezigon G<sup>13-18</sup>, *Ep. Birm.*, I, ii, p. 127
- 27 Shwezigon Pyay Inscription, *Ep. Birm.*, I, ii, pp. 153-68
- 28 *Thiluiñ Mañ* Palace Inscription, *Ep. Birm.*, III, i, pp. 1-68
- 29 Luce, G. H., "The Peoples of Myanma, 12th-13th century AD", *JBRs*, XLII, i, p.72
- 30 Palace Inscription, 0<sup>6</sup>, *Ep. Birm.*, III, I, P. 64
- 31 Palace Inscription, D<sup>29</sup>, *Ep. Birm.*, III, i, p. 46
- 32 Palace Inscription, H<sup>10</sup>, H<sup>15</sup>, *Ep. Birm.*, III, i, pp. 56 & 57
- 33 Pl.128a<sup>10</sup> (inscription found in Hsingut village, Shwebo)
- 34 Pl. 388a<sup>10</sup>
- 35 Pl.262<sup>4-6</sup>
- 36 Palace Inscription, A<sup>28-35</sup>, *Ep. Birm.*, III, i, pp. 37-8
- 37 Blagden, C. O., "Kyansittha in Contemporary Records", *Ep. Birm.*, I, ii, p. 87; see also *ASB*, 1913, p.23
- 38 Pl. 6
- 39 Pe Maung Tin, "Buddhism in the Inscriptions of Pagan", *JBRs*, XXVI, ii, pp. 52-70
- 40 Shwezigon A<sup>32</sup>, *Ep. Birm.*, ii, p. 114
- 41 Luce, G.H., "The Peoples of Myanma, 12th-13th century AD", *JBRs*, XLII, i, p.62
- 42 Pl. 24<sup>13</sup>
- 43 Pl. 73<sup>29</sup>, Pl. 90<sup>14</sup>, Pl. 157<sup>7</sup>, Pl. 205<sup>5</sup>, Pl. 228b<sup>2</sup>, etc.



44 Pl. 272<sup>31-6</sup>; see also Pe Maung Tin, "Buddhism in the Inscriptions of Pagan", *JBRs*, XXVI, I, P. 54 and Luce, G. H., "Prayers of Ancient Burma", *JBRs*, XXVI, iii, p. 137

45 Pl. 275<sup>12</sup>

46 Pl. 23<sup>10</sup>, Pl. 246<sup>13</sup>, Pl. 253b<sup>20</sup>, etc.

47 Pl. 216<sup>1-15</sup>

48 Shwesandaw Pyay Inscription III., *Ep. Birm.*, I, ii, pp. 153-68

49 Pl. 299; see also Taw Sein Ko, *Burmese Sketches*, I, (1913), pp. 90-3



## THE SADDANĪTI

Tin Lwin

### The three volumes of the Saddanīti

Largest of the three principal works of Pali grammar, namely Kaccāyana, Moggallāna and Saddanīti the last named is composed of 28 chapters which are divided into three volumes: *Padamātā*, *Dhātumātā* and *Suttamātā*. The *Padamātā* consists of the first 14 chapters, the *Dhātumātā* the next five chapters and the *Suttamātā* the last nine chapters. But this division and naming of these three volumes do not seem to have been done by the author himself. The entire work is so voluminous that it has been separated into three bundles of manuscripts for convenience according to their nature and context. Each bundle has thus become a volume and assumed its name appropriate to its subject matter. That this division and naming of the volumes was made centuries ago, even before the time of its famous *nissaya* author U Budh (1787-1842), is indicated by the fact that U Budh uses the same names in his work.

Judging from the nature of content, the work is indeed unique: it is the first of its kind and probably the last as well. The *Padamātā*, as the name suggests, deals with formation of words, especially nouns and verbs derived from the root *bhū*. But it is not merely a series of their declensions or inflexions as it also discusses their genders, numbers, cases, persons, tense terminations, etc. In so doing it makes a comparison or contrast between *Sakkatabhāsā* (Sanskrit) and *Māgadhabhāsā* (Pali). For instance, it says that there are ten kinds of tense terminations in Sanskrit while there are only eight in Pali, that *Bahuvacana* is the name for the plural number in Sanskrit while it is *Puthuvacana* or *Anekavacana* in Pali, that there is no dual in Pali while it is there in Sanskrit, that in Sanskrit *vāyu* is the word for the wind while in Pali it is *vāya*, that the Pali Dative Singular *Buddhāya* instead of *Buddhassa* is Sanskritism, and so on.

The *Dhātumātā*, too, is not merely a list of roots, and the way it deals with the roots is interesting. First he gives a root and mentions its meaning. If necessary, he explains the meaning. Then he shows an example or examples taken from pertinent Pali texts. Where he deems fit, he discusses the meaning of the root or forms derived from it and comments on a certain derivative. Here is an example:

*I ajjhayane. Ajjhayanam uccāranam, sikkhanam vā*

*ayati, adhiyati, ajjhayati, adhite, ajjhenam, ajjhāyako.*

"*Dibbam adhiyase māyam.*" "*Adhiyanti Mahārāja dibbamāy'idha paṇḍitā.*" "*Ajjhenam ariyā pathavim janindā.*" "*Tattha ajjhāyako ti ajjhāyati ti ajjhāyako, mante parivatteti ti attho.*

"*I* is in the sense of *ajjhayana* (recitation). *Ajjhayana* means *uccārana* (uttering) or *sikkhana* (learning): *ayati* (recites), *adhiyati* (recites), *ajjhayati* (recites), *adhite* (learns), *ajjhenam*, (the Vedas for recitation), *ajjhāyako* (a Brahman who recites the Vedas). "(O Mahosadha!) do you learn (*adhiyase*) divine magic?" "O King, the wise do learn (*adhiyanti*) divine magic in this world." "(Approach) the Vedas (*ajjhena*), O Noble Ones! (Conquer) the lands, O Kings!" Therein, regarding the word *ajjhāyaka*, its meaning should be noted thus: A Brahman who recites the Vedas is *ajjhāyaka*, that is to say, he masters the Vedas by reciting Vedic hymns.

In the above example, *i* is the root, *ajjhayana* the meaning, *uccārana* or *sikkhana* the explanation, *ayati*, *adhiyati*, *ajjhayati*, *adhite*, *ajjhenam*, and *ajjhāyako* the examples supposed to be found in Pali texts, and "*Dibbam adhiyate māyam*," etc. the examples taken from the *Umaṅga Jātaka*. Each root is thus accompanied by its meaning, explanation and examples. The author sometimes gives his comment short in some cases and long in others. It may include synonyms formed from other roots and rejection of a Sanskrit usage unapplicable to Pali. After tackling a root by elaborating it thus, the author goes on to another one.

