

**A Critical Study of Monastic Education in Myanmar  
AD 1044 (Bagan Period) to AD 1885 (Kone Baung Period)**

**THESIS**

**SUBMITTED TO THE**

**BABASAHEB BHIMRAO AMBEDKAR UNIVERSITY  
(A CENTRAL UNIVERSITY) LUCKNOW**

**BABASAHEB  
BHIMRAO  
AMBEDKAR  
UNIVERSITY**



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ESTABLISHED 1996**

**FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**IN**

**HISTORY**

**SUBMITTED BY:**

**THAW BA NA**

**ENROLLMENT NO. 426/15**

**UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF  
PROF. SHURA DARAPURI**

**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY**

**SCHOOL FOR AMBEDKAR STUDIES**

**BABASAHEB BHIMRAO AMBEDKAR UNIVERSITY**

**(A CENTRAL UNIVERSITY)**

**VIDYA VIHAR, RAEBARELI ROAD LUCKNOW-226025**

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2019

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work embodied in this thesis entitled **A Critical Study of Monastic Education in Myanmar AD 1044 (Bagan Period) to AD 1885 (Kone Baung Period)** carried out by me under the supervision of **Prof. Shura Darapuri**, Professor Department of History, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (A Central University) Lucknow is an original work and it has not been previously submitted in part or full for any other degree or diploma in this or any other university. This is also to certify that this thesis is free from all kinds of plagiarism.

Place: Lucknow

Date: 12-09-2019

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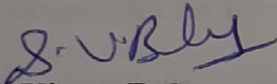
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## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis titled **A Critical Study of Monastic Education in Myanmar AD 1044 (Bagan Period) to AD 1885 (Kone Baung Period)** submitted by **Mr. Thaw Ba Na** is an original research work and has not been previously submitted in part or full for the award of any other degree or diploma to this or any other University.

This thesis submitted to Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University Lucknow satisfies all the requirements as stipulated in the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) regulations- 1999 as amended in 2008/2010/2013 and it is fit for submission and evaluation for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the University.

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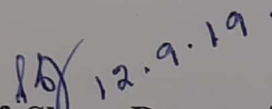
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# CONTENTS

S.N.	CHAPTER'S NAME	PAGE NO.
1.	<b>CHAPTER-1</b>	
	<b>THE MONASTIC SCHOOLS PLAY IMPORTANT ROLE IN MYANMAR</b>	<b>1-51</b>
	1.1. Introduction	1-2
	1.2. Monastic Education	2-3
	1.3. Historical Background of Buddhism and Pali Canonical Texts Used in Monastic Education	3-9
	1.3.1. Arriving Theravada Buddhism in Myanmar	9-10
	1.3.2. The Circumstance in Myanmar Before the Buddha Arose	10-11
	1.3.3. Introduction of Buddhism in Myanmar	11-12
	1.3.4. The First Five Foremost Actions	12-13
	1.4. The Circumstance of Myanmar and the First Great Buddhist Council	13
	1.4.1. The Circumstance of Myanmar and the Second Great Buddhist Council	14
	1.4.2. The Circumstance of Myanmar and the Fourth Great Buddhist Council	14
	1.4.3. The Fifth Great Buddhist Council in Myanmar	15
	1.4.4. The Sixth Great Buddhist Council in Myanmar	15-16
	1.5. Religious Conditions in Majjhima-desa	16-18
	1.5.1. Nine Missionary works and Nine Countries	19-21
	1.5.2. The Arrival of Buddhism to Suvannabhumi kingdom of Myanmar	21-26
	1.5.3. Vesali Kingdom	27
	1.5.4. The Emergence of Buddhism to Beikthano and Sriksetra	27-28
	1.6. The Bagan Period and the Buddha Sasana	29-30
	1.6.1. The Background Story of Monastic Education in Bagan period (1044 1287 AD)	30-33
	1.6.1.1. Early Art Historical Studies in Myanmar	34-37
	1.6.1.2. The Attentions of Monastic Education	37
	1.6.1.3. Teacher	38
	1.6.1.4. The Distinguished Monks	38-41
	1.6.2. Morality and Monastic Education	42-43
	1.6.3. A Monastic Religion in Myanmar	43-46
	1.6.3.1. Learners (Students)	46
	1.6.3.2. Schools	46--47
	1.6.3.3. Literature and Languages	47-50
1.7.	Summary	50-51

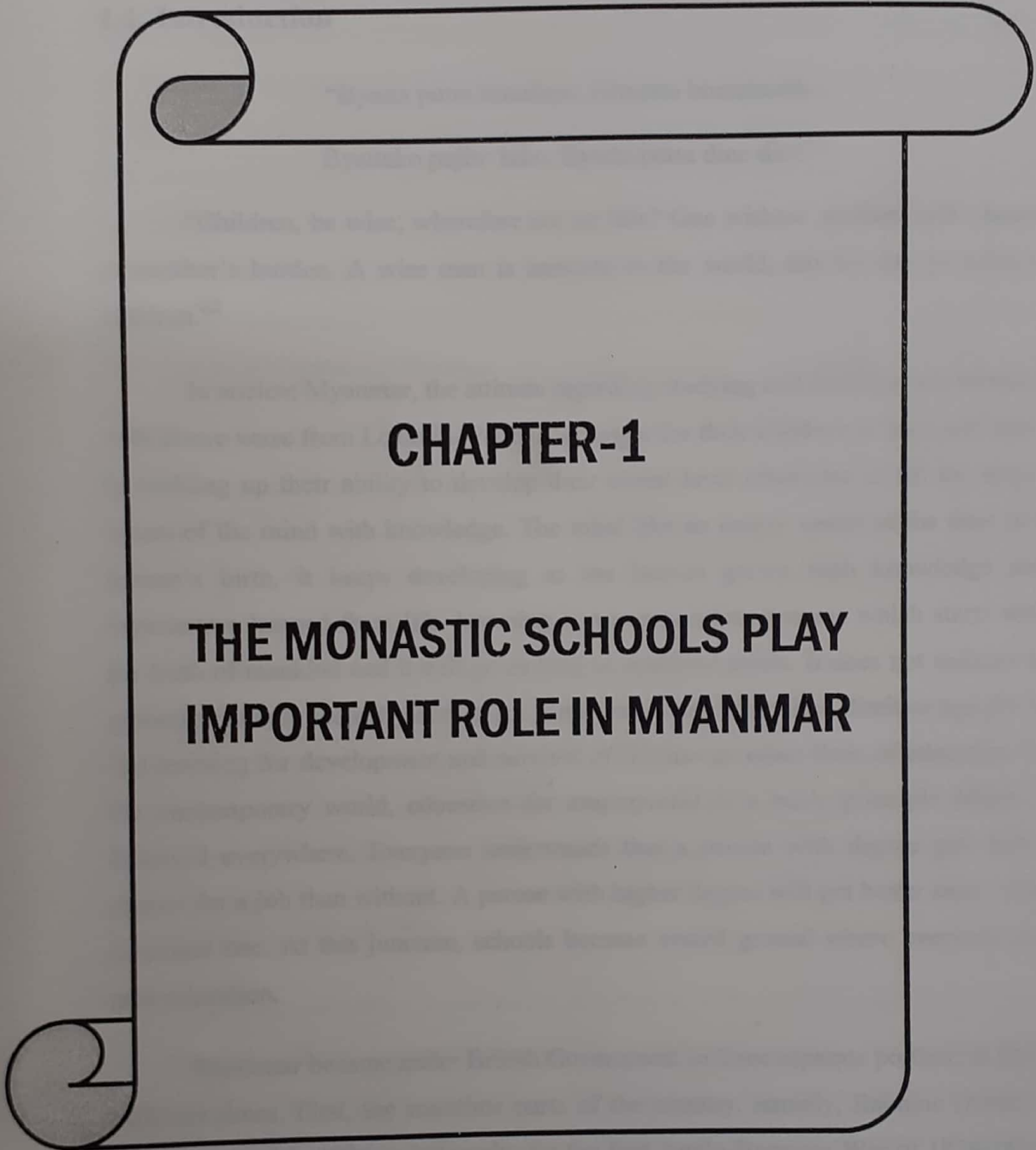
<b>CHAPTER 2</b>	
<b>STRENGTHENING MONASTIC SCHOOL EDUCATION IN MYANMAR</b>	<b>52-110</b>
2.1. Introduction	52-55
2.2.1. A Brief History of Buddhist Education in Myanmar	55-58
2.2.2. Informal Education	58-61
2.2.3. Formal Education	61
2.4. Sagaing Dynasty and Ava Dynasty	62
2.4.1. The Five Greatest Benefactors	62-70
2.4.2. Mother and Father, the Great Benefactors	71
2.4.2.1. Notable Points Concerning the Greatest Benefactors	71
2.4.2.2. The First Teachers	72
2.4.2.3. Parents are Like Brahmas	72-73
2.4.2.4. Maternal Instinct	73
2.4.2.5. Gratitude that could not be Fully Repaid	73-74
2.4.2.6. The Best Way to Repay One's Gratitude	74-75
2.4.2.7. Gratitude to Teachers	75
2.4.3. Traditional Culture of Myanmar People	75-76
2.4.3.1. Knowing the Gratitude of Teachers	76-77
2.4.3.2. A Pupil Who Obeys His Teacher	77-78
2.4.3.3. Prince of Baranasi	78-80
2.5. Famous Scholars and the Homily of some Scholars	80
2.5.1. The Homily of the Venerable Shin Maharatthasara	80-81
2.5.2. The Homily of the Shin Mahasilavamsa	81-82
2.5.3. The Homily of Nyaung Bin Thar U Ponnya	82
2.5.4. The Homily of Pho Thu Daw U Nu	83
2.5.5. The Homily of Myanmar Traditions.	83
2.5.6. The Homily of the Venerable Sardon Sayadaw	83-84
2.5.7. The Homily of Editor U Ponnya	84-
2.5.8. The Homily of the Reverend Kan Taw Min Kaung Sayadaw	84-85
2.5.9. Taung Phi lar Sayadaw's Homily	85
2.5.10. Admonition to Dighavu	85
2.5.11. The Homily of Lon daw Sayadaw	85-86
2.5.12. The Homily of Kyee Kan Shin Gyi	86
2.5.13. The Homily of Paukkam Maung Cho	87
2.6. The Duties as shown in Singalovada Sutta	87
2.6.1. Five Kinds of Duty for Sons and Daughters.	87-88
2.6.2. Five Kinds of Duty for Parents	88
2.6.3. Five Kinds of Duty for a Pupil	88
2.6.4. Five Kinds of Duty for a Teacher	88-89

2.6.5. Five Kinds of Duty for a Husband	89
2.6.6. Five Kinds of Duty for a Wife	89
2.6.7. Five Kinds of Duty for a Good Friend	89
2.6.8. Five Kinds of Duty for a Beneficiary	89-90
2.6.9. Five Kinds of Duty for a Master	90
2.6.10. Five Kinds of Duty for a Servant	90
2.6.11. Five Kinds of Duty for Laymen	90
2.6.12. Six Kinds of Duty for Bhikkhus	91
2.6.13. Six Kinds of Duty for a Leader	91
2.7. Thirty-eight kinds of Blessings (Mangala Sutta)	91-92
2.7.1. Mangala Sutta in Pali	92-93
2.7.2. Explanation of each blessing	93-97
2.8. The Causes of Downfall according to <i>Parabhava Sutta</i>	97-98
2.8.1 The Causes of becoming a Wretch ( <i>Vasala Sutta</i> )	98-100
2.9. Four Factors of Endowments ( <i>Sampada</i> )	100-101
2.10. Moral Culture	101-102
2.10.1. Polite Manners	102-104
2.10.2. Verbal Politeness	104-105
2.10.3. Mental Politeness	105
2.10.4. The Civilized Terms Concerning Alms-food	105
2.10.4.1. Rules for Monks and Novices	105
2.10.4.2. Putting on Robes and Dwelling Rules of Etiquette	106
2.10.4.3. Having Food Rules of Etiquette for Novices and Monks	106-107
2.10.4.4. Teaching Dhamma, Rules of Etiquette for Novices and Monks	107
2.10.4.5. Abstaining, Rules of Etiquette for Novices and Monks	107-108
2.11. Summary	108-110
<b>CHAPTER 3</b>	
<b>THE ROLE OF SANGHA INSTITUTION IN CUSTOMARY SOCIETY</b>	<b>111-136</b>
3.1. Introduction	111
3.1.1. Kings, Sasana and Sangha	111-113
3.1.2. Developers of Sasana in Post-Bagan Era	113-116
3.2. Kings, Sangha and Religious Controversies of Konbaung Period	116-119
3.2.1. King Mindon and his Efforts for the Development of Sasana	119-126
3.3. Role of Sangha in Society	126-129
3.3.1. Sangha and Political Problems	129-131

3.3.2. Sangha and Administration	132-136
3.4. Summary	136
<b>CHAPTER 4</b>	
<b>EFFECTIVENESS AND BENEFITS OF BUDDHIST MONASTIC SCHOOL</b>	<b>137-174</b>
4.1 The Functions and Aims of Education	137-139
4.2 Education Philosophy	139-140
4.3 Buddhism: Its Centers and Learning	140-141
4.4 Essential Aims and General Characteristic of Monastic Education	141-142
4.5 Origin of Monastic Education in Myanmar	142-143
4.6 The First Monastic Schools in Myanmar	143-144
4.7 Monastic Education in Bagan Period	144-150
4.8. Monastic Education in Pinya Period	150-152
4.9. Monastic Education in Innwa Period	152-160
4.10. Monastic Education in Taungoo Period	160-162
4.11. Nyaung Yan Period	162-163
4.12. Monastic Education in the Konbaung Period	163-166
4.14. Significant of Monastic Education in the Konbaung Period	166-171
4.15. Summary	171-174
<b>CHAPTER 5</b>	
<b>THEORY AND PRACTICE OF BUDDHIST MONASTIC SCHOOLS</b>	<b>175-214</b>
5.1. Introduction	175
5.1.1 Conditions of Monastic Education in Colonial Period (1826-1948)	175-184
5.2 Conditions of Monastic Education under Japanese Occupation (1942-45) and during the Post War Period (1945-48)	184-188
5.3 Conditions of Monastic Education After Independence (1948-1962)	188-191
5.4 Conditions of Monastic Education during Revolutionary Council (1962-72)	191
5.4.1 Forming of Monastic School Education Section	191-192
5.4.2 Monastic School Education System under the State Sangha Nāyaka Organization	192-193
5.4.3 Monastic Schools in Theravāda Buddhist Missionary Schools	193-194
5.5 The Role of Monastic Education in Myanmar Education	194
5.5.1 The Buddha and Sangha as Teachers	194-195
5.5.2 The Five Infinite Benefactors, or Infinite Venerable generation by offering classes at their monasteries.	195-198
5.5.3 Management of Monastic Schools and the Donor Tradition	198-199

5.5.4 Monastic Schools Administration	200-201
5.5.5 Influence of Monastic Education in Myanmar	201-207
5.5.6 The Importance and Benefits of Monastic Education in Myanmar Society	207-209
5.6 Summary	210-214
<b>CHAPTER-6</b>	<b>215-218</b>
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	
• <b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>i-xi</b>
• <b>APPENDIX</b>	
• <b>PHOTOS OF DAILY LIFE AT MONASTERY</b>	

THE MONASTIC SCHOOLS PLAY IMPORTANT ROLE  
IN MYANMAR



**CHAPTER-1**

**THE MONASTIC SCHOOLS PLAY  
IMPORTANT ROLE IN MYANMAR**

## THE MONASTIC SCHOOLS PLAY IMPORTANT ROLE IN MYANMAR

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### 1.1. Introduction

“Byatta putra kimalaso, Abyatto bharaharako,  
Byattako pujito loko, Byatta putra dine dine”<sup>1</sup>.

“Children, be wise; wherefore are ye idle? One without wisdom is the bearer of another’s burden. A wise man is honored in the world; day by day ye wise, O children.”<sup>2</sup>

In ancient Myanmar, the attitude regarding studying and learning was identical with above verse from *Lokaniti*. Parents are eager for their children to learn and study to building up their ability to develop their social level otherwise to fill the empty vessel of the mind with knowledge. The mind like an empty vessel at the time of a human’s birth, it keeps developing as the human grows with knowledge and experiences learned from life. Learning is a never-ending process which starts with the birth of mankind and it will go as long as mankind exists. It does not indicate to particular things, subject place, in the same way, there is no time, limit or age for it. Yet learning for development and survival of life has an exact limit of education. In the contemporary world, education for employment is a basic principle which is followed everywhere. Everyone understands that a person with degree gets better chance for a job than without. A person with higher degree will get better salary than a normal one. At this juncture, schools become vested ground where everyone can gain education.

Myanmar became under British Government in three separate portions at three different times. First, the maritime parts of the country, namely, Rakhine (Arakan) and Taninthayi in 1826 as indemnity for the first Anglo-Burmese War of 1824-1826; then the provinces of Bago and Mottama by the annexation after the second Anglo-

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<sup>1</sup> U Tet Toe, *Lokaniti*, Yangon, Sarpe Beikman Press, 1985, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, verse, 17.

<sup>2</sup> James Gray, *Ancient Proverbs and Maxims from Burmese sources; The Niti Literature of Myanmar*, 1886.

Burmese War of 1852: and, finally, the last independent portion of Myanmar, Upper Myanmar, in 1885 after the deposition of the Burmese King by the British in the same year. The conquest of the country was therefore, gradual, and naturally Burmese life and institutions came under the new influence at different times. Thus, for instance, while British rule was changing the economic condition of the inhabitants of Rakhine (Arkan) and Taninthayi and attracting numerous immigrants from Burmese territory, the people of Myanmar proper still lived the old life of a slower pace and greater stability. It was the same with the people of Upper Myanmar when Bago and Mottama were annexed. This being so, the educational conditions presently to be described must be taken as applicable down to later times in some parts of the country than in others. As the instance, while many monasteries were induced to co-operate with the government education department in lower Myanmar between 1861-1886, in Upper Myanmar under the Burmese King, conditions were unchanged.

Education in the Myanmar of pre-British times was carried on almost entirely by Buddhist monks in their Buddhist monasteries. The only additional place for education was that supplied by Lay schools, which taught girls and little boys too young to go to the Monastery School. But the important schools are in quantity as well as in quality and scopes of teaching were based on the monasteries. The Lay Schools were few in number and they were preparatory in nature. They gave an education which was very similar in aims, methods, and the manuscript texts used, to that given in the monasteries, with the difference that they seldom took the pupils far.<sup>3</sup> This chapter will be shown background story of Buddhism, emergence of Buddhism in Myanmar and monastic education of Bagan period.

## **1.2. Monastic Education**

Monastic education in Myanmar is believed to be as old as Buddhism itself and therefore, a brief account of how, when, and in what form the religion was conveyed into the country must be given first, although it has been treated more fully by various writers for their own particular purpose. Without an adequate account of this momentous event, namely the introduction of Buddhism into the land and its

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<sup>3</sup> U Kaung, "A Survey of the History of Education in Burma before the British Conquest and after", *Journal of Burma Research Society*, Vol. 46, 1963, p.9 (Hereafter cited as Kaung, "A Survey of the History Education in Burma")

effects, it is impossible to understand anything Burmese to any great extent. Isolated geographically from the outer world, Myanmar lived throughout the greater part of her history practically to herself, unaffected by extraneous influences arising from invasion, commercial relations with other countries, and similar forms of contacts which tend to change a people towards the acceptance of new ideas and aspirations, and the adoption of new ways of life. But although it lay thus detached, the seed of a spiritual and intellectual influence was brought over the sea from Southern India (Telangana) early in the Christian era, and it took root, and grew, affecting the whole of her life. Moreover, as the aspiration of Buddhism was broadly emphasized on human-beings and not limited to a race or a class so each people and each individual might take its message to the heart in an individual way. In the case of Myanmar, the restraints it enjoined, and the ideals it held up became the occasions for the unfolding of her own inner nature. No one can study any aspect of Burmese life and thought without being struck by the clearness and the permanence of the impress left on it by Buddhism. Literatures developed under its immediate influence, the first authors in Myanmar, in fact, are monks<sup>4</sup>. Even poetry is usually not “personal” but fine rather with that clear-eyed courage and mellow love for all creatures, qualities which have their source in the religion. The influence is equally pervasive in the architecture, sculpture, painting, legends, plays and customs of the country. The very law of the land in fact gradually became Buddhist in its principles and practice from a Hindu origin<sup>5</sup>. The one important extraneous cultural influence before the English Conquest under which she fell was, therefore, of the greatest significance.

### **1.3. Historical Background of Buddhism and Pali Canonical Texts used in monastic education**

The Buddhist doctrine was introduced into the country enshrined in a canon of Texts written in Pali which is for that reason still called the original language or the mother tongue of all men by the Burmese<sup>6</sup>. The teachings of the Buddha were grouped and classified systematically. Like flowers the teachings of the Buddha were put into three baskets, known as Pitaka. Just as the flower-picker selects the flowers

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<sup>4</sup> Ba Thein, “A Dictionary of Burmese Authors”, *Journal of Burma Research Society*, 1920, P 137

<sup>5</sup> See Forchammer, E, *The Jardine Prize: An Essay on the Sources and Development of Burmese law*, Rangoon 1885

<sup>6</sup> B. C. Law, *A History of Pali Literature*, New Delhi: Rekha Printers Pvt, Ltd, India, 1993, p 12.

from the heap of colorful flowers and put them into the respective baskets the bhikkhus select the teachings relating to disciplinary rules for bhikkhus into Vinaya Pitaka, the teachings of ultimate realities into Abhidhamma Pitaka, and the numerous discourses expounded throughout the forty-five years to humans', devas and brahmas into Sutta Pitaka. Furthermore, the theras divided the teachings into five collections according to their length and similarity. They collected the long discourses and put them into one group named Digha Nikaya, and the medium length discourses in one group named Majjhima Nikaya. The group of related discourses delivered to individual devas, or theras or lay-devotees, etc., are collected and put into one group called Samyutta Nikaya. Then, they collected the numerically graduated discourses and put them in' one group named Anguttara Nikaya and the remaining discourses are grouped together as Khuddaka Nikaya.

The Digha Nikaya is the collection of long discourses. It consists of three divisions, namely division concerning morality (Silakkhandha Vagga), large division (Maha Vagga) and Pathika division (Pathika vagga). It contains 34 long discourses such as Brahmajala Sutta.

Majjhima Nikaya has three divisions which are Mulapannasa, Majjhimapannasa and Uparipannasa. This Nikaya is the collection of medium length discourses. It contains one hundred and fifty-two discourses such as Mulapariyaya sutta. These discourses are subdivided into fifteen groups.

The Samyutta Nikaya consists of five treatises, namely;

1. Treatises of related discourses in verse (Sagatha-vagga samyutta)
2. Treatises of related discourses on causal factors (Nidana-vagga samyutta)
3. Treatises of related discourses on aggregates (Khandha-vagga samyutta)
4. Treatises of related discourses on sense bases (Salayatana-vagga samyutta)
5. Treatises of related discourses in large division (Maha-vagga sarfiyutta).

These five treaties are published in three books. It contains seven thousand, seven hundred and sixty-two suttas such as Oghataraqa sutta.

Anguttara nikaya contains eleven treatises:

1. Ekaka nipata (group of one factor discourses)
2. Duka nipata (group of two factors discourses)
3. Tika nipata (group of three factors discourses)
4. Catukka nipata (group of four factors discourses)
5. Pancaka nipata (group of five factors discourses)
6. Chakka nipata (group of six factors discourses)
7. Sattaka nipata (group of seven factors discourses)
8. Atthaka nipata (group of eight factors discourses)
9. Navaka nipata (group of nine factors discourses)
10. Dasaka nipata (group of ten factors discourses) and
11. Ekadasaka nipata (group of eleven factors discourses) comprising three books.

There are nine thousand five hundred and fifty-seven suttas such as Cittapariyadana. Apart from the discourses included in four nikayas, the remaining discourses are included in Khuddaka Nikaya. So, Suttanta Pitaka, Vinaya pitaka, and Abhidhamma Pitaka all three are included in Khuddaka Nikaya. The Khuddaka Nikaya, Suttanta Pitaka contains nineteen treatises, namely:

1. Khuddakapatha,
2. Dhammapada,
3. Udana,
4. Itivuttaka,
5. Suttanipata,
6. Vimana vatthu,
7. Peta vatthu,
8. Thera gatha,

9. Then gatha,
10. Apadana,
11. Buddhavarhsa,
12. Cariya Pitaka,
13. Mahaniddesa,
14. Cujaniddesa,
15. Jataka,
16. Patisambhida magga,
17. Netti,
18. Petakopadesa
19. Milinda Pinya

These nineteen treatises are published in eleven books.

The Khuddaka Nikaya, Abhidhamma Pitaka contains twelve books of seven treatises. These treatises are:

1. DhammasartganI,
2. Vibbhaga,
3. Dhatukatha,
4. Puggalapannatti,
5. Katha vatthu,
6. Yamaka, and
7. Patthana.

The Khuddaka nikaya, Vinaya Pitaka contains five books of five treatises. These treatises are:

1. Parajika,
2. Pacittiya,

3. Mahavagga,
4. Cullavagga and
5. Parivara.

In this way the teachings of the Buddha were recorded and preserved well in Tipitaka and Pancanikaya. The successive elder bhikkhus preserved the teachings of the Buddha, holding Great Buddhist Councils and approving the teachings. The teachings of the Buddha thus approved is called Theravada Pitaka. The Tipitaka contains forty books, 16528 pages, as published by the Sixth Great Buddhist Council. The commentaries that give explanation to those teachings are called Athakathas. The sub-commentaries that give detailed explanations are called Tikas. The Elders collected all the teachings of the Buddha and recited them in unison and committed them to memory in order to preserve them.

The ascetic Sumedha received a prophecy from Dipankara Buddha, that he would become a Buddha in future. Then he fulfilled the ten Perfections in his numerous existences for four Asankhyeyyas (Great aeons) and one thousand world-cycles. In the year 103 of the Maha Era, he became Enlightened One as an Omniscient Buddha. Throughout the forty-five years of his lifetime the Buddha expounded the Dhamma and gave discourses relentlessly for the welfare of all beings. The Dhamma or the Teachings of the Buddha is called the Buddha's Sasana. The Buddha Sasana is of three divisions as followed:

1. Pariyatti Sasana,
2. Patipatti Sasana, and
3. Pativedha Sasana.

Pariyatti Sasana means learning and studying the Buddhist scriptures. Patipatti Sasana deals with the practice of Buddha's teachings. It includes the practice of morality and prescribed duties, the practice of concentration and the practice of wisdom. Pativedha sasana means the realization of the Buddha's Teachings, i.e., the attainment of Magga, Phala and Nibbana.

Out of these three divisions Pariyatti sasana is the most fundamental. Since the time of the Buddha, the bhikkhus have been learning, memorizing the teachings of the

Buddha (Pariyatti). The teachings of the Buddha are divided into three Pitakas at the First Council. The three Pitakas are:<sup>7</sup>

1. Vinaya Pitaka = The Basket of Disciplinary Rules
2. Sutta Pitaka= The Basket of Discourses
3. Abhidhamma Pitaka= the Basket of Ultimate Realities.

The teachings of the Buddha are also divided into five collections, namely:

1. Digha nikaya = collections of long discourses,
2. Majjhima nikaya= collections of medium length discourses,
3. Samyutta nikaya= collections of groups of related discourses,
4. Anguttara nikaya= collections of numerically graduated discourses,
5. Khuddaka nikaya= collections of the remaining discourses.

The two methods of division of the teachings of the Buddha mentioned above came into existence in the first Great Buddhist Council which was held three months and four days after the demise of the Buddha in the year 483 of Maha Era<sup>8</sup>.

In the year 100 Buddhist Era (B.E), the second Great Buddhist council was held and the Buddhist teachings were collected and edited again. When the third Great Buddhist Council was held in the year 235 B.E, Venerable Maha Moggaliputtatissa Thera solved the problems concerning wrong views and expounded the Kathavatthu according to the method guided and given by the Buddha. This treatise was incorporated into and enumerated in the Abhidhamma Pitaka. Before the year 450 B.E, there arose Brahmatissa rebellion in Sri Lanka and there was scarcity of food. So, most of the Bhikkhus from Sri Lanka left for India. The bhikkhus remaining in Sri Lanka existing only on tubers and bulbous roots, found it very difficult to maintain the Buddha's teachings. After the rebellion had been put to an end, the bhikkhus from Sri Lanka and India gathered together and held the fourth Great Buddhist Council at Aloka cave in Malaya district, Sri Lanka, in the year 450 B.E.

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<sup>7</sup> Rhys Davids, T.W. *Buddhist India*, New York: G.P Putnam's sons, 1991, p. 10

<sup>8</sup> Geiger. W, *Pali Literature and Language*, Trans, Balakrishna Ghosh, New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, 1943, p. 20

The elder bhikkhus foresaw that if such danger were to appear again, such danger would surely appear again in future. The bhikkhus would not be able to memorize the disciplines and the discourses by heart because of the decline in their power of memory, concentration and wisdom. Therefore, after the fourth Great Council, the elder bhikkhus inscribed all the Buddha's teachings on palm leaves. Since that time, Pitaka canons have come into existence.

In the year 2412 B.E, the fifth Great Buddhist Council was held at Mandalay in Myanmar, under the patronage of King Mindon. In order to make the Pitaka last for a long time, the scriptures were inscribed on seven hundred and twenty- nine white marble slabs. Rajaguru Sayadaws supervised that inscription work to make sure that the inscriptions were correct and exact. Moreover, King Mindon himself managed this work to be flawless by promulgating an order that anyone who could point out an error would get a gold-coin as reward. These stone- inscriptions are regarded as the greatest Book in the world. When the printing press was introduced into Myanmar, the Pali words on the stone-inscriptions were printed and published as Pitaka texts. Then there arose many forms of Pitaka manuscripts aiming at the purification of the Buddha's teachings, the Sixth Great Buddhist Council was held in 2500 B.E. with the participation of elder bhikkhus, governments and public from five countries of Theravada Buddhism. After that council, the purified Pali Texts, Tipitaka, find their way to all Pitaka Libraries throughout the world and they are accepted as the most purified form of Tipitaka. In this way, the Tipitaka-Pali Texts have made a long journey over a period of 2500 years throughout the world. As the duration of time has been very long, skeptical doubt has arisen in some disbelievers whether the Pali- texts remain in their original pristine purity. But, in reality, there is no need to be doubtful about this. The persons who memorized the teachings of the Buddha successively were arahats who were free from defilements and were endowed with great power of memory, concentration and wisdom. Especially, the successful results and attainments received through the practice of the Buddha's teachings as recorded in Pit aka-texts are the best proofs of the correctness and exactness of the text.

### **1.3.1. Arriving Theravada Buddhism in Myanmar**

Over 2600 years ago, the Buddha attained Enlightenment in the Middle Region, Majjhima desa and expounded the Dhamma for forty-five years. Owing to the

Dhamma taught by the Buddha, many human beings, devas and brahmas were liberated from the round of sufferings. As disciples of the Buddha generation after generation expounded the Dhamma, Buddhism has spread throughout the world. In this way, Buddhism was introduced into Myanmar and it has flourished here.

Theravada Buddhism, established and purified in Bagan era, has flourished though out Myanmar. The unity and national spirit of Myanmar citizens have been cultivated by Theravada Buddhism. As the Buddha's teachings have always brought about the welfare and prosperity of all Myanmar citizens, we should systematically study the complete history of Theravada Buddhism.

Long ago, before the Buddha appeared, there arose a battle in India, between the king Pancala and the Sakyan Kings of Devadattha, Kapilavatthu and Koliya. When the Sakyan kings were defeated in the battle, Abhiraja, a Sakyan king of Kapilavatthu fled his country and came into Myanmar together with his troops and retainues. When he reached Tagaung, he founded a new city naming it Sankassanago and lived there. The former residents of Tagaung and the Sakyan race of Majjhima desa were the descendants of the same race called Tibeto Myanmar. Therefore, they could live together peacefully. The time when King Abhiraja founded Tagaung was 600 B.C.

### **1.3.2. The Circumstance in Myanmar Before the Buddha Arose**

According to the authentic records, at the time Tagaung was established in Upper Myanmar, the Pyus had settled in the eastern region, the Kanyans in the western region, and Thets in the northern region, and the Mons in the southern region in the valleys of the Ayeyarwady, the Sittaung and the Thanlwin rivers.

According to discovered evidences the ancient fortified cities of Myanmar were situated thus: the city of Tagaung in the east bank of the Ayeyarwady river in the Upper Myanmar, the city of Vesali in northern Rakhine State of western Myanmar, the city of Suvarnabhumi or Thaton in the coastal region of southern Myanmar, the city of Sriksetra at the site of Hmawza village in eastern Pyay township, and the Pyu cities of Beikthano, and Hanlin in central Myanmar.

It is assumed that the city of Tagaung: had already been founded before the Buddha attained Enlightenment. It is communicated to northern India by the mountain passes, Patkoi and Hukaung. Moreover, it is situated on the Silk Road connecting India and China. Therefore, Tagaung is the trading center between India and China. After the Tagaung citizens had associated with Sakyan Kings and their retinues, the Pali and Sanskrit names became popular. Being the citizens of India, they gave Pali and Sanskrit names to the cities, rivers and mountains in Myanmar after the names they had come across in India. Therefore, the names such as the Ayeyarwady river, the Sallawady river, Sankassanago, Pancalarij, etc., came into existence.

### **1.3.3. Introduction of Buddhism in Myanmar**

The Buddha attained Enlightenment on the Aparajita throne at the foot of the Bodhi Tree in Uruvela Grove of India, in the year 103 Maha Era (600 B.C.). After attaining the Buddhahood, the Buddha enjoyed the blissful peace of Phalasamapatti for forty-nine days, seven days each at seven places, without taking any food. During the last seven-day period of Rajayatana Sattaha, the Buddha enjoyed the blissful peace of Phalasamapatti under the b Buchananialalifolia tree called Rajayatana.

At that time the two merchant brothers Tapussa and Bhallika, from Ukkla Province together with five-hundred carts loaded with goods were travelling to Majjhimadesa for trade. They were guided by a deva, who was related to them in a past existence, to go to the Buddha for paying homage.

The two brothers offered the Buddha rice honey cake made of honey, butter and rice- powder. The Buddha accepted them with the alms-bowl offered by four celestial kings (Catumaharajas) and ate them. The merchant brothers not only had a chance to offer the very first meal to the Buddha but they also had a chance to take refuge in the two Sacred Gems, the Buddha and the Dhamma. They were the very first devotees of the Buddha who took refuge in the two Sacred Gems (Dvevasika Saranagamana). The disciples of the Buddhas (Samgha) had not appeared at that time and so they did not take refuge in the Samgha. Then they pleaded with the Buddha to give them something to be worshipped forever. Thus, the Buddha touched his head with his right hand and gave them eight sacred hairs. It was the third waxing day of Wazo (July).

Then the brothers went back from Majjhima desa to their native land, Ukkala, Suvaññabhumi Division and reached there on the fifth waning day of Wakhaung (August) in the year 103 Maha Era. The King and the citizens welcomed them and venerated the sacred hairs of the Buddha. Then they built a shrine called Tigumba cetiya on the Singuttara Hill and enshrined the hair relics in it. That shrine is now known as the Shwedagon Pagoda in Myanmar.

The Buddha foresaw that his teachings would flourish there forever. Therefore, he himself gave his sacred hairs to the merchant brothers. This was the first and the most significant gift of the Buddha. These sacred hairs are symbols of the Buddha's Teachings and they will remain as long as the Buddha's Teachings exist.

These sacred hairs were given by the Buddha himself during his lifetime and so they are regarded as living hairs and called Sajjvakesadhatu in Pali. It is called Jivamanaka. The Shwedagon Pagoda is the very first pagoda built and venerated in the world.

#### **1.3.4. The First Five Foremost Actions**

- The foremost to pay homage to the Buddha,
- The foremost to offer the first meal to the Buddha,
- The foremost to take refuge in the two sacred Gems,
- The foremost to be given the sacred hairs, and
- The foremost to build the shrines and pagoda (cetiya).

Those who had the first chance to perform these five foremost actions are the citizens of Okkala that is Myanmar.

The Teaching of the Buddha it is believed has been introduced into Myanmar since the time of Gotama Buddha. So Myanmar is a true auspicious land for the Teaching of the Buddha to flourish. The Okkalāpa city was also called Asitanjana or Pokkharavati, Ukkala. Later, it was known as Tigon, and then Dagon. Nowadays, it is known as Yangon.

Historical records stated that the Buddha made a journey to Myanmar as invited by the Venerable Puppha Thera and the Venerable Gavanapati Thera. Many evidences also described that all Buddhas went to any place hundreds or thousands of miles away if there should be a person who would accept his teaching. Therefore, we should not have any doubt about the fact that the Buddha foresaw, by his supernatural power of foreseeing the future that his Teaching would flourish well in Myanmar. Similarly, there should be no doubt that the Buddha visited Myanmar during his life time and taught the parittas, Metta sutta, etc., the Dhamma that would give protection to the land where his teachings would flourish in the future.

Even at the time of the Buddha, his relatives from Kapilavatthu, King Dhajaraja and his followers, on being attacked by King Vidadubha, fled their country and came into Myanmar. King Dhajaraja met Queen Nagasina, the queen of King Bhinnaka who belonged to the first Tagaung dynasty, at Male village. Because they belonged to the same race, they were married and crowned as King and Queen. According to the Glass Palace Chronicle, the book of historical records concerning successive Myanmar Kings, it is learnt that two arahats (Perfect Ones) recited protective verses (Paritta) at the ceremony of laying down the foundation of a new palace. So we came to know that Buddhism has already flourished in Tagaung city at that time. But Buddhism had not spread throughout the whole country yet.

#### **1.4. The Circumstance of Myanmar and the First Great Buddhist Council**

In the year 148 Maha Era (544 B.C), three months and four days after the demise of the Buddha, the five hundred arahats headed by Venerable Mahakassapa Thera held the first Great Buddhist Council in Sattapaimi Cave Pavilion at Mt. Vebhara near the city of Rajagaha where the Alstonia scholar tree grew. King Ajatasatthu gave support to that Council which lasted for seven months. At the successful completion of the first Great Buddhist Council, the Maha Era 148 was written off and the Buddhist Era was established counting that year as 1, that is, the Buddhist Era began at the eighth year of the reign of King Ajatasatthu in Rajagaha, and the fifth year of the reign of King Jambudlpadhaja in Tagaung. The two kings were contemporaries. At that time Buddhism flourished both in Tagaung and Vesali (Rakhine). Because India and Myanmar could be easily communicated by land and by sea, Buddhism spread easily from India to Myanmar.

#### **1.4.1. The Circumstance of Myanmar and the Second Great Buddhist Council**

One hundred years after the demise of the Buddha, there appeared ten unlawful modifications in the Rules of the Order (Adhamma vatthu) which were the causes for the decline of the Buddha sasana. The Vajjian bhikkhus from Vesali preached and practised ten unlawful principles such as that "Bhikkhus could accept gold and money as offerings". They also tried to convince other bhikkhus to accept these unlawful principles as lawful principles. Therefore, Venerable Yasa, a disciple of Venerable Ananda, made attempts to correct these unlawful principles. Owing to his attempts, the arahats such as Venerable Revata, Venerable Sabbakami held a meeting at Valikarama monastery in Vesali. In order to purify the Buddha's teachings, they held the second Great Buddhist Council for eight months under the patronage of King Kalasoka. That was the tenth year of the reign of King Kalasoka in Vesali, Majjhima desa. In Sriksetra, Myanmar, it was a year before the coronation of King Dvattabaung. King Kalasoka and King Dvattabaung were contemporaries.