The *Suttamāta* is of special interest, for it is the volume that can be taken up together with the other two principle grammars by *Kaccāyana* and *Moggallāna* for a comparative study. It is written on the lines of the *Kaccāyana* and may be called a *vyākaraṇa* in the sense common to the *Kaccāyana* and the *Moggallāna* with its own *suttas*, *vuttis* and *udāharaṇas*. Some of its *suttas* seem to be adaptations of those of the *Kaccāyana* as the following *suttas* in comparison will show as examples:

### The Kaccāyana

S.2 *Akkharāpādayo ekacattalisaṃ*

(The *akkharas* are forty one beginning with *a*.)

S.3 *Tatth odantā sarā attha*

(There in the vowels are eight ending with *o*.)

S.4 *Lahumattā tayo rassā.*

(The three having light matra are short vowels.)

S.5 *Aññe dīghā.*

(The others are long vowels.)

S.6 *Sesā vyañjanā.*

(The rest are consonants.)

### The Suttamāla

S.1 *Appabhut ekatālīsa saddā vaṇṇā.*

(The forty one sounds begin with *a* are *vaṇṇas*.)

S.2 *Akkharā ca te.*

(They are also *akkharas*.)

S.3 *Tatth atthādo sarā*

(There in the first eight are vowels.)

S.4 *Ekamatta adi tatiya pañcamā rassā.*

(The vowels having one *mātrā* such as the first vowels *a*, the third and the fifth are short vowels.)

S.5 *Aññe dvimattā dīghā.*

(The others having two *mātrās* are long vowels.)

S.6 *Sesā addhamattā vyañjanā.*

(The rest having half a *mātrā* are consonants.)

But there are many *suttas* in the *Suttamāta* which have no corresponding ones in the *Kaccāyana* such as

120 S.9 *Dīgho garu.* (A long vowel is heavy.)

S.10 *Samyogaparo ca.* (A short vowel followed by a conjunct consonant is also heavy.)

S.11 *Assaravyañjañato pubbarasso ca.* (A short vowel preceding a consonant separated from a vowel is also heavy.)

S.12 *Rasso lahu.* (A short vowel is light.)

S.13 *Asamyogaparo ca.* (That not followed by a conjunct consonant is also light.)

There are many other such *suttas* independent of those belonging to the *Kaccāyana*. That the *Suttamālā* abounds in these *suttas* is also indicated by the fact that the number of its *suttas* is about twice as large as that of the *Kaccāyana suttas*: while the *Kaccāyana* contains 673 *suttas*, the *Suttamālā* has 1347, a few of which may be modifications of certain *suttas* of the *Moggallāna* and even those of Sanskrit grammatical treatises.

With regard to the *vuttis*, some of them are longer than those in the *Kaccāyana* reminding one of the writings in the *Rupasiddhi* or the *Nyasa*. For such a *vutti* often includes a discussion on a certain form or forms. On the *sutta* 229 which declares change of *o* of *go* into *ava* in compounds the *vutti* for instance says somewhat like this:

In the compound where the case ending of the first member is elided the vowel *o* of *go* is changed into *ava* before a vowel or consonant: *gavassaka* (*go* + *assaka*), *gavelaka* (*go* + *elaka*), etc. In this connection one might ask: "How is the word *gavapāna* formed?" The answer is: "The milk originates from a cow is *gava*; because the milk is something to drink, it is *pāna*; it is milk as well as a drink; therefore it is *gavapāna* (a drink of milk)," "How are the forms *Sakyapuṅgava*, etc. formed?" Here, however, the word *puṅgava* means "lordship." But the formation of *gava* should not be thought about.

A *vutti* is sometimes merely elaborately written as its discussion touches various aspects of the form or forms concerned.

As for the *udāharāṇas*, the *Suttamāṭā* gives more of them in many cases, for it occasionally supplies those omitted by the *Kaccāyana* or even by the *Rūpasiddhi*. For instance, for its *sutta* 307, which prescribes use of the Second Case to denote the Third and Seventh, the *Kaccāyana* gives the following as examples of the same denoting the Seventh Case which here concerns time:

*pubbañhasamayam nivāsetvā* (having put on the robe in the morning)

*ekaṃ samayam Bhagavā* (on one occasion the Blessed One)

To these the *Rūpasiddhi* adds:

*Imam rattim cattāro Mahārājā* (during the night the four *Mahārājās*)

After repeating what have been mentioned by the previous two, the *Suttamāṭā* still has the following to furnish:

*kiñci kalam purejātapaccayena paccayo* (on some occasions the cause is what has previously occurred.)

*purimaṃ disaṃ cattāro Mahārājāno* (in the eastern quarter the four *Mahārājās*)

The *Suttamāṭā* like other grammars draws its examples from a number of sources which mainly include various canonical and non-canonical works. But the author seems to have made use of them better than others.

Though the *Suttamāṭā* generally follows the patterns of the *Kaccāyana* in giving the *suttas* with their expositions and examples on the one hand, the volume as a whole on the other hand points to differences. While the *Kaccāyana* consists of eight chapters, the *Suttamāṭā* comprises seven chapters, the chapter on *Kīta* covering

*Uṇādi*, which forms a separate chapter and as the last in the *Kaccāyana*. These seven chapters of the *Suttamāla* run from the 20th to the 26th if we calculate them from the first chapter of the *Padamāla*. Thus it is the 26th chapter that really marks the end of the *Suttamāla* and the next two chapters, the 27th and the 28th, constitute something like appendices. The former is called *Catupadavibhāga* which suggests that this particular chapter analyses or examines each of the four kinds of *pada*, namely, *nāma*, *ākhyāta*, *upasagga* or *upāsāra* and *nipāta*. But it deals only with the first and the last two; *ākhyāta* is not dealt with here because it has been discussed fully elsewhere. The 28th and last chapter entitled *Palinayadisāṅgha* concerns various styles of writings in the Canon, Commentaries, Sub-Commentaries and others. Certain grammatically interesting points are also touched upon in this chapter.

#### The *Saddanīti* and its Sanskrit sources

It has been accepted on all hands that the *Kaccāyana* is mainly based on the *Kātantra* and the *Moggallāna* on the *Candra-Vyākaraṇa*. Pali grammarians are not only inspired by Sanskrit grammars but given some guidelines. It is therefore natural that the author of the *Saddanīti* is no exception. The work has its recourse in authoritative Sanskrit works which are collectively referred to as *saddasattha* (grammatical works) or *loka* (secularity) and their examples *lokikappayoga* (secular examples). But the *Kātantra* is quoted by name at one or two places. (*Sadd* I, pp. 76-77.) A short passage is reproduced from the *Mahābhāṣya* which the *Saddanīti* mentions by the name of its author *Patāñjali*. (*Sadd* III, p. 140.) At other places, however, these two works, the *Kātantra* and the *Mahābhāṣya*, are unspecifically alluded to like other Sanskrit works including *Pāṇini* and the *Kāśikā*. Allusions are also made to the *Nirukta*, the *Amarakoṣa*, the *Ekakṣarakoṣa* and the *Kāvyaḍāsa*. It is interesting to note that the *Nyāyadarśana* and even the *Bhagavad-Gītā* have their traces in the *Saddanīti*. An indirect reference is made to Hemacandra, the noted Prakrit grammarian. (*Sadd* II, p. 170.)

But the author of the *Saddanīti* does not blindly follow Sanskrit grammar in writing his of the Pali language. He is well aware that there are certain formations and uses common to both Pali and Sanskrit on the one hand and there are differences between the two on the other. That is why he explicitly remarks at one place that "Sanskrit grammar cannot fully contribute to the knowledge of the Buddha's teachings, but it can do so partly." (*Sadd* I,p.123.) He even ventures to conclude that "even those who know Sanskrit grammar full well may still get deluded as to the Canonical texts in sequence" and urges students of Pali to master the language, for it contains "ways of expressions that are far from conforming to Sanskrit rules." (*ibid*.p.171) Yet it is clear that he never hesitates to cite directly or indirectly Sanskrit grammatical rules or forms which are also applicable to Pali. The following are but a few examples: as to various flexions of *manogana* or words declinable like *manas*, he gives as examples

*ghatena vā bhuñjassu payasā vā* (eat with butter or milk)

*sādhū khalu payaso pānaṃ Yaññadattena* (it is good indeed that Yannadatta should take milk as a drink)

which are taken from the *Kāṣikā* 2:3:66. (*ibid*. p.157.) In connection with *atthi* and *n'atthi* which he takes to be *nipātas*, he gives a definition of both as *avyaya* which is identical with that given in the *Mahābhāṣya* on *Pāṇini* 1:1:38. (*ibid*. p.397) The sutta 581 which teaches use of the Second Case after words denoting immediate proximity of time or space and the sutta 586 which teaches use of the same in connection with words employed for the definition of an action are nothing but *Pāṇini* 2:3:5 and 2:3:8 respectively. (*Sadd* III, pp.146 & 148.)



## 124 Date and authorship of the *Saddanīti*

Nowhere in the *Saddanīti* is given its dates. Even the epilogue is silent about the year of the work. All it says is that it is the work of one Aggavaṃsa of Arimaddanapura (Pagan) who was nephew of Aggapaṇḍita, whose *upajjhāya* (moral teacher) was Mahā- Aggapaṇḍita. We are therefore certain only of authorship of the *Saddanīti*, but its date or at least the period to which it belongs is yet to be found out.

A few works in Myanmar give or discuss the date of the *Saddanīti*. According to the *Sāsanālaṅkāra* (*Laṅk.*p.118) the *Saddanīti* contains introductory *gāthās* which clearly state that the work was composed in 1697 Sāsanā Era or 515 Myanmar equivalent to A.D.1153 which has been accepted by Western scholars such as Bode (*PLB* p. 16) and Geiger (*PLL* p.55). Even Malalasekara takes it to be the date of the work. (*PLC* p.185.) The date thus accepted falls during the reign of Cañcū I (1112-67). But in all versions or manuscripts of the same available to us the alleged *gāthās* are missing. What Aggavaṃsa tells of in his introduction is somewhat like this:

Those who are willing to be benefitted by knowing grammatical characteristics should study the *Saddanīti*, which I am going to expound on the authority of the learned, the authority which is pure and clean.

The *gāthās* that contain the date as has been claimed by the *Sāsanālaṅkāra* do not seem have been met with by other authors either. For the *Vohāraññattha-Dīpanī* says that the *Saddanīti* was written during the reign of King Kyacwā (1234-50) of Pagan (*Vohār* p.74) which is echoed in the *Piṭakat-thamaṅg* (*Piṭ* p.383) which essentially is a record of Pali and Myanmar works. There is, however, no citation of evidence in both.

But it is the statement of these two works that is supported by the *Mahādvāranikāya-Sāsanāvam̐sa-Dīpanī*, which draws our attention to what is called *Mahā-Aggapaṇḍita-Cetiya* Inscription. The Inscription as reproduced partly in the work contains Pali verses narrating chiefly the pilgrimage of Mahā-Aggapaṇḍita of Arimaddanapura (Pagan), who went to the Mahābodhi Stupa at Budh-Gaya at the age of 37. On his return, however, he died midway in the year 1717 Sāsanā Era or 535 Myanmar Era, which is equivalent to A.D.1173. A *cetiya* was erected where his remains were cremated. Two years later his bowl and robes were enshrined in a temple by his pupil Aggapaṇḍita, who died in 1731 Sāsanā Era or 549 Myanmar Era (A.D.1187).

On the authority of the inscription, the *Dīpanī* argues that if the pilgrim Mahā-Aggapaṇḍita was only 37 years old when he died in 1717 Sāsanā Era (A.D.1173), how many years of standing as a monk his pupil might be at that time? Even, say, he was seven years of standing or 27 years of age, how many years of standing his nephew might be then? How could he write the *Saddanīti* in A.D.1153 as alleged by the *Sāsanālaṅkāra*? Accordingly the *Dīpanī* holds that the reign of King Kyacwa (1234-50) saw the writing of the *Saddanīti* as stated by the *Vohāralīnattha-Dīpanī* and the *Piṭakat-thamaing*.

Thus there are two different views as to the date of the *Saddanīti*: the year 1163 or the reign of Cañsū I (1112-67) and that of Kyacwā (1234-50). It is the latter view that seems to be supported also by internal evidence. When Aggavaṃsa wrote the *Saddanīti* he had before him a number of works of both Sinhalese and Myanmar scholarship to make use of. With regard to the definition of the word *Buddha*, Aggavaṃsa quotes a statement from a certain work. (*Sadd II*, p.228.) Again, while elaborating the root dhar(a), he reproduces a *gāthā* from the same work. (*ibid.* p.339). On both occasions, he does not mention the name of the work, from which the quotation and the *gāthā* are taken. But recently Sayadaw U Silānanda has identified it with what is called *Sambyañ(Thanbyin) Ṭikā*, a Pali grammatical

treatise (SP, p.19-20). The *Sāsanālaṅkāra* (*Laṅkāra* p.120) agrees with the *Piṭakatthamaing* (Piṭ. para 375) in saying that the *Sambyañ Ṭikā* was written during the reign of King caṅsū II (1173-1210). Since there is no controversy over the date of the *Sambyañ Ṭikā*, the *Saddanīti*, which is definitely later, should be placed towards the end of the reign of *Caṅsū* II (1173- 1210) or during the first half of the thirteenth century.