#### **1.4.2. The Circumstance of Myanmar and the Fourth Great Buddhist Council**

In Sri Lanka (Ceylon), King Dutthagamani ascended the throne in 377 B.E. He built several sacred edifices such as Lohapasada monastery roofed with copper plates, also Maricavatti Shrine and monastery, and the great pagoda called Mahaceti for the prevalence of Buddhism. He gave away one thousand scores of coins in donation towards the Buddha's Teaching. In his reign, Theravada Buddhism flourished very well in Sri Lanka. It was recorded in Mahavamsa that the sixty thousand bhikkhus from Mount Kelasa monastery of Suvannabhumi (Thaton) Myanmar, went through space to the foundation laying ceremony of Mahaceti, the most prominent pagoda known as Suvannamali in Sri Lanka. Being Theravada Buddhist countries, Suvannabhumi and Sri Lanka had mutual relations since then.

In 450 B.E the fourth Great Buddhist Council was held and the Buddhist scriptures were inscribed on palm leaves. These scriptures were checked and edited for one hundred times. In 930 B.E. the Venerable Maha Buddhaghosa left south India for Sri Lanka and wrote new Pitaka commentaries in Magadha (Pali)language on the basis of Ceylonese commentaries. According to the Myanmar chronicle, a Mon monk also named Buddhaghosa from Suvannabhumi went to Sri Lanka, brought the Pali commentaries to Myanmar and translated them into Mon Language.

### **1.4.3. The Fifth Great Buddhist Council in Myanmar**

Theravada Buddhism, established during the Bagan Era continued to blossom in the age of Yatanabon, Mandalay. In 2395 B.E (1214 Myanmar Era), King Mindon ascended the throne and held the fifth Great Buddhist Council with the noble aim of perpetuating Theravada Buddhism forever.

Commencing from the Mynamar month of Tazaungmon (November), in 2404 B.E (1222 M.E), the three Pitakas were inscribed on 729 marble slabs; Vinaya Pitaka was inscribed on 111 slabs, Abhidhamma Pitaka on 208 slabs, and Suttanta Pitaka on 410 slabs. This inscription work was finished on the fourteenth waxing day of Kason (May) in 1230 M.E. Later, when Myanmar lost her independence and became a colony of Britain, Theravada Buddhism declined.

### **1.4.4. The Sixth Great Buddhist Council in Myanmar**

When the Myanmar nationals struggled for independence, they had the intention to reform Myanmar with full development in nationality and religious affairs. After regaining independence in Myanmar, Buddhists held the sixth Great Buddhist Council at Mahapasana Great Sacred Cave, Kaba-Aye. Yangon, in 2498 Buddhist Era (1316 Myanmar Era, 1954 A.D). Two thousand and five hundred bhikkhus from five Theravada countries convened to recite and scrutinize the Scriptures which were later spread throughout the world. Those Pitaka scriptures are now accepted by scholars throughout the world as the purest Buddhist scriptures.

With the generous support of the government and the people of Myanmar and due to the energetic efforts of the Theras headed by the State Maha Nayaka, Buddhism flourishes in Myanmar. Grand and new religious buildings such as pagodas, and monasteries, are appearing everywhere within Myanmar. Two new great Samgha Universities, Pariyatti Sasana Takkasilas, and the International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University have been also established. Seven Tipitakadhara theras, who are well versed in Buddhism scriptures and many other learned Buddhist monks have also appeared. These learned persons are striving for the propagation of Buddhism not only in the whole country including border areas but also throughout the world. Therefore, the Teachings of the Buddha is becoming much more developed and much more purified, and is spreading far and wide.

To sum up, the Myanmar Buddhists have always been living peacefully under the guidance of the Buddha's Teaching. They should take pride in the fact that they belong to a race that arose contemporaneously with the Buddha's Sasana. Accordingly, the present-day Myanmar Buddhists should also strive for the promotion and propagation of the Sasana as much as possible.

### **1.5. Religious Conditions in Majjhima-desa**

During the years between 100 and 235 Buddhist Era, there appeared various religious sects in Majjhima desa. The arahats led by Venerable Yasa decided that the ten unlawful modifications of the disciplinary rules were improper for bhikkhus, and so held the second Great Buddhist Council in Vesali with the participation of seven hundred arahats. Thereupon, the ten thousand opponents, Vajjian bhikkhus, gathered together in Kosambi City and held the rival Great Council in that city. They left out some Sutta, Vinaya and Abhidhamma. They named their council Mahasamghika Samgayana. They seceded from the Order of Theravada Elders, set up a new sect named Mahasamghiti and made efforts to propagate their view.

Later, Mahasamghiti sect was divided into Gokulika sect and Ekabyohara sect. Gokulika sect was again divided into two, Pannatti (Pannattivada) sect and Bahussutika sect. And again, from these sects there arose one more sect named Cetiya. Therefore, the total number of these sects became six. Thereavada sect was also divided into two: Mahimsasaka sect and Vajjiputtaka sect. The former was later divided into two: Sabbatthi sect and Dhammagutti sect. The Vajjiputtaka sect was again divided into four sects: Dhammuttariya, Bhaddayanika, Chandagarika (Anagarika) and Samiti. Again Sabbatthi sect was divided into three sects: Kassapiya, Sankantika and Suttavada. Thus, the numbers of Theravada sects become twelve. Therefore, the total number of religious sects was eighteen<sup>9</sup>.

Although there were various religious sects, only the original main Theravada sect remained pure and correct and thrived forever whereas the other sects slowly diminished and disappeared, fighting and quarrelling with one another. Some sects took up the mixed practices of Brahmana and other religious customs in order to gain

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<sup>9</sup> DPPS Group; *The Teaching of the Buddha*, (Higher Level) 2 vols. Yangon, Myanmar: Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2001, p. 12

popularity. Their practice came to be known as Mahayana Buddhism, being quite different from the practice of Theravada Buddhism. According to the Pali chronicle Dipavamsa, the eighteen sects except Theravada Buddhism are said to be the parasites that rely on the main banyan tree.

After the second Great Buddhist Council, the elder Theras who held Council foresaw the decline of Buddha's Teaching in Majjhima-desa in the future. So, they searched for one who could strive for the perpetuation of the Buddha's Teachings, and they found the brahma Tissa in brahma realm. They went up to the Brahma realm and requested the Brahma Tissa to take up the human life to preserve and propagate the Buddha-Sasana. The Brahma Tissa accepted their request and soon passed away from the Brahma realm and was conceived in the womb of a brahmin lady Moggali. When he was born, he was named Moggaliputta Tissa. He was thoroughly proficient in three Vedas in his youth. On account of the effort of Bhikkhu Siggava, the youth entered the Order of bhikkhus. He studied Buddhist scriptures under the guidance of Candavajji Mahathera. Soon he became an expert in the Buddhist canon. Later he became a very well-known arahat and resided in Ahoganga region.

At that time the Majjhima desa in India was under the reign of King Candagutta of the Moriya dynasty, King Bindusara anointed Queen Dhamma as the chief Queen. Prince Asoka was born to that queen and was appointed governor of Ujjeni city when he came of age. Then he married a daughter of a rich man from Vedissaka city. They had one son, Mahinda, and one daughter, Sanghamitta. When King Bindusara died, Prince Asoka became king. But he did not hold a coronation ceremony until four years later because the political affairs of his country were not settled till then. He expanded the territory of his country into an empire. In the year 218 of the Buddhist Era, he was crowned as great emperor. He offered alms-food daily to sixty thousand followers of various sects other than Buddhism.

King Asoka became a Buddhist due to the teachings of a seven years old nephew, Nigrodha samanera, the son of his elder brother, Sumana. He stopped his donations to heretics and transferred his offerings to the members of the Buddhist Order. The sixty thousand heretics were short of donations. They pretended to be Buddhist monks and infiltrated into the Order of Bhikkhus. They also brought their heretical views into the order. Therefore, the assembly of the Samgha became impure.

So the Buddhist monks did not attend the Vinaya-assembly. Because of the impurity in the Samgha community, the Buddhist monks did not attend the assembly for listening to Vinaya rules (Uposatha), nor did they attend the ceremonies for invitation (Pavaranas) for seven years.

When the king heard this, he sent a minister with the order to settle the dispute and to make the bhikkhus attend the assembly for listening to Vinaya rules. The minister misunderstood the order and killed many holy bhikkhus, who refused to attend the assembly because the assembly was not pure.

When it came to the turn of the king's younger brother, Tissa Thera, the minister dared not kill him. So, he asked the king what he had to do. The king regretted the wrongful killing and felt doubtful whether he was guilty of the killing though he did not give order to kill. So, he asked the samgha about this matter.

Venerable Moggaliputta told the king that he was not guilty of killing the monks if he had no intention to kill them by referring to Tittira Jataka. The Thera also taught him the Doctrine of the Buddha for seven days. Then the king had all the bhikkhus gathered together and questioned them what the Buddha's doctrine was. Only the bhikkhus who answered that the Buddha had Vibhajjavada (Analytical View) were accepted as the right viewers and all those holding heretical views were expelled from the order. In this way, the king purified the order of bhikkhus and the bhikkhus, being now pure, attended the assembly together to listen to Vinaya rules.

At that Samgha assembly, Venerable Moggaliputta Tissa Thera first expounded the eight contents by the Buddha. Then he extracted and explained one thousand discourses, five hundred from Buddhism (Sakavāda) and five hundred from other views (Paravāda), and also expounded Kathavatthu in accordance with the eight contents to refute the wrong views. Then in order to purify the Teachings of the Buddha, he selected one thousand arahats and held the third Great Buddhist Council at Asokarama Monastery in Pataliputta City for nine months. That time was the eighteenth year of the reign of King Siridhammasoka (Asoka) in Pataliputta of Majjhima desa and the twenty- first year of the reign of King Yanpaung in Sriksetra of Myanmar. It was in the year 235 Buddhist Era.

### 1.5.1. Nine Missionary works and Nine Countries

After expurgating the wrong views, purifying the Buddha's Teachings and holding the Third Great Buddhist Council, Venerable Moggaliputta Tissa foresaw with his supernatural power that the Teachings of the Buddha would flourish well in the countries outside Majjhima-desa. Therefore, he selected the arahats who were able to perform missionary work, and consulted with King Asoka to send them to nine countries as follows<sup>10</sup>:

1. A mission led by Venerable Majjhantika was sent to Kasmira Gandhara Province,
2. A mission led by Venerable Maharevata was sent to Mahimsakamandala District (Mysore Province),
3. A mission led by Venerable Rakkhita was sent to Vanavasi (Malaba)of South Dakkhinapatha,
4. A mission led by Venerable Yonaka dhammarakkhita was sent to Aparanta (Koja of west India),
5. A mission led by Venerable Maha dhammarakkhita was sent to Maharattha District (Bombay),
6. A mission led by Venerable Maha rakkhita was sent to Yonaka Province (Persia of Greek Empire),
7. A mission led by Venerable Majjhima was sent to Himavanta region (Himalya region),
8. A mission led by Venerable Mahinda was sent to Tambapanni (Ceylon)and
9. A mission led by Venerable Soqa and Venerable Uttara to Suvannabhumi (Ramanna Province).

Each mission comprised five bhikkhus in order to enable them to attend to samgha affairs. The missions went to their respective places during the Third Great Buddhist Council in the year 235 B.E. But Venerable Mahinda left for Sri Lanka only in the year 236 B.E.

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<sup>10</sup> Bapat, P.V. *2500 Years of Buddhism*, New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1956, p.8

In Kasmira and Gandhara provinces, although the Buddha's Teachings existed for over one thousand years, the true Theravada Buddhism flourished only for five hundred years. Later, Mahasamghiti sect arrived at those countries and the Mahayana Teachings flourished there until 1000 B.E. Then the other religious faiths flourished there.

Mahimsakamandala (Mysore) Province was situated in southern Majjhimadesa. Theravada Buddhism flourished well in this province as well as in Kalinga, Andha, Cola, Damila, Pandu, Malakuta provinces of southern India for more than one thousand years. Many learned commentators came from those provinces.

The western countries of Dakkhinapatha, VanavÈsi, were composed of coastal regions such as Keralā and MalabÈ. Theravada Buddhism flourished well in that region for one thousand years. According to the stone-inscription of King Asoka, Keralaputa province and Satiyaputa provinces were mentioned as the regions where officials for propagating the Sasana were appointed under the religious minister called Dhamma Mahamatta.

Apananta province was the region of Bumbai (Bombay) and comprises Ajanta-elora region and Vinjhā mountain region. Ajantā monastery became famous and Theravada Buddhism flourished well in these regions until 700 B.E. Later, Mahayana teaching flourished there until 1000 B.E. onwards.

Maharattha province was surrounded by the provinces of Andhara, Vanavasi and Aparanta. Theravada Buddhism flourished in this province for over one thousand years.

Yonaka province was situated in the northwest outside Gandhara Province and eight hundred yojanas away from the capital. Yona or Yonaka countries are now known as Greece. In Asoka stone-inscription No (13), it was inscribed that the religious minister, Dhamma Mahamatta and missions of Dhamma niyutta were sent to those provinces. These missions were sent to the Kings of Yonaka country and nearby countries.

1. King Antioka of Syria;
2. King Tulamaya of Egypt;

3. King Antikini of Macedonia;
4. King Magas of west Egypt; and
5. King Alikasudara of Appirochi

Records display that the Venerable Piyuha thera and Venerable Isenesa thera from Parlis went to Yonaka in 500 B.E and expounded the Dhamma there and the Dhamma prevailed there up to 300 B.E. In Turkistan, Afghanistan and Persia, the Teachings of the Buddha flourished up to 800 B.E. The Mahayana Teachings flourished there. Mahayana Teachings also flourished well in Kambhoja Province and Kabul udayana Province.

The border areas of Himavanta region are Nepal mountain ranges, Cinarattha (China), Sikkim, Bhutan, Tibet and Wutan (Khutan, Khotan). In spite of cold weather and rough journey through mountainous regions, the Theras led by Mijjhima Thera performed missionary work there. Although Theravada Buddhism arrived there first Mahayana Teachings flourished later and is still flourishing there.

On the full moon day of Nayon (June) 236 B.E., Venerable Mahinda went to (Sri Lanka). King Devanampiyatissa venerated the Teachings of the Buddha and supported missionary work. He had Mahavihara Monastery built and donated it to the Sasana. Since that time Theravada Buddhism had been established in Sri Lanka. Venerable Mahinda taught the Buddha's teachings together with the commentaries in Sihalese language and so the Buddha's Teachings became well established in Sri Lanka. Then, in 450 B.E the fourth Great Buddhist Council was held in Sri Lanka and the Buddhist scriptures were inscribed on palm leaves, thus, the Buddhist scriptures flourished. Venerable Maha Moggaliputta Tissa foresaw that Theravada Buddhism would flourish and propagate well in Sri Lanka, and that was why King Asoka sent his own son, Venerable Mahinda, to Sri Lanka.

### **1.5.2. The Arrival of Buddhism to Suvannabhumi kingdom of Myanmar**

Theravada Buddhism was introduced into Suvannabhumi, Thaton, and the capital of Yamanya province in 235 B.E. A mission, comprising Venerable Sona, Venerable Uttara, Venerable Anuruddha, Venerable Tissagutta and Venerable Soneya, arrived at Suvannabhumi in order to perform missionary work. At that time Thaton was known as Sudhammapura and ruled by King Siridhghama Āsoka.

Before that time, it is believed that an ogress of the sea was in the habit of eating every heir born to the King. The arrival of the Theras coincided with the birth of a prince. When the guardians saw the Theras, who had strange appearance with robes which they had never seen before, they thought that the Theras were friends of the ogress, and they ran to the Theras to attack them. While Venerable Sona and Venerable Uttara were explaining to them that they were the Buddhist monks, the ogress came out of the sea with her retinues. The Theras drove them away by creating new forms twice bigger than the ogresses. Then the Theras expounded the Brahmajala Sutta to the gathering of the people who has assembled there. Sixty thousand people became ariyas. Three thousand five hundred men and one thousand five hundred women entered the Order. In this way true Theravada Buddhism became firmly established in Suvannabhumi. Religious records described only briefly the facts concerning Suvannabhumi so the accuracy and exactness of facts should be verified. Myanmars do believe that Suvannabhumi was part of Myanmar. Some refer to Sumatra as Suvannabhumi. Some writings describe Davarawady, the country of southern Thailand, as Suvappabhumi whereas others say that Bombai, the western coast of South India or Surattha Province is Suvannabhumi. Therefore, it is necessary to examine carefully the location of Suvannabhumi.

In Kalyani stone inscription, it was inscribed that Suvannabhumi was situated in the south west of Mt. Kelasa pagoda in Yamanya Province. It is in Bilin, Thaton district. It was formerly called Golamattika City. When the venerable Sona and the venerable Uttara drove away the ogresses, they recited thus; “Dipassa samantato Èrakkham thapetva.” According to Parajika commentary, that Pali phrase means “guards have been placed around the island.” So Suvannabhumi could have been an island.

By “Dipa” it is also meant “a peninsula”. For instance, a peninsula surrounded by west Arabian Sea in the west, Bengal Sea in the east and Lankadipa channel in the south was known as Jambudipa. Nowadays it is taken as the Indian Peninsula. Similarly, being surrounded by the gulf of Thailand in the east, Malacca channel in the south, the gulf of Mottama in the west Suvannabhumi was referred to as ‘Dipa’ in the commentary.

The residents of Majjhima desa used to give names to the places they came to, in accordance with the major product of each place. They called an island resembling a sail Lankadipa. Sumatra which produced gold Suvannadipa, an island which produced barley 'Yavadipa' (Java), and Thaton which produced gold Suvannabhumi. Thus, Sumatra was named Suvannadipa and Thaton Suvannabhumi. So Suvannabhumi must be Thaton.

Out of the excavations of Nalanda monastery, a bronze writing tablet written by King Devapala, who belonged to the third dynasty of Pala kings of Vinga Province, and reigned in 900 B.C. (1444 B.E.) was found at the northwest corner of the entrance to parlour room. (Parabaik means writing tablet made of paper, cloth or metal in the form of accordion folds) That bronze tablet stated thus; "King Siribalaputtadeva, King of Suvannadipa or Sumatra, donated five villages in Rajagaya district of Participates country, for the support of Nalanda Monastery. He then offered five villages under his reign to King Devapala in substitution for the five villages he had donated.

Therefore, according to this bronze inscription, the Sumatra Island was directly named Suvannadipa. Thus, Sumatra must be Suvannadipa and That on must be Suvannabhumi. Also in Yamanya story written by Sakkata, Sumatra was described as Suvannrupa, not as Suvannabhumi.

In modern literature, the geographer of 50 A.D, Pomponius Mela wrote that there existed Chryse (gold land Suvannabhumi) and Argyre (silver land Hirannapadesa) beyond the Ganga River and black moors lived on the nearby banks.

In page 37-52 of a book on Geography written by a Greek scholar, Ptolemy, at about 150 A. D. it was written that "If one goes to the south-east of the Ganga River, one will reach Kiradiya first, then Barakura (Cittagong) harbour, and then Argyre. In this country, the cities Symbra, Sada, Beraboona and Temala exist. Beyond these cities, one will reach a cape."

Here, Argyre is Rakhine Coastal region and the cape is the cape of Negrai (Maw-tin- zun). The Zee-gyaing village near Maw-tin-zun is still being called Ngwe-taung-pagoda. And again, Ptolemy added in his writing thus, "Short, strong and tough people lived along the coast of Becinga (gulf of Mutama). In Chinese chronicle, it was

stated that Suvannabhumi produced gold and ivory. The records of Arabian traders stated that Suvannabhumi exported gold, silver, beautiful cloth and spices to India. According to modern records, the land between the Thanlwin River and the Toe River, a branch of the Ayeyarwady River, could be the location of Suvannabhumi.

The natives of this region likely were Australoid, which literally meant pisaca, (ogres). When the Mons reached there, they would not defend themselves and left for the islands. Historians believe that sometimes the ogres seemed to come onto the shores and snatched the babies.

On Kalyapi stone-inscription of King Dhammaceti, it was inscribed that Thaton was formerly called, Rakkhatapura (the land of ogres), and that Htee-saung pagoda in Zoat-thoat village, Bilin township, was built by the ogres. Belukyun (the island of ogres) at the mouth of the Thanlwin River is the distinct evidence which proves the truth of the above statements.

In world history, the research records on Sumatra were stated thus: "At about 400 B.E. a group of merchants from Majjhimadesa led by Sumitta (Sumitra) left the city Srikulama (Sirikumma, Srikulama), which was at the mouth of the River Kaphanadi (Kisana) of south India, by ship. When they met the barbarians who lived on that island they were tortured first. But later, they defeated the barbarians and named the island "Sumitra" in honour of their leader. As time passed by, the name became Sumatra. These traders believed in Hindu Brahmanism, and so Brahmanism flourished well on that island. After four hundred years, at about 800 B.E, some more people from Sindhu Province of northwest India, and from Daraka City of Gujarat Province arrived there. Then they founded the new city, Pasira in Ajja or Achin Province. The new comers were Buddhists. They spread Buddhism among the former residents, and the custom and traditions of Buddhism and Hinduism became mingled. Therefore, it is quite evident that Suvannabhumi to which Venerable Sona and the Venerable Uttara came in 235 B.E was not Sumatra.

Thus, according to the above findings, Sumatra should not be taken as Suvannabhumi. Similarly, Suvannabhumi is not Dvaravati Kingdom, neither does it exist inside India. The country where the Venerable Sona and the Venerable' Uttara came for missionary works must be Thaton of Myanmar. The elder Arahats who

selected Myanmar as one of the nine provinces for the propagation of Buddhism foresaw that Theravada Buddhism would flourish and perpetuate in Myanmar for a long time.

The Teachings which were introduced to Myanmar earlier was not pure but mixed with Brahmanism. That was why the Venerable Sona and the Venerable Uttara expounded Brahmajala Sutta explaining and discriminating the various wrong views. When they had explained thus, genuine Theravada Buddhism became prominent and was established firmly in Suvannabhumi. With regard to the introduction of Theravada Buddhism into Myanmar, one can definitely fix the time as 235 B.E the date of the inauguration of the Third Great Buddhist Council.

The verse beginning with Ye dhamma hetuppabhava was found on the stone-inscription of Savikacandrariya, the queen of King Niticandra (AD 520-575) near Shithaung Pagoda in Rakhine (Arakan). The Pali writings such as the Law of Dependent Origination (Patikkasamuppada), and the verse of "Yedhamma hetuppabhava etc" were also found on twenty gold-parchments excavated from ancient Sriksetra City at Khinba kone<sup>11</sup>. Such usages are the characteristics of Theravada Buddhism and they still remain prominent in Pali literature nowadays. These evidences were discovered from the excavation of an ancient city which was founded in the first century A.D and so they proved that Pali Texts had been widespread throughout Myanmar before the first century B.C.

Thus, the ancient evidence proved that the Buddhism in Sri Lanka propagated by the Venerable Mahinda and the Buddhism in Myanmar propagated by Venerable Sona and the Venerable Uttara, after the Third Great Buddhist Council, represented the genuine Theravada Buddhism. Therefore, Suvannabhumi. Thaton, is the truly auspicious ground for the cultivation of the Buddha's Teachings among the nine provinces to which Buddhist missionaries were sent after the Third Great Buddhist Council.

The main central place of Suvannabhumi is around the Mount Kelasa in Bilin Township, Thaton District. Mons settled there and founded the Mon dynasty. This is a

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<sup>11</sup> Then Tun, *Khit Haung Myanmar Yazawin* (in Myanmar) (*Ancient Myanmar Chronicle*), Maha Dagon Literature Press, 1969, p. 50 (Hereafter cited as Than Tun, *Ancient Myanmar Chronicle*)

coastal region and the western plain of Mottama mountain range was once covered with sea water. At that time the seashore extended up to the foot of Kelasa Mountain which is now known as Ayat-the-ma (Taik kalar) village. Ancient bows and arrows, pieces of anchor chain and pieces of foreign ships were excavated from that village and from Thaton.<sup>12</sup>

Suvannabhumi was known as the Ramanya Province where Mons started their settlement. In olden times, the region between the Sittaung River and the Thanlwin River was known as Suvannabhumi. In 2000 B.C, the Mon-Khmer race emigrated to the river-basins of South-east Asia, and settled extensively in the deltas of Myit-ni, the Mekhaung, the Sittaung, the Thanlwin and the Gyine rivers. Some of them reached even to the deltas of Ayeyarwady River, Brahmaputtara River and the Ganga River.

The Mons founded the city of Suvannabhumi in seventeen hundred B.C. It is one of the busiest trade's centres for Indian traders and explorers. The residents of Suvannabhumi were very rich. The area of Ramanya Province was very wide and extensive. For effective administration it was divided into three divisions: Pathein district, Dalla district and Mottama district each of which was composed of thirty-two towns. Suvannabhumi was also known as the golden land because of its products of gold, ivory and honey. In addition to the overseas trade, it also had overland trade with the eastern countries by crossing over the Tanintharyi mountain ranges. The overseas trade between India and Suvannabhumi was very good.

The residents of Suvannabhumi come daily communicated with the Mon-Khamers residing in the delta of the Ganga River. The refugees from Kalinga province and Telangana province of India left their country, came into Myanmar and lived in Dagon. The former residents of Dagon were also Mon Khamers and so they could live together peacefully. According to a Mon song, it was known that these southern Indians named Dagon "Ukkalapa". Their names were also in Pali and Sanskrit. At the time of fine weather, they visited their native land on ox-carts taking along merchandise for trade. It was said that the land transportation between India and Suvannabhumi had already existed before 600 B.C.

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<sup>12</sup> Elizabeth Moore and San Win, "The Gold Coast: Suvannabhumi? Lower Myanmar Walled Sites of the First Millennium A.D.," *Asian Perspectives*, Vol. 46, No. 1, 2007, the University of Hawaii Press, pp. 202-231

### **1.5.3. Vesali Kingdom**

In 2666 B.C. King Marayu founded Dannawady in the delta of Kaladan River in northern Rakhine State. It was known as Vesali city-state and can be communicated with India by land and by sea.

Before the appearance of the Buddha in 600 B.C. the prosperous city-states such as Tagaung, Suvannabhumi and Vesali were already in existence in Myanmar and these cities had communicated with India by land and by waterway. It was found that the names of cities, villages and people were given in Pali and Sanskrit.

### **1.5.4. The Emergence of Buddhism to Beikthano and Sriksetra**

According to the archaeological research, Beikthano, Hanlin and Sriksetra are recognized as the Pyu cities of Myanmar. In the treatise named "Jambu-kun-char Myanmar Purana" it is stated that there was a great Beikthano city, the research scholars estimated that Beikthano had been founded in 1st century AD and was more primitive than Sriksetra and Hanlin. It had commercial intercourse with China and India and had more intercourse with Southern India. The religion worshipped by the majority of the people was Buddhism which was derived from Andharadesa of India.<sup>13</sup>

As the literature, in 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D, the Pali literature written in Brahmi letters was found in Andhara, India. Buildings similar to monastic dwellings were excavated in Bissano ancient city, so it was known that the standard of upholding Buddhism was high. Modern historians have written that thousands of Theravada bhikkhus resided in the city. According to the Glass in Palace Chronicle Sriksetra was founded in 101 Buddhist Era. In the reign of King Dvattabaung there were three thousand arahats. The King donated four bhikkhus' requisites—robes, alms-food, monastic dwelling and medicine — to the arahats daily. He also built eleven pagodas, namely, Bobo, Nyee Nyee, Si Si, Lyo Lyo, Thokyamma, Myin- bahu, Mya-thi-htin, Paya-taung, two Su-taung- pyi Pagodas and Puhto-gyi, enshrining the Buddha's relics in them. We can venerate and pay homage to them even at the present time.

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<sup>13</sup> U Aung Thaw, "Nauk Twe Pyu Yin Kyee Hmu Ahtauk Ahtar Mya" ("Later Evidence Found about Pyu Culture"), *Shee Haung Myanmar Myo Taw Mya (Ancient Myanmar Cities)*, Yangon, Ministry of Information, News and Periodicals Enterprises, 1996, p. 231

The queens of King Dvattabaung venerated the arahats. When Princess Suvana Mala after listening to the Dhamma expounded by the arahat Venerable Mahayama, entered the Order of bhikkhunis together with one thousand attendants. Later, she became famous as the arahat Sudhamma Theri.

King Dvattabaung permitted his queens, sons and daughters to enter the Order of bhikkhus or the Order of bhikkhunis as they wished. He himself also became a Stream-winner (Sotapanna) after listening to the Dhamma preached by two arahats who were his former sons. The king gave in donation nine-lakh-worth of his possessions daily to four hundred thousand bhikkhus and three hundred bhikkhunis. Both the bhikkhu sasana and the bhikkhuni sasana flourished well in Sriksetra.

The social behaviours of the Pyus of Sriksetra were generally moulded according to Buddhism. The custom of paying homage to the Buddha's images and shrines became popular. Ancient religious articles and symbols proved that the Teachings of the Buddha flourished well in Sriksetra in the second century A.D.

With reference to the twenty gold plates, excavated from Khin-ba-kone, on which the extracts from Pali Texts were inscribed in Telagukanacji script of South India, and one Buddha image with broken head, excavated from Kan-wet-khaung-kone, with inscriptions in Pyu I and Sanskrit languages on four sides of its throne, it can be known that Buddhist scriptures had been in use and the people had possessed a wide knowledge of Buddhism since that time.

Hanlin, a Pyu fortified city, had also existed contemporaneously with Bissano and Sriksetra. Theravada Buddhism might have been flourishing in Hanlin also, relating to the Teaching of the Buddha in Pyu fortified cities before Christ, the Chinese historical records stated thus: When they came to the age of seven, both boys and girls shaved off their hair and were sent to a monastery, where they took refuge in the Teaching (Sasana).

On reaching the age of twenty, if they did not wish to remain in the Order, they let their hair grow again and returned to lay life. Thus, the Teachings of the Buddha had flourished well in these Pyu cities.

## 1.6. The Bagan Period and the Buddha Sasana

Ancient Myanmar founded Arimeddanapura (Bagan) City in the region named Yonhlu-kyun (the Island where rabbits were set free). In 1044 A.D (1561 B.E) Bagan became an empire in the reign of King Anawrahta who ascended the throne in 1044 A.D (1561 B.E). During the late years of Suvannabhumi Period Buddhism was on the decline because of the improper behavior of immoral persons. The Aris who settled down in Samahtee region performed acts contradictory to the Buddha's Teachings. Therefore, the Theravada Buddhism which existed around Bagan before the eleventh century was on the decline.

When Anawrahta became King, he was longing for the arising of pure Buddhism. In the ninth year of his reign, an arahant, named Venerable Dhammadassi from Thaton came to Bagan. The king venerated the Thera and requested him to preach the pure dhamma and perform missionary work. Venerable Dhammadassi, commonly known as Shin Araham, strived for the propagation of Buddha's Teachings with the patronage of the king. They dispelled the Aris from the Order. Then king Anawrahta conquered Thaton in 1601 B.E (AD.1058) and took away thirty sets of Pitaka, the relics of the Buddha and Theravada learned monks to Bagan for the promotion of Theravada Buddhism.<sup>14</sup>

In fact, Buddhism had existed after the dissolution of the Pyu kingdom and before the establishment of the Bagan dynasty, King Anawrahta also requested Elder bhikkhus to get Pitaka scriptures from Sri Lanka also and to co-ordinate the Buddhist Scriptures brought from Sri Lanka with those brought from Thaton, at the Sacred Pitaka library. (Pitaka-taik-kyauung) near the Sarapa City Gate of Bagan. Owing to the brilliant effort of Ven. Dhammadassi and King Anawrahta the pure Teachings of the Buddha, i.e. Theravada Buddhism, was firmly established in Bagan and then it spread throughout Myanmar.

The successors to King Anawrahta were also ardent Buddhists and so they made strenuous efforts for the promotion of the Buddha's teachings by various means. They all strived for the promotion and propagation of the Buddha Sasana in their

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<sup>14</sup> Roger Bischoff, *Buddhism in Myanmar in Short History*, Kandy, Sri Lanka, Buddhist Publication Society, 1995, pp.41-42 (Hereafter cited as Bischoff, *Buddhism in Myanmar*)

reigns, respectively. Theravada Buddhism had become more and more developed and it flourished gloriously since its introduction into Bagan in 1600 B.E. With the contribution of successive kings Kyansittha, Alaungsithu, Narapatisithu, Kyaswa, etc., and the people of Myanmar, numerous pagodas and monasteries were built in Bagan<sup>15</sup>. On account of the brilliant efforts of successive kings in successive ages Bagan, Pyinya, Sagaing, Inwa, Nyaung yan, Konboun, Theravada Buddhism flourished throughout the country.

### **1.6.1. The Background Story of Monastic Education in Bagan period (1044-1287 AD)**

The early Bagan period (1044 - 1113) is the key formative phase of modern day Myanmar's history and art history. The capital of Bagan began its transformation from a local settlement of longstanding to one of the foremost Buddhist historical sites in the world. Concomitantly, Bagan represents the foundations of a Buddhist sculptural tradition which brought together for the first time the various stylistic influences present in Myanmar. At Bagan, these influences would coalesce to form a distinctly Burmese visual and stylistic sculptural repertoire.

The early Bagan period therefore is arguably the most significant period in Myanmar's art history, yet to date there has not been a study dedicated to the Buddhist sculptures of the time. This thesis will address this art historical gap, examining iconographic and stylistic developments in the depiction of the Buddha and related sculptural images from the early Bagan period.

There are three aims, the first being to trace stylistic change and identify the various agencies which contributed to the emergence of a distinct Burmese style of Buddha image. The second aim is to describe a chronologic framework which can be used to assist the dating of Buddhist sculptural images thought to belong to the early Bagan period. Such images may be new "finds" that cannot be reliably attributed to a dated site, or sculptures that come to light in a public forum and lack reliable provenance. A final aim is more conceptual than these very specific goals, and concerns the subject matter of the sculptures that predominated at the time. As will be shown, much of the early commentary regarding Bagan's sculpture was based on a

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<sup>15</sup> *Glimpses of Glorious Pagan*, Yangon, Universities Press, Department of History, 1985, pp. ix-xi

particular understanding of Theravada Buddhism. As a result, interpretation of the imagery was undertaken within a limited framework and misinterpretations regarding early Buddhist art at Bagan were made. A review of imagery in light of an expanded understanding of Buddhism demonstrates that the sculptures of the time are representative of an evolving phase of Buddhism, not just Theravada Buddhism, and this will be achieved through an analysis of narrative images.

The early Bagan period traverses the reigns of Anawrahta (1044-1077), his son Sawlu (1077-1084) and Kyanzittha (1084-1113).<sup>16</sup> Sawlu is usually linked with the Anawrahta period. Historically, Sawlu has not been credited with a distinct influence of his own, and the monuments and imagery associated with his reign are more closely linked to his father's style rather than that of his successor, Kyanzittha. For the purpose of this thesis, therefore, the Anawrahta period covers the years 1044-1084 and represents the rise of Bagan from its position as a relatively unknown town to that of the capital city of a major Southeast Asian kingdom. It also represents the formative period of Burmese Buddhism. The Kyanzittha period (1084-1113) represents the consolidation phase of the Burmese kingdom, and Buddhism's role as a historical constant in Myanmar was secured.

During the early Bagan period there were a number of significant interactions which contributed to the evolution of Bagan, and Burmese culture. Anawrahta and Kyanzittha engaged with India and Sri Lanka, and the Arakan region of western Myanmar. The Pyu and Mon people who were established in Myanmar long before Myanmar arrival also contributed to Bagan's expansion. The impact of these influences on Bagan's artistic development has not been addressed in a systematic way which integrates the effect of these interactions on the stylistic evolution of Bagan period sculpture. This thesis will consider these influences in a chronological framework.

To achieve the stated aims, following this introduction to scholarly research in Myanmar and the particular challenges it brings, Chapter 1 will review recent

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<sup>16</sup> Anawrahta is the commonly accepted contemporary spelling of his name. An earlier transliteration is Aniruddha and this form was frequently used by early scholars. The end date of Kyanzittha's reign is sometimes listed as 1112. His successor, Alaungsithu, came to the throne in 1113. The conflicting year may be due to differences in calculating calendar years which was often done according to the lunar calendar rather than the Western calendar.

research regarding Bagan and Myanmar's early history, and remark on the validity of some key agencies and events of the period. A description of narrative texts relating to the Buddha's last existence from various streams of Buddhism is also included to provide a framework for later analysis of Bagan's narrative sculptures. Next, the Pyu and Pyu art are introduced, as the Pyu provide the link between Bagan's imagery and the rise of a Myanmar artistic form. A stylistic analysis of the principal Buddhist sculptural imagery of the early Bagan period follows, which includes a study of votive tablets, architectural plaques and freestanding sculptures. This comprehensive review of most known and attributable images from the period reveals shifts in the physical appearance of the images which are divided into four discernable phases. The key features of each phase are identified. The usefulness of the proposed chronology, which links contemporary views on Myanmar's history with stylistic change will be demonstrated by applying the criteria to some more recently discovered images, and through some examples of sculptures with uncertain provenance. Relationships between historical events and these phases are also highlighted and it will be shown how the stylistic features of the imagery can help inform our historical knowledge of the period.

Following the proposed stylistic chronology this thesis will then turn to narrative sculptures. Narrative imagery is prevalent at Bagan, in particular, in scenes depicting the last life of Gotama Buddha. As iconographic features are the principal means of identifying the presence of Theravada and Mahayana practices, one approach that can help broaden our appreciation of Bagan imagery and understanding of cultural interactions of the time is the examination of the life story of the Buddha, as told in texts associated with the Theravada and Mahayana schools. Similarities between the stories and imagery associated with the narratives can be used to demonstrate the presence of both Theravada and Mahayana influence. While this may seem an obvious approach, continued focus on the current Theravada dominance of Southeast Asian Buddhism has discouraged the study of non-Theravada textual accounts that can provide further insight into the meanings of this imagery, and a comparative study has not yet been undertaken. The presence of imagery that can be shown clearly to draw on material from both streams of Buddhism provides further insight into the nature of Buddhist practice in early Myanmar. The significance of this finding lies in its confirmation that Buddhism of the early Bagan period was eclectic

and adaptable, and reinforces the need to look beyond a simplistic view of Theravada Buddhism when studying early Bagan period imagery.

The sculptural material reviewed in this thesis is restricted to images that have a strong provenance, that is, they were found in situ, and their 'discovery' documented. These images can be most reliably attributed to a particular time and place, and as such allow integration into the understood historical chronology of the time. In general, the objects discussed are those made under the patronage of Bagan's ruling families and installed in the most significant Buddhist monuments of the day. There are of course numerous small sculptures found in temple grounds or in small shrines that have been attributed to this period. These are excluded due to their variable form, generally inferior quality and often uncertain attribution. While it is acknowledged that the diversity of these images provides an insight into the culture of the time, they were not part of the visual repertoire of the ruling classes. It is the latter that was the imagery being promoted to the public and showcased to the broader Buddhist world.

The focus of this art historical review is on early Bagan's sculptural material, and includes votive tablets, *Jataka* plaques, relief and free-standing sculptures. The most common surviving imagery of the Buddha from the early Anawrahta period is in the form of votive tablets and *Jataka* plaques and by the Kyanzittha period freestanding and relief sculptures become more numerous. An analysis of painted illustrations of the *Jatakas*, the life stories of the Buddha, which are prevalent at Bagan, and other wall paintings falls outside the scope of this thesis though they are discussed in relation to their stylistic characters, and mention is made of the differing *Jataka* recensions that are found in temples of the period.

Throughout this thesis, the term Theravada Buddhism refers to Buddhism of the Southern School. In this context it is synonymous with Hinayana Buddhism, meaning "Little Vehicle". While Theravada is in the strictest sense an early subdivision of the Hinayana, the term Theravada is more commonly used in Southeast Asia to refer to the Hinayana. The ritual language of the Theravada is Pāli. Mahayana Buddhism is the Buddhism of the Northern school, the "Greater Vehicle" and the language of the Mahayana is Sanskrit.

### 1.6.1.1. Early Art Historical Studies in Myanmar

Buddhism has been the fundamental ethos of Myanmar's culture for over one thousand years. The Burmese view themselves as upholders of the Buddhist Theravada tradition, the true doctrine of Gotama Buddha. During Myanmar's golden age of the Bagan period (1044-1287 CE), Buddhism of the Theravada school was established as the preeminent orthodoxy and has remained so ever since. While Buddhism has waxed and waned in popularity throughout most of Southeast Asia since sometime early in the 1st century CE, Myanmar has remained a stronghold for Buddhist devotees.<sup>17</sup>

Evidence of Buddhism is abundant in Myanmar. There are innumerable temples and *stupas*. There are monks and nuns and monasteries. Alms are collected every morning in cities and villages. People make pilgrimages to sacred Buddhist sites. This widespread devotion has ensured that visual representations of the religion are everywhere. The earliest extant Buddhist art of Myanmar can be reliably dated to around 5th century CE, though this date is continually being pushed further back in time as more archaeological excavations are undertaken. It is possible to construct a visual history of Buddhist art in Myanmar from that time through to the present day.

Bagan, recognized as one of the most important historical sites in Southeast Asia, is a virtual treasure house for art historians, with an abundance of material remaining in site. However, while there is a wealth of material for art historians to study, Myanmar's Buddhist art tradition is the least known to the Western world. This situation can be attributed to two principal factors. The first is a political one which initially manifested itself during British colonial rule, with Myanmar being administered as a province of British India.<sup>18</sup> There was little autonomy and for archaeologists and other scholars interested in the region funding was not in abundance for local initiatives, the bulk of money allocated to these fields being

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<sup>17</sup> The terms BCE (before Common Era) and CE (Common Era) will be used throughout except when BC and AD appear in quotations.

<sup>18</sup> This period of Burmese history was troubled, with the British only ever maintaining tenuous control of Myanmar. For an overview of the colonial period see D.G.E. Hall, *A History of South-East Asia*, 4th edition (London: MacMillan 1981), 625-59, 770-76. Myanmar was recognized by the British as a fully independent country in January 1948, though effective British control of Myanmar ceased during the early years of World War II.

directed to Indian archaeological pursuits.<sup>19</sup> With only modest support, archaeological and art historical research in Myanmar fell behind that of the neighboring regions of Thailand and Cambodia. When an independent Myanmar effectively isolated itself from the West from the 1960s until the early 1990s, it coincided with a crucial period in the development of Southeast Asian studies in the Western world. This extended period of exile from the international scholarly community coming not long after a colonial period which, while not discouraging of historical and archaeological research was not encouraging either, saw our knowledge of Myanmar's history and culture only modestly enhanced over the course of nearly a century.

A second factor is less direct and the result of historical happenstance. Scholars such as Duroiselle and Forchammer, who can be considered amongst the founders of art and archaeological research in Myanmar, wrote of Myanmar's religious art during the late 1800s and early 1900s and did so in an environment dominated by Pali Theravada Buddhism.<sup>20</sup> Western interest in Buddhism was strong in the late 1800s and it has been argued that the influence of early Pali scholars such as Rhys Davids contributed to a very particular view of Theravada Buddhism being popularized. Snodgrass remarks "Since missionaries and travelers had written about Buddhism for centuries, why it was that Buddhism caught the attention of intellectuals at this time? Given all that could be said about Buddhism, all the various interpretations that could have emerged from a study of its vast literature, why were some features emphasized and others ignored?"<sup>21</sup> Snodgrass asserts that Theravada

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<sup>19</sup> There are frequent references to the financial allocations to the research projects undertaken by the *Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)*. The annual reports detail the spending of all monies and comments are often made regarding the need for more funding, or the limitation of work able to be undertaken due to lack of funds. Funding was also subject to dramatic change. Taw Sein Ko notes in "during the year 1907-08, R68, 475 was expended, in Myanmar, on archaeological works, as compared with R1, 25,930 in the previous year. Of this amount, R12,000 was a grant-in-aid from Imperial revenues. The reduction in expenditure was due to retrenchment, owing to drought and famine, in the Provincial Public Works Department Budget". Taw Sein Ko, "Notes on Conservation in Myanmar", *ASI (1907-08)*, 33. With funding dependent on local conditions, there were only limited options for sourcing money for much needed conservation and excavation work.

<sup>20</sup> Charles Duroiselle was very active in archaeological research during the early 1900s and published extensively in the *ASI*. Duroiselle's work, and that of some other early scholars will be discussed in Chapter 1. Theravada Buddhism was the dominant branch of the region in Southeast Asia at the time. The other principal stream, the Mahayana, was restricted to Himalayan regions that still supported Buddhism.

<sup>21</sup> J.Snodgrass, "Colonial Constructs of Theravada Buddhism. Current Perspectives on Western Writing on Asian Tradition", in *Traditions in Current Perspective*, proceedings of the Conference on Myanmar and Southeast Asian Studies, Yangon: Universities Historical Research Centre (1995):79. This article expounds on the "formation of Western knowledge of Buddhism" with reference to the work of the Pali scholars, in particular Rhys Davids. Snodgrass states "Nineteenth century Western interest in

scholarship had a significant impact across disciplines, and scholars such as Duroiselle were no doubt influenced by this debate. Evidence for this can be found in his paper on the Ananda temple narrative sculptures. Already, there is a convention for referring to Buddhist deities in the Pali form, for example, Indra is called Sakra.<sup>22</sup> His comments regarding the narrative presented in the Ananda temple are firmly based in the Theravada tradition. Duroiselle's excavations of archaeological sites at Bagan are, however, of great use to modern day scholars as many artifacts illustrated in the *ASI* reports have since disappeared but his interpretations regarding imagery should be treated cautiously. Snodgrass's view is supported by Karlsson who remarks in the context of early Buddhist studies in the West, during the late 19th century scholars "textualised" Buddhism. In their preoccupation with the study of Buddhist texts "what they were actually doing was putting themselves in the position of creating an ideal Buddhism of the past. This representation of the ideal Buddhism as rationalist and free of rituals was to a large part prompted by the Orientalist's expectations and wishful thinking".<sup>23,24</sup>

Burmese historical records also promote a Theravada Buddhist Myanmar, recounting an almost epiphany-like conversion of Bagan's populace to Theravada Buddhism during the reign of their first great king, Anawrahta (1044-1077) and since then Burmese chronicles have assumed a Theravada framework. The emphasis on the Theravada during the late 1800s and early 1900s was consistent with the prevailing Burmese chronicle, the *Glass Palace Chronicle of the Kings of Myanmar* acceptance of this account of Myanmar's history colored subsequent writings on Bagan's Buddhist art, with later scholars continuing to favor what had become the Theravada paradigm of early Bagan. Western researchers viewed Buddhist practices in Myanmar principally within the confines of a particular type of Theravada tradition and hence

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Theravada Buddhism was intimately connected with the intellectual crises of the time, the debates arising out of the perceived conflict between orthodox Christianity and the implications of developments in natural science". Snodgrass, "Colonial Constructs", 80. Snodgrass also discusses the influence of the rise in Pali scholarship on British politics as it related to Southeast Asia.

<sup>22</sup> C. Duroiselle, "The Stone Sculptures in the Ananda Temple at Bagan", *ASI* (1913-14): 64. Sakra is the Pali name for Indra. Refinements in Pali scholarship have resulted in some spelling modifications and Sakra is now more correctly known as Sakka.

<sup>23</sup> K.Karlsson, "Face to Face with the Absent Buddha. The Formation of Buddhist Aniconic Art", PhD Dissertation. Uppsala University, 1999, p. 28.

<sup>24</sup> In 1829, King Bagyidaw directed the leading Burmese scholars of the day to compile a history of Myanmar called the *Glass Palace Chronicle*. This work became the officially sanctioned version of Myanmar's history, and in particular, of Bagan. Pe Maung Tin and G.H Luce, trans., *The Glass Palace Chronicle of the Kings of Myanmar*, Reprint, Rangoon, Rangoon University Press, 1960, p. 1 (Hereafter cited as *Glass Palace Chronicle*)

the interpretation of Buddhist imagery was often limited, remaining within a narrow Theravada construct.

The monastic school system in Myanmar is an old education system with a very long history, dated back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century King Anawrahta period.

At the reign of Bagan (1044-1287 AD) was defined as the age of feudalism. At that time, King Anawrahta made indigenes to live as national solidarity. Then, his effort to clean and spread the Theravada Sasana. Actually, Myanmar kings supported urgently the teaching of the Buddha. In the same way, there were many scholar monks who made purity and preserve the teaching of the Buddha.

At the role of Monastic education, there are five major types; (1) teacher, (2) learner, (3) school, (4) literature and language and (5) teaching method.

#### **1.6.1.2. The attentions of Monastic Education**

1. What is Sāsana: The Pāli word “Sāsana” means the teachings of the Buddha. At the reign of Bagan, the main attention of king and citizens were to follow and practice under the guidance of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Samgha as long as they lived and to learn the Buddha literature.
2. Connected with “the teaching of the Buddha” (Sāsana), there must be understood three kinds of Sāsana. They are teaching, practicing and understanding the truth.
3. According to the teaching of the Buddha, Theravāda Buddhists understood that all conditional things are impermanent, noone possess nothing but merit or demerit possess. They hoped to arrive to the Nibbāna by undertaking good deeds.
4. At the reign of Bagan, the major point of monastic was to understand skillfully in Pāli grammar and language and then they may have to study Mon language together with Pāli literature.
5. The main object of Monastic education was to write, to read and to say the literature of the teaching of the Buddha.

### 1.6.1.3. Teacher

The meaning of teacher, Sayar is derived from the Sanskrit language “Ācārya” and the Pali language “Ācariya”<sup>25</sup>. At the age of Bagan, associated with the Monastic education, most of teachers were Monks. According to Myanmar tradition<sup>26</sup>, at the period of Bagan monks had the two qualities as “Saṅgha” and “Teacher” that included in the five members of measureless qualities<sup>27</sup>.

### 1.6.1.4. The Distinguished Monks

1. **Shin Arahan:** he was a Theravada Mon monk. He arrived to Bagan in 1056 CE. King Anawrahta refuted him and donated the arañavesī monastery. Suggested by Sayardaw, King Anawrahta march and sieved the Thahton and also made efforts to develop the Theravāda Sāsana. At the reign of the king, Htilaishin-Kyansittha, Shin Arahan became the guidance of the king that to teach the teachings of the Buddha. Sayardaw passed away at the time of king Alaungsīthū (1113-1162 AD).
2. **Shin Dhammasenapai:** at the reign of the king Kyansittha (426 ME), Sayardaw dwelt at the Nandar monastery which stands near the Nanda Cave. He wrote the prominent text namely kārikāin which explain about distinguish Pāli grammar and it was the foremost text of the Bagan period.
3. **Shin Aggavamsa:** At the time of king Narapatisīthū (1174-1211AD), the Thera Aggavamsa wrote the Saddanīti text that is the deepest and completest text of the Pāli grammar texts.
4. **Ambassador Sambyin:** At the reign of king Narapatisīthū, there appeared the distinguish Pāli grammar text named as Sambyin tikā which effort by Ambassador Sambyin.
5. **Shin Chapada:** At the time of Narapatisīthū, Shin Chapada went to Srilanka together with Sayardaw Uttarājīva thera and learned the Pāli text. In 1192, he came back to Pagan with the four accompanie monks and endeavored to propagate the teaching of the Buddha.

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<sup>25</sup> U Phoe Lant, *Myanmar Sakar Aphwint Kyam (Introduction to Myanmar Language)*, Vol. I, Yangon, Pyinna Nanda press, 1962, p 214

<sup>26</sup> U Tin Hla, “Myanmar tradition of Bagan period”, *Journal of University Teachers Association*, 1961, p. 2

<sup>27</sup> Than Htut, *History of Myanmar Monastic Education*, Yangon, Thein Minn Hlaing press, 1980, p.36 (Hereafter cited as Than Htut, *History of Myanmar Monastic Education*)

6. **Dhamavilāsa:** In 536 ME, while he dwelt at the Dala Township, in the Patippa village, he wrote Dhammavilāsa Dhammathat (a law book) which quoted on the Manuyin Dhammathat. He received a monk hood preceded by Thera Ananda.<sup>28</sup>
7. **The King Kyaswar:** he ascended the throne in 597 ME. Because of learning the tri pitaka in nine times and skillful, even he taught monks the tri piṭaka in seven times in daily. Accordingly, he made Paramathabindu text which associated with Abhidhammā and sub-commentary of Saddabindu text which connected with Pāli grammar.
8. **U Kyi Pwae:** At the time of king Narapate (1254-1287 AD), there appeared a distinguish layman who had turned to over sixty age. He was a skillful one in tri Pitaka, namely U Kyi Pwae. He made Gambīragandha which means the deeper knowledge of Pāli grammar text.

As about mentioned are very distinguish monks, lay people and texts of the period of Bagan. These all mentions may have received special paying respect for the monastic education of the Bagan period.

At about 800 A.D., Sriksetra decayed through internal dissension and the people migrated northwards up the Irrawady to the plains of Myingyan District. There they intermarried with the local tribes and lost their Theravada Buddhism (as Hinayana well known). But while they lost the Hinayana Buddhist culture, which made them remarkable to the Chinese as a race that disliked the taking of life, they gained virility and the power and wish for dominion. And this fact, coupled with the infusion of new blood through intermarriage with the more primitive people eventually produced a race which called itself the *Bama*, sometime about the 9<sup>th</sup> century. At the same time, they walled Bagan and made it their capital<sup>29</sup>. The religion of Burmese at this period was a mixture of a debased form of Mahayanism and probably some local animistic beliefs. The Burmese Chronicles call it *Ari-is* from the name of its priests who were said to have ministered to the superstitions of the people by faked tree oracles “so that the King and all the people misbelieved”. They certainly did not teach the Sanskrit Buddhist Cannon they possessed<sup>30</sup> to the people either

<sup>28</sup> U Wom, “Summary of translation”, *Journal of Burma Research Society*: 1962, p.130-131.

<sup>29</sup> Kaung, “A Survey of the History Education in Burma”, p. 13

<sup>30</sup> Epigraphia Birmanica, 1.i.7

because they did not understand it themselves, or because it was in their interest to hold the monopoly of knowledge.

Ari-ism flourished at Bagan till the middle of the 11<sup>th</sup> century when in 1056, Shin Araham. A young Talaing Buddhist monk converted Anawrahta, the first great Burmese King (1044-77) to Hinayana Buddhism. Together they reformed the religion by breaking the dominion of the Aris and establishing a Talaing Monkhood. Shin Araham, however, had brought no sacred books with him for writing was perhaps still a rare acquirement and manuscripts perhaps scarce. On the other hand, he knew that the conversion of the people could not be come real unless the books were in the country to guide the new adherents to what is right according to the new religion they had accepted. He, therefore, urged the King to procure copies from the Lower Talaing Kingdom of Thaton where King Manuha owned thirty complete sets of the Pali Pitakas. Envoys were sent, but they received only an insulting refusal. Forthwith, Anawrahta raised his army and swooped down by river and land, taking Thaton after a three month's siege in 1057. He took back with him to Bagan besides the royal family and the Count; first of all, the monks, the thirty sets of the Pitakas, and the entire population numbering about 30,000 including the craftsman and the builders. As in many other similar cases in history, the conquered eventually conquered the conqueror. The culture and civilization thus wrested from an unwilling neighbor worked as leaven among the Burmese in Bagan. The Hindu arts of writing and arithmetic introduced with the religion were adopted, and the Burmese language was reduced to writing in Talaing script, soon after this momentous conquest, in 1058.<sup>31</sup>

By the next generation, the great and the smaller temples of Bagan had begun to rise in "architectural magnificence" from the flatness of the plain showing us today that the new faith found fervent acceptance as much among the people<sup>32</sup> as with the King. Among these religious edifices were many monasteries equally well built, and apparently meant for a considerable number of monks complete with cells, big ball, and a smaller hall for holding a school<sup>33</sup>. To these monasteries the Kings of the Bagan dynasty (1044-1287) invited the most pious and learned monks of the Lower

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<sup>31</sup> The first inscription in Burmese is dated 1058 A.D. Harvey, G. E. *History of Burma: From the Earliest Times to 10 March 1824, the Beginning of the English Conquest*. London: Frank Cass, 1967, p. 23 (Hereafter cited as Harvey, *History of Burma*)

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p.70

<sup>33</sup> Monasteries of Bagan, Journal of the Myanmar Research Society, 1920

Country, as well as from countries further away. And it was in their schools and colleges that Pali Literature developed, attaining a remarkably high standard of scholarship in short time<sup>34</sup>. This speedy maturing of the new learning at Bagan was made possible through the fact that when the religion and culture were transplanted, the essentials of their growth in the new land were secured by Anawrahta through his transportation of the relics, books, and teachers. They formed that necessary nucleus from which a culture could develop, as well as spread among the people. The Pitakas were housed in a splendid library<sup>35</sup> and placed at the disposal of the monks both at Bagan and Kyauk-ku- Umin which was the center of learning of the Myanmar Monks, the oldest sect in Bagan.

The first study of the Burmese was Pali grammar. In the course of time, young men from among the native Burmese entered the monasteries as novices and learnt from Talaing monk master. The first essay of a Burmese author in Pali scholarship was made in 1064, just seven years after the introduction of the new learning when the Burmese monk Dhammasenapati wrote the *Karita*, a grammatical work in Pali. The study of Pali grammar was, of course, a necessary preliminary to the study of the Pitakas and its study was apparently not confined to the monks. Kings, ministers and courtiers studied it, and a King's daughter wrote a treatise on it to show examples of Pali grammatical cases. Learning seemed to have thrived especially during the reign of Kyaswar (1234-50) who "loved everybody, read and became master of every book, held public disputations, and seven times a day instructed his household." According to the *Sasanavamsa*, grammar was popular even among the women and young girls. These glorious days of learning at the Bagan lasted over two and a half centuries, and then the city fell before the Chinese invasion in 1277, followed by the swamping of the whole of the northern country by the Shans, a race new to Myanmar which reached its valleys through the northern passes in the 13<sup>th</sup> century<sup>36</sup>.

About the end of this period of Shan dominion, Burmese literature, the seed of which was sown by Anawrahta through his importation of the alphabet during the 11<sup>th</sup> century, produced its first harvest.

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<sup>34</sup> Bode, *Pali literature of Myanmar*, 1909 p 14.

<sup>35</sup> The Libraries of the ancient monasteries were building apart. They were called in Pali "Ratanamaye pasado". The Burmese merely called them the Pitaka-building. (Pitaka tike).

<sup>36</sup> Survey 16

### **1.6.2. Morality and Monastic Education**

The one prominent fact about Burmese monasticism which strikes any inquirer is its close welded to the life of the people. This is due to two main cause. First according to Dana, one of the three main divisions of the Dhamma as taught by the Buddha, charity (and love) in thought and deed was a virtue to be fostered in the development of one's self. Through the influence of the doctrine, the Burmese people developed that trait of "doing all good" for its own sake. As a European Buddhist monk has written: "like a flame of fire love kindles love, grows by mere act of loving and nowhere is that great truth more understood, and so more followed, than in this Golden Chersonese. Never were there a people more generous, fuller of charity than this, it has been the wonder of every author who has truly gained an insight into the hearts and the lives of this most fascinating race. All the land is covered with tokens of their charity from the golden glory of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda at Rangoon, gilded all over at intervals of a few years, at a cost of lakhs of rupees, by voluntary offerings of the people, to the village well, or monastery, or rest houses for chance travelers, down to the little stand containing a few chatties (pots) of clear cold water, which even the poorest can set up by the roadside and keep daily replenished for the benefit of thirsty passers-by". But the chief and daily expression of this charity is the ministrations of "the worthy monk" who lives the good life, and thereby provides in this person the "worthy recipient" of charity which makes the fulfilment of the injunction possible. Thus, for instance, the housewife daily "provides" food for the monks who can own nothing according to the Vinaya. The monk in return teaches the boys, consoles in times of trouble and sorrows by his explanation of the unvarying course of the Law that governs the Universe, and offers a valuable personal influence in all difficult matters that can be solved only by the advice of a kind, serene and detached person. All this he is not bound to do by the Vinaya, but he has done so from the beginning, because the religion has elements derived from the human contacts besides those contained in the original doctrine. This personal connection of the monks and the layman is the second cause of the close wilderness of the monastic life and the life of the people. That secular life should be so bound up with the religious life of the monks was natural in a Myanmar of a purely agricultural civilization. Even today after a hundred years of new influences which tend to divide life into different

compartments the unity of life remains. But two hundred years ago it must have been more so<sup>37</sup>.

The aim of monastery education was religious, but as the whole of secular life was permeated with religion<sup>38</sup> it was fitting preparation for it. And could be called national for that reason. The education developed Buddhist character, which is indeed a fine character, as we can still see today in some old gentlemen who have had the advantage of an education in the monastery in their youth. Crawford<sup>39</sup> and Howard Malcolm, who were both critical of the faults of the people they described, found them, on the other hand, polite and cultured. The success of monastic education in giving a literary culture and a real moral training to its pupils was made possible in Myanmar time by favourable conditions which passed away as the country came under a foreign government. As above mentioned, monastic education based on morality during the time of Buddha.

### 1.6.3. A Monastic Religion in Myanmar

The general features of Buddhism<sup>40</sup> in royal Myanmar can be described in three important terms: it was a monastic religion; enjoyed royal patronage; and was an educational institution. First of all, the Buddhism that became the religion of the people of Myanmar, then known as Sriksetra or the Pyu Kingdom, at least “from about the second century AD”,<sup>41</sup> was a monastic religion. By monastic religion we mean that the *Sangha* was (and still is) at the heart of the Buddhist religion. Gombrich thus remarks: “The fortunes of Buddhism as a historical phenomenon, then, are the fortunes of the Order.”<sup>42</sup> There are two reasons why the *Sangha* has occupied such an important place in Buddhism. Firstly, as Gombrich states: “Buddhists have traditionally believed that for a layman to attain salvation is virtually

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<sup>37</sup> Kaung. *A Survey of the History of Education in Myanmar*, p.20.

<sup>38</sup> As in mediaeval Europe.

<sup>39</sup> Harvey G.E., *Note on Administrative Conditions*. p.337

<sup>40</sup> By this we mean Theravada Buddhism, unless stated otherwise.

<sup>41</sup> We follow Stargardt's date here because all the extant chronicles of Myanmar tell of the history of Buddhism only from the Bagan period (1044-1287). These chronicles, composed only in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries by the now dominant Myanmar scholars, are silent on the history of Buddhism not only in the Pyu kingdoms of Beikthano and Sriksetra but also in the Mon kingdom of Thaton that was devastated by King Anoratha (Aniruddha) of Bagan. Both the Pyu and the Mon kingdoms preceded Bagan. Stargardt, *the Ancient Pyu of Burma*, Vol. I, Cambridge, PACSEA, 1991, p.192.

<sup>42</sup> Gombrich, “Introduction: The Buddhist Way” *The World of Buddhism*, p.10.

impossible”.<sup>43444546</sup> That is because there are more hurdles for him: he lives in a sensual world (*kamabhogino, rajopatho*); and as a householder his life is so busy with family and social commitments that he can hardly make any real effort to purify his mind so as to eradicate desire (*tanha*). In contrast, the life of a “renouncer” is, according to a well-known passage in the *Sutta-pitaka*, free as an open space.<sup>47</sup> A renouncer can therefore devote his time to achieving Enlightenment, the purpose for which he left home. A layman, for his part, takes responsibility for providing the material needs of the monks, whom he sees as a fertile soil in which to grow the seed of his generosity, in the belief that his action will accumulate for him the merit necessary not only for betterment in *samsara*, the circle of life, but also help him ultimately to achieve *nibbana*. In return for his generosity, the monk teaches him the basic moral teachings of the Buddha and ways to improve his *kamma*. To go beyond these practices, however, he needs to join the monkhood, which is open to all. Here although the general description applies equally to the Order of nuns, *bhikkhuni-sasana*, we speak only of the order of monks, *bhikkhu-sasana*, because the *bhikkhuni-sasana* in Theravada countries had disappeared long before the seventeenth century, the beginning of the focus of this study.<sup>48</sup> Secondly, “the Order preserves the scriptures”, usually considered synonymous with the Doctrine.<sup>49</sup> The teaching has been, since the Buddha passed away, the guide to the Eightfold Path leading to emancipation. The profession of maintaining the Doctrine has given the Order an unparalleled position in the history of the Buddhist world. It is believed that the need to study and safeguard the Doctrine was emphasized by the Buddha himself, who said that if the monks did not engage in study and teaching, the result would be the disappearance of the *Saddhamma* [true Doctrine].<sup>50</sup> And the Order has taken this task very seriously. The need for the preservation of the scriptures, remarks David Wyatt, a historian of Thailand, requires of the monkhood “a relatively high degree of

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, p.9.

<sup>44</sup> *Kamabhogī-sutta*, A v 177. See also a ii 6.

<sup>45</sup> D i 63; *Sumangalavilasini* i 180-181.

<sup>46</sup> *sambadho gharavaso rajopatho ..... , na idam sukaram agaram ajjhasata ekantaparipunnam ekantaparisuddham samkhalikhitam brahmacariyam caritum*. D i 63.

<sup>47</sup> *abbhokasopabbajja*. *Ibid*.

<sup>48</sup> The *bhikkhuni-sasana* disappeared in the eleventh century in Sri Lanka. For more information see Skilling, *A Note on the History of the Bhikkhuni-sangha (II): The Order of Nuns after the Parinirvana*, WFB Review, XXX, IV; Gunawardena, *Robe and Plough: Monasticism and Economic Interest in Early Medieval Sri Lanka*, p.39; Bartholomeusz, *Women Under the Bo Tree: Buddhist nuns in Sri Lanka*, p.21.

<sup>49</sup> Gombrich, “Introduction: The Buddhist Way”, p.9.

<sup>50</sup> A iii 176-180

scholarship and wide distribution of literacy”.<sup>51</sup> This emphasis on scholarship in Buddhist monasticism, according to Walpola Rahula, began in the first century BC. That was indeed a turning point in the history of Theravada Buddhism, as study became more prominent than practice.<sup>52</sup> In the first century BC, after “a foreign invasion” and “an unprecedented famine”, two schools of opinion in Sri Lanka debated whether “learning” or “practice” was the basis of the *sasana*, “the Buddha’s dispensation”. “Ultimately it was decided that learning was the basis of the *sasana*, and not practice.” This decision, which went against the fundamental position of early Buddhism, strengthened the separation between the two vocations, *gantha-dhura*, “vocation of books” and *vipassana-dhura*, “vocation of meditation”, and created two separate groupings.<sup>53</sup>

Both vocations were probably present in the Pyu kingdom of Myanmar, although there is so far no direct evidence of the *vipassana-dhura* there. However, we can conclude with a degree of certainty that those following the “vocation of books” were present, particularly at Sriksetra. The archaeological findings between 1897 and 1929 at Prome (now Pyi), the old Sriksetra, have re-written not only the early history of Buddhism in what is now Myanmar but also unearthed evidence of the excellent state of monastic learning, unknown to us before. Twenty gold-leaf Pali manuscripts, all excerpts from the Pali canon, were found at pagodas and mound hills in and around three villages, namely Mawza, Kalagangon and Kyundawzu, situated a few miles from the present Prome.<sup>54</sup> These were indeed evidence that the “vocation of

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<sup>51</sup> David K. Wyatt, *The Politics of Reform in Thailand: Education under King Chulalongkorn*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1969, p. 6 (Hereafter cited as Wyatt, *The Politics of Reform in Thailand*)

<sup>52</sup> Walpola Rahula, *History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, M. D. Gunasena, Colombo, 1956, pp.177-160 (Hereafter cited as Rahula, *History of Buddhism in Ceylon*)

<sup>53</sup> Gombrich literally translates *gantha-dhura* as “book-duty” and *vipassana-dhura* as “meditation-duty”. Gombrich, *Buddhist Precept and Practice*, p.368. A more complete discussion on the two *dhura* can be found in Cousins, “Introduction” in Ananda Maitreya *Nine Special Qualities of the Buddha and Other Essays*, pp.i-ix.

<sup>54</sup> A summary of the findings was given by Stargardt “The Oldest Known Pali Texts ... from Sriksetra”, *Journal of the Pali Text Society*, XXI (1995), pp.199-213. Details also have been reported by various scholars over the years. They include Finot “Un nouveau document sur le bouddhisme birman” *Journal Asiatique*, XX , 1912 and XXI , 1913; Duroiselle, “Excavations at Hmawza” *Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Report, 1926-1927*, pp. 171-181 & 1928-1929, pp.105-109; Lu Pe Win, “The Pali Text from Khin Ba-gon” *Report of the Superintendent of Archaeology*, Rangoon, 1940, pp. 12-22. The Pali passages inscribed on those gold plates are from the *Vinaya-* and *Sutta- pitaka*. The question surrounding the language of those passages has also been settled by modern Pali scholars: the language is now known to be pure Pali, not Pyu-Pali as previously considered. Stargardt, *Ibid*.

books” was very strong at Sriksetra.<sup>55</sup> All native chronicles, on the other hand, are silent on the question of the history of Buddhism before the Bagan period (1044-1279).

### 1.6.3.1. Learners (Students)

At Bagan, the *Sangha* was generally divided into two fraternities: the village-dwellers, known as “monks living in monasteries” or *klon nay so sangha*, and the forest-dwellers, known as “the lords dwelling in the forest”, *skhin* or *taw klon sangha*.<sup>56</sup> Among the village-dwellers, the students, or *taw mlat kri*, *taw casan*, were perhaps the most important group. We do not know their exact number but we learn from an inscription dated 1101 AD that there were a great number of monks in Bagan. In a house-building ceremony “all the four thousand and one hundred and eighty monks” were invited “with our lord Chief Monk Arahan, who was the leader in reciting the *Paritta* blessing”.<sup>57</sup> Arahan, a Mon monk from Thaton (Sudhammapura), was credited in the Burmese chronicles with introducing Theravada Buddhism to Bagan.<sup>58</sup> The number of monasteries, libraries and schools dedicated to the monks following the “vocation of books” also suggests that they were more numerous than those following the “vocation of meditation”, usually taken to refer to the forest-dwellers.

### 1.6.3.2. Schools

In an inscription dated 1236 “a donor built five school buildings for students and a monastery for the *thera* in one compound”.<sup>59</sup> Another inscription mentions that seven years later, in 1243, the Queen “built as many as twenty monasteries encircling a hollow pagoda, a library, a monastery and a hall of law, and dedicated three hundred *pay* of land, thirty slaves and fifty cattle for students of the Most Reverend

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<sup>55</sup> Stargardt, *Ibid.* Stargardt repeated this conclusion on the standard of Pali at Sriksetra during her lecture at Linacre College, 2002. See also Than Tun, *History of Buddhism in Myanmar*, pp.52-53.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.91 & 96.

<sup>57</sup> Charles Duroiselle, *Epigraphia Birmanica*, Vol.II, Rangoon, Government Printing Press, 1920, p.38

<sup>58</sup> Pe Maung Tin & G. H. Luce trans., *The Glass Palace Chronicle of the Kings of Burma*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1923, pp.71-75 (Hereafter cited as Pe Maung Tin, *The Glass Palace Chronicle*)

<sup>59</sup> Than Tun, *History of Buddhism in Burma A.D 1000-1300*, *Journal of Burma Research Society*, Rangoon, 1978, pp.96-97 (Hereafter cited as Than Tun, *History of Buddhism in Burma*)

Vinayadhara” And there were many other donors who supported the students in this way. Meanwhile the forest-dwellers, *can aran*, at Bagan were by no means living as recluses. Instead, they had monasteries of their own “with hundreds of monks living in them under *taw mlat kri*, the Most Reverend Lords of the Forest”. They also received donations from the royals, who provided slaves and lands to them. During the Bagan period the majority of the forest-dwellers lived in areas far away from Bagan, such as Minnathu, Pwazaw, Myinmu and Monywa, where there were centres of forest monasteries. But “some of them” also lived in Bagan.

According to John Ferguson, the forest-dwellers at Bagan were also known as *panthaku (pamsukula) gaing* or the fraternity of ragged robes.<sup>60</sup> At Bagan, the forest-dwellers were powerful only under King Alaungsithu (1112-1167); otherwise the village-dwellers were dominant.

### **1.6.3.3. Literature and Languages**

It is true that Pitaka literature was studied and lectured in the monasteries, and Pitaka learners had to learn, memorize and practice Buddhist literature or Pariyatti scriptures with great effort. In that learning case, a language was a great problem. Myanmar language is a family of Chinese Tibetan language and Pāli language is the family of Europe-Indian language. The root of language family was very different from each other. Therefore, there were many difficulties for studying Pāli literature assiduously.

Bagan King Anawrahta, however, supported Pāli language. There are some evidences that he himself had prayed phrases written in Pāli on the clay tablet. In learning Pāli language, Grammar was dominant. In that period, famous Grammar books appeared. It was recorded as follows:

It was known that Bagan people learnt Vinaya (Disciplines), Abhidhamma (Distinguishing dhamma) and Sakkata, but especially they favored learning Pāli Grammar. No thought came to them to write Myanmar Grammar books. It is a noticeable fact that Pāli Grammar was learnt in favor of them. The period of Bagan should be called 'the period of Pāli Grammar'.

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<sup>60</sup> John Ferguson, *The Symbolic Dimensions of the Burmese Sangha*, (Unpublished PhD Dissertation) Cornell University, Ithaca, 1975, p.167 (Hereafter cited as Ferguson, *The Symbolic Dimensions of the Burmese Sangha*)

Though, as mentioned in the above, the period should be called 'the period of Pāli Grammar', Myanmar writing style was found. However, the writing style was not strong enough. Because of the period of a new recording Myanmar language in writing, it was not as strong and steady as Pāli language. When Pāli language appeared prominent, Myanmar language also became strong. For the fact of the relational link between Pāli and Myanmar language, Sayagyi U Pe Maung Tin drew a conclusion as follows:

"Only when Tipitaka, in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, was brought from Thahtun to Bagan, Myanmar writing became significant. Therefore, it become a fact that Pāli language could support Myanmar language well. Myanmar primer, Ka Gyi and Kha Khwe, etc., relied on Sakkata alphabet and Mon alphabet. From that time on, PĒli language produced many benefits to Myanmar language till it was much useful for developing Myanmar Buddhist culture."<sup>61</sup>

Therefore, it can be said that Myanmar language grew strong in Bagan dependent on Pāli language. Similarly, it was known that some methods were followed from Mon language. Especially, the Myanmar changed Mon alphabets into their own alphabets and used as Myanmar alphabets.

According to Mya Zeti inscription, it is known that, in the Bagan period, Rājakumāra had stone inscription carved with four languages: (1) Myanmar, (2) Pāli, (3) Mon, and (4) Pyu. Four languages were prominent accordance with the inscription. In addition, there are some evidences that Sakkata language was also prominent. Thus, it was found that five languages were used at the time of Bagan. Of five, Pyu language disappeared since that period. Myanmar, Pāli and Sanskrit except Mon, were favored in learning. A few people taught and learnt Mon language. Pāli and Sanskrit were given priority because Theravāda Buddhism, which was revered and exalted by Myanmar, remained present with two writings: (1) Pāli and (2) Sanskrit, which is older and closer to Pāli.

There were some evidences of stone inscription to prove that Sanskrit was used. At the time in Bagan, Ashin Aggavañsa wronte Saddanāti in Pāli, but Sanskrit terms which are similar to Pāli could be found in the Saddanātidhātumālā. As to this,

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<sup>61</sup> Than Htut, *History of Myanmar Monastic Education*, p. 42

the skill of Pāli and Sakkata could be observed. Also, a thesis "Monastic Education at the Time of Bagan" by Saya U Tin Hla mentions thus:

Although Pāli literature was prominent in Bagan, it did not seem to neglect Sanskrit because Sanskrit terms were used with no use of Pāli terms even though Pāli had the same meaning terms as Sanskrit.

Pāli	Sanskrit	Usage
Kamma	Karma	luck, destiny, fate (kramma)
Cakkavālā	Cakravarla	universe
Nibbāna	Nirbāna	liberation from Sañsarā
Paññā	Prajañar	wisdom
Amacca	Amartra	colleague; fellow-worker; privy councilor

Concerning with being taught by the Myanmar in the past, Sayagyi Phe Maung Tin mentioned as follows:

In Myanmar, both Pāli and Sanskrit were taught. In 700 A.D, Sakkata inscription which included Pyu terms was found in Sarekhattara. At the same period, the Arakan-king-dynasty-mentioned inscription carved in Sakkata language still exists in Chit-thoung pagoda in Ancient Arakan City, Mrauk-U. In the Bagan Inscriptions, the following words were found carved in Sanskrit spelling, but not in Pāli spelling. The terms are Prajañar, Niravan, Krammer, Saravan, Trilokacandra, Bummaketra, Disāprāmuk, and Indricitta.<sup>62</sup>

In the reign of King Narapatisithu (1174-1211 A.D), Myanmar writing and educational standard developed so much. To point out the inscription carved by King Anawhrata with two languages, Pāli and Sanskrit, it was probable that both languages were used as a State language. Also, in the reign of King Saw Lu, the inscriptions were carved in Pāli. However, in the reign of King Kyansittha, inscriptions were carved in Mon language for the goodwill of Mon and Myanmar. Nevertheless, in the reign of King Alaungsithu, inscriptions were carved in Pāli. In that way, the non-native Pāli language was constantly used as a central language. King Narapatisithu,

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<sup>62</sup> Than Htut, *History of Myanmar Monastic Education*, p. 45

who ascended the throne in 1174, started to use Myanmar language only in the inscriptions. During his time, nearly sixty inscriptions were carved. Myanmar terms, writing style and composition were very high. To point out this fact, since his reign, Myanmar writing could be said that it became the language used by the members of the royal court. It was impossible that Pāli was to be used as a central language because Myanmar and Pāli were very different from their ancestry. In addition, Pāli was not possible to be replaced with Myanmar writing and terms. Therefore, although Myanmar people used Pāli as a central language in the past for a long time, Myanmar writings and alphabets had been created and used in their own ways, for it was not possible for Myanmar people to always use Pāli as a central language. At the later age from the time of King Narapatisithu, Myanmar terms and writing were used as a central language in communicating, writing and teaching. From that time on, Myanmar language was to become an important language which have been used by the natives of the country.

In the same way, in teaching Pāli and Myanmar together, the teaching of Myanmar language was to become a central language.

## **1.7 Summary**

In the earlier time of Bagan, religions were intermingling. Mahāyana Buddhism, Theravāda Buddhism and Tantra Brahmanism spread out among the Bagan people. Such different religious ideologies became an impediment to the Union of Nation. That was known to King Anawrahta. Because of various religious faith, the Bagan people could be disunited with each other. Therefore, Anawrahta worked together with Shin Araham for religion and nation and organized the people to be a Theravāda Buddhist country. Since then, politics, financial conditions, society, religion, education and literary arts progressed fast.

King Kyansitha united the disunited nation. Giving favor to Mon, inscriptions were carved in Mon language. In this way, Myanmar showed good examples for the goodwill of natives of the country.

In the period of Bagan, respective social language spread nationwide. The languages of Pāli, Sanskrit, Pyu and Mon influenced there. Therefore, Myanmar alphabet, Myanmar language and Myanmar writing were not in an established and

settled state. In the reign of King Narapatisithu, he gave priority to create Myanmar alphabet, Myanmar language and Myanmar writing. Stone inscriptions became carved in Myanmar language. Beginning from that time, it could be said that Myanmar language started to be strong. The objective of monastic education was (1) to revere the three Gems, (2) to prosper three types of Sāsana (Pariyatti, Patipatti, Pativedha), (3) to cause people to hope that they would attain Nibbāna, and (4) to be not only good at reading and writing but also expert at Buddhist scriptures.

While the affairs of Bagan Sāsana, education and society were carried out successfully, the Sangha took the lead and supervised the people in Bagan. The Sangha Organization led by Shin Arahan strived for the prosperity of Sāsana, which was a State religion. The famous persons, who led throughout the age of Bagan, were Shin Dhammasenāpati, Shin Aggavaṅsa Thera, Tham Pyin, Shin Sapadu, Dhammavilāsa, King Kya Swar and U Kyi Pwei. While the religion was linked to education, the objective of education was the religion. Buddhist Pitaka scriptures, Buddhist literature and Jātaka (Buddha's previous life's stories) influenced the education. The subject of Myanmar, Mon, Pāli and Sanskrit favored being learnt. Later, Myanmar and Pāli were constantly taught and learnt. The education was like a weapon which fulfilled the desire of the religion. It was the custom of that language; culture arts and education took responsibility to contribute the trust in the State.