Like the other two grammars, the *Saddanīti* has made great contributions to Pali studies. In fact it has established itself as a separate school of Pali grammar and complementary to *Kaccāyana* and *Moggallāna* students of the Pali language. The *Saddanīti* thus merits close attention of modern scholars. In fact, it was "Beautifully and exactly edited by H.Smith, Lund, Gleerup, as far back as in 1928." A.K. Warder mentions the work to be "The finest and most comprehensive grammar on all questions grammatical analysis." (See his *Introduction to Pali*, Bibliography.) It is the pride of Myanmar scholarship in Pali belonging to the Pagan Period (1044-1300).



## BASIC BUDDHISM

Win Pe

When we talk about Buddhism we usually talk about the Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Path, the Three Characteristics, the five Aggregates and the Law of Karma and Dependent Origination. These are doctrinal elements and essential to Buddhism. They represent what Buddhism is saying. But Buddhism also has the doing. In fact, Buddhism arose not from the saying but from the doing. If you look through Buddhist texts you will keep coming across words like "effort, endeavour, diligence, energy, striving, resolute, unflinching, struggle, exertion". These are all words of action, of doing. Thus, it should be profitable to look at Buddhism from the aspect of doing. Furthermore, Buddhism originated with the Buddha's Enlightenment. Without the Enlightenment there is no Buddhism. Thus, it should be interesting to look at the events leading to the Enlightenment, the Enlightenment itself and the events immediately after the Enlightenment. Such scrutiny should lead us to what is basic to Buddhism.

After Prince Siddartha had made the Great Departure, leaving his wife, his son and the palace, he crossed over the Anomā River. He shaved off his hair and put on the robes of an ascetic. He then made his way to the mango-grove at Anupīya, where he stayed for seven days. He was 29 years old.

"Thus having gone forth from the world I strove after the good, and searching for the supreme state of peace I went to Āḷara Kālāma."

We can assume that Prince Siddartha was no stranger to the religious doctrines and practices of his day. After he was born, the aged sage Asita visited the palace and prophesied: "If he dwells in a home, he will become a king, a universal monarch... But if he goes forth from home to a homeless life, he will become Tathāgata, a fully enlightened Buddha." And saying this, Asita wept.

" Why do you weep? " asked the king, Siddartha's father. " Is there misfortune for the boy? "

" I do not weep for the boy, " replied the sage. " I weep for myself. I am old and advanced in years. When this boy attains supreme enlightenment and turns the Wheel of the Dhamma I shall not be there to reverence him. Hence, I weep in sadness. "

From that time on the king had all kinds of enjoyments provided to divert the prince. However, when still a boy, one day when his father was performing the Ploughing Ceremony, he was seated under a rose-apple tree and there he attained and dwelt in the first jhāna.

Later, he was to tell of this period of his life. "Thus, O monks, before my enlightenment, being myself liable to birth, I sought out the nature of birth, being liable to old age I sought out the nature of old age, of sickness, of death, of sorrow, of impurity. Then I thought, what if I being myself liable to birth were to seek out the nature of birth... and having seen the wretchedness of the nature of birth were to seek out the unborn, the supreme peace of Nirvāna. "

Thus, even before the Great Departure the religious tone had entered his life. And he must have heard of Ājāra Kālāma even then, because after staying at the Anupiya mango-grove he decided to go straight to Ājāra Kālāma in Vesali.

Ājāra Kālāma taught him the doctrine which Gotama comprehended and mastered in no time. Gotama then asked Ājāra Kālāma to teach him the practice to attain what the doctrine proclaimed. Ājāra Kālāma did so and Gotama in no time attained the jhāna of the state of Nothingness.

The jhāna of the state of Nothingness is the third of the four Formless Jhānas. The first is the jhāna of boundless space. Bound space, however vast would still have form at the boundary. In the first Formless jhāna, the meditator dwells and abides in the awareness of

boundless space. In the second Formless jhāna, the meditator dwells and abides in the awareness of boundless consciousness. In the third Formless jhāna, the meditator, aware of the limitation of even boundless consciousness, discards this and dwells and abides in the awareness of Nothing.

Gotama mastered the practice and found out that this doctrine extending to the attainment of the state of Nothingness did not conduce to disregarding, absence of passion, cessation, tranquility, higher knowledge and Nirvāna. So without tending this doctrine he abandoned it.

He next went to Udaka Rāmaputta in Rājagaha. There he comprehended the doctrine taught by Udaka and mastered the practice extending to the attainment of the state of Neither-perception - nor - not-perception. This is the fourth Formless jhāna. The meditator, wearied by the state of Nothingness, so attenuates the perception that there only remains the perception that there is no perception. Again, Gotama found that the state of Neither - perception - nor - not-perception did not conduce to disregarding, absence of passion, cessation, tranquility, higher knowledge and Nirvāna. So without tending this doctrine he abandoned it.

Then he gradually made his way to the Māgadhas and went to Uruvela. There he saw a delightful spot with a pleasant grove, a river flowing delightfully with clear water and good fords, and nearby a village to seek alms. He decided it to be a good place for striving.

He then thought of an image: that of a man trying to kindle a fire by rubbing a fire-stick on wet green wood plunged in water. He can get no fire. Like him are the laymen whose passions are not calmed. So it is in the case if a man rubs a fire-stick on wet green wood even if it is out of water. He can get no fire. Like him are the ascetics whose passions are not calmed even if they have left home for the homeless life. A man can get fire only if he takes dry wood. Even so, ascetics

who are removed from passion may possibly attain knowledge and enlightenment.

So Gotama enters into the ascetic practices. He adopts the well-known practices, the standard practices of that time. Two will be mentioned here.

"Then I thought, what if I now practice trance without breathing. So I restrained breathing in and out from mouth and nose. And as I did so, there was a violent sound of wind issuing from my ears, just as there is a violent sound of wind from the blowing of a blacksmith's bellows. ... Then I thought, what if I now practice trance without breathing. So I restrained breathing in and out from mouth, nose and ears. And as I did so violent winds disturbed my head. Just as if a strong man were to crush one's head with the point of a sword, even so did violent winds disturb my head." He continues to practise holding his breath and it is as if a butcher were cutting his body with a sharp knife or as if two strong men were holding a weaker one over a fire of coals.