By saying so, it could not be said that, in the branch of studies, handicraft, architecture, agriculture, arts of painting and medicine stayed poor (did not come into prominence). Till the present time, the world praises that professional careers which came into prominence at the time of Bagan. Because of Buddhist influence, it could be said that the foundation of education was possessed.

To summarize, from 1044 to 1387, the philosophers of monastic education were generally Buddhist monks. With the admonishment of those monks, those who regulated educational policy were only kings. Therefore, Buddhist monastic education was based on the government. Dependent on the qualification of the government, Buddhist monastic education was in low and high position. The monastic education that was at high speed was not free from the control of the kings (way of the mundane world). Hence, in the reign of King Narasiṅhapate or Ta Yout Pyei Min (in 1287 A.D.) the nation was divided and which led to its fall.

STRENGTHENING MONASTIC SCHOOL EDUCATION

**CHAPTER-2**

**STRENGTHENING MONASTIC  
SCHOOL EDUCATION IN MYANMAR**

## STRENGTHENING MONASTIC SCHOOL EDUCATION IN MYANMAR

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### 2.1. Introduction

In Theravada Buddhism, monastic education is very significant because children are taught Buddha's teaching mainly by monk teachers. In Buddhist literature, children play an important role for the realization of the truth, preservation and propagation of Buddhist teachings. It can be found that there are many children enter to *Samgha* order and many of them realize the truth. Besides, the Buddha also gives special attention to children and he recognizes children as social units for better world and peaceful society. Teaching to children, therefore become a part of Buddha's life.

The Buddha said in Dighanikaya

“*Sila pannananca pana Bhikkhave Lokasmim Aggamakkhayati*”<sup>1</sup>

O monks! Morality and wisdom are called the best in the world.

According to the Buddha's teaching, there are two kinds of *Sila* (Morality) in the Buddhism; they are *Caritta Sila* and *Varitta Sila*. The Buddha preached the *Singalovada Sutta* with the intension to show up the *Caritta Sila* for lay people. *Caritta Sila* means abiding by the rules of conduct and performing one's duties and responsibilities. In *SingalovadaSutta*, the *Buddha* described the rules of conduct or duties for sons and daughters, for parents, for pupils, for teachers, for husbands and wives, for friends, etc. Nowadays, phenomenal material progresses a lot in the world but not in spiritual wellbeing. Therefore, everyone's need today is a code of ethics and morality which will guide them to the way of peaceful and purification of their mind. In Buddhism, the Buddha taught in Dhammapada

“*Sabba pāpassa akāranam, kusalassa upasampadā*

*Sacitta pariyodāpanam, etam buddhāna sāsanaṃ*”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Digha Nikaya. Vol. I. p. 116-117.

<sup>2</sup> Dhammapada, Verse No. 138.

1. To refrain from all evil,
2. To do what is good,
3. To purify the mind.

In this verse, “To purify the mind” is a need of nowadays people. The only way to purify one’s mind is observing *Sila* (morality). We don’t need to find the way how to purify the mind, just only walk along on the way which was already laid down and lighted up by the Lord Buddha. Morality can control one words and actions. It can make us good ladies and good gentleman in the worldly-wise sense. At this juncture, Buddhist monastic schools pay attention in the morality or ethical practices of students. Therefore, morality exists on monastic education based on Theravada Buddhist Teaching.

Buddhist Education in Myanmar has been challenged since Anawrahta asked for Theravada Tipitaka from king Manuha of kingdom of Thaton in eleven century A.D. In that, king Anawrahta had to march on Thaton with the large number of his army for attaining the three pitakas. Since arrival of Theravada teaching brought by King Anawrahta from Thaton, people in Myanmar had learnt by heart to preserve Theravada Tipitaka throughout its kingdom generation by generation. Buddhist education in Myanmar more or less had some challenges in each kingdom as the impact of social, political and economic condition. There are many challenges as regard to current Buddhist education in Myanmar. However, three challenges are the most important for Buddhist Education in the future of Myanmar. They are:

1. Imperfection of Pāli Pahtamapyan curriculum,
2. Being less temple-boys and novices in the village and
3. Material influence.

Pāli Pahtamapyan examination is being held by the Myanmar government every year. Many candidates all around the country have been giving this examination. Unfortunately, its curriculum consists of only Pāli and Myanmar literature. This is a real great challenge for Buddhist education in Myanmar today. For instance, a monk, having finished his study in Pāli Pathamapyan examination, has to face with many difficulties for their further study in USA, UK, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand and so on. For, Pāli Pathamapyan curriculum laid down by the conservative

does not include secular subjects such as English, mathematics, sociology and science. As a result, when most of Myanmar monks go abroad for their further study, they could not follow the lectures given by the teachers. Only a few monks are good at English because they had studied in private centers such as American center and British council in Yangon. The monk who can spend too much amount of money could attend the good English classes.

Another problem is about language barrier. There are many excellent meditation masters and good Dhamma preachers in Myanmar but some could not preach Dhamma in English while they give Dhamma talk to the foreigners. Most of them have to rely on translators for translation of their Dhamma talks. Some translators cannot reach its real meaning without studying the Buddhist terms. Their translation may lead to wrong meaning because Buddhist term is very profound. All these difficulties are showing us the weakness of traditional Pali Pahtamapyan curriculum.

Therefore, Government and State Sangha Mahānāyaka Committec need to amend Pāli Pahtamapyan curriculum which is equivalent to international education standard to help them solve their difficulties confronted by young generation monks so that qualification of Myanmar monks could reach international level in the future.

Second challenge is being less temple-boys and novices in the villages all over the country; for there were many temple-boys and novices in villages in the past. They traditionally were studying basic Pāli and Buddhism courses taught by the abbots in the villages. Temple-boys became the novices and novices as well had entered the monkhood when they were grown up. They then had studied the teachings of the Buddha until they became the Buddhist scholars. Most of Buddhist scholars in Myanmar came from novices in the villages. In other words, it could be said that foundation of Buddhist education in Myanmar had begun from the villages that have produced temple-boys and novices.

But, nowadays, we rarely see a large number of temple-boys and novices in the villages as before. Due to the economic, social and political change, the temple could not teach secular subjects such as English, chemistry and science for youths. It is also a main reason that makes youths far away from the monasteries. So, the monks

need to learn not only sacred subjects but also secular subjects to solve this challenge; otherwise, they could not bring back their previous status. The monks also need to persuade the children in the villages to come to the temple for learning Buddhism. The establishment of orphanages and monastic schools for poor children is also a good way to produce the temple-boys and novices. Furthermore, the monasteries all around the country should be peaceful and happy Buddhist education centers for the young children.

The last challenge is material influential such as, money, possessions, fame, internet and mobile phones. Some young monks don't understand the value of spiritual development. They indulge in materialistic things for example by using internet for wrong purposes, playing the games and chatting with friends on the face book without good intention for many hours instead of reviewing their lessons. Actually, these modernizations may lead to deficiency of morality, concentration and wisdom if students do not use it in correct way. Such an indulgence in materialistic things by few monks also happened during the life time of the Buddha while residing in the Jetavana monastery. At that time, the monks in Savathi had inherited the material. To solve this problem, Buddha preached a sermon to the monks not to hoard the material and to inherit only his teachings because one may lose sight of the goals in chasing the material things. “Bhikkhus, be my heirs in Dhamma, not my heirs in material things.”<sup>3</sup>

The previous chapter discussed background story of Buddhism, emergence of Buddhism in Myanmar and monastic education of Bagan period in brief, this chapter will mention strengthening monastic education from Pinya Dynasty to Nyanung Yan Dynasty.

### **2.2.1. A Brief History of Buddhist Education in Myanmar**

Myanmar is a Theravada Buddhist country, and it is located in South East Asia. Myanmar became a member of Association of South East Asia (ASEAN) on 23rd July 1997. Her neighboring countries are China, India, Bangladesh, Laos and Thailand. According to Myanmar tradition, it is said that Buddha himself had arrived in Myanmar during his life time. For that matter, it is very hard to say whether true or

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<sup>3</sup> Nanamoli, Bhikkhu and Bodhi, Bhikhu, *Majjhima Nikaya*, Wisdom publication, USA, 1995. P, 97

false. However, if we say that Buddhism had arrived in Thaton that is located in lower Myanmar in third century B.C during the reign of the king Asoka of India, nobody can deny this statement because two Buddhist missionary monks, Thera Sona and Thera Uttara sent by the king Asoka had already arrived in Thaton since third century for the dispensation of Buddha's doctrine. On account of King Asoka's contribution and zealous mission of Thera Sona and Uttara from India, Buddhism had widely flourished at Thaton, in lower Myanmar. In other words, it could be said that Thaton was the first center of Buddhist education in Myanmar by seeing the historical evidence.

According to Burmese tradition, Buddhism had reached that country during the life-time of the Buddha himself. This may or may not be true but it had certainly reached Thaton in the third century BC at the time of Asoka, the first Buddhist Emperor of India. Thera Sona and Thera Uttara were the two missionaries deputed by Asoka to preach the Dhamma in Suvannabhumi (Suvarnabhumi), including Thaton, a trading centre in lower Burma. From the first century onward, trade between India and Burma expanded and there was increased contact with India. As more Buddhist missionaries arrived people. In due course, Thaton became a center of Buddhist learning and culture.<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, although Theravada Buddhism had arrived in Thaton, lower Myanmar in third century B.C, its teaching could not introduce to Bagan kingdom in Upper Myanmar until ten century A.D. As regard the religion practiced in Bagan, before Theravada Buddhism was introduced, people were influenced by Tantric practice which is completely opposite of Theravada's doctrine. It could be clearly understood by seeing the following passages what religious sect dominated Bagan kingdom before Theravada Buddhism arrived.

While Theravada Buddhism continued to flourish in lower Burma, Bagan in upper Burma was in the eleventh century in the grip of a degenerated form of Mahayana Buddhism, mixed with Tantric practices. Its priests, called Aris resorted to all sorts of immoral practices and encouraged animal sacrifices.<sup>5</sup> Theravada

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<sup>4</sup> D.C Ahir, *The Great Buddhist Kings of Asia*, Buddhist World Press, India, 2011, p, 39 (Hereafter cited as Ahir, *The Great Buddhist Kings of Asia*)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

Buddhism fortunately was introduced to Bagan by the mission of Ashin Arahan in eleven century A.D. In relation to history of Ashin Arahan missionary in Bagan, it is said that one day a hunter had found Ashin Arahan in the forest near Bagan, and then he brought Ashin Arahan to the palace where king Anawrahta lived. Ashin Arahan was asked by king Anawrahta on arriving of the palace. He then replied to the king that he was a Buddhist monk from Thaton, Mon kingdom and preached a sermon to the king. Anawrahta, the king of Bagan, after hearing true teachings of the Buddha from Ashin Arahan, was delighted in his mind on Buddhism. From then on, he became a Buddhist, and asked Ashin Arahan to dwell in his kingdom for the propagation of the noble teaching of the Buddha.

It is sad that one day a hunter found an ascetic, 'with a shaven head and yellow robe' in the forest near Bagan. Knowing that king Anawrahta was interested in such holy men, he took him to the king's presence. When questioned by the king, the wandering ascetic told the king that he was a Buddhist monk from Thaton where the Dhamma flourishes. He also explained to the king the noble teachings of the Buddha. Satisfied with the profound teachings of the Buddha, King Anawrahta accepted Theravada Buddhism, and requested the monk to stay at Bagan and preach the Dhamma in his kingdom.<sup>6</sup>

King Anawrahta heard of from Ashin Arahan that there were holy texts in Thaton; that was why, he sent his minister to king Manuha of Thaton for asking for Theravada holy texts. In this case, D.C. Ahir, mentioned in the book of *Great Buddhist Kings of Asia* as follows. Ashin Arahan informed him that the holy texts as well as some sacred relics were available at Thaton. Keen to have the sacred scriptures, Anawrahta immediately sent one of his ministers to Manuha, king of Thaton, asking for the scriptures and the relics. But the later refused to give the same saying that 'it is not befitting to despatch the Pitaka and the scared relics to a place of wrong view likes yours'. Infuriated by this refusal, Anawrahta set out with his army to conquer Thaton. Manuha was defeated and captured. Consequently, thirty sets of Pitakas (texts of the scriptures) were carried away from Thaton to Bagan on 'thirty-two white elephants'. Anawrahta not only took scriptures to Bagan but he also took

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<sup>6</sup> Ahir, D.C. *The Great Buddhist Kings of Asia*, p. 40

the king and his family as well as a large number of skilled workmen of Thaton, both artisans and artists, to his own capital.<sup>7</sup>

### **2.2.2. Informal Education**

King Anawrahta tried to propagate the teachings of the Buddha in his kingdom, after attaining the Theravada Tipitaka from Thaton. Accordingly, Theravada Buddhism was spread quickly in Bagan upper Myanmar because of his support and zealous missionary of Ashin Araham. Besides, king Anawrahta had declared his kingdom as a Theravada Buddhist country and then he also urged all monks in Bagan to study the holy texts brought by him from Thaton. Many stupas and pagodas were built by him in his kingdom as well. King Anawrahta declared Theravada Buddhism as the state religion. And to popularize it, he had all the texts, acquired from Thaton, copied from the Mon script into Burmese. He also ordered that these texts be taught to all the monks. The king also built pagodas and stupas at Bagan, his capital.<sup>8</sup>

Myanmar monks also have been studying by heart all teaching of the Buddha to preserve the teaching of the Buddha brought by their king Anawratha. They had compiled various commentaries and sub-commentaries both in Pāli and Myanmar to comprehend the exact meaning of the Buddha's doctrine.

The Burmese monks studied and digested all the books of the Tipitaka and wrote numerous commentaries and sub-commentaries on them, both in Pāli and Burmese.<sup>9</sup>

Furthermore, they tried to focus on learning Pāli Grammar so that they could interpret true meaning of Pāli . Finally, they could compose Saddhaniti Pāli Grammar book to be more helpful in learning Pāli . This book was praised even by Sri lanka Buddhist scholars.

In order to get a correct grasp of the inner meaning of Tipitaka the Burmese scholars first of all tried to master Pāli Grammar and basing their studies on Kaccayana they produced Saddaniti –a grammar in Pāli within a hundred years of the arrival of the Pāli . Tipitaka in Burma . This grammar called forth admiration of

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>8</sup> Ahir, D.C., *The Great Buddhist Kings of Asia*, p.41

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 75

scholars of Ceylon even . Though Ceylon undoubtedly served as the model of Pāli scholarship, to the Burmese scholars.<sup>10</sup>

To preserve Pāli literature , not only monks but also the kings , ministers, princes, princesses and some employees were studying Pāli and as well could make conversation with each other occasionally.

Pāli scholarship in Burma was not confined to the monasteries and temples only. Even kings and ministers, princes and serving maids took a keen and active interest in the study of the Pāli scriptures and even used the Pāli medium in their conversation.<sup>11</sup>

During Bagan period , the people had studied Pāli regularly . Even some young girls could understand grammatical mistakes very well while they heard of Pāli conversation from novice. Furthermore, women in Bagan asked about Pāli books that they had read when they came across each other on the way . The following paragraph mention about how Pāli literature influenced in the daily life of Bagan people then . In Arimaddanapura (the ancient name for Bagan ) the women were specially gifted and made a regular study of the Pāli scriptures . It is recorded that when they met one another on the way, they asked one another about the Pāli books they were reading then. Thus we hear the story of a lady who on being asked about the book she was committing to memory then by one of her friends, replied "The cares of my little children do not leave me much time to study and I am now only memorising the Kusalattika portion of the Mahāpatthāna pakrana ." It may be noted in passing that the Patthāna pakrana is one of the most abstruse and technical books in the Abhidhamma Pitaka. There is also another story about a girl of twelve correcting the Pāli of a Bhikkhu who approached her in the course of his begging rounds . In another case we hear about the story of a Sramanera who wanted to test the knowledge in Pāli of the women of Arimaddanapura. The fame of the women of Bagan as being experts in "Saddaniti" or grammar had already spread elsewhere . He came to Bagan and purposely put some questions in incorrect Pāli to a small girl sitting by the roadside . The girl immediately pointed out the mistake in the idiom of Sramanera.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p. 76

<sup>11</sup> Ahir, D.C, *The Great Buddhist Kings of Asia*, p, 77.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 77-78

Buddhist monks in Myanmar were played an important role in Buddhist education in the Past. Traditionally, monks have been the teachers of kings, princes, princess, ministers and ordinary people in Myanmar because all of them were trained by the monks. In the other words, it could be said that original education in Myanmar was from the Buddhist temples. Traditionally monks are referred to as teachers (Sayadaw) and monastery in Myanmar language is “Kyaung” which is residence for the monks as well as school where monks teach pupils, both clergy and laity. Myanmar literary education originated in Buddhist monasteries.<sup>13</sup>

The following passages are mentioned about how Myanmar Buddhist monks studied Pāli to become the Pāli master during the informal education period. In brief, the method employed in this informal textual study primarily consisted of two elements: reading a text through a paraphrasing exercise, which usually went with syntactical exercises; and philosophical analysis of each passage from the text. Paraphrasing, also known as Nissaya, was done initially by the teacher, and was repeated aloud by all students. Every sentence and paragraph were studied. After some weeks or months when most of the students were considered competent, the teacher would delegate the task of paraphrasing to the best student in the class. He would then be known as Zar-so, "reciter of the Burmese paraphrase", and was treated as an assistant teacher. He needs to prepare himself well, reading related texts, including commentaries and sub-commentaries to each Sutta, in advance. For a Zar-so was one of the various ways the teacher assessed his students. In the course of a paraphrasing exercise, philosophical expositions were usually given. Students were not usually allowed to read the Nissaya by others in their preparation for the class because that would mislead the teacher when he assessed the competence of his students in Pāli and comprehension ; instead, students were required to work on the original text itself and a new paragraph would only be studied when the current one had been well digested. (sar-kyay).<sup>14</sup>

The qualification of the students in informal education system was tested by asking them to write a Pāli book and to teach some principle Pāli text book to new

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<sup>13</sup> Sitagu International Buddhist Academy, *The World Buddhist Summit*, 2004, p.151.

<sup>14</sup> Dhammasami, Khammai, “A Study of Monastic Buddhist Education in Burma and Thailand”, PhD Dissertation, University of Oxford, 2004, p, 48 (Hereafter cited as Dhammasami, “A Study of Monastic Buddhist Education”)

students and measuring by means of a Zar-so. If necessary, he was asked to preach a sermon in front of the lay people especially on Buddhist Sabbath days.

In the absence of formal examinations, in the informal tradition of study a student's qualification was assessed in many ways: he might be measured as a Zar -so; or he might be asked to help teach some basic texts to his juniors; or he might write or be asked to write a book, and sometimes a commentary in Pāli on any text he saw fit or one chosen by his teacher, or he might be asked to preach on full moon days.<sup>15</sup>

### **2.2.3. Formal Education**

Theravada Buddhist teaching was maintained by Myanmar Buddhist scholars by means of informal education system since its arrival from Thaton. Many Buddhist scholars were produced by way of informal study of the teachings of the Buddha for many centuries. However, this informal system was being changed by the king Thalun in seventeenth century A.D in Myanmar. From then on, formal education system was applied in Myanmar.

Formal examinations began in the seventeenth century in Burma. So far it has been held that they were introduced by "King Thalun (who) held examinations every year for the shin laung [candidates for novicehood] and Pazin laung [candidates for monkhood] in the month of nayon [June or July] to select royal candidates for ordination"<sup>16</sup>

There are four levels for formal examination in Myanmar now. They are: Pathamange (Preliminary); Pathamalat (intermediate); Pathamagyi (advanced) and Dhammacariya (the teacher of Dhamma). A small number of Buddhist universities were built by State Sangha Mahanayaka Committee and Government for the purpose of propagation of pure Theravada Buddha's teaching throughout the world last three decades. However, these universities cannot accept most (75% or 80%) of matriculate monks owing to difficulties of lodging, class rooms, and meal and so forth. Therefore, some monks have to go abroad for their further study in USA, UK, Sri Lanka, India and Thailand and so on.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 49

<sup>16</sup> Dhammasami, "A Study of Monastic Buddhist Education"

### **2.3. Pinya Dynasty**

During the period of Pinya (1313-1365), there was the Pinya kingdom that ruled central Myanmar. Pinya was a microcosm of the small kingdoms (1287-1555) of Myanmar history. In the 1350, Kyaw Swa ruled in Pinya kingdom. At that time, Suu Twin Pit Sayadaw (1313-1373) was a famous scholar, Buddhist monk who named Ashin Nagita<sup>17</sup>. The king built Kyawswa Buddhist monastery and donated to Suu Twin Pit Sayadaw who was famous of monastic education. Suu Twin Pit sayadaw wrote a Pali grammar named Saddasarattajani<sup>18</sup>. During the reign of King Thiha Thura (1350-1359), Ashin Nanakitti was also an author-monk. He wrote the two books, namely, Atthaliniyojana and Sammohavinodani. In yojana book it gives Pali to Pali explanation.<sup>19</sup> In Myanmar history, like Pinya was a period of kingdom, Sagaing was also kingdom.

### **2.4. Sagaing Dynasty and Ava Dynasty**

Sagaing is now the capital of Sagaing Region. Sagaing kingdom was founded king Athinkhayar Saw Yun in 1315 after the fall of Bagan Dynasty. Its period of importance was short for the founder's grandson, Thado Minbya moved his capital to Ava in 1364. From 1760 to 1764, Sagaing was once again the capital. Sagaing is now a religious and monastic center, with numerous Buddhist monasteries and pagodas.

Sagaing has a very strong religion in the past. According to Myanmar legend, the Buddha himself visited Sagaing Hills. The 99 ogres of Sagaing Hills became the disciples of Lord Buddha and reached the state of Sotapanna, the first stage on the path to Nirvana. These 99 disciples built a pagoda enshrining the lower robe of Buddha. The head of the ogres was known by the name Zata. Therefore, his pagoda was named Zatawun. Looking back at the history of Sagaing, there was 9 original monasteries, Zatawun pagoda, Shin Arahan ordination hall, and other buildings for the initiation of adult monks.

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<sup>17</sup> Than Htut, *History of Myanmar Monastic Education*, p. 70

<sup>18</sup> Ashin Kincana, *Famous Burmese Scholars Monks*, State Pariyatti Sasana University, Mandalay, 2016, pp. 54

<sup>19</sup> Dr. Nandamalarbhivamsa, *Fundamental Abhidhamma*, Mahasubodhayon monastery, Sagaing Hills, Myanmar, 1997, pp.18

The glory of Sagaing was the countless pagodas and monasteries of Sagaing hills. The pagodas and monasteries crowded the numerous hills along the ridge running parallel to the river. From the top of the hills, one can enjoy the magnificent view of Sagaing with pagodas and great Ayeyarwady River. There are many pagodas on the top; some significant names are U Min Thonsae pagoda and Soon U Ponya Shin pagoda. U Min Thonsae pagoda was built by venerable monk named Padugyi Samgharaza (though the date was variously given as A.D.687, 1005, 1050, 1085). Forty-five Buddha images sit in a crescent-shaped colonnade within the pagoda. The Soon U Ponya Shin pagoda was located on the top of the Sagaing Hills. It was one of the oldest temples on the Sagaing Hills. All the pagodas in the area, it received the first alms offerings. It was built in 1312 by Minister Pon Nya. Pagoda festival is held on the fullmoon day of Waso (july). Kaungmudaw pagaoda, also called Yazamunisula is one of the magnificent pagodas. This special and excellent pagoda was built in Sri Lanka style by King Thalun in 1636. It is located 10km beyond the town of Sagaing. The dome shaped pagoda rises up to 46 meters. The stupa enshrined the Buddhist relics including reputedly part of Buddha's tooth and emerald bowl inside. The pagoda dome had been continuously painted white to signify, but now gilded with gold.<sup>20</sup>

Besides the pagodas, there were numerous monasteries, nunneries and meditation centers. Tilokaguru cave monastery was one of the monasteries on the Sagaing hillside. It was a meditation cave which was built around 1672. Bright red, yellow, blue, but especially turquoise that produced richer and more vivid mural painting still can be seen in the Tilokaguru meditation cave. Pariyatti, the theoretical aspect of Buddhism, flourished in Sagaing starting with the Vinayalankara, the sub-commentary on Monastic Code of discipline, by Taung-bi-lar sayadaw. Also, during Myanmar's Pinya Era, the well-known Shin Ariyavamsa composed the Manisaramajjhosa, a sub-commentary on Tikakyaw and Manidipa, the sub-commentary on mulatika. These two treatises concern Abhidhamma doctrine. Ashin Varatejo, the abbot of Tilokaguru monastery, composed the sub-commentary on Mahaparitta. The author monk at the time of writing this was only 25 years old, and in his 5<sup>th</sup> years of monkhood. By and by, the Pali sutta, Vinaya and Abhidhamma pitakas

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<sup>20</sup>*Nationality Youth Resource Development Degree College, Annual Magazine, Sagaing, Myanmar, 2016, p. 11 (Hereafter cited as Nationality Youth Resource Development)*

came to be subjects of super scholars in Sagaing. Patipatti, the practical application of the Buddha's teachings, were exemplified by such notable monks as Mahagandayon sayadaw and Yatana Htut Khaung sayadaw. In this way, Sagaing Hills became a flourishing ground for the practice as well as the study of Buddhism. Monasteries, besides being holy places, are focal points of academic study. It was therefore fitting that Sitagu International Buddhist Academy had come into view along the same traditional lines as the glorious Buddhist Institution of Sagaing and Myanmar in the past.<sup>21</sup>

The Sitagu Association was founded by Venerable Sayadaw Ashin Nyanissara, abbot of Sitagu monastery, on the full-moon day of Kason (Vesak) in 1980. That date marked the 2604<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Buddha's birth, as well as being the commemoration day of three other sacred events in the Blessed One's life; the Prophecy, the Enlightenment and the Great Demise. The Sitagu Association is based at Sitagu monastery in the Sagaing Hills, Sagaing, Myanmar. The Sagaing hills had for many centuries been an important center of Theravada Buddhism and of Myanmar Buddhist culture and civilization. The Zetawun pagoda's history even recounted how the Buddha himself visited these hills and converted the local inhabitants to his worldly teachings. Inspired by the accomplishments of the past and looking forward into the future, in 1994, the Sitagu Association, headed by Venerable Sitagu sayadaw, Ashin Nyanissara, launched the construction of Sitagu International Buddhist Academy with the aim of propagation the three-fold Saddhamma of scriptural study (pariyatti), Buddhist practice (paripatti) and realization of the Dhamma (pativedha) in the contemporary world. With this project the Sitagu Association intends to create a world-class modern educational institution designed to provide undergraduates and graduates level training in Buddhist studies and related academic subjects to qualified monks, nuns and lay persons. Such a religious university fits in nicely with splendor of the hills famed for the study and practice of Buddhism. With all its glory, Sagaing is a unique place in the Buddhist world, as well as in Myanmar's place of extraordinary peace and tranquility and beauty.

During the periods of Sagaing (1315-1364) and Ava (1364-1555 and 1605-1752), there was a less clear distinction between the two professions of the monks,

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid

“Teaching and learning process”, (Pariyatti) and “Practice meditation” (patipatti). Certainly, it was no longer possible to state that the village-dwellers followed “Teaching learning process” and the forest-dwellers that of “meditation”<sup>22</sup>. From the Ava period onwards, a particular lineage would usually trace its roots to more than one tradition of ordination, and often its roots might go back to both professions.<sup>23</sup> This is likely to explain how the concept of an ideal Burmese monk developed. It is said that a monk should study for ten years, then teach for another ten years, after which he should become a forest-dweller. However, after ten years of teaching, if he did not choose to become a forest-dweller, he usually took a twin role by continuing as a teacher and at the same time also becoming an administrator, as an abbot.

The convergence of the two vocations is described by Ferguson as one of the “type[s] of adjusted mechanisms” through which interaction took place between different monastic lineages over the centuries.<sup>24</sup> Here, to illustrate the cross-over between the two vocations, we cite a famous story of two monks. In Sagaing, there was a famous forest-dweller, Shwe Oo Min Sayadaw, also known by his ordained name, Shin Jambudhaja, whose *nissayas* on the *Vinaya-pitaka* and its commentaries are still in use today.<sup>25</sup> One of his contemporaries was Taung-bi-lar Sayadaw, also known by his ordained name as Munindaghosa and by his title, Tipitakalankara, for his fame in learning.<sup>26</sup> The encounter between these two learned monks tells us about the fusion of the two vocations. It is said that Taung-bi-lar Sayadaw visited Shwe Oo Min Sayadaw at his forest hermitage on the Sagaing Hills and saw the latter sweeping the compound of a pagoda nearby. Not knowing who the sweeper monk was, the former asked to meet Shwe Oo Min Sayadaw to consult him over a work on the *Vinaya* that he, Taung-bi-lar Sayadaw, was in the process of writing. It seems the

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<sup>22</sup> Dhammasami, “A Study of Monastic Buddhist Education”, p. 29

<sup>23</sup> (a) *Ibid*, p. 164-165

(b) Than Tun, *The History of Shwegyin-nikaya* (Shwegyin Sect in the Order of Buddhist Monks), Mandalay, 1984, pp.152-153 (Hereafter cited as Than Tun, *The History of Shwegyin-nikaya*)

<sup>24</sup> Ferguson, *The Symbolic Dimensions of the Burmese Sangha*, p.165

<sup>25</sup> (a) Mahathirizeyyathu, Mingyi, *Pitakatthamaing*, Rangoon, Tipitaka-nikaya Thathanapyu Apwe (The Association for the Promotion of the Tipi Taka-Nikaya, 2<sup>nd</sup> Reprint, 1989 (Hereafter cited as ) Mahathirizeyyathu, *Pitakatthamaing*)

(b) Ashin Pandittasiri, *Shwegyin-nikaya thathanawin (History of the Shwegyin-nikaya)*, Buddhathathana Aphwe Press, Rangoon, 1963 (Hereafter cited as Pandittasiri, *Shwegyin-nikaya thathanawin*)

<sup>26</sup> Mahathirizeyyathu, *Pitakatthamaing*, pp.182-183

ragged robes worn by Shwe Oo Min did not help to identify him as a scholar known for his thorough knowledge of the *Vinaya-pitaka*.

On learning who the sweeper monk was, Taung-bil-lar Sayadaw introduced himself and found that both of them had been ordained on the same day. Tradition dictates that the junior should pay respect to the senior by bowing to him three times and letting him walk ahead if both were to go the same way. So, there was a decision to be made: who would walk in front when they were to leave the pagoda for the hermitage of Shwe Oo Min? Taung-bi-lar offered the privilege to Shwe Oo Min for his virtue of being a forest-dweller. In fact, Shwe Oo Min himself had been a village-dweller and indeed a royal tutor. But he declined and said that Taung-bi-lar should walk in front because he was now the royal tutor. Upon learning in subsequent discussions that Shwe Oo Min was writing a commentary on the same work and that it seemed to be of a better quality, Taung-bi-lar is reported to have stored his own version away in a purpose-built pagoda, without making it available to any reader. He did so in honour of Shwe Oo Min. Soon, “weary perhaps of royal *viharas*”, Taung-bi-lar Sayadaw “withdrew to the *tiriyapabbata* to live in a quiet forest”.<sup>27</sup> Ferguson mentioned that both *sayadaws* had studied under the same teacher but it must have been at different times as they do not seem to have known each other well.<sup>28</sup> Here we can see pursuit of scholarship by forest-dwellers, and retreat to the forest by village-dwellers.

From the beginning of the Bagan period, contact was maintained with Ceylon, the centre of Theravada Buddhism. An inscription in Bagan dated 1233 AD “mentioned the presence” of a monk, Buddharams I, from *sinkhuih*, Ceylon, “who was then the head of a monastic establishment [in Bagan] to which the donor gave land and slaves”.<sup>29</sup> Buddharamsi must have been one of the Sinhalese monks who were settled in Bagan. One inscription mentions many Sinhalese monks witnessing a donor’s “deeds of merit”. Monks from Bagan looked to Ceylon for authority. Many of them, indeed, went to the island for ordination and study. One of the famous scholars

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<sup>27</sup>(a) Mabel Bode, *Pali Literature of Burma*, Yangon, Burma Research Society, 1965, p.53 (Hereafter cited as Bode, *Pali Literature of Burma*)

(b) Pandittasiri, *Shwegyin-nikaya thathanawin*, pp.83-84

(c) Ferguson, *The Symbolic Dimensions of the Burmese Sangha*, p.169

<sup>28</sup> Ferguson, *The Symbolic Dimensions of the Burmese Sangha*, p.169

<sup>29</sup> Than Tun, *The History of Shwegyin-nikaya*, p. 119

of Bagan, Chabada, for example, received his education and ordination in Ceylon. On his return to Bagan in 1180, after ten years in Ceylon, he founded a new fraternity, the Sinhalese Mahavihara tradition, *ST halasangha*, for which the king, Narapatisithu or Narapatijayasura (1167-1202), came to have “a feeling of great esteem and reverence”.<sup>30</sup> Chabada wrote some commentarial works in Pali. These included the *Suttaniddesa*, on *Kaccayana’s* Pali grammar, and the *Saiikhepavannana*, on the *Abhidhammatthasangaha* of Anuruddha.<sup>31</sup> The trend continued even during the unstable political situation towards the end of the Bagan period: an inscription of 1268 tells us of an educational mission, “under the leadership of Dhammasir and Subhucanda to Ceylon probably between 1237 and 1248”<sup>32</sup>

An even more far-reaching event in the contact between the Burmese and Sinhalese *Sangha*, however, came during the reign of a Mon king at Hamsavati, Pegu era (1287-1539). Dhammaceti (1472-1492), himself an ex-monk, sent twenty-two monks to “Sihaladipa” [Ceylon]... “To receive at their (“the spiritual successors of the priests of the *Mahavihara*’) hands the *upasampada* ordination in the *udakukkhepasima* consecrated on the *Kalyani* river, where the Fully Enlightened One enjoyed a bath”.<sup>33</sup> On their return, the king had all the old chapter halls, *Sima*, re-consecrated and all other monks in his Ramanna kingdom re-ordained in the “pure form of the *Sihala upasampada* ordination”. Altogether 15, 065 monks were re-ordained.

By the eighteenth century, however, the monastic Order in Burma was stronger than the Sinhalese. During the reign of Bodawpaya, it was the Sinhalese who came to Amarapura, the capital, for ordination. After their ordination, they took back with them “a number of Pali texts either of Burmese authorship or better known to the Burmese fraternity than to the Sinhalese”.<sup>34</sup> Those Sinhalese monks who had received ordination at Amarapura in 1800 came to be known as the *Amarapura-nikaya* in their own country.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid

<sup>31</sup> Bode, *Pali Literature of Burma*, pp.17-19.

<sup>32</sup> Than Tun, *The History of Shwegyin-nikaya*, p. 119

<sup>33</sup> Ibid

<sup>34</sup> Bode, *Pali Literature of Burma*, p.78

<sup>35</sup> Kitsiri Malalgoda, *Buddhism in Sinhalese Society*, 1750-1900, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1976 pp.97-98 (Hereafter cited as Malalgoda, *Buddhism in Sinhalese Society*)

With regard to the administration of the *Sangha*, the main administrative work was the responsibility of the abbot. However, there were ecclesiastical offices such as *sasanapuin* (old spelling of *thathanabaing*), supreme leader of the *Sangha*, and *winendhuir* (old spelling of *vinayadhara*), and ecclesiastical judge. *Sasanapuin* was usually appointed the preceptor of the king but Than Tun thinks that the *sasanapuin* at Bagan was not as significant as the *thathanabaing* during the Konbaung period.<sup>36</sup> Every monarch had at least one learned monk as his tutor, to advise him on educational and religious affairs. Shin Disapramuk (Disapamokkha), a *sasanapuin* in the reign of the last king of Bagan, however, advised the king also on political affairs and was despatched to China by the king on a peace mission. An ambitious king might appoint more than one tutor. At Ava, King Thalun had at least five tutors: Taung-bi-lar Sayadaw of Ava, already mentioned, and Shin Ariyalankara from Sagaing, Shin Nandadhaja, Anuruddha Sayadaw and Bamei Sayadaw.<sup>37</sup> However, one of them, Taung-bi-lar Sayadaw, rejected the capital and retreated to the forest just three years after Thalun ascended the throne.<sup>38</sup> On the other hand, Bamei Sayadaw, a Mon monk who had fled to Ava, was so knowledgeable in astrology and magic that the king invited him and his eleven pupil-monks to march with him, the king, on all his military expeditions. The *winendhuir* or *Vinayadhara*, for his part, was an ecclesiastical judge, usually a senior monk, well-versed in the *Vinaya*. He was elected and authorised by the *Sangha* to decide on disputes among its members.

However, during the Konbaung period (1752-1885), the administration of the *Sangha* became more highly organised, particularly at the highest level. Selected royal tutors were appointed to a newly created council, called *Sudhamma*. *Sudhamma* had been the name of the royal religious hall (*zayat*) since the Ava period. At Amarapura, the fourth capital of the dynasty<sup>39</sup>, Bodawpaya appointed in 1783 four *sayadaws* to the council. He called them *thathanahtein*, “the guardians of the

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<sup>36</sup> Than Tun, *The History of Shwegyin-nikaya*, pp.116-117

<sup>37</sup> *The Royal Orders of Burma, A.D. 1598-1885, Part Two, A.D. 1649-1750*, edited by Than Tun, Kyoto, the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, 1985, p. 365, p. 467 (Hereafter cited as ROB II)

<sup>38</sup> *Fergusson, The Symbolic Dimensions of the Burmese Sangha*, p.169

<sup>39</sup> Shwebo, Sagaing and Ava were used as capital by the early Konbaung rulers.

Sasana<sup>40</sup> He divided the kingdom into four territories and gave ecclesiastical jurisdiction in each to one of the *sayadaws*, calling for them to convene a meeting of the council to discuss matters that any one of them could not solve alone. While this concept of collective leadership through a *sanghakamma*, “ecclesiastical act”, had been the main characteristic of early Buddhist monasticism, such collective responsibility was new to the history of the *thathanabaing* in Burma.

Venerable Kelatha, in his work, *Mandalay Thathanawin* (History of Buddhism in Mandalay), says that Bodawpaya expanded the *Sudhamma* Council a year later with another eight *sayadaws*, to a total of twelve.<sup>41</sup> However, according to the royal order dated 24 May 1784, in which is mentioned the appointment of the *sayadaws*<sup>42</sup>, eleven in total, not twelve, the four-member *Sudhamma* Council was neither expanded nor were its members included in the eleven. The eleven *sayadaws* were, in fact, appointed as examiners in the *Pathamapyan* examinations, which we shall discuss later in this chapter<sup>43</sup>, and not as members of the *Sudhamma* Council. Two years later, on 27 June 1786, the king replaced the four-member *Sudhamma* Council with one *thathanabaing* when he appointed Gunamuninda to take charge of appointing *gaing ok* and *gaing dauk*, and of religious activities in the kingdom.<sup>44</sup> The same order also appointed twelve other *sayadaws* as *vinayadhara*, ecclesiastical judges.<sup>45</sup> However, in the following year, 1787, Gunamuninda was himself replaced by one of the twelve *vinayadharas*, Maung Taung Nanabhivamsa, who, as one of the eleven examiners appointed in 1784, had been in charge of copying the *Tipitaka*.<sup>46</sup>

Mindon (1853-1878) revived the *Sudhamma* council, consisting of a *thathanabaing* as its head and eight other members.<sup>47</sup> U Neyya, the second Maung

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<sup>40</sup> *The Royal Orders of Burma, A.D. 1598-1885, Part Four, A.D. 1782-1787*, edited by Than Tun, Kyoto, the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, 1985, p. 252 (Hereafter cited as ROB IV). They were Nanavilasa; Mingala Shwebon; Maha Mingala Shwebon; and Bonkyawweiyay Sayadaw.

<sup>41</sup> Ashin Kelatha, *Mandalay thathanawin (History of Buddhism in Mandalay)*, Vol.1, Department of Religious Affairs, Rangoon, 1980 -1986, pp.258-259

<sup>42</sup> ROB IV, p.252. They were Nanavilasa; Mingala Shwebon; Maha Mingala Shwebon; and Bonkyawweiyay Sayadaw.

<sup>43</sup> ROB IV, pp. 85-88.

<sup>44</sup> ROB IV, pp.501-502

<sup>45</sup> They were: Taung Lay Lone; Mahadanwun Kyaung; Ein Shyay Kyaung; Palaing; Hmundaw; Shwe Taung; Bagaya; Mehtee; Sinte; Katoo; Maung Taung; and Nyaung Kan Sayadaw. *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> ROB IV, p.414

<sup>47</sup> (a) Than Tun, *The History of Shwegyin-nikaya*, p. 156

(b) Shwe Gaing Tha, *Mandalay hnit taya pyi(The Centenary of Mandalay)*, Gyi Pwa Yay Press, Mandalay, 1959, p. 231 (Hereafter cited as Shwe Gaing Tha, *The Centenary of Mandalay*)

Taung Sayadaw, who was *thathanabaing* during the reign of Bagan (1839-1847), was appointed the *thathanabaing*. After the *thathanabaing* died in 1866, Mindon did not appoint a successor. So, the *Sudhamma* Council was in charge of the whole ecclesiastical administration until the next reign. Thibaw, the last king of Burma, appointed two *thathanabaings*, one for the new fraternity, the *Shwegyin-nikaya*, and the other for the majority, now called *Sudhamma-nikaya*, a name derived from that of the royal religious office. However, only the *thathanabaing* for the *Sudhamma-nikaya* agreed to be on the *Sudhamma* Council and thus became its head. As we shall see in Chapter Three, the *Shwegyin thathanabaing* refused even the title of *thathanabaing*. Nevertheless, he was in sole charge of the *Shwegyin-nikaya*, of which, in any case, he was himself the founder.

#### **2.4.1. The Five Greatest Benefactors**

For all mankind there are five greatest benefactors. Their benevolence towards mankind being too great for anyone to be able to repay them fully, they are called “The Five Greatest Benefactors”. The five greatest benefactors are the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the sangha, one's parents and one's teachers.<sup>48</sup>

Out of them, the benevolence of three Sacred Gems—the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Samgha are the greatest and matchless. They can bring security and welfare throughout samsara to those who take refuge in them. The next greatest benefactors are one's parents and one's teachers. They can give help and guidance at least for the present life.

Everyone in the world should repay the debt of gratitude to his parents and teachers. First, he should know that he owes a debt of gratitude to them. Next he should try to repay it. He should acknowledge and repay the debt of gratitude to his parents and teachers not only because of religious views but also because of natural laws. Let alone human beings, even animals know the need to repay the debt of gratitude to their parents.

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<sup>48</sup> DPPS, The Teaching of the Buddha, higher level-vol2, Department for the Promotion and Propagation of the Sasana, yangon, Myanmar, 2001, p.291.

## **2.4.2. Mother and Father, the Great Benefactors**

Parents showed love and affection and give protection to their sons and daughters since the time of conception in their mother's womb. Again, from the time of the delivery of their offspring till they can stand on their own feet, parents look after them and support them in the following ways.<sup>49</sup>

Parents prevent their sons and daughters from doing misconducts. They show them the way to behave good conducts. They make them learn arts and sciences. They let them to get married to suitable spouses. They give them their inheritance at the proper time.<sup>50</sup>

### **2.4.2.1. Notable Points Concerning the Greatest Benefactors**

Here, the benevolence of one's parents and teachers will be presented for the benefit of readers to remind them to repay the debts of gratitude they owe parents and teachers. In spite of saying, “the benevolence (loving-kindness, good-will, help, etc.) of parents to their children is greater than Mountain. Meru,” there are very few people who truly understand this and sincerely take the responsibility to repay their debts of gratitude they owe to their parents. While parents are still living, sons and daughters should perform their duties such as providing their parents with food, clothing and shelter, attending on them tenderly and affectionately, conducting themselves well as taught by the parents and thus making the parents happy, paying homage to them before leaving for a long journey, paying homage to parents by giving whatever gifts of high or low value on arriving back from a journey. Thus it is a kind of repayment in part, for the debts of gratitude they owe to their parents. Such actions are like tonic which can bring about long life to their parents and can enable them to enjoy longevity.

Some may think thus: “I will provide my parents worthily when I become rich.” When he becomes rich, his parents may have already died. One needs not be very rich just to repay one's debts of gratitude to one's parents. It is important for one to provide one's parents with whatever one can afford now. Otherwise, one will be remorseful like King Ajatasattu.

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<sup>49</sup>Ibid, p.502.

<sup>50</sup>DN, 3, Singalovadasutta, p. 145. DNA, 3, p. 124.

#### **2.4.2.2. The First Teachers**

The Buddha taught that parents are the first teachers of their sons and daughters, because they give guidance to their children beginning from childhood days. Besides they teach their children proper ways of living: they teach them how to behave, how to speak, how to eat, how to pay homage to the Sacred Triple Gem, etc., according to the ages of the children. Parents do not want their children to live apart from them even when the children get married. Parents love their children and arrange for their future comfort and happiness as long as their children are still under their care. Even a mother-hen always loves her small chickens, cares for them and protects them by putting them under her two wings. Also, the mother-then teaches the chickens how to fly, to run, to hide, and to eat. That is why the loving-kindness of parents is greater than even Mountain Meru.

#### **2.4.2.3. Parents are Like Brahmas**

The Buddha taught that parents are like Brahmas. In the abodes of Brahma, all Brahmas always dwell in the four sublime states of mind; love and affection (Metta), compassion (Karuna) sympathetic joy (Mudita), and equanimity (Upekkha). In the same way, parents live in the four sublime states of mind towards their children.

Since the time a mother conceived her baby in her womb, she avoids eating improper food, avoid living improper ways which might endanger her baby. She always radiates loving-kindness to her baby by reflecting thus: “May my baby be peaceful and happy. May my baby be born with complete parts of the body?” Father helps his wife by providing her whatever she needs.

When the baby is born, all pains of birth fade away as soon as she sees her baby's face. When her baby is crying persistently with hunger and pain, but with no ability to say any words, the mother showers compassion on her baby.

When parents see their baby's charming acts such as crawling, smiling, sitting, standing, speaking with pleasant words, they feel delighted with their baby's actions and manners. Even lookers-on equally share the parents' happiness.

Whenever their sons and daughters are acting and playing healthily and happily, parents feel very happy with sympathetic joy. Parents can enjoy long life and happiness as much as their sons and daughters show themselves to be good children by studying hard according to their respective ages, by helping their parents, etc. Therefore, sons and daughters should try to conduct themselves well in their daily life so that parents may be healthy, wealthy and happy and live a long life.

When sons and daughters get married and set up their own family, parents remain in equanimity thinking thus: “My sons and daughters are capable of living on their own.

Then, they can live peacefully with untroubled mind, which is in equilibrium and free from two extremes, i.e. anxieties and worries (dosa) on one hand and attachment and craving (lobha) on the other hand, concerning their sons and daughters.<sup>51</sup>

#### **2.4.2.4. Maternal Instinct**

Parents want their sons and daughters to get married before they die for, they want to be free from anxieties and worries concerning them.

Universal love cannot be greater than parental love. The loving-kindness of parents will cease only when they die. Therefore, there is no nobler love than a mother. In preaching the discourse on ‘Loving-Kindness’, the Buddha describes the love of a mother for her only son as the most-fitting example.

When a mother-cow was stabbed with a spear while suckling the young calf, she was not hurt due to her love for her baby calf. If parental love is compared with the earth, the ocean, Mountain-Meru, or the sky, the latter will be smaller than the former because parental love is much greater.

#### **2.4.2.5. Gratitude that could not be Fully Repaid**

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<sup>51</sup>Matuposakajataka, vol-1, p. 226, Matuposakajataka Atthakatha, vol-4, p. 91. Members of sixth Samgha Council, eds. *Mahavagga, DighaNikaya, Myanmar Translation*, 6<sup>th</sup> eds. Yangon, Myanmar: Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2007, p. 79.

In repaying one's debt, one may settle the full amount of the debt. Then one will be free from the debt. One cannot be free from the debt of gratitude we owe our parents because they are too great to be paid in full.<sup>52</sup>

The Buddha said thus: 'Sons and daughters cannot be free from the debt of gratitude they owe their parents although they might have served their parents as a servant for one hundred years.'<sup>53</sup>

#### **2.4.2.6. The Best Way to Repayone's Gratitude**

As mentioned above, we can say that one has perfectly fulfilled one's duty to one's parents if one performs five kinds of duty while parents are still living. When they die, one must give alms on their behalf and share merit with them whenever one performs a meritorious deed. In repaying one's debt of gratitude to one's parents, the best way as taught by the Buddha, is to show them the dhamma. It means:

Helping parents, who have not yet had faith and got established in the Three Sacred Gems to have faith in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Samgha and get established in the Triple Gem.<sup>54</sup> Helping ungenerous parents to become generous persons in making charity.

Helping parents, who have no sense of morality, become persons who observe moral precepts.

Helping parents, who have no general knowledge to acquire knowledge.<sup>55</sup> Of all the knowledge one can acquire, knowing the value of Three Sacred Gems, knowing the value of insight meditation and of four ariya truths are the noblest. In helping parents acquire knowledge, one may read religious books to them, or take them to meditation centres and places of Dhamma lectures. These are the best ways of repaying our debts of gratitude to our parents.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Members of sixth Samgha Council, eds. *Mahavagga, Digha Nikaya Atthakatha, Myanmar Translation*, 6<sup>th</sup> eds. Yangon, Myanmar: Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2007, p. 44.

<sup>53</sup> Members of sixth Samgha Council, eds. *Matuposakasutta, Samyutta Nikaya, vol-1, Myanmar Translation*, 6<sup>th</sup> eds. Yangon, Myanmar: Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2007, p. 183.

<sup>54</sup> *Matuposakajataka*, vol-2, p. 226.

<sup>55</sup> Members of sixth Samgha Council, eds. *Anguttara Nikaya, vol-2, Myanmar Translation*, 6<sup>th</sup> eds. Yangon, Myanmar: Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2007, p. 63.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, p. 64

Practicing meditation as a monk, a novice or a nun and sharing merits with parents and radiating love and affection to them are the best ways to repay their gratitude to them.

Venerable Sariputta helped his mother, who believed in wrong views, to convert her to the right view. Even the Buddha reciprocated gratitude to his parents in the best ways. He pointed out the true Dhamma to his father who later became an Arahant. The Buddha also taught the Abhidhamma to the deva Santusita, who was his mother during his previous existence.

The Buddha told about many things which can bring peace and welfare to anyone who reciprocated the gratitude to parents. There are also instances of people who were swallowed by the fissures appearing in the earth, who fall into poverty in their next existences because they ill-treated their parents. The venerable Mahamoggallana was beaten to death by five hundred thieves. It was the consequence of his beating his parents to death under the instigation of his foolish wife.<sup>57</sup>

#### **2.4.2.7. Gratitude to Teachers**

Just as the gratitude we owe to our parents is infinite, so also the gratitude we owe to our teachers is infinite. In this world, the most important thing for all human beings is wisdom. Wisdom is like one's ears and eyes. If one has no eyes or ears, one will not be able to participate in social affairs. In the same way, one who has no wisdom will not be able to participate in social affairs. Wisdom is first acquired from parents. It is not, however, enough for one. One also has to learn from teachers. So, the teacher must be dutiful as a teacher, and the pupil also must be dutiful as a pupil.<sup>58</sup>

#### **2.4.3. Traditional Culture of Myanmar People**

In the world, the wise are the leaders who guide a nation. The nation which has many wise people is a leader in the world and it can become a global power. Only when one gets the chance to learn from a good teacher with good knowledge and good teaching, can gain good knowledge from him. A pupil in former days had

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<sup>57</sup> Members of sixth Samgha Council, eds. *Anguttara Nikaya Atthakatha, vol-2, Myanmar Translation*, 6<sup>th</sup> eds. Yangon, Myanmar: Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2007, p. 27.

<sup>58</sup> Members of sixth Samgha Council, eds. *Anguttara Nikaya, vol-3, Myanmar Translation*, 6<sup>th</sup> eds. Yangon, Myanmar: Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2007, p. 281.

to serve as a close attendant to his teacher for three years at least to gain knowledge. He has to be a good learner first to become a good teacher later. A pupil who is loved by his teacher will receive much knowledge from his teacher. A pupil of a good teacher will be successful in life.<sup>59</sup>

All beings are equal, but those who receive the help of parents and teachers will become clever and skillful persons. Parents and teachers can mould the young persons who are like wax and plastic that can be easily shaped at will. The more we consider how much gratitude we owe to our teachers, the more we understand the gratitude. The gratitude we owe our teachers whether they are primary school teachers or university teachers, is the same. We pay homage to them all the same. Just as we pay homage to the Three Sacred Gems at the times of going to bed and getting up, we also should pay homage to our teachers who give worldly and super knowledge to us.

According to deep-rooted traditional culture, we the Buddhists pay special homage to parents and teachers on auspicious days. That brings merits to us. The merits will wipe away the evil consequences of our offences which we might have committed physically, verbally or mentally. They will help us to accomplish our desired goals.<sup>60</sup>

Those who have offended the five great benefactors cannot undertake any noble task, they do not prosper, and they make mistakes in their thoughts and actions. Their health is poor. Therefore, we should pay respect to our great benefactors daily.

#### **2.4.3.1. Knowing the Gratitude of Teachers**

There are Myanmar sayings which state: “One who reviles parents will be reborn in lower abodes or will be swallowed up by the earth; one who reviles teachers will be faced with various dangers.” Nowadays, we see or hear instances of persons who are blind, deaf or suffering from chronic disease; of persons who are poor and those who die as a result of fatal accidents or those who are swallowed by the fissure

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid, p. 238.

<sup>60</sup> Members of sixth Samgha Council, eds. *Samyutta Nikaya Atthakatha*, vol-4, Myanmar Translation, 6<sup>th</sup> eds. Yangon, Myanmar: Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2007, p. 77

appearing in the earth, which are the consequences of reviling parents and teachers. Those who realize the debts of gratitude they owe their parents and teachers look after their parents and teachers happily and help them generously as if they possess a big treasury. So one should unfailingly and willingly repay the great gratitude to one's parents and teachers. Such meritorious deeds will bear fruits for many more births till the day when one realizes Nibbana. The Venerable Sariputta always paid homage to his teacher Venerable Assaji who taught him to take refuge in Triple Gems, to perceive clearly the Four Noble Truths. He always lay down to sleep with his head turning towards the direction where the venerable Assaji resided. The gratitude of a teacher who shows the way to the Nibbana (Lokuttara) is much greater than the gratitude we owe to parents and teachers who make us wise in worldly ways. If we follow a wrong teacher, we will be reborn repeatedly in the four lower abodes. With regard to the great respect for teachers, the ardent desire of the young novice Rahula should be noted. As soon as he got up from bed, Rahula scooped up some sand in his hand and uttered thus: "May I have as many words of counsel from my teachers as there are grains of sand in my hand." He obeyed without protest the advice of any teacher who taught him. Just as a potter has to beat his raw pot repeatedly in order to obtain a beautiful pot, so also a teacher should admonish rude pupils by beating them to make them good pupils. Such teachers should be venerated all the more for their farsightedness for the benefits of their students. "The teacher who points out the fault of a pupil and chastises him severely should be thanked as one who digs out golden pots for him," said the Buddha.<sup>61</sup>

#### **2.4.3.2. A Pupil Who Obeys His Teacher**

To obey readily the advice given by teachers and learned persons without any complaint or argument is a noble blessing called "Sova cassata."<sup>62</sup>

Once, there were three young bhikkhus, who begged a revered teacher to take them as his pupils. Their pledges to be obedient to the teacher were notable.

One of them said: "If you should instruct me to jump from a high cliff, I will do so."

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<sup>61</sup> *Dhammapada Atthakatha*, vol-1, p.346-347.

<sup>62</sup> DN, vol-3, *Pathikavagga*, p.178.

One bhikkhu said: “If you should instruct me to grind all my body on a slab of stone starting from the heels upwards, I will do so.”

The third bhikkhu said thus: “If you should instruct me to kill myself by holding my breath, I will do so.”

These pledges illustrate the implicit obedience of Pupils to their teachers. Parents and teachers should never overlook even small faults but should chastise their sons and daughters as well as pupils by beating, if necessary, just as the potter have to beat his pots to make them fine. Only those who could bear such admiration will prosper.

#### **2.4.3.3. Prince of Baranasi**

Once, Brahmadata, the king of Baranasi, had a son named Prince Brahmadata.<sup>63</sup> The king sent his son, who was sixteen years old, to a teacher of Takkasila, who was well known in the four corners of the world. The prince was to complete his education under the teacher so that he would be familiar with worldly affairs.

In doing so, he gave his son a pair of sandals, an umbrella and a thousand pieces of money. The boy paid homage to his parents and left for Takkasila. When he got to the teacher’s dwelling, he took off his sandals, kept his umbrella aside and paid due respect to the teacher. He informed the teacher his name, native place, the names of his parents and the purpose of his coming.

From that day onward the teacher of Takkasila gave lecture to the prince. Thus, the young prince was taught all that a prince should know. One day, while he was going to bathe along with his teacher, he saw a woman preparing to dry some sesame seeds in the sun. He developed a strong desire to eat them. So, he picked up a handful of the seeds and ate them. He did so for three days consecutively.<sup>64</sup>

At the final day, when he took the seeds, the old woman informed the teacher about his pupil's bad behavior and asked him to punish the pupil. Instantly the teacher beat his pupil thrice on his back with a strip of bamboo. The prince was very angry

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<sup>63</sup> *Jataka Atthakatha*, vol-6, p.279.

<sup>64</sup> *Jataka Atthakatha*, vol-6, p. 280

with his teacher. With a bloodshot glare, he eyed him from head to foot thinking thus: “I will kill him when I become a king.” the teacher observed how angry the prince was and how he had eyed him. When the time came for the prince to go home, he said to his teacher thus: “Sir, when I become king of Baranasi, I will send for you. Then come to me, please.”

When the prince became king of Baranasi, he remembered his grudge. He sent off a messenger together with gifts to fetch his teacher. “I shall never be able to appease him while he is young,” taught the teacher, so he did not go. But after the prince had ruled his country for several years, the teacher thought that he could appease the prince then, and so he went to Baranasi. As soon as the king saw his teacher, he threatened him by saying thus: “I never forgot the punishment you had given me now I will kill you.” Then the teacher said, “Prince, in the world the punishments given by teachers to their pupils who committed evil offences do not represent their anger and grudge, but they represent their love and care for their pupils so that the pupils will not commit the offence again. So, you should not take revenge on me. If you had not been taught this lesson by me, you will become one who gradually commits small offences leading to greater offences and finally you will become a criminal. Then the king will have to give orders to kill you: Then you will not have succeeded to the throne. Now, you have received these royal pleasures owing to my admonition.”<sup>65</sup>

The ministers, who were near the king also said that his royal pleasures really belonged to his teacher. Then the king realized the goodness of his teacher and offered his kingly power to his teacher. But his teacher refused to accept the king's offer. So, the king ruled over his kingdom as a good pupil of a good teacher.

The above story illustrates some of the points concerning gratitude to parents and teachers. Only when teachers discharge their duties well, and pupils are dutiful towards teachers, will they become worthy teachers and pupils. There are many instances and stories, which show the benefits of good admonition and the bad consequences of bad admonition.

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<sup>65</sup> *Jataka Atthakatha*, vol-6, p. 281

In conclusion anyone who reviles his parents and teachers will meet with various difficulties in his present life and will certainly be reborn in four miserable realms (apaya) after his death.<sup>66</sup> One who repays the gratitude to one's parents and teachers will have peace and prosperity in his present and future existences. So, one should repay one's gratitude to one's parents and teachers as they are bound by duty. If you touch fire, you will feel hot and. if you touch water, you will feel cold. Buddhism only shows the way. We Buddhist have reason to be proud of our Buddhist way of life and of knowing well the gratitude we own to the five great benefactors The Buddha, the Dhamma, the Samgha, parents and teachers.

As mentioned above, those examples were of Buddhist culture which are teaching in monastic schools around the country as the curriculums of teaching courses.

## **2.5. Famous Scholars and the Homily of some Scholars**

During the Pinya dynasty up to Nyaung Yan dynasty, there were many scholars who were famous about books and homilies such as Shin Maharatthasara, Shin Mahasilavamsa, Taung Bi Lar Sayadaw and Kan Taw Min Kaung Sayadaw, etc. Their homilies are as follows:

### **2.5.1. The Homily of the Venerable Shin Maharatthasara**

During the period of Ava, in Myanmar Venerable Shin Maharatthasara was a famous scholar monk who was one of the greatest poets of ancient Burma.<sup>67</sup> He wrote the homily as follow:

One should regard one's elder brothers and elder sisters as one's parents; one should not argue with them.

One should work together with friends through thick and thin. When important matter arises, all must strive together without quarrel.

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<sup>66</sup> *Jataka Atthakatha*, vol-6, p. 287

<sup>67</sup> Than Htut, *History of Myanmar Monastic Education*, p. 77

One should be careful not to use bitter words but only to use sweet words pleasing others' ears. One just controls one's anger and pride so that one will not quarrel with others.

One must avoid by all means intoxicating drinks and drugs which can ruin one's prosperity and which are described as poison by the Buddha.

One must have compassion and love for other sentient beings as oneself.

One must give alms freely and unreservedly to provide oneself with provisions throughout samsara. As tiny drops of water falling incessantly from the eaves fill even large pots, so repeated offerings from time to time will fulfill one's merit.

One should not be excessively greedy; one must be fair in dealing with others in business.

One should follow the tradition of the noble ones by having the right thought, the right action, and the right view with a pure mind.

One should always look for knowledgeable books and literature and read them at home.

If one reads repeatedly and explains what one has gathered to wives and children, they will become especially wise and cultured on account of the knowledge they hear every day, even though they were ignorant and unwise previously.

One should make one's effort to the utmost to provide one's family with every necessity in life.<sup>68</sup>

### **2.5.2. The Homily of the Shin Mahasilavamsa**

Shin Maha Silavamsa was a Theravada Buddhist monk who lived Ava Kingdom (1364-1555) of Mynamar.<sup>69</sup> He was famous for his poetry and he was one of the greatest poets of ancient Burma. He wrote two books such as Paramitawkhan

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<sup>68</sup> *Thammata Se Zaung Dwe* (A Collections of Ten Texts), p. 243-8.

<sup>69</sup> Than Htut, *History of Myanmar Monastic Education*, p. 75-77

Pyo and Sutaungkhan Pyo which are his masterpieces.<sup>70</sup> Homily was regarded as follow:

One should not go in front of elders closely, rudely or with a raised head, but one should pass by with a bent head.

One should not partake of food before parents and teachers have started to take it.

One should not take anything kept aside by parents and teachers during their absence. One should ask for permission from them respectfully if one wishes to take it or to eat it.

One should be humble and modest in dealing with old and young person's alike as well as those senior or junior to one.

If one wishes to acquire knowledge, one should learn while one has the opportunity.

If one strives diligently, one will gain knowledge.

If one has acquired knowledge and becomes wise, one will be famous in the world.<sup>71</sup>

### **2.5.3. The Homily of Nyaung Bin Thar U Ponnya**

If one tries to find fault with others, one will have many enemies.

If one is proud, boastful and reckless, one will be hated by many.

One who asks from others and one who does not give when asked are both distressful and hateful.

One should wait for the right moment whether one should say or act.

Instead of prolonging a dispute, one should make it short by cutting off one's pride.

Don't walk on an old bridge in the dark. Don't talk highly as a mountain.

If one walks on an old bridge in the dark, the bridge may break.

If one talks highly as a mountain, one will be hated.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Bode, *Pali Literature of Burma*, p. 43.

<sup>71</sup> *Thammata Se Zaung Dwe* (A Collections of Ten Texts), p. 267.

<sup>72</sup> *Thammata Se Zaung Dwe* (A Collections of Ten Texts), p. 281-3.

#### **2.5.4. The Homily of Pho Thu Daw U Nu**

Don't drink any alcoholic liquor. Don't make clear water turbid. If one drinks alcoholic liquor, one will be reborn in the nether world. If one makes clear water turbid, the sediment will be stirred up.

One should not suppress others by talking too much, thinking one is right. One should not eat too much even though one has a good appetite. If one talks too much, one will be making enemies.

If one eats too much, one will get sick. One must have the right knowledge, and one must also have the right work and the right thought. Only if one has the right knowledge, one will be free from danger in samsara and be happy. Only if one has the right work and the right thought, one can earn one's living easily and get settled in life.<sup>73</sup>

#### **2.5.5. The Homily of Myanmar Traditions.**

The consequences of one's bodily actions will return to oneself.

The consequences of one's verbal actions will return to oneself.

The consequences of one's mental actions will return to oneself.

#### **2.5.6. The Homily of the Venerable Sardon Sayadaw**

Dear son (daughter), please listen to me: "Once there resided in the city of Baranasi, a rich man who possessed more than ten million silver coins. He had a son, and as he loved his son very dearly, he let him play at home instead of sending him to school. When his parents died, this rich man's son, being illiterate did not even know East, West, North or South. He did not know how to keep his money properly, and the money lent to various persons was collected and taken away by bad servants.

He became poor and had to sell his house. Finally, he was reduced to wearing

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<sup>73</sup>Ibid, pp. 276-280.

rags. He had to hold a cup and go around begging for food. He was, however, blamed as a very stupid person and beaten up by people. He had to leave the village, and finally died in the forest. His corpse was eaten by vultures. That illustrated the evil consequences of being uneducated. Young boys and girls must acquire education in order to lead a decent and happy life.”

### **2.5.7. The Homily of Editor U Ponnya**

Saying pleasant words is a blessing for success; this is a well-known saying among men.

A handsome or beautiful person without education is like a flame of the forest flower without fragrance or like a fig fruit without taste. On the other hand, a wise and learned person without physical beauty is like the star flower which is fragrant though not beautiful, and like the jack fruit, which is tasty though it appears ugly. People praise him and love him.

Even though one is the daughter of noble parents of decent lineage, if she lacks morality and is flippant, she is regarded as a mean, rude and lowly person, and she is ridiculed and dispraised by others.

Dear son, your beloved parents, with all their love and care for you, will give you admonishment for your benefit and welfare. Though we want to hold you in our bosom and keep you at home lying joyfully near us, we shall have to send you to a good learned teacher in order to give you a proper education. As a male person, if you are not educated, you will not be regarded as a respectable person in society, and you will have to learn your living miserably like a boatman or a laborer.

On the other hand, if you have a proper education in the arts and sciences, you can lead a noble life earning your living comfortably and acquiring great wealth in a short time. Remember this well, dear son, try your best to acquire a proper education under a good teacher.<sup>74</sup>

### **2.5.8. The Homily of the Reverend Kan Taw Min Kaung Sayadaw**

Shun evil persons. Seek the wise. Listen to the virtuous. Don't follow the bad

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<sup>74</sup> DPPS, *The Teaching of the Buddha*, higher level-vol2, Department for the Promotion and Propagation of the Sasana, Yangon, Myanmar, 2001, p.320-1.

example; practice restraint so that your conduct will be better than that of others. Try to be virtuous so that you are loved by all.

Don't desire for what is not given. Don't answer if you are not asked. Don't go if you are not invited. Don't eat without a good appetite. Don't pluck the fruit if it is not ripe. Silence is golden.

If people like and love you, gods will like and love you. Avoid the two extremes and follow the middle Path. Only when you are educated will you get the Opportunity. Only when you are wise, will you know the opportune moment. Only if you know and repay the gratitude to others, will you be prosperous for long. Only if you can see the coming danger from a distance, can you live long. If you want to acquire wealth, seek reliable friends who can help you. Keep yourself fit, be diligent. Don't be conceited, be humble, perform wholesome deeds. Abstain from all intoxicants. Be moderate in enjoying sensual pleasures. Avoid gambling and womanizing.<sup>75</sup>

#### **2.5.9. Taung Phi Lar Sayadaw's Homily**

Although judicial laws exist, bribery corrupts them.

Although one is famous as a learned man, excessive anger corrupts him.

Although the king rules righteously, his officials corrupt his rules.

Although one is righteous, his companions spoil him.<sup>76</sup>

#### **2.5.10. Admonition to Dighavu**

Neither take the long view, nor take the short view.

Hatred is never ended by revenge. Hatred is ended only by forgiveness.

Enmity should not be allowed to grow. Friendship should not be cut short. Only by forgiveness does enmity cease. Revenge merely multiplies enmity.<sup>77</sup>

#### **2.5.11. The Homily of Lon daw Sayadaw**

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<sup>75</sup> DPPS, *The Teaching of the Buddha*, higher level-vol2, Department for the Promotion and Propagation of the Sasana, Yangon, Myanmar, 2001, p.323-4.

<sup>76</sup> Than Htut, *History of Myanmar Monastic Education*, p. 80

<sup>77</sup> Ibid

Every day one must try to gain at least one of these three—merit, wealth or knowledge. Don't blame everything on the past kamma. Don't rely on your knowledge. Emulate wise persons, think out a way for own welfare. If your desire for wealth is very strong, you will gain wealth. If your anger is very strong, you will lose everything in the present as well as in the future.

Even though your plan is good, it is futile if it is too late.

One person's welfare may be forsaken for the welfare of many relatives.

The welfare of the many relatives may be forsaken for the welfare of the whole village.

The welfare of the whole village may be forsaken for the welfare of the whole nation.<sup>78</sup>

#### **2.5.12. The Homily of Kyee Kan Shin Gyi**

One becomes prosperous only when one is supported by good kamma.

One is supported by good kamma only when one possesses the knowledge of the Dhamma and practice of it.

One must be humble when one tries to acquire knowledge.

To be morally pure one must be diligent.

One must act as a beggar to acquire knowledge.

Only through wisdom can one see the truth.

Only through past good kamma can wealth stay long.

Even though one is learned in Buddhist literature, one can be considered a wise man only if one can make one's point agreeably.

Even though one is learned, one's decision will be appreciated by men and devas only if it accords with the traditional code of law applied righteously without being swayed by desire, fear, anger and delusion.

Only when one is righteous, is one free from unwholesome deeds.

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<sup>78</sup> DPPS, *The Teaching of the Buddha*, higher level-vol2, Department for the Promotion and Propagation of the Sasana, yangon, Myanmar, 2001, p.328

### **2.5.13. The Homily of Paukkam Maung Cho**

If one is extravagant, one's objective is not accomplished. If one uses bombastic or high-flown words, one's speech will be futile. If a fish is rotten, the whole boat loaded with fishes will be rotten. If one is wicked, all will be ruined. If one is good, all will be happy and well. If one knows the truth, one can see what is wrong. Even though one is wealthy, one seldom shows generosity. Even though one learns and understands the benefits of generosity and morality, it is difficult to practice these two wholesome deeds. Don't be lazy if you want to acquire knowledge. Don't quarrel an opportunity if you want to acquire wealth. If you want to be loved by your community, show generosity to them.<sup>79</sup>

### **2.6. The Duties as shown in Singalovada Sutta**

Singalovada Sutta means the discourse preached by the Buddha to a young man named Singala. In this sutta, the Buddha explained the social duties for all human beings and they include the duties of parents, the duties of sons and daughters etc. If one fails to observe these duties one encounters a declination in prosperity in addition to the misfortune of being reborn in woeful abodes after death. If one observes these duties, one enjoys prosperity and high dignity in the present life and one will be reborn in pleasant abodes after death. So, all human beings should observe these social duties with due respect and firm conviction.<sup>80</sup> These duties are stated in brief as follows:

#### **2.6.1. Five Kinds of Duty for Sons and Daughters.**

Sons and daughters must attend closely to their parents in order to provide them with all the requisites in life. They must carry out the social affairs of the business matters of their parents.<sup>81</sup>

They must maintain their parents' properties, their parents' nationality, their parents' religious duties, and try to straighten their parents' religious view if they have a wrong view.

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<sup>79</sup> DPPS, *The Teaching of the Buddha*, higher level-vol2, Department for the Promotion and Propagation of the Sasana, Yangon, Myanmar, 2001, p.330-1.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, p.156.

They must also maintain the good name of their parents and their lineage.

They must obey their parents and make themselves worthy of the parents' heritage.<sup>82</sup>

On their parents' death they should do good deeds in dedication to them and share the merits with them.<sup>83</sup>

### **2.6.2. Five Kinds of Duty for Parents**

Parents must prevent their sons and daughters from engaging in misconduct.

They must show their sons and daughters to behave in good conduct.

They must let their sons and daughters learn arts and sciences.

They must let them to get married to suitable persons.

They must provide them with their inheritance at the proper time.<sup>84</sup>

### **2.6.3. Five Kinds of Duty for a Pupil**

He must stand up and welcome his teacher when he sees the teacher coming.

He must attend and wait upon his teacher.

He must obey the words of the teacher with confidence and devotion.

He must serve his teacher and supply his needs.

He must learn carefully and respectfully what is taught or instructed by his Teacher.<sup>85</sup>

### **2.6.4. Five Kinds of Duty for a Teacher**

A teacher must teach his pupils about good behavior.

He must impart knowledge to him in such a manner that the pupil may thoroughly grasp the subject.<sup>86</sup>

He must train his pupil without any discrimination.

He must speak well of his pupil's virtues and attainments to his friends.

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid, p.156.

<sup>83</sup> *Thammata Se Zaung Dwe* (A Collections of Ten Texts), p. 260.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, p. 260.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, p. 261.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, p.156.

He must prevent his pupils from danger.<sup>87</sup>

#### **2.6.5. Five Kinds of Duty for a Husband**

A husband must be kind and adore his wife.<sup>88</sup>

He must not treat his wife in an insolent manner.

He must not engage in sexual misconduct with other women.

He must give her control and authority over domestic matters.

He must provide his wife with garments and ornaments.<sup>89</sup>

#### **2.6.6. Five Kinds of Duty for a Wife**

A wife must arrange chores of the household well and run it smoothly.

She must distribute gifts fairly between her relatives and her husband's relatives.

She must not engage in sexual misconduct with other men.

She must keep and maintain all things orderly that are handed over by her husband.

She must be skillful and diligent in all her house works.<sup>90</sup>

#### **2.6.7. Five Kinds of Duty for a Good Friend**

A man must give his friends all necessary things as much as possible.

He must use affectionate words towards them.

He must do his best for the benefits of his friends.

He must think of them as himself.

He must be true to his words and promises.<sup>91</sup>

#### **2.6.8. Five Kinds of Duty for a Beneficiary**

A beneficiary must protect his friend when his friend is inebriated.

He must guard over his friend's properties when he is inebriated.

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid, p.261.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, p.156.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, p.261.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid

<sup>91</sup> *Thammata Se Zaung Dwe* (A Collections of Ten Texts), p.261.

He must be a refuge for his friend when the latter is in trouble.<sup>92</sup>

He must not depart his friend when he is in distress.

He must help his descendants.<sup>93</sup>

#### **2.6.9. Five Kinds of Duty for a Master**

A master should make his employees work in accordance with their capability and strength.

He must provide his employees with food and pay them sufficiently.

He must give them medical treatment when they are ill and sick.

On receiving delicious food, he must share it with his employees.

He must allow them to work at appointed times and let them enjoy leisure at other times for rest and relaxation.<sup>94</sup>

#### **2.6.10. Five Kinds of Duty for a Servant**

A servant must wake up from sleep before the master.

He must sleep after his master.

He must take only what is given to him by his master.

He must try his best in his master's work.

He must always speak of the virtues of his master.<sup>95</sup>

#### **2.6.11. Five Kinds of Duty for Laymen**

A layman must minister to the bhikkhus with affection in action.

He must minister to the bhikkhus with affection in speech.

He must show them affection in thoughts, wishing them well at all times.

He must always keep his house open to the bhikkhus.

He must provide them with material requisites.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid, p. 156.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid, p.261.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid

<sup>95</sup> Ibid

<sup>96</sup> *Thammata Se Zaung Dwe* (A Collections of Ten Texts),, p.262

### **2.6.12. Six Kinds of Duty for Bhikkhus**

A bhikkhu must restrain his laymen from doing evil deeds.

He must exhort them to do good deeds.

He must protect them with loving and affection.

He must preach them what they have never heard before.

He must explain to them what they have already heard.

He must show them the way to the realm of devas.<sup>97</sup>

### **2.6.13. Six Kinds of Duty for a Leader**

He must be more industrious than others.

He must be vigilant in order to lead others.

He must be kind to his subordinates.

He must forebear and forgive others.

He must be considerate and reasonable whatever he does.

He must be wise and foresighted in doing anything with his own wisdom.<sup>98</sup>

### **2.7. Thirty-eight kinds of Blessings (Mangala Sutta)**

Before the Buddha preached the Mangala Sutta, a certain rumor concerning mangala had arisen among men and devas twelve years in advance. They pondered what mangala is. And so, there were many divergences of opinions; some said seeing pleasant objects was Mangala, some said hearing pleasant sound was Mangala, some said smelling sweet odor was Mangala, etc. This controversy spread from men to the devas and brahmas. On one occasion the Exalted One was dwelling at the Jetavana monastery of Anathapindika in Savatthi. Then at the middle watch of the night, a certain deva of extremely attractive appearance approached the Buddha, illuminating the entire Jetavana monastery. Having approached the Buddha and having made obeisance to the Exalted One, he stood in a suitable place. Thus standing, the deva addressed the Bhagava in verse: "Many devas and human beings, longing for their

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<sup>97</sup>Ibid, p.262

<sup>98</sup>Ibid

well beings, pondered what Mangala is:<sup>99</sup> Oh! The Exalted One, please tell us what the highest blessing is." Then, the Buddha expounded the following thirty-eight factors of blessing.

### 2.7.1. Mangala Sutta in Pali

*Yam mahgalam dvadassahi cintayimsu sadevaka sotthanarri nadhigacchanti atha tirh sanca mahgalam. Desitam devadevena sabbapapa vinasanani sabbaloka hitatthaya mahgalam tarn bhanama he. Evam me sutam Ekam samayam bhagava Savatthiyam viharati Jetavane anathapincji kassa arame. Atha kho anatara devata abhikkantaya rattiya abhikkanta vaiina kevalakappam jetavanani obasetva. Yena bhagava upasarikamitva bhagavantani abhiva detva ekamantam athasi. Ekamantam thita kho sa devata bhagavantam gathaya ajjhabasi. Bahu deva manussaca maiigalani acintayuni akaii khamana sotthanani byuhi mangala muttamam. Asevanasa balanam panditananca sevana pujaca pujaneyyanani etani mangala muttamam. Patirupadesavaso ca pubbeka katapunhata attasamma panidhica etani mangala muttamam. Bahusaccana sippanca vinayo ca susikkhito subhasita ca ya vaca etam mangala muttaman. Matapitu upatthananm putta darassa sahgho anakula ca kammanta etani marigala muttaniani. Dananca dhammacariyaca natakananca sarighaho anavajjani kammani etani mangala muttaniani. Arati viratipapa majjapana ca saniyamo appamado ca dhammesu etani marigala muttaniani. Garavo ca nivato ca santutthi ca katannuta kalena dhammassavanani etani marigala muttaniani. Khanti ca sovacassata samananan ca dassanani kalenadhamma sakaccha etani marigala muttaniani. Tapocabrahmacariyanca ariyasaccana dassanani nibbana sacchikiriyaca etani marigala muttamarri. Phujhassa lokadhammehi cittam yassa na kampati asokam virajam khemani etam marigala muttamam. Etadisani katvana sabbattha maparajita sabbattha sotthini gacchanti tam te sarri mangala muttamam.<sup>100</sup>*

Devas and men for twelve full years, pondered over things auspicious, but failed to discover the thirty-eight factors of Auspiciousness. The Buddha, greater than all devas, has taught things auspicious which remove all evil, which are for the good of the whole world. Let us now recite those factors of Auspiciousness.