Some Devā seeing him then said: "The ascetic Gotama is dead." Other Devā seeing him said: "The ascetic Gotama is not dead but he is dying".

Then he thought that he would refrain altogether from food. But the Devā approached him and said that if he did so they would force-feed him with divine food through the pores of his skin and with this, keep him alive. But he thought that this would be acting falsely on his part. So he decided that he would take food only in small amounts, as much as his hollowed palm would hold, of the juice of beans and chicken-peas and pulses.

He does so and his body became extremely lean. The bones of his spine when bent and straightened were like a row of spindles through the little food. As the beams of an old shed stick out, so did the ribs stick out through the little food. And as in a deep well the deep low-lying sparkling of the waters is seen, so in his eyesockets was seen

the deep low-lying sparkling of his eyes through the little food. When he thought he would touch the skin of his stomach he actually took hold of the spine and when he thought he would touch the spine he took hold of the skin of his stomach, so much did the skin of his stomach cling to the spine through the little food.

Then he thought, those ascetics in the past, who have suffered sudden, sharp, keen, severe pains at the most have not suffered more than this. Similarly of those in the future and the present.

" But by this severe mortification I do not attain superhuman truly noble knowledge and insight. Perhaps there is another way to enlightenment."

Then he realised that once when his father was performing the Ploughing Ceremony, he had sat under the rose-apple tree and attained and dwelt in the first jhāna of joy and pleasure combined with reasoning and investigation. Perhaps that was the way to enlightenment.

Then he thought that it would not be easy to gain that state while his body was so very lean. So he decided to take solid food, rice and sour milk.

At that time there were five ascetics attending him with the thought that if he gained the Truth, he would teach them. When they saw him take solid food they left him in disgust saying: "The ascetic Gotama lives in abundance, he has given up striving, and has turned to a life of abundance."

When he decided to take usual food again, it was given him by a girl, Sujātā, who had come to offer milk-rice to the guardian god of the tree under which Gotama sat. Gotama bathed in the near by Nerañjarā River and took his meal. He then passed the day in a grove of sal-trees. In the evening he went along a wide road towards the Bodhi-tree. On the way, a grass-cutter Sotthiya, gave him eight handfuls of grass. With these he made a seat under the Bodhi-tree



and sat down cross-legged and upright. He resolved not to rise till he had gained enlightenment.

We might now pause to review Gotama's life experience to this moment in time. First, there were the years of luxurious pleasure.

"I was delicate, O monks, extremely delicate, excessively delicate. In my father's dwellings lotus-pools had been made, in one blue lotuses, in another red, in another white, all for my sake. I used no sandalwood that was not of Benares, my dress was of Benares cloth, my tunic, my under-robe and cloak. Night and day a white parasol was held over me so that I should not be touched by cold or heat, by dust or weeds or dew. I had three palaces, one for the cold season, one for the hot and one for the season of rains. Through the four rainy months, in the palace for the rainy season, entertained by female minstrels I did not come down from the palace."

Then came the angst or ennui as you might wish to call it, or the resultant of accumulated doings in the past, *pāramī*, as I should call it. He was shaken out of his ease by the sight of an old man.

"Then, O monks, did I, endowed with such majesty and such excessive delicacy, think thus, "an ignorant, ordinary person, who is himself subject to old age, not beyond the sphere of old age, on seeing an old man is troubled, ashamed, and disgusted, extending the thought to himself. I too am subject to old age, not beyond the sphere of old age; and, should I, who am subject to old age, not beyond the sphere of old age, on seeing an old man be troubled, ashamed and disgusted"

"This seemed to me not fitting. As I thus reflected on it, all the elation in youth utterly disappeared."

And so he left home for the homeless life.

On the one hand, delicate luxury. On the other, severe selfmortification. Ascetics adopted many ways to rid themselves of passion. They washed themselves in sacred rivers, bathing continuously. They

sat continuously before burning fires. They lay on a bed of nails. They lived and behaved like cattle, believing that human passions would not rise. Then they tried to starve themselves or to hold the breath. All these ascetic practices, Gotama experienced in a severe form and he knew their limits.

Then there were the third and fourth of the Formless jhāna: the jhāna of Nothingness and the jhāna of Neither-perception-nor-not-perception. These are very abstract jhāna. They do not meet Gotama's need because they do not go beyond themselves. An ascetic who has attained these jhāna might think that Nothingness is the end of passion or that Neither-perception-nor-not-perception is the end of passion. But as the Buddha said, this one is still world-bound, he still has not gone out of this world.

Then there were the four jhāna of Form, the first of which he had dwelt in when his father was performing the Ploughing Ceremony. Ascetics were afraid of these jhāna because the first three contained bliss as a jhāna element.

The component elements of the first jhāna are initial and sustained investigation, joy, bliss and one-pointedness of mind. The elements of the second jhāna are joy, bliss and one-pointedness of mind. The elements of the third jhāna are bliss and one-pointedness of mind. The elements of the fourth jhāna are equanimity and one-pointedness of mind.

When it was clear that self-mortification would not lead to supreme knowledge, Gotama considered that the way of jhāna was perhaps the way to enlightenment. To get to the first jhāna, one has to remove the five hindrances. These are sensuality, ill-will, sloth and torpor, agitation and doubt. Since these hindrances have already been removed, the first jhāna is without sensual desires and without evil thoughts though it contains the elements of joy and bliss. Gotama was referring to this when he declared: "Why should I fear the happy state that is without sensual desires and without evil ideas? I do not fear

the happy state that is without sensual desires and without evil ideas."

While the four jhāna of Formlessness can be ends in themselves, the fourth jhāna of Form can be a very powerful means to arrive at supreme knowledge. For, with the attainment of the fourth jhāna, the mind is concentrated, purified, made calm, free from blemish, purged of taint, made supple and pliable, serviceable, established and unshaken. And it is this mind that is concentrated, purified, made calm, free from blemish, purged of taint, made supple and pliable, serviceable, established and unshaken which Gotama employed as he sat under the Bodhi-tree that fullmoon eve over two thousand five hundred years ago.

In the first watch of the night, he directed his mind to the knowledge of the remembrance of former existences. He remembered his former existences, such as one birth, two births, a hundred thousand births with their special modes and details.

In the second watch of the night, he directed his mind to the passing away and rebirth of beings. With divine, purified, superhuman vision he saw beings passing away and being reborn, low and high, of good and bad colour, in happy or miserable existences according to their karma.