<sup>99</sup> Khuddakanikaya, Kuddakapathapali, Mangalasutta, p. 3

<sup>100</sup> Khuddakanikaya, Kuddakapathapali, Mangalasutta, p. 4

On one occasion the Exalted One was dwelling at the Jetavana monastery of Anathapindika in Savatthi. Then, soon after the middle watch of the night, a certain deva of extremely attractive appearance approached the Buddha, illuminating the entire Jetavana monastery. Having approached the Buddha and having made obeisance to the Exalted One, he stood at a suitable place. Thus standing, the deva addressed the Bhagava in verse: "Many devas and human beings, longing for their well-being, pondered what constitutes Auspiciousness; O! Tell us what the highest Auspiciousness is?" Then, the Buddha expounded these following thirty-eight rules of conduct.

### **2.7.2. Explanation of each blessing**

***Asevanaca balanam***<sup>101</sup>: Not to associate with the foolish is the highest blessing. Here, a foolish person is called one who thinks, speaks and conducts evil deeds in order to destroy the benefits of others.<sup>102</sup>

***Panditananca sevana***: To associate only with the wise is the highest blessing. Here a wise person is one who thinks, speaks and conducts good deeds in order to gain the benefits and prosperity for oneself and others.<sup>103</sup>

***Pujacapujaneyyanam***: To honour those who are worthy of honour is the highest blessing. Here those persons are the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sanigha, parents, teachers, elders and those who are higher in prestige. In paying honour, there are two kinds of honour: honouring by giving material gifts (Amisapuja) and honouring by preaching dhamma gift (dhamma puja).

***Patirupadesavasoca***: To dwell in a suitable locality is the highest blessing. Here a suitable locality is a place where the Buddha's teachings exist and flourish well and which enables one to gain merits, wisdom and properties.

***Pubbecca Katapunnata***: To have done meritorious deeds in the past is the highest blessing.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Khuddakanikaya, Kuddakapathapali, Mangalasutta, p. 3.

<sup>102</sup> Members of sixth Samgha Council, eds. *Dhammapada, Khuddaka Nikaya*, Myanmar Translation, 6<sup>th</sup> eds. Yangon, Myanmar: Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2007, p. 44.

<sup>103</sup> Members of sixth Samgha Council, eds. *Dhammapada, Khuddaka Nikaya*, Myanmar Translation, 6<sup>th</sup> eds. Yangon, Myanmar: Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2007, p. 277.

<sup>104</sup> Members of sixth Samgha Council, eds. *Pathikavagga, Dighanikaya Nikaya*, Myanmar Translation, 6<sup>th</sup> eds. Yangon, Myanmar: Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2007, p. 230.

***Attasamma panidhica:*** To set oneself in the right course is the highest blessing. Here setting oneself in the right course means making oneself endowed with morality, conviction, generosity and so on.<sup>105</sup>

***Bahusaccanca:*** To have a wide general knowledge in mundane and supramundane levels is the highest blessing.

***Sippanca:*** Being skillful in the technology and handicrafts is the highest blessing.

***Vinayoca susikkhito:*** Learning and abiding by the rules of conduct and disciplines laid down by the Buddha for lay devotees and monks is the highest blessing.

***Subhasitaca yavaca:*** Speaking what is true, non-backbiting, pleasant and benefitting to others is the highest blessing.

***Matapitu upatthanam:*** To attend closely to one's parents is the highest blessing. Here attending closely to one's parent's means ministering to all the needs of one's parents performing their duties, making them happy and healthy.<sup>106</sup>

***Puttadarassa sangaho:*** To take care of one's wife and children is a noble blessing.

***Anakulaca Kammanta:*** To perform a faultless work at a proper time and under proper circumstances is a noble blessing. A faultless work means an action which does not harm one's benefits as well as others' benefits.

***Dananca:*** Making charity is the highest blessing.

***Dhammacariyaca:*** To live righteously performing the ten kinds of meritorious deeds is a noble blessing.

***Natakananca sangaho:*** To support one's paternal and maternal relatives with food, clothing money, etc., or with encouraging words and good advice is a noble blessing.

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<sup>105</sup>Ibid, p. 230

<sup>106</sup>Members of sixth Samgha Council, eds. *Dhammapada, Khuddaka Nikaya*, Myanmar Translation, 6<sup>th</sup> eds. Yangon, Myanmar: Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2007, p. 172

**Anavajjani Kammani:** To perform a blameless action associated with the welfare of oneself and others such as keeping the sabbath precepts, planting tree and gardens, performing social work, etc, is a noble blessing.

**Arati (papa):** To resolve mentally to refrain from committing all evils, knowing well the evil consequences of evil conduct is a noble blessing.

**Virati (papa):** To refrain from committing three bodily evil deeds and four verbal evil deeds is a noble blessing.

**Majjapanaca samyamo:** To abstain from any intoxicating drink or drug such as alcohol, opium, cocaine, marijuana, heroin, etc, is a noble blessing.

**Appamadoca dhammesu:** Not to be negligent in doing good deeds, namely to give away in charity (Dana), to keep the moral precepts (Sila) and practice meditation (bhavana) is a noble blessing.

**Garavoca:** To pay respect those who are worthy of respect is a noble blessing. The persons who are worthy of respect are the Buddha, the disciples of the Buddha (monks), and parents, teachers, uncles, aunts, elder brothers and sisters and those persons who are older or higher in status than oneself. One shows them respect by making way for them, by bending one's back on passing in front of them, by offering them one's seat when travelling in a bus or train, by sitting in a lower place than theirs, and by holding things in offering to them.<sup>107</sup>

**Nivatoca:** To be humble and modest with out pride and conceit is a noble blessing. To be humble means not only showing a respectful behaviour but also being humble in one's physical, verbal and mental actions.

**Santutthica:** To be contented with whatever one possesses presently, although one must strive and work hard honestly and steadily, is a noble blessing.

**Katannuta:** To acknowledge other's gratitude and repay the gratitude one has to owe is a noble blessing.

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<sup>107</sup> Members of sixth Samgha Council, eds. *Mahavagga, DighaNikaya, Myanmar Translation*, 6<sup>th</sup> eds. Yangon, Myanmar: Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2007, p. 79.

***Kalena dhammassavanam:*** To listen to the dhamma which can lead one to prosperity in the present life as well as in future lives is a noble blessing.

***Khantica:*** To forgive the insult caused by others and be patient without bearing a grudge or dissatisfaction is a noble blessing.

***Sovacassata:*** To obey readily the advice given by elders and learned persons without any complaint or argument is a noble blessing.

***Samanananca dassanani:*** To see noble persons who have purified or are trying to purify their minds from all defilements produce tranquility and wholesome attitude in one's mind. So, it is a noble blessing.

***Kalena dhammasakaccha:*** Discussion of the Dhamma with learned persons at the proper time can lead one to prosperity in the present as well as in the future and it will enrich one's knowledge, straighten one's view and clarify one's mind. So it is a noble blessing.

***Tapoca:*** Practice austerity by controlling one's sense faculties in order to scorch all defilements is a noble blessing.

***Brahmacariyanca:*** To undertake the noble practice such as observing the eight precepts and developing concentration and insight knowledge in order to realize the Four Noble Truths is a noble blessing.

***Ariyasaccana dassanam:*** To realize the Four Noble Truths with four Path-consciousnesses stage by stage is a noble blessing.

***Nibbana sacchikiriya:*** To realize Nibbana and enjoy the highest bliss with their respective Fruition-consciousness by the four types of Noble persons (Ariyas) is a noble blessing.

***Phuthassa lokadhammehi cittam yassa na kampati:*** To stand steadfastly with an unshaken mind when one is confronted with the ups and downs of life associated with the eight worldly conditions is a noble blessing. The eight worldly conditions are (labha) gain, (alabha) loss, (yassa) fame, (ayassa) dishonour, (pasanna) praise, (ninda) blame, (sukha) wellbeing and (dukkha) misery.

**Asokam:** To be free from all worries is a noble blessing.

**Virajam:** To have a mind free from the dust of all defilements such as greed (lobha), hatred (dosa) and ignorance (moha) is a noble blessing.

**Khemam:** To possess a peaceful mind free from all dangers of defilements is a noble blessing.

Whoever abides by and follows the thirty-eight rules of blessing overcomes all difficulties and oppositions in life and will gain success and prosperity in the present life as well as in future lives. These 38 rules of conduct according to the discourse of Blessings are called the highest Auspiciousness because they bring success and prosperity to all who follow them.

## **2.8 The Causes of Downfall according to *Parabhava Sutta***

After hearing the discourse on Mangala Sutta<sup>108</sup> and realizing the Thirty- Eight Blessings, the devas wanted to know the causes of downfall for individuals. So they informed the king of Devas about their desire. On the next day, the king sent a deva to supplicate the Buddha to preach a discourse on the causes of downfall. Therefore, the Buddha delivered the Parabhava Sutta<sup>109</sup> as follows:

To love and abide by the ten kinds of good conduct (sucarita) is the cause of one's prosperity whereas to hate and disobey the ten kinds of good conduct is the cause of one's downfall.<sup>110</sup>

To love the noble persons and associate with them, and also to dislike the noble persons and dissociate with them are the causes of one's downfall.

To indulge in excessive sleep, to indulge in companionship, to lack in effort, to be lazy and to be easily angry are the causes of one's downfall.

Not to support and attend to old parents although one has the ability to support and attend to them is the cause of one's downfall.

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<sup>108</sup> Khuddakanikaya, *Suttanipata Atthakatha*, vol-1, p.149.

<sup>109</sup> Khuddakanikaya, *Suttanipata, Parabhavasutta*, p. 295.

<sup>110</sup> Khuddakanikaya, *Suttanipata, Parabhavasutta*, p. 295. p. 296.

To deceive monks or other donors with false speech is a cause of one's downfall.

To enjoy one's great fortune only for one's benefit without sharing it with others is a cause of one's downfall.

To be proud of one's birth, wealth and lineage and to despise and disrespect one's own kinsmen is a cause of one's downfall.

To indulge in womanizing, drinking and to squander whatever one possesses are the causes of one's downfall.

To indulge in sexual misconduct with courtesans and other's spouses is a cause of one's downfall.

To marry a young person in spite of one's old age is a cause of one's downfall.

To give authority to a person who indulges excessively in food and dress and who is also a spendthrift is a cause of one's downfall.

To aspire to possess something or some position which is out of one's reach or ability is a cause of one's downfall. A wise person, considering these causes of deterioration carefully, shapes the course of life to be free from these bad causes and attain peace and prosperity in the present life as well as in future lives.<sup>111</sup>

### **2.8.1 The Causes of becoming a Wretch (*Vasala Sutta*)**

According to *Vasala Sutta*, on one occasion the Buddha was staying at the monastery of Anathapindika in Jetavana's Grove. One day while He was going for alms-round, he arrived at the house of a brahmin named Aggika bharadvaja.<sup>112</sup> At that moment the brahmin was preparing for fire oblation, and when he saw the Buddha coming to his house he shouted angrily in harsh words thus: "Stop there, wretched mendicant, stop there wretched mendicant!"

The Buddha stopped and said gently to the brahmin: "Do you know, O! brahmin, who a wretch is and the causes that make one a wretch?"

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid, p. 297.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid

The brahmin answered that he didn't know them and requested the Buddha to explain them to him. Therefore, the Buddha delivered the Vasala Sutta which explains the meaning of a wretch and causes of becoming a wretch.

One, who is hot-tempered, grudging, ungrateful, holding a wrong view, and deceitful in order to hide his fault, is a wretch.

One, who has no pity for living beings and kills them oneself or makes others kill them, is a wretch.<sup>113</sup>

One, who besieges and destroys villages and towns is a wretch.

One, who does not pay back the loan owed to others, is a wretch.

One, who steals others' properties, is a wretch.

One, who kills and robs others is a wretch.

One, who bears false witness, is a wretch.

One, who commits sexual misconduct with other's spouses, is a wretch.

One who does not support and attend to one's parents is a wretch.

One, who tortures one's parents, brothers, sisters and relatives bodily and verbally, is a wretch.

One, who when asked a reasonable and beneficial question, gives a detrimental answer or a crooked answer deliberately hiding the true facts, is a wretch.<sup>114</sup>

One, who keeps in secret the evil deeds committed by oneself, is a wretch.

One who enjoys the treatment offered by others in warm welcome but fails to return the treatment to others when they visit one's house, is a wretch.

One, who gives many lame excuses and refuses to donate to others after inviting them for donation, is a wretch.

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<sup>113</sup> Kuddhakanikaya, *Suttanipata, Vasalasutta*, p. 298

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid*, p. 299

One, who speaks harshly without donating anything when bhikkhus come for alms food, is a wretch.

One, who tricks others with false speech in order to gain something from them, is a wretch.

One, who praises oneself and despises others, is a wretch.

One, who provokes others to quarrel, neither donates anything by oneself nor appreciates other's donation, possesses a mean desire, pretends to be virtuous, and has no shame and fear to do evil deeds, is a wretch.

One, who abuses the Buddha, his disciples and other noble sages, is a wretch.

One, who claims himself to be an Arahant although one is not an Arahant, is the meanest wretch.<sup>115</sup>

## **2.9. Four Factors of Endowments (*Sampada*)**

On one occasion in the Buddha's time, a man, son of Koliya, named Dighajanu,<sup>116</sup> said to the Buddha who dwelled in the market town Koliya: "Reverend Sir, we, living together with our families, using various perfumes, and taking delight in jewels like gold and silver. Please deliver a discourse, pointing a way how we can gain wealth and happiness in the present life as well as in future lives. The Buddha delivered the discourse on "Sampada." "Sampada" means the qualities with which one must be endowed in order to gain wealth and happiness. This "Sampada" consists of the four qualities described below:

1. ***Utthana sampada***: active and diligent exertion in business undertaking;
2. ***Arakkha sampada***: the ability to manage wisely what one has earned;
3. ***Kalyanamitta sampada***: the ability to associate with a wide circle of good friends.
4. ***Samajivita sampada***: the ability to live within one's means; not spending more than what one has earned by lawful means.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Kuddhakanikaya, *Suttanipata*, *Vasallasutta*, p. 300.

<sup>116</sup> *Anguttara Nikaya*, vol-8, p.107.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid*, p.107.

***Utthana sampada:*** In this world everybody has to make a living by any suitable means of livelihood. One can be a vagrant without working in any occupation. One must be skillful, diligent and wise in making decisions and in the administration of the business one is undertaking. These three qualities: skill, diligence, and wisdom make up the endowment Utthanasampada.<sup>118</sup>

***Arakkha sampada:*** The wealth, and properties, that one has acquired just fully by active and diligent exertion in business undertaking, must be managed wisely and protected from five kinds of danger: flood, conflagrations, bad rulers, thieves and robbers, and bad sons and daughters who are unworthy heirs. This wise management and protection of the wealth and properties that one has acquired just fully is called the endowment Arakkha sampada.<sup>119</sup>

***Kalyanamitta sampada:*** One must associate with good friends endowed with good qualities such as conviction and morality. One must also associate with those who have achieved success in their business. Only when one associates with such good companions can one imitate them and strive to achieve the good qualities that they possess in order to attain good morality, conviction, business management, etc. This is called the endowment Kalyanamitta sampada.<sup>120</sup>

***Samajivita sampada:*** One must keep a systematic account describing the incomes, the outcomes, the receipts and the expenditures. One should divide the net income into four portions. One should use one portion for consumption, another portion for saving, and the remaining two portions for investment. The ability to live within one's means and not spending more than what one has earned by lawful means is called the endowment Samajivita sampada.<sup>121</sup>

## **2.10. Moral Culture**

Every country or every race has its own moral culture which is the characteristic of that country or that race. As for Myanmar, it has its own culture which is based on Buddhism. This chapter is concerned with Buddhist moral manners,

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<sup>118</sup> *Anguttara Nikaya*, vol-8, p.141.

<sup>119</sup> *Anguttara Nikaya*, vol-8, 141.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid*, 141.

<sup>121</sup> *Anguttaranikaya Atthakatha*, vol-8, p. 140, 239.

namely: courtesy (Polite manners), gentleness in speech (Verbal politeness) and good thought (Mental politeness).<sup>122</sup>

### **2.10.1. Polite Manners**

When one visits a certain pagoda or a certain monastery, one should wear proper dress. One must take off one's hat, umbrella and any foot-' wear before one enters the precinct of a pagoda or a monastery. One should not behave improperly in the precinct of a pagoda or a monastery or in the presence of an image of the Buddha or a monk.

When one takes a seat near Buddhist monks or the virtuous or the aged, one must take a suitable place free from six faults of location: being too far, being too near, being at the front, being at the back, being at a high place and being against the wind.

When one passes by Buddhist monks, the virtuous or the aged or passes through an audience, one should go slowly leaning one's body and bowing one's head. When one gives something to someone or takes something from someone, one should give or take with one's two hands even though it may be a small thing.

When one pays homage to Buddhist monks, parents or teachers, one should touch the floor or the ground with one's two knees, two hands and forehead.

When one comes across Buddhist monks on the way, one should stand aside and pay obeisance to them taking off one's hat, umbrella, and footwear and putting two palms together on the forehead.

When one goes away from the presence of Buddhist monks, teachers, parents and the aged, one should make four or five backward steps with joined-palms and turn to one's desired direction.

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<sup>122</sup> DPPS, *The Teaching of the Buddha*, basic level-vol-2, Department for the Promotion and Propagation of the Sasana, Yangon, Myanmar, 2001, p.330-1.

When one comes across Buddhist monks, teachers, parents and the aged on a narrow path, one should stop one's stepping and give way for them to pass. One should not jostle against them nor overtake them.

One should generously offer one's Buddhist monks, the aged, the infirm, and nuns while travelling by train or in a bus or in a boat.

While Buddhist monks, teachers and parents are taking rest or sleeping, one should not disturb them in any way. If necessary, one should help Buddhist monks, nuns, the aged and the infirm by carrying their packages on the way.

When one listens to the Dhamma, one should take off one's hat in honour of the virtues of Dhamma. If one wears Myanmar turban, one should expose one's hair. Even if one listens to the discourse from a tape recorder, one should put it on a high place. One should sit kneeling joining one's two palms together in the meditation posture. One should place the Buddha's image, the Buddha's picture and the Buddhist scriptures on a high and noble place. If one wants to hold them, one should pay homage to them with joined-palms first. One should not put them down on the floor nor take them under one's arms. One should not greet Buddhist monks and nuns by shaking their hands nor gesture to them. One should greet them respectfully with joined-palms.<sup>123</sup>

A woman should not rearrange her garment nor beautify herself before Buddhist monks or the virtuous or the aged.

A woman should not go to Buddhist monks and the aged in unsuitable dress which does not conform to tradition.

A woman should not go to a Buddhist monk while he is in his private room. If it is necessary to go to a monk, she should take a man along with her.

A woman should not pay homage to a Buddhist monk by spreading her hair on the ground nor by touching the monk's feet with her hand.

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<sup>123</sup> DPPS, *The Teaching of the Buddha*, basic level-vol-2, Department for the Promotion and Propagation of the Sasana, Yangon, Myanmar, 2001, p.280-4

When one meets others on the way, one should greet them either with joined palms or with a bow or with a smile respectfully.

When one wants to approach the bhikkhus, teachers, parents and the aged, one should make one's body clean in advance.

One should not spit nor blow the nose carelessly at public places such as the pagoda platform, the precinct of the monastery, the hospital, the school and so on.

One should not cough nor sneeze turning to someone. If one wants to do so, one should go out of the audience or clear it by blowing into a handkerchief. If one wants to fart, one should go away from the audience.

While someone is having a meal, one should not hawk nor blow his nose in a place where the former can hear or see.

### **2.10.2. Verbal Politeness**

The Buddha should be addressed respectfully by the term: "The supreme Buddha" or "The Enlightened One"; not by the term "Gotama" (or) "Buddha."

One should not say that a shrine, an image of the Buddha, a Buddhist monk or a nun is "beautiful" or "pretty." One should use the words 'Sublime', 'glorious' or "Venerable" instead.

If one is to say words of approval or denial while speaking with Buddhist monks and novices, one should reply respectfully and humbly: 'Certainly, Venerable Sir', "No, Venerable Sir.", and with parents and teachers: "Yes Sir" (or) "No Sir."

If one wants to address an elderly Buddhist monk or a learned one, one should address "Sayadaw" or "Venerable." For a young Buddhist monk and a novice, one uses "Reverend Sir."

Moreover, an elderly Buddhist monk or a learned one should not be addressed by his name. He should be addressed by his birth-place or residential place such as "Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw", "Venerable Bago Sayadaw", and so on.

A Buddhist monk or a novice used to call an old man or a youth "Dagagyi or Dagalay", and an old woman or a young woman "Dagamagyi" or "Dagamalay."<sup>124</sup>

### **2.10.3. Mental Politeness**

One should not wish to get others' properties in an improper way. One should not breed a malicious mind to destroy others' properties and virtues. When one comes across someone, old or young, one should cultivate one's (metta) love and affection towards them thus: "May he be well and happy." Believing the law of Kamma and its results, one should cultivate a sympathetic mind towards all. One should not be jealous of superior ones, nor should humiliate inferior ones. We should not compete with companions of the same status in wrong ways.

### **2.10.4. The Civilized Terms Concerning Alms-food**

When Buddhist monks and novices go around for alms-food, it should be called "collecting alms-food." If one cannot offer alms-food, one should apologize "Would you mind going ahead?" If one wants to offer some food and drink to a Buddhist monk or a novice, one should give them to him with two hands respectfully.

#### **2.10.4.1. Rules for Monks and Novices**

**‘Vinayo nama sasanassa Èryu, Vinaye thite sasanam thitam hoti’<sup>125</sup>**

Rules for monks and novices is the life or main objective of the Sasana. When Vinaya exists the Sasana will exist. Therefore, it is very important to learn by heart and follow the Vinaya rules by all monks who are called the spiritual sons of Buddha. There is a literary Burmese translation of the original Pali text of rules usually learnt by the Burmese novices and monks for the examination, based on monastic education since the Buddha lifetime. There is also a literary English translation of this text done by the western scholars. For the Burmese novices and monks, there are many rules of Sekiya (etiquette) to be observed for training as followed:

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<sup>124</sup> DPPS, The Teaching of the Buddha, basic level-vol-2, Department for the Promotion and Propagation of the Sasana, Yangon, Myanmar, 2001, p.284-8.

<sup>125</sup> Kuddakapatha Atthakatha, p. 82.

#### **2.10.4.2. Putting on Robes and Dwelling Rules of Etiquette**

1. One should put on the inner-robe on all round level covering the circle of the navel, hanging down eight fingers' breadth under the knees.
2. One should put on the upper-robe on all round level.
3. One should go (sit down) properly well clad covering the neck and wrists amidst the houses.
4. One should go (sit down) amidst the houses having senses well controlled.
5. One should go (sit down) amidst the houses with the eye cast down looking only four cubit's distance ahead.
6. One should not go (sit down) amidst the houses with the robes lifted up.
7. One should not go (sit down) amidst the houses with loud laughter.
8. One should not go (sit down) amidst the houses with little noise.
9. One should not go (sit down) amidst the houses swaying the body.
10. One should not go (sit down) amidst the houses swaying the arms.
11. One should not go (sit down) amidst the houses swaying the head.
12. One should not go (sit down) amidst the houses with the arms akimbo.
13. One should not go (sit down) amidst the houses with the head muffled up.
14. One should not go (sit down) amidst the houses pressing on the heels.
15. One should not sit-down squatting winding the arms or robe on the knees upright.<sup>126</sup>

These rules are called Saruppa that is behaving or staying gracefully.

#### **2.10.4.3. Having Food Rules of Etiquette for Novices and Monks**

1. One should eat alms-food mindfully.
2. One should eat alms-food being mindful of the bowl.
3. One should eat alms-food in due order.
4. One should eat alms-food with curry equal to one-fourth of it.
5. One should not eat alms-food having chosen from the top.
6. In eating alms food, one should not cover up the curry with food, desiring to eat more curry.

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<sup>126</sup> U Myint Swe (London), Patimokkha rules for Monks, p. 29.

7. One should not eat curry or food, having asked for it for oneself, unless one is ill.
8. One should not look at others bowls captious- mindedly.
9. One should not make up too large a mouthful.
10. One should not make up a morsel into a round.

These rules are the eating alms-food for them.<sup>127</sup>

#### **2.10.4.4. Teaching Dhamma, Rules of Etiquette for Novices and Monks**

1. One should not teach Dhamma to anyone holding an umbrella over the head, unless he is ill.
2. One should not teach Dhamma to anyone with a stick in his hand, unless he is ill.
3. One should not teach Dhamma to anyone with a weapon in his hand, unless he is ill.
4. One should not teach Dhamma to anyone wearing sandals, or slippers, unless he is ill.
5. One should not teach Dhamma to anyone wearing shoes, unless he is ill.
6. One should not teach Dhamma to anyone in a vehicle, unless he is ill.
7. One should not teach Dhamma to anyone on a bed, unless he is ill.
8. One should not teach Dhamma to anyone who is sitting down squatting, winding the arms on the knees upright, unless he is ill.
9. One should not teach Dhamma to anyone sitting on a mat.
10. One should not teach Dhamma to anyone going along on the path, unless he is ill.<sup>128</sup>

These are rules when the novices and monk teach Dhamma to anyone.

#### **2.10.4.5. Abstaining, Rules of Etiquette for Novices and Monks**

1. One should not ease oneself (discharge feces excrement) and urine standing, unless he is ill.

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<sup>127</sup> VIN, Vol-2, p 238-239.

<sup>128</sup> U Myint Swe, *Pali pyatthana (The Problem of Pali Study)*, Myint Swe Press, Rangoon, 1957 , p. 31

2. One should not ease oneself or spit where there are green grass and plants, unless he is ill.
3. One should not ease oneself or spit in the water, unless he is ill.<sup>129</sup>

When one behaves according to the above rules, one will obtain merit and auspiciousness. One will be well-known as a civilized one in this existence. Moreover, one will enjoy bliss, happiness and pleasure in future existences. The people of Myanmar, abiding by the Buddhist Teachings, are polite in behavior, speech and thought, so they can live peacefully through many generations.

#### **2.10.4.6. Summary**

Education is very important for peace and development of the society. The highest standard of one's life, family, society and nation is dependent on their education. However, the education that they have pursued must be as good as standard education in real life situation. From a Buddhist perspective, good education must consist of religious education and secular education too. The education system such as learning the mathematics, physics, chemistry, agriculture, commerce and medicine is secular education. Religious education means especially the one focusing on spiritual development such as development of the morality, concentration and wisdom. Buddhist education comprises both secular and religious education but its ultimate goal is to get rid of all defilements that are latent in one's mind and harm others and help each other's in the society to develop or save from disasters. Since, Buddha himself had preached his disciples the aim of his teaching in Dhammapada to all the people "Not to do evil, to cultivate merit, to purify one's mind." these are the Teachings of the Buddha."<sup>130</sup>

As a result, in present life, those who study Buddhist education and put into practice it in daily life could attain spiritual and material progress both in this present life and the reflection or results in next existences. Therefore, this chapter mentioned about a history of Buddhist education in Myanmar and how Myanmar people have been preserving Pinya dynasty to Naung Yan dynasty of Buddhist education in the

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<sup>129</sup> *Vinayapitaka, Mulasikkha*, p. 141.

<sup>130</sup> Daw Mya Tin, M.A (translator), *The Dhammapada: Verses and Stories*, Edited by Editorial Committee, Burma Tipitaka Association Rangoon, Burma, 1986. Source: <http://www.tipitaka.net/tipitaka/dhp/verseload.php?verse=183> accessed on September, 28<sup>th</sup> 2014

past and contemporary context. In addition, it became a medium of strengthening monastic education in Myanmar.

Furthermore, the famous scholars such as Shin Maharatthasara, Shin Mahasilavamsa, Taung Bi Lar Sayadaw and Kan Taw Min Kaung Sayadaw, etc. and each of the homily during Pinya period to Innwa period provided great support for the development of monastic education in Myanmar. The discourses preached by the Buddha to a young man named Singala which was known as Singalovada Sutta explained the social duties for all human beings and they include the duties of parents, the duties of sons and daughters etc. That is why, the Teachings of Buddha become main and essential text for monastic school education pupils as well as disciples and the rest of the people.

In addition, among the Suttas preached by the Buddha, Mangala Sutta or Thirty-eight kinds of Blessings are the most essential ones for all the Buddhists and it is a main component for the pupils in the monastic school education. Each blessing of Mangala Sutta such as not to associate with the foolish, to associate only with the wise, to honour those who are worthy of honor, to dwell in a suitable locality, to have done meritorious deeds in the past, to set oneself in the right course, to have wide, excellent, and superb levels of general knowledge. To be skillful in the technology and handicrafts, learning and abiding by the rules of conduct and disciplines laid down by the Buddha for lay devotees and monks, speaking what is true, not-backbiting, using words pleasant and benefitting to others, to attend closely to one's parents, to take care of one's wife and children, to perform a faultless work at a proper time and under proper circumstances, to provide charity to needy, to live righteously performing the ten kinds of meritorious deeds, to support one's paternal and maternal relatives with food, clothing and money, or encourage with soothing words and giving good advices, to help others with vigorous action associated with the welfare of oneself such as keeping the fifth or eighth precepts, planting trees and gardens, and performing social work are what the Buddha taught. Besides, to resolve mentally, to refrain from committing all evils, knowing well the evil consequences of evil conducts, to refrain from committing three bodily evil deeds and four verbal evil deeds, to abstain from any intoxicating drink or drug such as alcohol, opium, cocaine, marijuana, heroin, etc., not to be negligent in doing good deeds, namely to give away

donation (Dana), to keep the moral precepts (Sila) and practice meditation (bhavana), to pay respect those who are worthy of respect, to be humble and modest with out pride and conceit to be contented with whatever one possesses presently, although one must strive and work hard honestly and steadily, to acknowledge other's gratitude and repay the gratitude one has to owe, to listen to the dhamma which can lead one to prosperity in the present life as well as in future lives, to forgive the insult caused by others and be patient without bearing a grudge or dissatisfaction, to obey readily the advice given by elders and learned persons without any complaint or argument, to see noble persons who have purified or are trying to purify their minds from all defilements, to try to gain peace and tranquility in one's mind, to have discussions of the Dhamma with learned persons at the proper time, practicing austerity by controlling one's sense of faculties in order to scorch all defilements, to undertake the noble practice such as observing the eighth precepts and developing concentration and insight knowledge in order to realize the Four Noble Truths, to realize the Four Noble Truths with four Path- consciousness's stage by stage, to realize Nibbana and enjoy the highest bliss with their respective Fruition-consciousness by the four types of Noble persons (Ariyas), to stand steadfastly with an unshaken mind when one is confronted with the ups and downs of life associated with the eight worldly conditions, to be free from all worries, to have a mind free from the dust of all defilements, to possess a peaceful mind free from all dangers of defilements are noble blessings of human beings. These 38 rules of conduct according to the discourse of Blessings are called the highest auspiciousness because they bring success and prosperity to all who follow them.

THE ROLE OF SANGHA INSTITUTION IN  
CUSTOMARY SOCIETY

**CHAPTER -3**

**THE ROLE OF SANGHA INSTITUTION  
IN CUSTOMARY SOCIETY**

...in other words, upon assumptions thought the early days of...  
...an evidence described the King...  
...Buddhist relationship to the state...  
...of Myanmar. However, most of the scholars who...  
...of Myanmar assumed that the state of the...  
...is not rather than first reflection...  
...to have been...  
...of great extent. After the collapse of the...  
...of the...  
...developments to reform its socio-political...  
...recognition and support from the political authorities. Secondly...  
...integrative principles to socio-cultural life of the people. Thirdly...  
...strong organization to exert its influence on the society...  
...history, following these steps made...  
...and well-being of Sangha institutions. They were...

## THE ROLE OF SANGHA INSTITUTION IN CUSTOMARY SOCIETY

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### 3.1. Introduction

Legends mentioned that Buddhism arrived into Myanmar during the life time of Buddha. In other words, vague assumptions mingled the early history of Buddhism in Myanmar.<sup>1</sup> An evidence described that King Asoka (c.268-232 BCE), mighty Mauryan Emperor, sent Buddhist missionaries to the nine provinces including present day Thaton of Myanmar.<sup>2</sup> However, most of the scholars who emphasized their study on the early history of Myanmar accepted that the date of the arrival of Buddhism into Myanmar is not earlier than first millennium AD when the Pyu urbanization was believed to have thrived in the earliest city-state of Thayekhitaya (Sreiksetra).<sup>3</sup> Archaeological finds of Sreiksetra revealed that the rulers of Sreiksetra fostered Buddhist religion of great extent. After the collapse of Pyu city - states, Bagan emerged as the royal capital of the first unified empire. The Aniruddha (c. 1044 - 1077) (Anawrahta) made efforts for the purification and propagation of sasana.<sup>4</sup>

#### 3.1.1. Kings, Sasana and Sangha

Any religion needs three developments to enhance its socio-political role. Firstly, it needs recognition and support from the political authorities. Secondly, the religion must create integrative principles in socio-cultural life of the people. Thirdly, religion must have strong organization to exert its influence on the society. Throughout monarchical history, following seven kings made noteworthy efforts for the prosperity of *Sasana* and well - being of *Sangha* institutions. They were:

<sup>1</sup> Sithu Maung Maung Kyaw, *Mandalay Myoti-Nanti Sadan* (Paper on the establishment of Mandalay), Mandalay, Yadanadipani Press, 1959, p. 37. The author shed light on the legendary visit of Buddha to the regions of Myanmar.

<sup>2</sup> Maha Dhamma Thingyan, *Sasana Lankara Sadan* (A Treatise on the History of Buddhism), Yangon, Hanthawaddy Press, 1956, p.157 (Hereafter cited as Dhamma Thingyan, *Sasana Lankara Sadan*)

<sup>3</sup> (a) Than Tun, *Khit Haung Myanmar Yazawin (Ancient Myanmar Chronicle)*, Yangon, Maha Dagon Press, 1963, p. 206 ( Hereafter cited as Than Tun, *Ancient Myanmar Chronicle*)

(b) Aung Thaw, *Historical Sites in Burma*, Yangon, Ministry of Culture, 1972, p.19 (Henceforth Aung Thaw, *Historical Sites in Burma* )

<sup>4</sup> U Tin, *Myanmar Min Okchok pon Sadan Hnint Bodawphaya Ei Yazathat Khaw Ameindawdangyi (A Treatise on the Administration of Myanmar Kings and the Orders of King Bodawphaya called Yazathat)*, 2012, (Reprint p. 293 (Henceforth Tin, *the Administration of Myanmar Kings* )

King Anawrahta	(1044 - 1077)
King Kya-zwa	(1235 - 1249)
King Ramadipati (Dhammaceti Min)	(1235 - 1249)
King Bayinnaung	(1551 - 1581)
King Minyazagyi of Rakhine	(1592 - 1612)
King Badon (Bodawphaya)	(1782 - 1819)
King Mindon	(1583 - 1878) <sup>5</sup>

Owing to their ardent efforts for the promotion of Buddhism they were known in history as developers of sasana or Buddhist religion or defenders and promoters of it. Of the above-mentioned kings, Aniruddha (Anawrahta), the founder of Bagan as the first unified kingdom of Myanmar, was believed to be the first developer of Buddhist religion in Myanmar. Although the chronicles mentioned him as the first promoter of Theravada Buddhism in Myanmar through the conquest of Thaton, some evidences revealed that he probably had had ambivalence between the Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism and non-Theravada Buddhist belief.<sup>6</sup>

Some chronicles described the Aniruddha's conquest on Thaton. The very cause of Aniruddha's expedition to Thaton was to get sets of *Tipitaka* scriptures. After the conquest, thirty sets of *Tipitaka* scriptures were brought to Bagan. Then the King built a splendid library with tiered roofs studded with precious stones to store the scriptures. The library became the learning center of the monks residing in Bagan.<sup>7</sup> Some scholars did not accept the story. The evidence form Phet-leik Pagoda mentions that Buddhism had already reached at Bagan before the Aniruddha's conquest of Thaton.

During Aniruddha's reign, the relations between Myanmar and Sri Lanka particularly developed. *Sulavamsa*, Sinhalese Chronicle, described that Vijarabhahu a.k.a Srisinghabodhi *Min* (1059- 1114 A. D), asked assistance from Aniruddha to drive of the Chola, the people from the Southern tip of India subcontinent, in 1060 A.

<sup>5</sup> Tin, *the Administration of Myanmar Kings*, pp. 347 - 348

<sup>6</sup> (a) Than Tun, *Myanmar Terracotta's*, Yangon, Monywa Press, 2003, pp. 70, 64

(b) Donald Eugene Smith, *Religion and Politics in Burma*, Princeton (N.J) Princeton University Press, 1965, p.13 (Hereafter cited as Smith, *Religion and Politics in Burma*)

<sup>7</sup> Mè-hti Sayadaw, *Wun-tha Di-pa-ni (A Work on the Lineage of Monks)*, Yangon, Hanthawaddy Press, 1966, pp. 80-82 (Hereafter cited Mè-hti, *Wun-tha Di-pa-ni*)

D. As Chola repeatedly, invaded and devastated the Buddhist institutions and edifices of Sri Lanka, Aniruddha gave required assistance to the king of Sri Lanka. After the conquest of Chola, Aniruddha dispatched a religious mission comprising monks to Sri Lanka in 1071 A. D to give help in attempting to revive Buddhism.<sup>8</sup>

The most notable king of Bagan Dynasty who made great effort to develop literature and Buddha Sāsana after Aniruddha was Kyazwa *Min* (1235-1249). He was well known in the history not only for his compassion on all people but also his expertise in Tipitaka Scriptures. He treated his people and the monks as though they were children of his own. He was also a remarkable scholar who read Tipitaka scriptures over nine times and well-versed Pāli texts, commentaries and sub-commentaries.<sup>9</sup> He assumed the title of Dhammaraja. He wrote *Paramattha Beindu* – a text on Abhidhamma commentary and *Sadda Beindu* – a brief text on Pāli grammar.<sup>10</sup> During Kyazwa *Min*'s reign the collections of laws on civil and criminal lawsuits had already existed. In addition, the inscription of Kyazwa *Min* mentioned *amu-non-sa* which might be the manual for criminal lawsuits. Between the years, 1237 and 1248 A. D, two Myanmar monks Subutichanda and Dhammathiri visited Sri Lanka for educational purpose.<sup>11</sup> When they returned to Myanmar, the concepts on the purification of Buddhist *Sāsana* probably spread among the monks of Bagan.<sup>12</sup>

### 3.1.2. Developers of Sasana in Post-Bagan Era

The third king who made extraordinary efforts for the prosperity of Buddhism was Rāmādhipati (1422-1492) who assumed the title of Sri Para Maha Dhamma Rajadhiraja. He was widely known in history as Dhammaceti.<sup>13</sup> He was an ex-monk, Rāmādhipati (Dhammaceti) made attempts for the purification of *Sāsana* and for the emergence of *Sanghas* who followed the strict rules of disciplines. There were five necessities for the prosperity of Buddhist *Sāsana*, viz, *Sima* – ordination, devotees, *watthu* – material completion of *Sanghas*, *ñyat* – ritual incantation and *kammavaca* – sacred Pali texts which are ritually recited to formalize a certain monastic

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<sup>8</sup> Than Tun, *Ancient Myanmar Chronicle*, pp. 211-214

<sup>9</sup> *Glass Palace Chronicle*, p.155

<sup>10</sup> Dhamma Thingyan, *Sasana Lankara Sadan*, p.121

<sup>11</sup> Nyein Maung, *Ancient stone Inscriptions of Myanmar*, p. 236

<sup>12</sup> Than Tun, *Ancient Myanmar Chronicle*, p. 132

<sup>13</sup> Mr. Maung Hmaing, *Dhammaceti Watthu* (The Story of Dhammaceti Min), Yangon, Thanlwin Press, 1969, pp. 106-107

undertaking. Of these requirements Ramadhipati believed that *Sima* is the most important requirement for the propagation of *Sāsanā*. So the king planned to send Mon monks from Ramaññadesa to Sri Lanka to study the Buddhist scriptures as regard to the rules of disciplines in ordination and to repeat ordination to Mon monks.<sup>14</sup> Sri Lanka island actually being a place of Buddhist missionary activities conducted by Ashin Maheinda, the disciple of Ashin Mogghaliputta, 230 years after Buddha's attainment of *Parinibbāna*. The then king of Sri Lanka Devananpiyatissa donated Mahavihara monastery to Ashin Maheinda which was later known as Mahavihara Sect. As Rāmādhipati noticed the tradition of Buddhism in Sri Lanka he liked to dispatch learned Mon monks to repeat ordination. He appealed Mon *theras* his plan and to spread the practice of righteous ordination when *theras* returned to Ramaññadesa from Sri Lanka. He then sent twenty-two Mon *theras* and their disciples in two batches. The eleven *theras*, headed by Moggalana *thera*, together with their disciples left on 21 January 1476 to Sri Lanka.

As Rāmādhipati wished to impose strict Vinaya on the monks, he forced to those who handling scheming ideals, and owned secular properties to denounce their old practices and ordained in Kalyani *Sima*. Within five days of ordination, 245 Sect leaders were ordained. Then a mass ordination was followed. Sect leaders, numbered 800, and 14265 junior monks were ordained.<sup>15</sup> The total number of ordained monks had arisen up to 15666 in Rāmādhipati's reign.<sup>16</sup> The king and officials offered all kinds of food, robes, and other necessities.<sup>17</sup> The king also renovated Shwemawdaw Pagoda and raised the present height of 225 feet. He also enshrined the sacred hair relic of Buddha which was brought from Sri Lanka, gilded the pagoda and dedicated a bronze bell of 7000 viss weigh. Rāmādhipati *Min* was the second king after Kyazwa *Min* of Bagan who well-versed in Buddhist scriptures.

During the Taungoo Period, Hanthawaddy Hsinbyumyashin (1551-1581). a.k.a Bayinnaung, emerged not only as the largest empire builder of Myanmar

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<sup>14</sup> Mè-hti, *Wun-tha Di-pa-ni*, pp. 106-107

<sup>15</sup> Taw Sein Kho, *Bago Kalyani Inscription*, Yangon, Government Printing, 1892, p. 97, p. 103 (Hereafter cited as Taw Sein Kho *Bago Kalyani Inscription*)

<sup>16</sup> E. Michael Mendelson, *Sangha and State in Burma*, New York, Cornell University Press, 1975, p. 51 (Hereafter cited as Mendelson, *Sangha and State in Burma*)

<sup>17</sup> Razinda (Phayhaphyu *Sayadaw*), *Kalyani Kyauk-sa Pali Ni-sa-ya (Pali Text Translation of Kalyani Inscription)*, Yangon, Thudhammawaddy Press, 1938, p. 208 (Hereafter cited as Razinda, *Pali Text Translation of Kalyani Inscription*)

History, but also as the promoter and defender of Buddhist *Sasana*. One year after ascending the throne in 1551, Bayinnaung defeated Mottama, Hanthawaddy and Pathein. The King invited *Araññavasi* – forest-dwelling monks and *Gamasvasi* - the monks residing in the cities and villages and offered a great feast and eight requisites at Shwemawdaw Pagoda. After his conquest on Inwa, his army advanced to Shan States. The king managed to propagate *Sāsanā* in Shan states by ordaining the local people. He also manages the shelters for the monks who were devoted themselves to *gandhadhura*—learning of Buddhist scriptures and *vipassanadhura*—pursuing religious meditation to propagate *Sāsanā* in Shan States. He orders to copy the sets of *Pitaka* scriptures and sent full text each to Mogaung and Mohnyin Kyaing Tong and other Shan States.<sup>18</sup> Shan *Saw-bwas* were organized through the learned monks to discard wrong beliefs. In some regions, *Saw-bwas* and people had to observe precepts on Sabbath days. The most important achievement of the king was the prohibition of animal sacrifice which was the contradictory practice to Buddhism.<sup>19</sup>

In order to propagate *Pariyatti Sāsanā*, the king made all possible efforts to propagate Buddhism in the lands he conquered. He also delivered 40 sets of *Pitakas* to provinces. He also supported and offered lavishly to learned *theras* including big monasteries. In 1551, the king donated a big monastery with forty surrounding monasteries to Saddhamaguru Sayadaw, similar dedication to Dhammañeya *Sayadaw* of Pathein and *Thathanabyu Sayadaw* in 1555 and also donated a big monastery with thirty surrounding monasteries to Shin Saddhamapala of Taungoo. Similar donations of monasteries were also made to Ashin Tithathanadaja of Sagaing in 1558, Ashin Saddhamadivaraka and Ashin Buddhaghosa of Pinya, etc.<sup>20</sup>

Rakhin Minyazagyi (1592-1612) was also noted for his efforts in Buddhism. The king, probably under the influence of learned *theras*, encouraged to learn only to the true teachings of Buddha and ordered to remove all texts which deviated from the original Pāli scriptures. He discouraged *gamavasi* monks and supported *Arañnavasi*

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<sup>18</sup> *Hman-nan Ma-ha Ya-za-win-daw-gyi (The Glass Place Chronicle)*, Vol. II, Yangon, Ministry of Information, 1993, p. 313 (Hereafter cited as *The Glass Place Chronicle*)

<sup>19</sup> G.E Harvey, *History of Modern Burma from the Earliest Times to 10 March 1824; The Beginning of the English Conquest*, London, Frank Cass and Co Ltd, 1967, p. 166 (Hereafter cited as Harvey, *History of Modern Burma*)

<sup>20</sup> *Thuthawdita Maha Yazawingyi (Thuthawdita Chronicle) Six Volumes Three Parts, Part Two*, Saya Bi, Saya Thein and Saya Ko Ba Kyaw (ed.), Yangon, Seikku Cho Cho Publishing House, 2015, pp 497-498 (Hereafter cited as Saya Bi, Saya Thein, *Thuthawdita* )

monks. The king probably saw the laxity of disciplines of Hanthawaddy monks after his campaign with Taungoo Bayin. During that time, some monks who residing among the people attempted to win the royal favour, were jealous of each other, keeping the properties, mingled with the laity and engaged in money lending business. Minyazagyi, therefore, dismissed such *alijji* monks. In addition, he found the texts which exaggerated the original teachings of Buddha compiled by some improper monks who liked to attain popularity among the people. After his conquest of Bago, Minyazagyi ordered Dhammasami Sayadaw and Jeyathein who was a congressional man to seize the texts and burnt to ashes. He discouraged the slaughtering of animals in the feast. The king also prohibited the performers not to use the harsh words, and ordered to following the tradition.<sup>21</sup> By this way Minyazagyi was also regarded as "the promoter of Buddhism".

### **3.2. Kings, Sangha and Religious Controversies of Konbaung Period**

Badon *Min*, the third and the last son of Alaungmintaya, who emerged as the longest reigning king and most devoted king in religious affairs of Konbaung Dynasty. His reign was seen as a country of developed Buddhism. On the country, his reign was marked by the increasing religious controversies. The first religious controversy the king had to deal with was the robe controversy known as *Parupana-Ekamsika* controversy which revolved around the seemingly trivial question of whether a monk could keep one shoulder uncovered or had to keep both shoulders covered by his robe while going out of monastery for alms. The former was known as *A-tin* and latter was known as *A-yon*.<sup>22</sup> The problem was not a new one for *Sanghas'* order which emerged since Taungoo Period. When it revived for the first time in Konbaung Period the party who favoured *A-tin* practice was prohibited by the king's order and had to cover both shoulders.<sup>23</sup> Badon *Min* considered that *A-tin* group temporarily denounced their practice on fearing of the king's punishment. As the king was curious to know the origins of controversy and the interpretation of treatises on the robe controversy, he sent *Twin-thin Taikwun U Tun Nyo* to submit the problem

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<sup>21</sup> Tin, *the Administration of Myanmar Kings*, pp. 361-362

<sup>22</sup> U San Tun, *Kavi La-kha-na Vi-so-dha-ni (Exposition to Literature Characteristics)*, Mandalay, Department of Buddhist Studies, University of Mandalay, 1961, p.481 (Hereafter cited as San Tun, *Exposition to Literature Characteristics*)

<sup>23</sup> Dhamma Thingyan, *Sasana Lankara Sadan*, p. 190

before the learned *theras* of *Sangha* institution.<sup>24</sup> On the king's questions, Atula *Sayadaw* answered that *Culaganthi* text mentioned the monks had to wrap the chest and put *dukod* robe on the shoulder. When other *Sayadaws* asked Atula the author of *Culaganthi* Atula mentioned that the *Culaganthi* was the genuine text written by arahat *Sayadaw* Shin Moggalan examined the text he found that it was *Vinayagandi* written by Shin Moggalan. Of Pawkandigama Village, on the south of Anuradha in Sri Lanka. He also permitted other *Sayadaws* the copy of the text to examine. When *Sayadaw* Finally Atula' *Sayadaw's* explanation on robe controversy was found inconsistent with *Vinaya* texts and the royal's favour. *Badon Min* decided to punish to those who followed the Atula's practice.<sup>25</sup>

The king also made effort for the propagation of *Sasana*. He dispatched Buddhist missionary to peripheral areas of the kingdom. The headmen of towns, villages and *Saw-bwas* had to offer foods and other necessities.<sup>26</sup> By 1785, the king sent Buddhist missionaries to Kaing-ma, Kyaing-yon, Mong-hlyin, Mong-nyaung of Wideha *Taing*, Kyaing-ton from Kheimarahta *Taing*, Kyaing-thei of Haribonsa *Taing*, Kyaing-taung, Theinni, Lecha, Möng-khaung, Taung-paing, Möng-kaing Naung-mon, Nyaung-shwe, Yauk-sauk, Möng-lon, Thi-baw, Sa-ga Thi-kyit, Ta-bet, Kyaing-kan, He-Ion, Mo-ne, Möng-pan of Kanboja *Taing*, Mo-gaung of Zawtinagara *Taing*,<sup>27</sup> Mo-meik, Bamaw, Kaung-ton of Sein *Taing*, Thauung-thut, Ka-don of Thunapranta *Taing*,<sup>28</sup> Kalay of Yawnaka *Taing*, Pathein, Mottama, Da-we, Myeik of Ramana, Danyawaddy *Taing*, Ramawaddy, Megawaddy and Dwarawaddy of Rakhine in Mahavihika *Taing* the principle towns where the king sent missionaries has number fifty-six. The king sent full texts of *Tipitaka* and six *act* monks to each town.<sup>29</sup>

In order to the perpetuity of religious edifices and to provide the necessities of the monks, The Kings, from Bagan Period to the end of monarchical rule, were

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<sup>24</sup> Maungdaung *Sayadaw*, *Buddha Tha-tha-na-win-kyan Hnint Bamamin-mya Tha-tha-na-saung shaung-pôn (Treatise on the History of Buddhism and the Patronage of the kings of Myanmar on Sasana)*, Yangon, Thara Thingaha Press, 1941, p. 302 (Hereafter cited as Maungdaung, *Treatise on the History of Buddhism*)

<sup>25</sup> *The Royal Orders of Burma (AD. 1598-1885), Part V (AD.1788-1806)*, Than Tun (ed.) Kyoto, The Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, 1986, pp.326-327 (Hereafter cited as ROB V)

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, p. 328

<sup>27</sup> Lands located in Eastern and Southern Shan States

<sup>28</sup> Lands located to the west of Ayeyarwaddy River and Sagain Division

<sup>29</sup> U Maung Maung Tin, *Konbaung-zet Ma-ha Ya-za-win-daw-gyi (Great Chronicle of the Konbaung Dynasty)*, Vol.II, Yangon, Universities Historical Research Center, 2004, pp.32-34 (Hereafter cited as Maung Maung Tin, *Great Chronicle of the Konbaung Dynasty*)

accustomed to endow lands and labors to the pagodas and monasteries.<sup>30</sup> Over time, the lands donated to *Sasana* by the successive kings mingled with the other lands owned either by the royalties or servicemen through various reasons. Badon *Min* therefore discussed with *Thathanabaing Sayadaw* to make clarification between the crown lands and glebe lands.<sup>31</sup> The king ordered to collect stone pillars to compile the new list of religious lands in 1785. On 24 July 1793, the supplementary lists were added to the original inscriptions under the charge of Thwinthin Taikwun U Tun Nyo Thetpan, a *secretary*, and *Bala Raza Kyawhtin*.<sup>32</sup> The stone inscriptions can be seen present day in the sheds of Maha Mum Pagoda in Mandalay were collected by Badon *Min*. About 95 percent of 710 inscriptions, erected in order of townships where the inscriptions were found, were inscribed with additional texts by the king.<sup>33</sup> The objectives of the inspection of religious lands through epigraphic evidence were to transfer the religious lands under obscure ownership under the category of the crown land, and to use the land revenues imposed from such lands in copying *Pitaka* texts and collection of *Pitaka* scriptures. Badon *Min* also attempted to introduce some reformations in *Sangha* Order.

He believed that each monk had to follow the *Vinaya* and teachings of the Buddha. He was eager to study the religious scriptures and discussed with learned theas. Whenever he came across the bewildered things, he sometimes submitted his ideology on religion. He disliked controversies and disputes on *Vinaya*. Badon *Min* also assumed that only observance of precepts was not the means to attain *nibbana*. Similarly, the practice of shaving head and wearing robe did not provide the means to attain *nibbana*. The king believed that the true essence lies in the ardent and continuous devotion to Buddha, Dhamma and the *Sangha*. If the monk did not have such devotion, the king ordered to defrock the monk to resume secular life.

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<sup>30</sup> For the example of the donation of lands to religious establishment since Bagon period, see Dr. Toe Hla, *Myepaw Mye-out Kyauksa Hmattan Myaga Pyawthaw She-haung Myanmar Naigan Thamaing (Myanmar History through Epigraphic Evidences)*, Yangon, Myanmar Knowledge Society, 2014, pp 85-94, pp. 152-53 (Hereafter cited as Toe Hla, *Myanmar History through Epigraphic Evidences*)

<sup>31</sup> Maungdaung Sayadaw, *A-mei-daw-phye (Primate's Answers on the King's Questions)*, Yangon, Zabumeikswe Press, 1961, pp.122-128 (Hereafter cited as Maungdaung, *Primate's Answers on the King's Questions*)

<sup>32</sup> (a) Than Tun, *A Modern History of Myanmar: 1752-1948*, Yangon, Loka Alin Publishing House, 2010, p12 (Hereafter cited as Than Tun, *A Modern History of Myanmar*)

(b) *Great Chronicle*, Vol.I, Yangon, Mingala Press, 1968, p. *pha* (Hereafter cited as Tun Nyo, *Great Chronicle*)

<sup>33</sup> Dr Yi Yi, "Maha Muni Kyauk-sa-su" ("Collection of Stone Inscriptions in Maha Muni Pagoda"), *The Journal of Literature and Social Science*, Vol.I, Sept. 1968, pp.555-559 (Hereafter cited as Yi Yi, "Stone Inscriptions in Maha Muni Pagoda")

The king also encouraged the development of *Pariyatti Sasana* through the religious examinations. These religious examinations were divided into (1) *Pahtamabyan* first grade examination of novice, (2) examination of *Vinaya* texts for the monks and (3) examination of *Tipitaka* scriptures or five texts of *Nikaya*. The rules and disciplines were also set up for *Phahtamabyan* and *Vinaya* examinations. The examinations were held quarterly.<sup>34</sup> In addition, the king held *Ubhatovibhanga* examinations. Only monks who passed *Ubhatovibhanga* examination would become preceptors *Sayadaw* and *Nithayi Sayadaws*- The teacher or preceptor monk who protecting his pupil not to commit minor offences. As the king offered great rewards to those who passed the examination, so the monks increasingly entered the examination. Other benefit of religious examination was the number of illiterate persons were proved to decrease under *Badon Min's* reign.

### **3.2.1. King Mindon and his Efforts for the Development of *Sasana***

Although King *Badon* made efforts to purify *Sangha* orders, some monks could not observe the *vinaya* - rules of discipline or code of conduct of the monks. During late *Konbaung* period, King *Mindon* (1853 - 1878) made further efforts to purify *sangha* orders. The king wished *sanghas* to devote themselves exclusively to the religious works and to stay away from secular affairs. He noticed that some persons joined *sangha* order for following reasons;

- (1) To become famous monk
- (2) To free from crown service
- (3) To abscond from paying debts
- (4) To free from slavery
- (5) To enjoy easy livelihood, and
- (6) To support relatives.<sup>35</sup>

The king therefore, prohibited his crown servicemen from joining *sangha* order without permission. The order was issued to check to these who wished to join *sangha* order whether they involved in thieving, robbery, or other crimes. He also

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<sup>34</sup> Maungdaung, *Primate's Answers on the King's Questions*, p. 443

<sup>35</sup> Than Tun, *Athit- myi Bamar Thamaing (A New Outlook on Myanmar History)*, Mandalay, Myakan Tha Publishing Houses, 1975, p. 495

ordered the monks not to ordain a person who could not yet settle debt or who did not have consent of parents or spouses.<sup>36</sup>

Generally speaking, some monks precisely followed these rules of precepts or disciplines and they were known as *Lijji pesala sikkhakama* - the monk who observes the *Vinaya* strictly, and some violated *Vinaya*, concealed their wrong-doings and committed corruption and they were known as *alijji* - a monk who knowingly violated the rules of disciplines.<sup>37</sup> During King Mindon's reign, some monks committed the violation of *Vinaya* by engaging in some occupations like farming, commerce, cattle breeding, giving medical treatment, and sooth-saying. Some turned themselves into servants of donors, and some violated *Vinaya* by using umbrella and sandals without proper reason, consuming betel-quid and cigar in afternoon, accepting cash offerings, roaming to and fro in town, watching performances such as shows like puppet show, magic show, etc at pagoda festival, saying mischievously among *Sanghas*, keeping arms, keeping jewelry, using amulets, magic, charms and other super natural things.<sup>38</sup>

Owing to the laxity of disciplines among the *Sanghas*, successive kings throughout history sought the way to impose strict discipline on *Sanghas* Order. They established ecclesiastical hierarchy under *Thathanabaing Sayadaw* who possessed the great moral authority and prestige. They had to settle the serious cases like disputes over monastic property, religious schism and controversies on theological, philosophical, or metaphysical points of doctrine. Although such serious cases were generally settled by *Thathanabaing* and his assistants, the king also played an important role in settling disputes or controversies in *Sangha* Order.<sup>39</sup> King Mindon followed suit of his predecessors and appointed *Maha Thera* as *Thathanabaing Sayadaw* to provide strict discipline in *Sangha* institution. The king appointed Ñeyyadhammabhicamsa Thiripavaralankāra Dhammasenapati Mahādhammārjādhir ājaguru (Maungdaung Sayadaw U Nyeya) as *Thathanabaing*- primate Sayadaw.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> *The Royal Order of Burma (AD. 1598 - 1885), Part IX, (AD. 1853-1885)*, Kyoto, Than Tun (ed.), Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, 1989, pp 637-639 (Hereafter cited as ROB IX)

<sup>37</sup> U Nigodha, *Vi-na-ya Sa-mu-ha Vi-nic-cha-ya Kyan (Collection of the Rules of Discipline)*, Vol. III, Mandalay, Thathana Mandaing Press, 1941, p. 429 (Hereafter cited as Nigodha, *Collection of the Rules of Discipline*)

<sup>38</sup> ROB IX, pp. 433-438

<sup>39</sup> Smith, *Religion and Politics in Burma*, p. 47

<sup>40</sup> ROB IX, p. 337

As the purification of *Sasana* has wholly depended on the monk's observance on the rules of conducts, *Thathandbaing* took special care to impose strict rule of disciplines among the monks. As have mentioned, in King Mindon's reign the *alijji* monks still existed and some even committed in gambling, theft and having affairs with the women. The settlement of *Thathanabaing Sayadaw U Ñyeya* was recorded by Shin Paññasami in detail. Therefore, the records shed light on the situations of *Sangha* Order in Later Konbaung Period.

It became the duty of *Thathanabaing* to exclude the *alijji* monks from the Order. As the task was so great that *Thananabaing* and his assistants could not be dealt with, local monk leaders and assistant leaders were appointed to share the responsibility to impose strict rules of conducts in the Order. These local monk leaders were empowered to deal with minor offences among *Sanghas*. If the case was so great that they could not settle, they had to submit the case to the royal capital to get the decision of *Thathangaing*. The little age, address, and the monastery of *alijji* monks were noted and the case was handed over to the board of *Thudhamma Sayadaw*.<sup>41</sup> Monks who committed lesser crimes were punished by ecclesiastical censor; a government official known as *Mahadanwun* on his authority of *Thathanabaing*. In cases of serious crimes monks were unfrocked and handed over to local authorities.<sup>42</sup> In addition to these ecclesiastical authorities, King Mindon appointed the council of *Thudhamma Sayadaws* in July 1862.<sup>43</sup>

*Thudhamma Sayadaws* issued orders to *Abbot Sayadaws*, assistant of *the Abbot and other assistants to the Council* to administer and take actions on those who disobey the rules and regulations of their respective areas.<sup>44</sup> Local monk leaders had to admonish the young monks to avoid such *alijji* acts like consuming cigars and betel-quid, roaming in the town, shooting fireworks, sooth-saying, riding horses etc.<sup>45</sup> *Thudhamma Sayadaws* had to make suggestions not only for taking care of the

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<sup>41</sup> *Dhamma Vinaya A-mein- daw Pyan-dan* (Royal Edicts on the Rules of Disciplines), Mandalay, Pitakattaw Pyanpwaye Press, n.d, pp. 53,58 (Hereafter cited as *Dhamma Vnaya* )

<sup>42</sup> Smith, *Religion and Politics in Burma*, p. 47

<sup>43</sup> Myo Myint, *Confronting Colonialism: King Mindon's strategy for Defending Independence (1853-1818)*, Yangon, Department of Religious Affairs, 2012, p. 207 (Hereafter cited as Myo Myint, *Confronting Colonialism*)

<sup>44</sup> Htun Yi, *Ya-ta-na-pon Khit U-pa-de-mya (Laws and Regulations of Yatanapon Period)*, Vol.II (AD. 1853-1885), Japan, Aichi University Press, 1999, pp.179-182 (Hereafter cited as Htun Yi, *Laws and Regulations of Yatanapon- Period* )

<sup>45</sup> *Thudhamma Sayadaw-toe Mein-chet (Orders of Thudhamma Sayadaws)*, Dated 1872, *Parabaik MS*, No.322, Meiktila University Library Collection

violation of *Vinaya*, but also for advising on the other religious affairs to the king. They had to examine the procedures of building religious edifices, ceremony of enshrining the relics,<sup>46</sup> to supervise the religious examination,<sup>47</sup> to examine the dates of the beginning and the ends of Buddhist lent<sup>48</sup> and to arrange to dispatch *Thathanapyu Sayadaws* to the towns and villages of provinces.

The formation of Sangha authority, similar to that of civil administration, was divided into the *Sangha* Council in the royal capital and provincial authority headed by *the bishop or* local monk leader and *other* assistant local monk leaders. In addition, qualified learned monks were selected to appoint assistants of Thudhamma *Sayadaws*. These assistant *Sayadaws* were known as *Anu-viccaka Sayadaws*. The king also appointed *the Head of Sayadaws* and their assistant *Sayadaws* at the four quarters of the capital. Their responsibilities were to make preliminary investigations on the crimes committed by the monks and then to hand over to Thudhamma or *the assistant Sayadaws*. They were directly appointed by Thudhamma *Sayadaws* and *Thananabaing Sayadaws*. They had to follow the orders of Thudhamma *Sayadaws* and sometimes they had issued additional orders and penalties to those who violated the *Vinayas*. In this way, the Abbot *Sayadaws* administered the *Sanghas* of their *aids* by strict rules.

In the areas outside the capital and other provinces, *the assistant sayadaws and other aids* were appointed by the sealed orders of *Thathanabaing* and Thudhamma *Sayadaws*. During the King Mindon's reign, over 160 *bishops* and 204 *assistants* were performing the duties of imposing the rules of disciplines and administering all affairs of local monks.<sup>49</sup> In the major cities ruled by *Mayor of the city*, and *General's* about two to three assistants were appointed and towns were ruled by *Myothu-gyis* and *Thwethaukkyi*, such as *administrators of towns* and about two to three *assistants* were appointed.<sup>50</sup> As mentioned above, their duties were to follow and materialize the order of Thudhamma *Sayadaws*, to prevent the monks from

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<sup>46</sup> Taw Sein Kho *Bago Kalyani Inscription*, pp. 194-95

<sup>47</sup> U Maung Maung Tin *Knonbaungzet Maha Yazawindawgyi (The Great Chronicle of Konbaung Dynasty)*, Volume, III, Yangon, Yabyay Press, 2004, p.305 (Hereafter cited as Maung Maung Thin, *The Great Chronicle of Konbaung Dynasty*)

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 156-57

<sup>49</sup> Maung Maung Tin, *The Great Chronicle of Konbaung Dynasty*, p. 304

<sup>50</sup> Khin Maung Gyi, "Maha-dan-wun Hmat-tan" ("Records of Mahadanwun"), *Shweman Aungsi Journal*, Vol.I, Part. xiv, April, 1950, p.20 (Hereafter cited as Khin Maung Gyi, "Records of Mahadanwun")

committing *ilijji* acts, to make development of *Pariyat* and *Patipat*, to sentence penalty to those who were in laxity of disciplines.<sup>51</sup>

While suppressing *ilijji-du-sila* who violated the *Vinaya*, King Mindon supported *lijji* monks who observed *Vinaya*. In 1855 the king disbanded *pwe-kyauungs*<sup>52</sup> which gave priority to the secular practice.<sup>53</sup> On the 15th of February 1856, the king passed *Dhamma Vinaya* order relating to the rules of disciplines which was the brainchild of Shan-galay-kyun *Sayadaw* and was ratified by Thudhamma *Sayadaws* and *Thathanabaing*.<sup>54</sup> King Mindon assumed that even a single *ilijji* monk could ruin the conduct of a thousand monks and accordingly prohibited the people not to worship and support such monks. The most prominent effort to purify *Sangha* institution was the ratification of *Dhamma Vinaya Act* on the 15th of February 1856. This act prescribed the standard of behavior of monks and cracking down the *ilijji* monks. This act emphasized how monks should behave in daily life whether they were at monastery or in the town.<sup>55</sup>

As mentioned above, King Mindon made every possible effort to support *Sangha* institution and propagation of Buddhist religion. As the saying goes "*Sasana* flourished like the sun and the moon", King Mindon's reign witnessed the development and prosperity of Buddhist religion. The noteworthy events occurred in Buddhist religion during 25 years of his reign. The most prominent event was the convening of the Fifth *Sanghayana* or Fifth Buddhist Council. This grand council was held between 15th April to 12th September 1871 to revise the Buddhist scriptures. To commemorate the 2400 years of Buddhist religion, the King invited 2400 monks to his palace to revise the *Tipitaka* texts. This meeting was completed under the leadership of eight Thudhamma *Sayadaws* and learned *theras*.<sup>56</sup> Another remarkable event occurred in King Mindon's reign was the emergence of *Shwegyin Nikaya* or *Shwegyin* sect. Indeed, sectarianism was not new in the Theravada tradition, even

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<sup>51</sup> Daw Myint Myint than, "Mindon-min Let-htet Tha-tha-na-yei-ya Phwe-zi-ok-chok-pon" ("The Formation of Ecclesiastical Authority and Administration"), *Tetkatho Pyinnya Padetha Sasaung*, Vol.I, part. iii, 1972, p.189 (Hereafter cited as Myint Myint Than, "The Formation of Ecclesiastical Authority")

<sup>52</sup> *Pwe-kyauungs* were the monasteries which primarily taught the secular curriculums like marital arts, sooth-sayings etc. Such monastic schools less devoted to the *Pitaka* scriptures.

<sup>53</sup> Tin, *the Administration of Myanmar Kings*, p. 212

<sup>54</sup> *Dhamma Vinaya*, pp. 15-16

<sup>55</sup> Myo Myint, *Confronting Colonialism*, p. 205

<sup>56</sup> Maung Maung Tin, *The Great Chronicle of Konbaung Dynasty*, pp. 261- 263

though differences between sects mainly centered on the observance of the code of conduct rather than on interpretation of the doctrine.<sup>57</sup> When King Mindon ascended the throne, there was only one major sect in Upper Myanmar. King Mindon appointed the second Maungdaung Sayadaw U Neya, a Thuddhamma monk, as the Thathanabaing-primate or supreme head of *Sangha* Institution. While he appointed *gamavasi*-city monks at the Thuddhama council, he was fascinated by the conduct of forest monks who strictly observed the disciplines of the monk.

During the days of his rebellion for the throne against his brother King Bagan, he met with Ven. U Zagaya, the Shwegyin Sayadaw, in Shwebo. He was attracted by the ascetic monk and asked Sayadaw U Zagaya to help him to purify *Sangha* order and promote Buddhist religion when he become king.<sup>58</sup> When he become King, King Mindon invited another ascetic monk U Nanda, later well known as Shangalaykyun Sayadaw, to the royal capital. However, in 1858, Shangalaykyun Sayadaw passed away. King Mindon invited Shwegyin Sayadaw and donated a grand monastery called Maha Dhammikayama Taik.<sup>59</sup> King Mindon also donated money to some laymen to prepare daily food for 1000 Shwegyin monks. King Mindon had a deep respect for Shwegyin Sayadaw and he looked Sayadaw as an example for entire *Sangha*. Naturally tension and rivalry developed between the leading *theras* of Shwegyin and Thuddhamma. Thuddhamma Sayadaws put pressure on Shwegyin monks to acquiesce in the authority of Thathanabaing.<sup>60</sup> However, the bitter rivalry had never broken out between two sects and they prospered side by side.

As the king realized that the prosperity of *sasana* and welfare of *sangha* wholly relied on the donation of king and people, he spent a lot of money to religious establishment and *sangha*. He spent a total of more than 126 million kyats<sup>61</sup> on donations for the *sangha* throughout his reign.<sup>62</sup> According to a document, some donations of king Mindon used during early years of his reign can be seen as follows;

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<sup>57</sup> Myo Myint, *Confronting Colonialism*, p. 211

<sup>58</sup> Shwehintha Sayadaw, *Shwegyin Nikaya Thathanawin (History of Shwegyin Sect)*, Yangon, Buddha Sasana Press, 1963, 153 (Hereafter cited as Shwehintha Sayadaw, *History of Shwegyin Sect*)

<sup>59</sup> 'Taik' means monasteries complex

<sup>60</sup> Myo Myint, *Confronting Colonialism*, pp. 212-215

<sup>61</sup> During king Mindon's reign, the price of gold was as much as 25 kyats for one tical (16.329 gm) Toe Hla, *Leyamye Thetkayit Twedega Thamaing (Myanmar History Through Money - lending, land - Mortgage and other Contractual Deeds)* Yangon, Myanmar Historical Commission, 2014, p. 218

<sup>62</sup> Tin, *the Administration of Myanmar Kings*, p. 370-371

<u>Year</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Nature of donation</u>	<u>Cost</u>
1853	Shwebo	Building monasteries	700 kyat
1853	Shwebo	Building rest houses	300 kyat
1853	Shwebo	Padesa tree with offerings	2,500 kyat
1853	Shwebo	Digging two ponds	3,000 kyat
1853	Kyaukmyaung	Floating lighted candles	1,000 kyat
1853	Amarapura	Releasing fish	3,100 kyat
1854	Amarapura	Making Buddha image and distribution of food	16,000 kyat
1854	Salinmyo	Release of fish	1,500 kyat
1855	Amarapura	General donation	1,550 kyat
1855	Amarapura	offering food to monk	1,300 kyat
1855	Amarapura	Offering daily necessities to monks	?
1855	Amarapura	offering robes to Mahamuni image	?
1855	Amarapura	Offering robes to monks	300 kyat
1856	Amarapura	Offering robes, book chests, <u>Tripitaka</u> texts, clothing to officials and wives, donation to the poor	40,000 kyat
1857	Mandalay	Donating monasteries and ordination halls	113,580 kyat
1857	Mandalay	Donation to monks	5,000 kyat
1857	Mandalay	Offering robes to monks	564 kyat
1857	Mandalay	Donation to the poor	2,625 kyat
1851	Mandalay	Donation to the poor	2, 625 kyat

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Source: Myo Myint, *Confronting Colonialism*, pp. 193-194.

According to the above-mentioned table and other evidences of the meritorious deeds of King Mindon, it can be said that the largest proportion of spending on religion went

to the support of necessities to *Sangha*: As the king supported every necessity to *Sangha*, the *Sangha* assisted the king in many ways.

### 3.3. Role of *Sangha* in Society

Before the discussion is made on the assistance of *Sangha* to the king and role of *Sangha* in customary society, it is need to make a brief discussion on the nature of pre-colonial administration. In pre-colonial society, the king was the most supreme head of administration of the state and arbiter to all existences.<sup>63</sup> Even the offices of court officials and ministers were his own creation. The administration of state was divided into *rajahtani* or central administration and provincial administration. The central administration was handled by the Hluttaw; supreme organ of administration, *bye-daik* Privy Council, *shei-yon*- Eastern Court or criminal court, *anauk-yon*- women's court and *taya-yon* law court.<sup>64</sup> The crown appointed officials such as ministers, ministers of interiors, clerks, town governors, magistrates, clerks, liaison officers, etc were responsible for the central administration.

The provincial administration was entrusted to the crown appointed officials such as viceroys, governors, township officers, and hereditary headmen such as *ywa-thu-gyi* or village headmen, officer of crown service groups such as chief of horsemen, captains of musketeers etc. Princes of Royal Blood were sometimes given control of the provinces. But their duties were carried out by their deputies.<sup>65</sup> Whoever ruled a certain township or district, the people living in these areas were vulnerable to the officials because these officials ruled their township as if they were the king themselves. The king issued orders to his provincial officials to rule benevolently. However, in a country like Myanmar where the authority of the king was ineffectual outside royal capital, the provincial officers and local headmen frequently committed atrocities to the local people such as, briberies, corruptions and embezzlements. One can come across many evidences on the cases of the briberies of local officials. As they were empowered to the revenue collection, judicial

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<sup>63</sup> Maungdaung, *Primate's Answers on the King's Questions*. 124-128

<sup>64</sup> Than Tun, *Ancient Myanmar Chronicle*. 107-110

<sup>65</sup> Thant Myint-U, *The Making of Modern Burma*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001, p.p 75-76 (Hereafter cited as Thant Myint-U, *The Making of Modern Burma*)

administration and general administration,<sup>66</sup> these officials took opportunity to exploit the local people for their own benefit.<sup>67</sup>

The people living in the rural areas were the most vulnerable to the taxation, maladministration, corruption of officials and hereditary headmen. The people of customary society were divided into *A-this* tax-paying commoners and *ahmu-dans*-crown servicemen. The most important responsibility of the *A-thi* was paying taxes. According to Myanmar kingship, the king, in accord with his coronation oath, had to rule justly while he was able to claim one-tenth of the people's produce. The kings of Konbaung period appointed hereditary officials for the judicial and revenue administration of the provincial areas. However, as it is known, as the economy of the whole kingdom has greatly relied on the agriculture, the people were able to pay taxes in the years of regular harvests. In the years of poor harvest, the king could not impose taxes as he expected. With the exception of such period of tax exemption, the people were generally forced to pay tax. Many land mortgage deeds and money-lending deeds revealed the fact that the people were forced to mortgage their lands and borrow money to pay taxes.<sup>68</sup>

As the local headmen were entrusted with the responsibility of the whole administration, the revenue administration also had fallen into the hands of those officials. The rates of tax assessment were naturally different from one place to another. If an official conducted misrule for his own benefit, the people could not present their grievances to the king. In this situation, local monk leaders wrote epistles to the king to mention the sufferings of people. For instance, Ven. Kyi-gan Shin-gyi *Sayadaw* wrote epistle to exempt the taxes. His epistle was as follow;

The date fixed by you, lord, for the final payment of taxes, and tolls is past, but the revenue from our village still remain uncollected, the village faced a financial crisis of their own. The expected and carefully calculated income,

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<sup>66</sup> Mya Sein, *Administration of Burma*, Rangoon, Zabu Meikswe Press, 1938, p.65 (Henceforth Mya Sein. *Administration of Burma*)

<sup>67</sup> Thwe Thwe Sit, "*Badonmin Let-htet Myanmar Nainggan Okchokye Thamaing*" ("History of Administration under King Badon: (1782-1819)"), M.A, Thesis, Department of History, Mandalay Arts and Science University, 1968, pp.120-121

<sup>68</sup> *Land-mortgage Deed of Nat-yin-daung Thugyi*, 13 September 1835, *Pei* M.S, No.7, Khin Saw Oo, Tutor, Department of History, Loikaw University Collection (Hereafter cited as *Land-mortgage Deed of Nat-yin-daung Thugyi* )

so regular in the past has failed to accrue: the creditors press for repayment of debts, and all business, trade and crafts are disturbed state. On top of all, there are old taxes and new tolls to pay. Trouble and despondent, many villages and it is only through the assistance and leadership of the elders that village has been saved from complete disintegration.<sup>69</sup>

According to the *vinaya*- code of conducts, *Sangha* has to eschew all mundane affairs and devote themselves exclusively in *Sasana*. However, as mentioned above, *Sangha* took responsibility to stabilize the local communities. Local *gain-oks* and *gaing-dauks* watched over the situations of respective villages and townships. They also watched the rule of local headmen and crown-appointed officials whether they committed atrocities or misrule on the people. For instance, during King Mindon's reign, the people living in the village of Okshikkon, Nyaungkaya, and Aung Tha village tracts of Shwepyi Yan-aung Cavalry District (Meiktila) were persecuted by *Myingaug*-cavalry officer of Konbaung Cavalry village.

The people of said villages comprising about 100 households, would not like to live under the rule of Kon-daung Myin-gaung and moved to Ywa-thit daing of Meiktila Township. In this event, Myin-gaung related the people by confiscating the household properties of escapees. The problem became local disturbance when Nga Khwet, Nga Lu Hmon, Nga Shay-ga-lay and Nga Khwy from Okshikkon, Nyaungkaya and Aung-tha villages made their complaints against Kondaung Myin-gaung to Meiktila Myo-wun. Myo-wun reminded Kondaung Myin-gaung not to persecute the people.<sup>70</sup> However, Kon-daung Myin-gaung continued his misconduct on the people. He even cooperated with Sa-myeik-shei Myin-gaung and committed another misrule over the people of Hla-naung-gan village. Finally, the provincial monk leaders reminded the myin-gaungs to rule fairly. Meiktila Gaing-dauk Sayadaw U Sobana and Dhammayon Gaing-dauk Sayadaw gave further instruction to Myin-gaungs as follow;

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<sup>69</sup> Maung Htin Aung (ed and trans), *Epistles Written on the Eve of the First Anglo Burmese War*, The Hauge, Martinus Nijhoff, 1965, pp.9-10 (Hereafter cited as Htin Aung, *Epistles Written on the Eve of the First Anglo Burmese War*)

<sup>70</sup> "Report of Meiktila Myo-wun On the Movement of People from Kon-daung Cavalry Village to Ywathit Daing in Meiktila", Parabaik, M.S, MUTLC, No.250

We know that *Samyeik-shei Myin-gaung* and Kon-daung Myin-gaung committed persecution against Nga Cho, Nga Po, Nga Chit Phyu and their household members, comprising over forty people from Htanaunggan village, who were not happy to live in the cavalry areas and moved to live and work by paying taxes in other areas. Owing to the persecutions of *myin-gaungs* and *thu-gyis*, these poor people could not follow their occupations and were more impoverished. Therefore, *Sa-myeik-shei gaing-ok* and *gain-dauk* shall admonish *myin-gaungs* to rule the people kindly in accord with the "virtues of the elders".<sup>71</sup>

Likewise, in the cases of writing epistles to exempt from pay taxes, the *Sangha* stood by the people by preventing harsh treatments of provincial officials.