It should be noted that the knowledge of previous existences and knowledge of the divine eye do not conduce to dispassion, cessation and liberation. They are world-bound and still belong to the world. They are useful later when elaborating and elucidating the Doctrine. However, this kind of knowledge is not easily obtained nor perfectly realised except by a Fully-awakened Buddha.

In the third watch of the night he directed his mind to the four foundations of mindfulness. These are mindfulness of body, mindfulness of sensation, mindfulness of consciousness and mindfulness of the Dhamma elements. He passed through these four foundations one by one as it is in their nature. During mindfulness of the fourth foundation he realised the 10 kinds of Insights one by one, succes-

sively. These include, among others, insight into the arising and dissolution of things, insight into what is to be feared, disgust, seeking release, discrimination, equanimity and adaptation insight. Then he gained Way-insight through Stream-winning and its fruition. Once more he established the foundations of mindfulness, gained the successive insights and won the Way-insight of the Once-returner and its fruition. Once more he established the foundations of mindfulness, gained the successive insights and won the Way-insight of the Non-returner and its fruition. Once more he established the foundations of mindfulness, gained the successive insights and won the Way-insight of the Arahant. He directed his mind to the knowledge of the destruction of the fluxions. He realised the truth: this is suffering, this is the cause of suffering, this is the destruction of suffering, this is the way that leads to the destruction of suffering. He realised: these are the fluxions, this is the cause of the fluxions, this is the destruction of the fluxions, this is the way to the destruction of the fluxions. As he thus knew and thus perceived, his mind was emancipated from the fluxion of lust for sensuality, lust for living, lust for speculation and lust for ignorance.

These fluxions or intoxicants flow within us like our blood. The significance of lust for sensuality and lust for living is obvious. As for the third intoxicant Gotama was very much against speculation or the holding of views.

"Each of these views is a thicket, a wilderness, a tangle, a bondage, and fetter of views, attended by ill, distress, perturbation, fever, does not conduce to disregarding, to dispassion, to stopping, to tranquility, to super-knowledge, to awakening, to stopping, to tranquility, to super-knowledge, to awakening, to Nirvana. I, Vaccha, seeing this as a peril, therefore scorn all views. Views are discarded by the Truth-finder. For this has been seen by the Truth-finder: This is material shape, this is its arising, this is its ceasing; this is feeling... perception... the mental productions... consciousness, this is its arising, this is its ceasing. Therefore I say it is by destroying, stilling, stopping, renouncing and

abandoning all imaginings, all supposings, all thoughts of "I am" that the Truth-finder is freed with no residuum."

The average person wishes to maintain the lust for ignorance because he does not wish to let go of what ignorance gives: he holds on to self-identity where there is none, he holds on to something as permanent when it is impermanent, something as pleasure when it is pain, something as delectable when it is detestable. So these fluxions keep flowing within us.

With the destruction of the fluxions at dawn on Full Moon Day, Gotama was fully enlightened, fully awakened and he became the Buddha.

"And in me emancipated arose the knowledge of my emancipation. I realised that destroyed is rebirth, the religious life has been led, done is what was to be done, there is nothing more beyond this world. This was the third knowledge that I gained in the last watch of the night. Ignorance was dispelled, knowledge arose. Darkness was dispelled, light arose. So it is with him who abides vigilant, strenuous and resolute."

The Buddha stayed in the vicinity of the Bodhi-tree for seven weeks, reviewing and investigating the insight knowledge that he had gained. He went through the Law of Dependent Origination, forward and backward and forward again, and the Law of Conditioned Relations, conceptualising his insight knowledge.

"Insight" is such a weak term for the emancipating knowledge of enlightenment. We tend to measure it with the small jumps in logic that we have. But for the Buddha, knowledge flowed where the fluxions flow in us. Knowledge to him was a moral knowledge, an operative knowledge. No deed, act of speech or thought was performed by him without this knowledge in control, without this knowledge leading.

At the request of the god Sahampati, the Buddha decided to teach the Doctrine. He thought of his teachers, Ālāra Kālāma and Udaka but they were both dead. Then he thought of the five ascetics who had attended him. "They did much for me," he said and made his way to the deer park at Benāres. There, two months after his enlightenment at 35 years of age, the Buddha preached the first sermon.

He said; There are two dead-ends which should not be followed by one who has gone from home into the homeless life. One is addiction to sensepleasures because it is low, vulgar, concerned with the worldling, not noble and does not serve the goal. The other is addiction to self-mortification because it is ill, not noble and does not serve the goal. There is a middle way which is the noble eightfold path: right view, right concept, right speech, right doing, right mode of living, right endeavour, right mindfulness, right concentration.

Birth is suffering, old age is suffering, sickness is suffering, death is suffering. In brief, the five aggregates of grasping are suffering. These are material form, sensation, perception, the mental productions and consciousness or, in other words, what we all are compounded of.

The cause of suffering is craving which makes for rebirth again and again. Craving is for sensual enjoyment, craving to be and craving to not-be.

This craving can be totally and completely, utterly destroyed.

That is the middle way of the noble eightfold path.

At the end of the sermon, the eldest of the five ascetics became a Stream-winner.

For five days the ascetics practised under the tutelage of the Buddha. On the fifth day, Buddha preached the second sermon.

If the body were the Self I should be able to tell it not to oppress me. I should be able to say: body be like this, body don't be like that. But since it is not the Self I cannot do so. So also with sensation, perception, the mental productions and consciousness.

The body is impermanent, painful and subject to vicissitude. It is not proper to say of the body: it is mine, it is me, it is my Self.

So whatever body that is in the past, future or present, subjective or objective, gross or subtle, low or excellent, far or near should be viewed thus: it is not mine, it is not me, it is not my Self. So also with the other four aggregates.

At the end of the sermon, all five monks became arahats.

Such is the nature of the effort to attain Enlightenment, the intensity of the effort and its mechanics. Such is the significance of the Enlightenment and such is how the main elements of the Buddhist doctrine fit around it.

The Great Effort is summed up in the Buddha's resolve: Let me be reduced to skin and sinews and bone and let my body's flesh and blood dry up if there came to be a vortex of energy so that which is not yet won might be won by human strength, by human energy, by human striving.

The Doctrine too is simply stated: If this is, that comes to be; from the arising of this, that arises: if this is not, that does not come to be; from the stopping of this, that is stopped.

In the two parts of this formula you have saṃsāra, the round of births and also Nirvāna.

The Buddha turned the Wheel of the Doctrine for 45 years. He passed into Parinirvāna at the age of 80. These were his last words: "All composite things are impermanent. Be diligently mindful."



## THE NATURE OF BUDDHISM

Win Pe

Buddhism is a religion of loving-kindness towards all, of mindful and self-reliant, diligent striving to achieve liberation from the rounds of birth.

Buddhism is not based upon revelation. It is not something which cannot be realised by normal people and so has to be revealed by a supernatural, all-knowing being through chosen agencies.

It was not through revelation that the Buddha realised the truth. He realised the truth with a mind studied, purified, made calm, free from blemish, purged of taint, made supple and pliable, serviceable, established and unshaken. And what he did during the 45 years of his ministry was to teach and exhort people to strive to realise the truth for themselves.

Buddhism is not based upon speculation. It is not based upon surmise and supposition and the following of thoughts wherever they may lead. It is not the outcome of thinking which says: this looks like being such, so that will be thus. It does not concern itself with matters which may be true or false in the light of facts but which do not arise out of practise and are not related to the main goal.

"Holy living does not depend on the correctness of the view that the world is eternal ... Holy living does not depend on the correctness of the view that the world is not eternal. Whether the view that the world is eternal is correct, or the view that the world is not eternal is correct there is yet birth, there is decay, there is death, there are grief, lamentation, sorrow, dejection and despair, the destruction of which in this world I make known. Holy living does not depend on the view that the world is finite ... or that the soul is other than the body ... Whether this view is correct or that view ... is correct, there is yet birth there is decay, there is death, there are grief, lamentation, sorrow, dejection and despair, the destruction of which in this world I make known."



Buddhism is not based upon rationalistic thinking. Rationalism is a theory of philosophy in which the criterion of truth is not sensory but intellectual and deductive. It is usually associated with an attempt to introduce mathematical methods into philosophy as in *Descartes*, *Leibnitz* and *Spinoza*. "These typically rationalistic philosophers tried to evolve systems of deductive metaphysics on the basis of a few premises, axioms and principles which they consider as self-evident or true a priori. But Buddhism in no sense considered certain premises as being self-evidently true and deduced the rest of the teaching from these premises.

At the same time, Buddhism is not irrational; it is rational. It is not unreasonable; it is reasonable. Buddhism does not appeal to the emotions but always appeals to the reason. The *Apaṇṇaka Sutta* is an example of Buddha reasoning with people to put across his ideas. It is addressed to the brahmin house-holders of *Saleyyaka* who are said not to have developed even a rational faith towards any teacher.

To them the Buddha says that there are two doctrines, the one denying survival and moral responsibility and the other which asserts survivability and moral responsibility. The Buddha says that in this situation a rational person would reason as follows:

If a person adopts the first alternative and there is no next world after death, then he will have no cause for regret. But if there is a next world he would suffer. In any case, he would be disparaged in this life as an immoral person. If there is a next world he would stand to lose in both worlds.

If a person adopts the second alternative and there is a next world, he would be happy after death. In any case, he would be praised in this life as a virtuous person. If there is a next world he would stand to gain in both worlds. Thus, it would be better for a person to adopt the second alternative.

This rational approach and tone of reasonableness permeates the teachings of the Buddha.

Buddhism is verifiable and places much stress on verification. This verification must be done by the person who wishes to know. In a historical period when a statement would have appeared authoritative only when it was handed down by a long line of teachers, the Buddha stressed that he had seen it by himself and had not heard it from another recluse or brahmin. He preached what he himself had verified to be true and he required others to verify the truth by themselves, personally and individually. Not that his knowledge was incommunicable and subjective. The Buddha said that he could instruct an intelligent person to verify for himself what the Buddha had himself verified. "Let an intelligent person come to me, sincere, honest and straightforward; I shall instruct him and teach the doctrine so that on my instructions he would conduct himself in such a way that before long he would himself know and himself see."

The Buddha's Dhamma is described as "bearing fruit in this life before long, an invitation to come and see, leading to the goal and verifiable by the wise."

Faith or belief is only a first step. It may not even be a necessary step. A person associates with the Dhamma out of faith but the person knows truly only out of understanding.. "With faith arisen, he approaches and associates with the teacher; thus associating he gives ear, giving ear he listens to the doctrine, listening to the doctrine he bears it in mind; he then examines the meaning of the doctrine he has borne in mind, thus examining the meaning he approves of it, approving of it the desire to try it out arises; with desire arisen he exerts himself, having exerted himself he considers it; having considered he puts forth effort; putting forth effort, he himself experiences the highest truth and sees it, having penetrated it with his understanding."

Buddhism is not based upon intuition. Intuition is the ability to understand a truth without preliminary logical reasoning. On the surface it might look like a direct and infallible realisation of the truth. In fact, behind the ability suddenly to grasp a truth are much accumulated thinking and reasoning. In any case, intuition is the type of cognitive activity held out by *Descartes* when he stated that the deductive form of proof rests on axioms which are understood purely intuitively without proof. More important, the knowledge arrived at by means of intuition is not necessarily true. It often proves to be wrong, so much so that only what is later proven to be right is assigned to the act of intuition. Otherwise, it is taken to be simply false thinking. Often the thought brought forth by intuition is only a hunch with all its attendant uncertainties. Buddhism's way of realising the truth is not this.

Buddhism is not the result of Jhāna. Certainly, Jhāna is a great help, but it does not lead to Nibbāna. When the future Buddha left home he went to Ajāra Kālāma who taught him how to attain the seventh Jhāna and then to Udaka who taught him how to attain the eighth Jhāna. This is the account of what followed:

"And pursuing the good, seeking the supreme path of tranquility. I drew near to where Udaka, the disciple of Rāma, was ... Then I said to Udaka: "How far do you declare this system to proceed?" Thereupon Udaka declared that it proceeded to the state of neither perception nor not-perception..... Then quickly I in no time learnt for myself, realised and having attained abode in that system ... Then I drew near to Udaka and addressed him thus: "Friend, is this as far as you teach this system?" "Friend, this is as far as I teach this system." "Friend I also have learnt this system for myself..." "It is an advantage for us, friend, it is a gain to us, who find such a venerable companion in holy living ... You are as Rāma, Rāma was as you. "Come, friend, lead this company." Thus Udaka, my companion in holy living set me up in the place of his teacher. And then I thought: "This system does

not lead to peace (nibbāna)." Then I departed." The Buddha knew that Nibbāna was not the result of Jhāna.

The Buddha was not supernatural and Buddhism is not a super natural system. The knowledge realised by Buddha is within the capacity of the human intellect and the human mind. What is required is earnestness and resolution. "Wherefore, I say unto you, monks this is how you must train yourselves: We will not shrink back but will struggle on, with this thought: Let me be reduced to skin and sinew and bones and let body's flesh and blood dry up if there came to be a vortex of energy so that which is not yet won might be won by human strength, by human energy, by human striving. This is how you must train yourselves."

Buddhism may be human but the realisations at each stage of striving towards the goal are not common everyday experience and knowledge. To be mindful of the processes as they are in themselves is not common; to know the arising and passing away of the formations is not common; to acquire equanimity regarding all the formations is not common. "To see in the seen only what is seen, to hear in the heard only what is heard," is not common.

Buddhism is moral. There is a correlation between good conduct and a happy state and bad conduct and an unhappy state. "A man may find pleasure in evil as long as his evil has not given fruit; but when the fruit of evil comes then that man finds evil indeed. A man may find pain in doing good as long as his good has not given fruit: but when the fruit of good comes then that man finds good indeed."

There is no escape from this moral law. "When a man's action is performed through desire...hatred...delusion, arises from desire...hatred...delusion, is caused by desire...hatred...delusion, has its origin in desire...hatred...delusion, wherever his individuality exists there that action ripens, and wherever it ripens, there he experiences the result of that action, whether it arises in the present world or in another life."

Buddhism is ethical. The Buddha exhorts: abandon the taking of life, abandon the taking of what is not given, abandon unchastity, abandon lying speech, abandon slanderous speech, abandon harsh speech, abandon frivolous chatter, abandon the taking of intoxicants, abandon what is wrong, abandon what is evil.

Buddhism is suffused with loving-kindness. Buddhists should train themselves thus: We will abide steady and compassionate, with loving-kindness in our mind and no hatred therein; and we will abide suffusing such and such a person with mind full of loving-kindness and beginning from this we will suffuse the whole world with mind full of loving-kindness, great, expanding, unmeasured, without enmity, without ill-will. As a mother even with her life protects her child, so let one cultivate a loving heart without measure towards all beings. "For hate is not conquered by hate, hate is conquered by love. This is eternal law."

Buddhism is self-reliant. A striving person has to use his own strength of will, steadiness of concentration and clarity of understanding. In the human person there is nothing beyond human nature which can be conceived or got at. So there is no possibility of being saved from that quarter. And the Buddha is only a teacher, a guide. A Buddha but shows the way. Liberation is not gratuitous; it is not attained through an act of grace. It has to be won by striving.

Buddhism has a long perspective; birth, decay and death are not confined to this one life. There was a death before this birth and there will be a birth after this death. And there was a birth before the death before this birth...

"Without beginning or end, monks, is the round of births. There cannot be discerned the first beginning of beings, who sunk in ignorance and bound by thirst, are incessantly becoming again and again in a new birth."

The moral and ethical implications of this long perspective are tremendous. How should a person conduct himself if the consequences of his act will reverberate through time? Given this unending perspective that person is fortunate who can ponder the question: will you strive to end this round of births?

So knowing the disease for what it is and its cure Buddhism is not pessimistic.

"Through a long time, you have experienced the death of the mother, the death of the father, the death of the son, the death of the daughter, the death of the brother and sister, through a long time you were oppressed by sickness. And while the death of the mother, the death of the father, the death of the son, the death of the daughter, the death of the brother and sister, the loss of wealth, the pain of sickness was your lot, while you were united to the disliked, separated from the liked, running from birth to death, from death to birth you have shed on this long way truly more tears than water is contained within the four great oceans...

"And thus, O monks, through a long time you have experienced suffering, pain and misery and enlarged the burying-ground, truly long enough to be disgusted with the formations, long enough to turn away from them."

And this turning away is done by taking the Eightfold Noble Path: right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

If there were no possibility of turning away and of liberation from the rounds of birth then Buddhism were truly pessimistic. But because there is the possibility of turning away and of liberation from the rounds of birth, Buddhism is joy. Listen to one who found that joy, *Aṅgulimāla*, the one-time dreaded bandit.

"Deep in the wild beneath some forest tree ,  
Or in the mountain cave, is't here, is't there,  
So have I stood and let my throbbing heart  
Transported beat. Happy I go to rest  
And pass the day, happy I lead my life.  
Escaped from snare of evil.  
Oh behold!  
The Master's sweet compassion shown to me."

The king of *Kosala* told the Buddha that he found the Buddha's disciples "joyous and happy, exultant and jubilant, buoyant and fervent, without care or worry, tranquil, with mind as creature of the wild. Surely, thought I, this is due to you and your teaching." Pessimists cannot practise such joy.

The primary element in Buddhism is the understanding of Anatta.

There is something that everyone desires above riches and health. That something is self-identity. What everyone desires and clings to is the notion of a separate self that is imperishable, immutable and essential. An Ego, an I that persists beyond change and death for evermore. And if such desire for the notion of a persisting self through an endless series of existences is not possible, then people cling to and desire the notion of a self, an Ego, an I which, beyond the death of this life, or at the end of a developing series of lives, will finally come to rest in a union or communion with something that is imperishable, immutable and essential. The first is an attempt to seek self-identity, an I, in something within the self. The second is an attempt to seek self-identity, an I, in something beyond the self.

Buddhism says that both attempts are futile, wrong-headed and misguided. The I cannot be got at within the self. Even less so can it

be got at beyond the self. What can be got at within the human form of becoming are the physical body, perception, feeling, volition and general consciousness and nothing more. These are the common components of human nature.

But these common components of human nature have a continuing characteristic. They afflict and are afflicted. If they were beyond human nature and possessed the qualities of imperishability, immutability and essentiality, it might be said of them: corporeality (body) do not afflict and be afflicted; perception, do not afflict and be afflicted; feeling, do not afflict and be afflicted; volition, do not afflict and be afflicted; consciousness, do not afflict and be afflicted." But that cannot be said of them.

In the same way, they are not disposable. If they were beyond human nature and possessed the qualities of imperishability, immutability and essentiality, it might be said of them: "Corporeality, be like this, do not be like that; perception, be like this, do not be like that; feeling, be like this, do not be like that; volitional formations be like this, do not be like that; consciousness, be like this, do not be like that." But that cannot be said of them. They are not disposable. And the fact that they are not disposable demonstrates that there is nothing that has the power to dispose them.

Expanding the finding, it will be seen that there was no body in the past, as there is no body now, nor any body in the future, nor any body within, nor any body without, nor any body that is gross, nor any body that is subtle, nor any body that is interior, nor any body that is superior, nor any body that is near, nor any body that is far that do not afflict nor be afflicted, nor any body that may be disposed.

Therefore, it may not be said of the body: "This is mine, this I am, this is my I. "The wise person will say of the body:" This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my I.



"And so with perception, feeling, volitional formations and consciousness which constitute all that there are in human nature.

This is where Buddhism differs crucially from other religions. It is **Anatta**.