### 3.3.1. *Sangha* and Political Problems

The most serious problem that created the instability social and economic life of the people was created by *Myin-gun-Myin-khon-daing* Rebellion in 1866. The rebellion greatly affected numerous villages from Magwe, Nat-mauk, Pin, Kyaukpadaung and Taungdwingyi regions. The rebel princes and their followers seized the royal steamer *Yenansekyia* and sailed down to Myin-gun and nearby villages and were asked to submit the quota of ten men from each village and some cash contribution.<sup>72</sup> Some village headmen joined the rebellion which some denied to cooperate with the rebel prince on fearing the punishment of royal army. When the rebellion was defeated and tranquility prevailed, it was found that the villages in Kyaukpadaung, Natmauk, Magwe, Pin, Taungdwingyi and the villages around Shwebo were devastated by the skirmishes between the royal army and rebel brigands.<sup>73</sup> The subsequent rebellion of Badein Prince, eldest son of late Crown Prince, further shattered the villages in Shwebo district when the rebel forces gained

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<sup>71</sup> "Letter of U Sobana, Meiktila Gaing-ôk Sayadaw to Provincial monk leaders of *Samyeik-shei Cavalry Village to Ywathit Daing in Meiktila*," Parabaik, M.S, MUTLC, No.250

<sup>72</sup> "Statement of U Sutacri", Abbot of Kyaukpu Village Monastery, Myin-gun Village, dated 20 October 1871, Parabaik, M.S, Dr. Toe Hla Collection (Hereafter cited as Toe Hla Collection)

<sup>73</sup> Maung Maung Tin, *Great Chronicle of the Konbaung Dynasty*, pp. 230-240

superiority on the royal army, many villages in the above mentioned townships were burnt down to ashes due to their loyalty to the king. When the rebellion was defeated, the royal army searched and destroyed the rebel's followers. In these retaliations, some villages were destroyed by the royal army under the suspicion of rebel's followers, King Mindon took the assistance of *Thudhamma Sayadaws* through the local monk leaders to give protection to innocent people and to restore the law and order in rural community. The following instructions of Thudhamma Sayadaws to local gaing-ôks and gaing-dauks were as follow:

The people were in great hardship and the towns and villages were in the state of turmoil because of the persecution of the local officials. Spare lives and properties of those who did not follow the rebels assistant sayadaws under the Abbot.( *gaing-oks* and *gaing-dauks*) of Shwepyi Yan-aung Cavalry District (East) shall make instructions to the myo-wuns, sit-kes and other offers not to persecute the people under mere suspicion of the followers of *Myin-gun* and Badein Princess. Sayadaws shall make strict supervision to *myo-wuns* and *sitès*.<sup>74</sup>

Some local headmen, however, had to continue their oppression on the people. Therefore, after the rebellion, the people from many villages of Magwe, Pin, Natmauk, Kyaukpadaung and some villages of cavalry districts fled into the British Myanmar. However, not all the people who fled to the Lower Myanmar were rebels. The period during and after the outbreak of rebellion in Upper Myanmar was coincided with the reclamation of Delta by the British Government. Therefore, some people moved there with the hope of resturting their life in Lower Myanmar where the more opportunities were opening. As the British offered an opportunity to reclaim without any payment of reclamation fees, the landless farmers also moved to Lower Myanmar. For example, almost fifty percent of 186 houses in Thabyeiwa Village, located between Meiktila and Wundwin, fled to Lower Myanmar.<sup>75</sup>

The people from the rebel-controlled areas and those who suffered economic hardship created by droughts, other natural calamities and misrule of local chiefs fled to Lower Myanmar. To what extent the rebellion affected the Kingdom of Myanmar

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<sup>74</sup> "Instruction of Thudhamma Sayadaws to Gaing-oks and Gaing-dauks of Shwepyi Yan-aung Cavalry District (East)", Parabaik, M.S, MUTLC, No-2150

<sup>75</sup> S. Keith, *Report on the Second Settlement of the Meiktila District, 1970-1910*, Yangon, Government Printing, 1910, p.10(Hereafter cited as Keith, *Report on the Second Settlement of the Meiktila District*)

can be seen in the sudden increase of population in Bago District that numbered 613,640 people; but after the rebellion in 1868, it came up to, 1,350,898 people. It is suggested that Myanmar immigrants in Bago totaled over 561,000.<sup>76</sup>

The British government of Lower Myanmar, which greatly in need of population to commercialize the rice cultivation of Ayeyawaddy and Sittaung valleys to support India after 1857 mutiny, welcomed Myanmar immigrants by offering some privileges. On the contrary, King Mindon made utmost effort to prevent further movement of the people and to attract his subjects from Lower Myanmar. They were called back through the chief monks of respective districts or provinces. (*Gaing-ôks* and *gaing-dauks*) *Assistants under the Abbot* sent epistles to the king stating that the most of the people ran away into Lower Myanmar, because they were intimidated by the rebels, and therefore, they should be pardoned from all civil and criminal lawsuits.<sup>77</sup> The king therefore offered the returnees that they did not need to settle their debts within five years, and also exempted from taxation for certain years. All local officials were also ordered not to arrest any of the returnees.

Myin-gun-Myin-khon-daing Rebellion greatly affected the economy and social life of the people. Many villages were totally devastated and the properties were looted by the people. As some officials and servicemen also fled to Lower Myanmar, the provincial administration has paralyzed. As a result, the crimes ordered through *Thudhamma Sayadaws* to all the monks of central Myanmar not to accept the offertories lest they should be the King's properties. Moreover, as the lack of secular authorities, the monk-students who were learning in royal capital were sent back to their respective native villages to help restore law and order with their local officials.<sup>78</sup> The king also exempted all the people in war-torn areas from taxation for five years so that the rural economy could recover within a short period.<sup>79</sup> However no concrete evidence shows the recovery and restoration of sound social and economic situation in rural community through the efforts of the king.

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<sup>76</sup> *Supplement to the British Burma Gazetteer*, Yangon, Superintendent Government Printing and Stationery, 1868, p.43 (Hereafter cited as SBBG, 1868)

<sup>77</sup> "*Epistles of Thudhamma Sayadaws*", *Parabaik*, M.S, dated 18<sup>th</sup> January 1868, UTC

<sup>78</sup> ROB IX, p. 657

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid*

### 3.3.2. *Sangha* and Administration

According to the *vinaya*-code of conducts, *sanghas* had to eschew all mundane affairs and devote themselves exclusively in *sasana*. However, as mentioned above, *sangha* took responsibility to stabilize the local communities. Local *gaing-oks* and *gaing-dauks* watched over the situations of respective villages and townships. They also watched the rule of local headmen and crown-appointed officials whether they committed atrocities or misrule on the people. For instance, during King Mindon's reign, the people living in the villages of Okshikkon, Nyaungkaya, and Aung Tha Village Tracts of Shwepyi Yan-aung Cavalry District (Meiktila) were persecuted by Myingaung-cavalry officer of Konbaung cavalry village.

Among the involvements of the Thudhaman *Sayadaws* in non-religious affairs was their supervision in the affairs of tax collection. Under the rule of King Mindon, former system of collection one-tenth of produces was replaced with the new one of collection one-tenth of income and the kingdom was divided into four parts for the purpose of tax collection, each part being placed under the in-charge of each of Salin *Sayadaw*, Thingaza *Sayadaw* and Maung-htaung *Sayadaw*. Salin *Sayadaw* was in-charge of twenty one down southern riverine towns and village of southern part; Madaya *Sayadaw* had to take responsibility for thirty five towns and villages of northern part; Thingaza *Sayadaw* had to look after twenty eight towns and villages of southern part and Maung-htaung *Sayadaw* had to supervise the tax collection in twenty five towns and villages of western part.<sup>80</sup> Concerning the tax collection, the Thudhamma *Sayadaws* sent their instructions to *Gaing-ok* (Assistant Local Monk) and *Gaing-dauk* (Assistant Local Monk) to supervise the tax collectors not to do unlawful acts upon the tax-paying people and to collect the taxes in a proper manner and the example of their instructions are as follow:

**Tax- Thathameidha**  
**Instruction of the Thudhamma *Sayadaws* to *Gaing-ok* and *Gaing-dauk* *Sayadaws***  
**of the Provincial Areas**

This letter is sent to *Gaing-ok* and *Gaing-dauk* of Salei Town.<sup>81</sup> Tax collectors had been sent by the Hluttaw to the towns and villages of the kingdoms to collect the

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<sup>80</sup> ROB IX, p.380

<sup>81</sup> Located in Magwe District

Thathameidha Tax. If the tax collectors sent to Salei and Bagan report the instructions of the Hluttaw (concerning tax collection) to you, you should teach them not to collect the more taxes than the fixed amount and not to treat the tax-paying people by excessively using their powers for the benefits of the beings, the king and the religion. If they do not adhere to your guidance, you should report the case as quickly as possible to the Thudhamma *Sayadaws*. If they present no report to you or commit unlawful acts adhering to four Gati,<sup>82</sup> you should report the cases to us. The instruction was issued with U Tezo on 18 May 1868.<sup>83</sup>

The above instruction supports the fact that the Assistant local monks had to take part in such administrative affairs as tax collection in the late Konbaung Period, particularly under the rule of King Mindon. Joined hands with the administrative headmen, the monastic headmen had to teach the rural people to follow the laws and to pay the fixed taxes without fail.<sup>84</sup>

The involvement of the local monk leaders in tax collection benefited the tax-paying people who were able to present their difficulties to them. The local monk leaders on their part presented the difficulties feed by the tax-paying people to the headmen concerned. By the royal order dated 1st June 1866, King Mindon exempted Sa-bei-daw Village from paying the Thathameidha Tax because Min-ok Kyaung *Sayiadaw* and Sabei *Sayadaw* reported that the said village harvested to crops due to the drought.<sup>85</sup>

Like the previous monarchical period, the rural people in the late Konbaung Period were forced to collect and sent money to hire armed men when asked by the king. When armed servicemen were recruited in 1868 due to the Theinni Rebellion, *Myin-zi* of Kyaukse area had to give money which was set aside for the cultivation of sesame and paddy on the royal land to hire armed men. When the rural people were

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<sup>82</sup> Four corruptions committed by fear, love, ignorance, etc.

<sup>83</sup> *A-khun (Tax), Thathameidha*, Parabaik MS 147, Yoke-son Monastery of Salei, U Ponnya Museum

<sup>84</sup> Smith, *Religion and Politics in Burma*, p. 32

<sup>85</sup> U Kyaw, *Konbaung Khit Yaw Detha (Yaw Region in the Konbaung Period) (AD 1752-1885)*, Yangon, Literature Committee of the Htun Foundation Bank, 2011, pp 95-96 (Hereafter cited as Kyaw, *Yaw Region*)

asked to pay their quota for the given money the local monk leaders prevented the headmen not to collect the money from the rural people because they considered it an unlawful act. Therefore, headmen of cavalry groups supplicated the matter to the Thudhamma *Sayadaws*, superiors of Assistant local monk's I.<sup>86</sup> this record clearly showed that the conditions forced them to take part in such administrative affairs as the recruitment of armed men and they had influence upon the *myin-zi*. It is true that *Gaing-ok* and *Gaing-dauk Sayadaws* were unable to ignore the administrative affairs of the Kingdom as their superiors such as Thathanabaing and the Thudhamma *Sayadaws* themselves rendered their services to this matter. The Thudhamma *Sayadaws* instructed the Assistant local monks to take part in the kingdom's administrative affairs.

After the end of the Myin-gun Myin-khon-daing Rebellion, the role of the Assistant local monks became more important than before. The ruling monarch recognized their influential role in the rural society and seemed to rely on them for the security and stability of the rural areas. The influence of *Gaing-ok* and *Gaing-duck Sayadaws* upon the rural people and their important role in the stability of the rural society can be vividly seen in the instructions of the Thudhamma *Sayadaws* to Hsinbyukyun *Gaing-ok* and *Gaing-dauk* of Kyapin. In the letter the Thudhamma *Sayadaws* instructed *Gaing-ok* and *Gaing-dauk* to persuade the people, who left their native places because of the 1866 Rebellion, to return to their localities. If they arrive back their native places, the dates of their return are to be recorded by the heads and their relatives and sent to the Assistant local monks who are again to send the record to the Thudhamma *Sayadaws*.<sup>87</sup> From this record, it is clear that *Gaing-ok* and *Gaing-dauk Sayadaws* played an important role in the return of the people to their native places.

It may be assumed that the administrative headmen did not need to take the instructions of the local monk leaders. However, since the local monk leaders were requested by the king himself to provide their services in the administrative affairs, the administrative headmen had to take the instructions of the local monk leaders in the affairs of the people to return to their native places as evidenced by the following.

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<sup>86</sup> Toe Hla, *Myanmar History through Epigraphic Evidences*, p. 297

<sup>87</sup> *Kya-pin Hsin-kyun Gaing-ok Gaing-dauk Toh Ko Sint Yan (Letter to invite Gaing-ok and Gaing-dauk of Kya-pin Sin-byu-kyun)*, Parabaik MS 137, Yoke-some Monastery of Salei, U Ponnya Museum

I, Judge Maha Yaza Thingyan, would like to supplicate to (the local monk leaders of Bagan.) I have to come to Sa-le and Bagan and report my arrival to you the local monk leaders of Salei and Bagan as instructed in the royal order. Myo-ok, *Thugyi*, Tan-gaung *Thugyi* and I will receive your instructions on 8 January 1868 in the town office. In accordance with the laws of the Hluttaw, we will perform our duties of settling those who returned to their native places and supervising not to occur criminal cases. I, your close pupil, would like to supplicate to you that, if Myo-ok, *Myo Thugyi* and Tan-gaung *Thugyi* of Bagan and Salei do not follow the existing laws, I'll punish them.<sup>88</sup>

The above letter proves that the administrative officers had to follow the instructions of such local monk leaders as *Gaing-ok* and *Gaing-dauk Sayadaws* in performing their administrative duties. Although the involvement of the Assistant local monks in the administrative affairs was not agreed with the *Vinaya*, the rural people probably gained the benefits from the involvement in administration.<sup>89</sup>

In some cases, monks of rural communities had quasi-judicial powers for their knowledge in customary laws and their influence on rural communities. Not only in the pre-colonial period, but also in the early days of colonial rule, the rural people relied on local monks in every aspect. The monks sometimes took part as honorable witness in negotiating of money-lending, land-mortgaging, deeds.<sup>90</sup> Although monks were not directly responsible to the secular court, the village headmen usually took the help of the monks to try some minor offences such as theft, burglary, disputes on property, etc. The method of arbitration was mainly used to settle these cases. Sometime, monks tried to save prisoners who were condemned to execution.<sup>91</sup> The criminal who were pardoned in such manner became the slave of monastery.<sup>92</sup> In short, monks protected the weak from extortion by powerful officials, assisted the

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<sup>88</sup> *Pay-sa (Letter sent) (from Taya Thugyi to Gaing-dauk)*, Parabaik MS 145, Yoke-sone Monastery of Salei, U Ponnya Museum

<sup>89</sup> Toe Hla, *Myanmar History through Epigraphic Evidences*, pp. 183-187

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 281

<sup>91</sup> Myo Myint, *Confronting Colonialism*, p. 232

<sup>92</sup> Smith, *Religion and Politics in Burma*, p. 33

king with tax in the period of economic distress and urged the removal of district officials who exploited the local people.

### **3.4. Summary**

Since the arrival of Buddhist religion in Myanmar, kings and people supported *sangha* for prosperity and perpetuation of *sasana*. Although pre-Buddhist practices and animistic belief predominated in the society, kings of successive dynasties made attempts to purify Buddhist religious. Some king's defender and promoter of Buddhism, a pagoda or a monastery was built whenever a king ascended the throne, among the kings in the past-Bagan period king Dhammaceti of Bago, King Badon and King Mindon were noteworthy for their efforts on the reformation of *Sangha* order. They have done three developments to enhance its socio-political role in religion. Firstly, it needs recognition and support from the political authority. Secondly the religion must create an integrative principle in socio-cultural life of the people. Thirdly, religion must have strong organizations to exert its influence on the society. They supported every necessity to the monks while they dealt with the religious controversies and Laxity of the code of disciplines among the monks. The monks also buttressed the King's authority. They assisted the king in administrative affairs such as revenue administration. On the contrary, Assistant local monks and local monasteries become the custodians of rural communities. As the king's authority was effectual outside the capital, local monks sterilized the communities in times of internal strife's, crop failure, frequent visit of drought, occurrence of the maladministration of provincial officials, etc. The most notable achievement of *sangha* institution was the monastic educations are discussed in next chapters.

... and ... of Education

## **CHAPTER -4**

# **EFFECTIVENESS AND BENEFITS OF BUDDHIST MONASTIC SCHOOL**

... education ...

... education ...

## EFFECTIVENESS AND BENEFITS OF BUDDHIST MONASTIC SCHOOL

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### 4.1 The Functions and Aims of Education

First of all, the first and foremost task would be to explain in very general term what is meant by 'education' and the educational process. Education may be defined as the process of attaining knowledge and skills. At this point it should be made clear that though there have been pioneers and men of wisdom who have made new discoveries about the world and both living and non-living beings, by knowledge it is meant that the vast store of information, methods, and skills that humanity has acquired, added to and passed down through generations. As D.J.O' Connor so aptly remarked:

“Two hundred years from now there will be no one alive in the world who is alive here today. Yet the sum total of human skill and knowledge will probably not be less than it is today. It will almost certainly be greater. And that, this is so, is due in larger part to the educational process by which we pass on to one generation what has been learned and achieved by previous generations.”<sup>1</sup>

Education means the process of training and nurturing the growing human mind. Education plays an important role in human life and it is part of life because since the beginning time, man has tried to improve his life first informally, by learning through experience and observations. Through such experience, humans were able to improve their life, by learning new skills, acquiring new knowledge about the world in which they lived. So much knowledge and skills were handed down from the more experienced adults to the young and thus began the process of education. It was at first informal, but with the further development of man's mind and intelligence which later led to the recognition and emergence of education, education as a special field of study became established.

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<sup>1</sup> D.J.O' Connor, *Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*, New York, Random House Inc, 1939, pp.6-7 (Hereafter cited as Connor, *Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*)

In this way, education became as essential part of man's cultural and social life. We cannot do without some form of education in life. This is acknowledged by all nations and cultures. The goals and methods of education may differ but it is admitted by all that it furnishes the brain with fresh and new knowledge.

Education provides the individual with power to improve the human quality of life. It is like a knife which sharpens man's intellect which should never become blunt. Today, people speak of the cutting edge of technology, which in essence means that present day technological knowledge is so sharp that it has totally changed the world and man's life. Thus, education has refined man's life and broadened his outlook.

Moreover, education and knowledge have improved not only man's material life but his spiritual life as well; the way he thinks, the way he views the world and his place in it in relation to others. In other words, it is knowledge and education that have aroused and stimulated man's moral responsibilities towards others in the group or society to he belongs. Therefore, education nurtures intellectual power or intellectual ability, which in turn, cultivates the required values in the individuals.

That is the most fundamental aim of education. It is also one of the most important functions in a society, for without education a society will surely stagnate and finally collapse. The educational system of a society is to train its members in certain skills and attitudes that are judged to be value and thus desirable for the society concerned. Two essential issues can be considered about a given educational system according to D. J. O' Connor are as follow;

( i) What is held to be valuable as an end?

(ii) What means will effectively realize these ends?<sup>2</sup>

These questions and discussions about them are thus the concerns of philosophy because they concern valuation which is an ethical problem and the second question is epistemological.

The study of the monastic education system in Myanmar will, however, have two similar questions such as:

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<sup>2</sup> Connor, *Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*, p.7

- (i) What are the values aimed at in monastic education? and
- (ii) What methods are used to install these values?

It will further supplement them by raising the question as to whether the monastic education system is still effective as an educational process and, if it is found that it still has valuable contributions to make, in what ways it can be improved to bring it up to date. This, in effect is the core of this study, but first it would be necessary to justify in what way a philosophical study of education can contribute to the enhancement of the educational process.

## 4.2 Education Philosophy

According to D.J.O' Connor education refers to :

- (a) A set of techniques for imparting knowledge, skills and attitudes;
- (b) A set of theories which purports to explain or justify the use of three techniques;
- (c) A set of values or ideals embodied and expressed in the purposes for which knowledge, skills and attitudes are conveyed and so directing the amounts and types of training that is given.<sup>3</sup>

The point of contact between philosophy and education is to be found in element (C). It is the task of philosophy to raise questions about the values or ideals for which knowledge is being imparted. It is not the direct task of philosophy to explain or justify techniques of teachings or theories, or question which techniques or methods are most effective. Yet even in such cases when questions are raised out about the nature of the theories concerning the function of education, such as monastic education in Myanmar as in this case , the questions may be raised as to whether it is to nurture a profound belief in Buddhism as a religion or to install a sense of morality in the young. These issues can be considered legitimate. Questions will be asked in the following discussions on Myanmar monastic education. Then, they will be answered in two parts as follow:

- (1) The objectives of monastic education in the past.
- (2) The objectives of monastic education as they have changed and evolved in modern times.

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<sup>3</sup> Connor, *Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*, p.5

This will then facilitate a fair assessment of the Myanmar monastic education system and open up the way to its enhancement. However, before proceeding to clarify necessary details of the nature of monastic education in Myanmar, how it developed throughout the ages and the situation of the system of monastic education today a brief account will now be given regarding its source of origin and historical background. For this will provide evidence that, no matter how monastic education has changed, its essential aims and objectives are rooted in Buddhism.

### **4.3 Buddhism : Its Centers and Learning**

If one is to trace the origin of monastic education in Myanmar, it would not be wrong to start with the founding of Buddhism when the Buddha, after attaining enlightenment preached the *Dhamma cakka pavattana* , or the Four Noble Truths to his first disciples, the *Panca Vaggi*. During the forty-five years of his ministry, the Buddha taught through dialogues sermons, and the *Jātakas*, the Buddhist theory of life and liberation, as well as methods and precepts on how to live good life and how to attain liberation from *samsara*, the endless circle of birth and rebirth. He tirelessly taught this to his followers , both *Sangha* and lay people in order to show the way to liberation. After the passing away of the Buddha, there only remained his Teaching (the *Dhamma*) and the rules for the *Sangha* (the *Vinaya*) to represent Him, and since there had not been any written records Shin *Mahakassapa* and the remaining five hundred members conducted the First Buddhist Council under the patronage of King *Azzatathat* to refresh and retain by rote learning what the Buddha had taught. Then the Second Buddhist was held after a hundred years under the patronage of King *Kalāsoka* at *Vesāli*. At the time, Buddhism was flourishing and had spread across India. But later schisms began to rise within Buddhism and as protection against further misinterpretations and disintegration, the Third Buddhist Council was held under the auspices of Emperor and the *Mauryan* Empire, the Great *Asoka* at *Pāṭṭaliputta* (near present day Patna) in the Buddhist Era 235. However, this Third Buddhist Council was attended by the *Sangha* who supported the original traditional Teachings of the Buddha but was not acknowledged by those of the new schisms, the *Mahasanghitta* sect. Thus, the Third Buddhist Council was said to have been convened by the Elders or *Theras* and hence the name *Theravāda* school of Buddhism. Nevertheless, after the Third Council, Buddhism was propagated far and

wide to Egypt, Greece, East Europe, countries to the North-west of India, to Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Myanmar and to other countries in Southeast Asia mainland and archipelago.

The Buddha's Teachings had now been set down in writing and the above mentioned propagation of Buddhism led to the emergence of great Buddhist centers of learning. The way Buddhist teachings were handed down and the methods of without discussions had some influence on monastic education in Myanmar, so some feed back can be made for Buddhist universities.<sup>4</sup>

The most well-known of these Buddhist centers of learning is the University of *Taxila*, located northwest of Peshawar. *Taxila* University and some others were founded by the *Mahāyāna* School, but it is noteworthy that the curriculum included not only Buddhist *Abhidhamma* but other lay subjects such as science especially medicine. It was a center of learning for sons of royal houses from neighbouring countries. Then there was the famous *Nalanda* Buddhist University which was founded around A.D 400, making it the most ancient university, older than *Bologna* University in Italy which is considered the oldest university in Europe having been founded in A.D 1088. The *Nalanda* University flourished for over 700 years from the 5<sup>th</sup> century to the 11<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Thus, it can be seen that Buddhist centers of learning were established in the country of its origin. These great universities provided beacons of learning to other countries where Buddhism had spread and especially with reference to Myanmar, it can be said that the arrival of Buddhism led to the establishment of monasteries for the propagation of Buddhist learning which later provided a system of education for the people themselves.<sup>5</sup> When we have learned monastic education in Myanmar, we should carefully make historical survey of monastic education in Myanmar.

#### **4.4 Essential Aims and General Characteristics of Monastic Education**

First and foremost, essential aim of Buddhist monastic education was the propagation of Buddha's teachings and was not probably intended for those who had

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<sup>4</sup> U Than Htut, *Myanmar Naing Ngan Hpondawgyi Kyaung Pyinnyar Ye Thamaing (History of Myanmar Monastic Education)*, Yangon, Thein Minn Hlaing Press, pp. 8-11 (Hereafter cited as Than Htut, *History of Myanmar Monastic Education*)

<sup>5</sup> Than Htut, *History of Myanmar Monastic Education*, p. 6

joined the *Sangha* or congregation of monks. As mentioned above, it all originated with the convening of the Buddhist Councils to refresh the memory of those who had listened to and heard the preaching of the Buddha Himself. Later however, the teachings were recorded in writing as the *Tipitakas* , with the *Mahāyana* sect using the *Sanskrit* and *Theravāda* School using the *Pālī* languages respectively. Thus the Buddha's teachings were recorded either in *Sanskrit* or *Pālī*. But whatever the case maybe, learning to read and write became a necessity , and so arose the establishment of universities which later spread to setting up monasteries for teaching the Buddha's words and the Buddha's ways in Myanmar. Thus, in Myanmar, monasteries were distinguished as either *Pariyatti* (that is for learning the Buddha's words) or *Patipati*. The *Pariyatti* monasteries are centers of Buddhist learning whereas other monasteries are for *Sangha* who wish to lead the ascetic life of a monk and practice meditation on their own. Therefore, monasteries were the training grounds for monks who wished to propagate the Buddha's sermons and follow His practice. Both aims were distinctly religious. This may generally be considered the origin of monasteries in Myanmar.

#### **4.5 Origin of Monastic Education in Myanmar**

Monks and monasteries have to depend on donations by lay Buddhists. A monk has to go round the village for instance for alms food, and monasteries to give them shelter were built with donations by the people of the village, town or neighbourhood concerned. In return, it was the compulsory duty of monks to spread the word for Buddhism among his congregation. A monk was often invited for meals in their houses where he would give instruction on the Fifth, or Eighth or Tenth Precepts and preach a sermon on morality, wisdom etc.: He had to officiate at funerals if invited or oversee noviciation ceremony of the son of the house; and when a boy on reaching his teens entered the monastery as a novice he was taught to read and recite and later write , whatever sermon he has taught. In olden days, such boys would stay for quite a lengthy period of time to learn to read and write probably became customary practice. Thus, began the monastic system of education in Myanmar, with monks and monasteries as the source of education.

The monks who were literate provided education to Myanmar children and the lay people provided alms food and the four requisitions, such as food, robes, medicine

and monasteries. The monastery building itself was donated by the village people who made contributions according to their means.

In some cases, a wealthy villager would donate the cost of the whole building and other would contribute what they could in cash and materials for the upkeep of the monastery and the monks. Buddhist monks with their vows of poverty depended entirely on the people's generosity. But they in turn looked after the spiritual welfare of the people and their most understanding service was the teaching of the scriptures to the young and training them to develop *pañña*(wisdom), *sila* (morality) and *Samadhi* (integrity and concentration of mind). The outstanding service provided by the monks and monasteries can never be overestimated. In fact Myanmar as a nation owes a great gratitude to the *Sanghas*. Myanmar culture as a whole – its literature , art, morals and manners- was shaped and created by the education provided by the monastic system of education.

#### **4.6 The First Monastic Schools in Myanmar**

It is impossible to ascertain when monastic education began in Myanmar. It is believed to be as old as Buddhism.<sup>6</sup> The predominant cultural tradition in Myanmar, Siam and China, has been associated with Buddhism for centuries.<sup>7</sup> According to U Than Htut in his *History of Myanmar Monastic Education*, monastic schools for education were to be found as early as the Pyu Era (1<sup>st</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> Century AD) and that over one hundred such schools were to be found. He also quoted Dr. Kyaw Thet in stating that it was the custom for Pyu children, both boys and girls to shave their hair and enter monasteries as novices for their education. Then on reaching the age of 20, they could return to lay life if they so wished. This can be considered as historical evidence that the monastic education system existed as early as the Pyu Era and that all children, whether male or female were sent to monasteries for education.<sup>8</sup>

The monasteries of the Pyu era were Buddhists, but they could have been of the *Mahāyāna* or *Theravāda* school since both flourished together with Brahmanism

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<sup>6</sup> U Kaung, “ A Survey of the History of Education in Burma before the British Conquest and after”, *Journal of Burma Research Societ*, Vol. 46, 1963, p.9 ( Hereafter cited as Kaung, “A Survey of the History Education in Burma”)

<sup>7</sup> *Report of the Vernacular and Vocational Education Reorganization Committee*, Yangon, Government Printing Press, 1936 (Hereafter cited as *Report of the Vernacular and Vocational Education*)

<sup>8</sup> Than Htut, *History of Myanmar Monastic Education*, p. 28

as stated in some Chinese chronicles according to U Than Htut.<sup>9</sup> When the Pyu civilization collapsed, the *Mahāyāna* and *Theravāda* Buddhism went into a decline, and by the time King Anawrahta ascended the throne of Bagan in 1044 AD, a form of Tantric Buddhism of the *Aris* was dominant.

Meanwhile it was said that Shin Buddhagosa of the Mon Kingdom of Thaton had travelled across to Ceylon (Sri Lanka) in 927 A.D to study Buddhism that flourished there. He stayed there for three years to study and copy the *Tipitakas*, which he later brought back to Thaton. Thus *Theravāda* first took root in Thaton and many Mon monks travelled to study and brought home the *Tipitakas* and other *Pālitexts* on Buddhism.<sup>10</sup>

It so happened that in Bagan, King Anawrahta, who disapproved of the *Ari* religious practices had met the Mon Buddhist monk Shin Arahan and wished to convert the people of Bagan to *Theravāda* Buddhism. So on Shin Arahan's advice, King Anawrahta requested a few copies of the 30 sets of *Pitaka* that King of Thaton, Manuha had. But Thaton King sent back a discourteous negative reply through the emissary. Angered at the Mon King's rude refusal, Anawrahta launched a military campaign and took prisoners, the Mon King Manuha and his royal household, including his slaves, artists and artisans. He also brought back with him monks, and learned men and set about to expand and unite his empire. Under his royal patronage, temples, pagodas, shrines were built for worship and teaching monasteries set up for the education of his people. Anawrahta was also the first king to build a *Pitakat Taik* (Library) to house the *Tipitaka* texts. The members of the *Sangha* led by Shin Arahan strived for the promotion of Buddhism.<sup>11</sup> From this time onwards, the monastic education system became established and gained momentum and served the country well.

#### **4.7 Monastic Education in Bagan Period**

As mentioned earlier, *Theravāda* Buddhism brought to Bagan by Shin Arahan, the learned Mon monk and adopted by King Anawrahta (1044-1077 AD), led to the flowering of Bagan in arts and architecture, in learning to become scholars under the

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 29

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p. 30

<sup>11</sup> Than Htut, *History of Myanmar Monastic Education*, pp. 63-64

wise rule of the powerful King Anawrahta, *Theravāda* Buddhism took roots and flourished. Lands were conquered, artists and artisans were brought from Thaton to build temples and pagodas which were decorated with art and sculpture. Stone inscriptions were set up first with *Pali*, *Pyu* and Mon scripts and by the time of the *Rajakumar* Inscription in the latter part of the reign of King Kyansittha, the Myanmar script had been invented and employed along with *Pali*, *Pyu* and Mon writings. Teaching monasteries were established and it is said there were exchange of visits of monks between Bagan and Ceylon (Sri Lanka). Monks from Sri Lanka and Thaton were visited to share their views and learning. New methods in arts and architecture were brought by artists and artisans, whom Anawrahta had brought captives from his conquest of Thaton to supplement the skills and ideas of the original artists and artisans.<sup>12</sup>

Education under the Myanmar monarchical period since Bagan period of 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D was carried out almost entirely by the Buddhist monks.<sup>13</sup> The objectives of monastic education at that time were:

- (1) To train the children to have respect towards the “Three Gems”, i.e. the *Buddha*, the *Dhamma* and the *Sangha*,
- (2) For the prevalence of the three *Sāsanas*,
- (3) To let people desire to attain *Nibbāna*, and
- (4) To teach the children so that they would be learned in religious books and would also be able to read, write and calculate.<sup>14</sup>

It is said that seven basic elements of learning were to be found in the Bagan period. They were:

- (1) the art of writing,
- (2) the teacher or instructor,
- (3) learners or students
- (4) the schools or place of education,
- (5) books and references,
- (6) education tools – (stylus and palm-leaf or other writing materials), and

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<sup>12</sup> U Phoe Latt, *Shwe Haung Myanmar Yazawin Hnit Yin Kyee Hmu Thutethana* ( *Ancient Myanmar Chronicle and Cultural Research*), Yangon, Pyinnyar Nanda Press, 1962, p. 24 (Hereafter cited as Phoe Latt, ( *Ancient Myanmar Chronicle and Cultural Research*))

<sup>13</sup> Kaung, “A Survey of the History Education in Burma”, p. 9

<sup>14</sup> Than Htut, *History of Myanmar Monastic Education*, p.64

(7) place for storing texts and references (*Pitaka Taik* or library).<sup>15</sup>

Stone inscriptions of the time show that these basic elements of education were found in the Bagan Era. The teachers of the period were as stated above mainly Buddhist monks and the Sanskrit term “*acara*” and the Pāli term “*acarisa*” meaning teachers were said to be in use at that time. Men of wisdom or those well-versed in literature were also referred to as “*Thukhamein*”. There is no concrete evidence of lay teachers in spite of the legendary princess, *Than Byan*, daughter of King *Kyaswa* of Bagan who was so famed for her scholarship that monks came to be taught by her. Whatever the case maybe there were learned laymen who were fluent in both written and spoken Pāli and Myanmar, for example learned royal ministers. So the third element of learners and students must have been present at that time. The numerous inscriptions set up all over Bagan attached to the fact that the literacy rate must have been quite high for the time. The learners were known as “*Casan*” or “*Taprisa*”. The school or place of education was the monastery and as mentioned above lay people, especially the wealthy donated to their establishment and upkeep. Mount Thet So inscription of Bagan period in 1038 AD stated:

The monasteries or ‘*Klon*’ for monks and learners to live in were necessary. Temple built and ‘*Kyaung* (Monastery)’ founded. The building where learners stayed was called “*Casan Taik*”, monastery for students.<sup>16</sup>

Kyaung Myint and Kala Kyaung are two storied monasteries, where the monks resided and teaching and learning were also done there. Nowadays, the monastery which teaches Buddhist scriptures is called “*Casan Taik*” (Monastery School) and the monastery which does not teach Buddhist scriptures is simply called “Monastery” or “Hpon Gyi Kyaung or the building where the monks live in”.

Monastic education gave emphasis to moral culture. The curriculums in monastic schools were based on Buddhism.<sup>17</sup> The subjects taught in the monastic schools were:

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<sup>15</sup> Dr. Than Tun, *Khit Haung Myanmar Yazawin*(*Ancient Myanmar Chronicle*), Yangon, Maha Dagon Press, p. 206 ( Hereafter cited as Than Tun, *Ancient Myanmar Chronicle*)

<sup>16</sup> Nyein Maung, *Sha-haung Myanmar Kyauksa-mya* (*Ancient stone Inscriptions of Myanmar*) volume II, Yangon, Department of Archaeology 1982, pp. 236 (Hereafter cited as Nyein Maung, *Ancient stone Inscriptions of Myanmar*)

<sup>17</sup> Kaung, “A Survey of the History Education in Burma”, pp.11-12

- (1) New pupils were taught the prayer *Namo Buddhāya siddham* (We pay homage to the Holiest Buddha), Myanmar Primer, the Buddha's victory over the eight base desires<sup>18</sup>, the Buddha's eight victories<sup>19</sup>, *Ratanā Rhwekhyuin*<sup>20</sup>, *Namakkāra*<sup>21</sup>, monk's rules of conduct, *Sekhiya*, etc.
- (2) Having learnt Buddhism for one or two years, most of the children were motivated. The novices had to study homily such as *Lawkasāra* and *Lawkanīti*<sup>22</sup> and *Parittas*.<sup>23</sup>

At this stage, the novices whom the monk believed would leave the Order would be taught the subjects that would be useful for laypersons, such as 550 *Jātakas*, Ten Great *Jātakas*, *Abhidhammatthasaṅgraha*, literature on religion and culture, arithmetic for trade such as calculating weights, etc., rules of conduct to be followed by teachers, pupils, sons and daughter, masters, slaves and teachers, which were explained in the *Sīṅgālovāda-sutta*.<sup>24</sup>

If the monk thought a novice would remain in the Order as a monk, he would teach that novice to have a basic knowledge of the scriptures, *Pāli* grammar, and the four books of the *Vinaya*. So under the guidance of the Buddhist monks, the process of teaching and learning continued and the tasks for the spreading of the *Pitakas* was carried out widely and effectively and there were many monasteries which functioned as schools. After attaining his nineteenth year, the novice would receive *upasamadā* ordination and would continue to study the Buddhist scriptures as a monk. Having completed the regular curriculum, he could continue to learn Bengali, Sanskrit languages, etc. in a monastery in which the courses were offered. According to the inscriptions of the Bagan period, the languages which used in education were (1) *Pyu*

<sup>18</sup> The victories over external enemies by the Buddha, namely, 1. Mara, 2. Ogre Alavaka, 3. Elephant Nālāgiri, 4. Robber Aṅgulimāla, 5. Wicked woman Cincamāna, 6. Pribbājaka Saccaka, 7. Nāga Nandonpananda, 8. Brahma Baka ( Ashin, Ubāthā Bīvamsa, *Thutethana Thayokpya Abhidhan* ( *Research Illustrated Dictionary* ), Yangon, Ministry of Religious Affairs Press, 2002, p. 107)

<sup>19</sup> The eight victories over internal defilements by the Buddha. These are named so referring to eight paragraphs which cause success, *Ten Episodes of Buddha*, Yangon, Khin Cho Tun Press, 2000, p.41 (Hereafter cited as *Ten Episodes of Buddha* )

<sup>20</sup> Words to recite for protection after establishing Triple Gems and Parittas in the body (*Ten Episodes of Buddha*, p.45)

<sup>21</sup> This is written in *Pāli* and contains Attributes of the Buddha and words in worshipping the Buddha (*Ten Episodes of Buddha*, p.78)

<sup>22</sup> Maxims for a successful life.

<sup>23</sup> Eleven Holy Discourses of Protection.

<sup>24</sup> The Buddha preached this *sutta* to a youth named *Sīṅgāla*. ( Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, 12<sup>th</sup> Edition, London, PāliText Society, 1887, p. 143

(2) *Pali*, (3) *Sanskrit*, (4) *Mon* and (5) *Myanmar*, although *Myanmar* as a separate language emerged only later. But *Pālī* seemed to be compulsory for it is the language of the *Theravāda* Buddhism.<sup>25</sup>

The monks would also teach astrology, palmistry, medicine, trading, architecture, masonry, and other crafts such as how to split bamboo into thin stripes for weaving mats, how to make baskets, how to hew firewood, how to produce umbrellas, yokes, etc., how to tend and rear cattles, how to harvest, etc.<sup>26</sup>

In addition, the monks would teach how to attire oneself, how to behave, how to be polite to older persons and parents, and other customs. The monks would also train the students to become devout Buddhists. As monastic education was only for boys, girls had to learn from their parents and other relatives.<sup>27</sup> With regard to the method of learning, the prescribed lessons had to be learnt by rote.<sup>28</sup>

Writing materials used in the old days were:

Wood *Sañpun*: - A flat piece of soft wood blackened with charcoal and congee to be used for writing on.

Black *Parabuik* – Coarse paper made from paper mulberry pulp in the form of accordion folds and painted black.

Metal *Sañpun*:- A flat piece of metal blackened by covering it with crude oil and fumigating it with shavings of teak.

*Kankūcham* - a slate pencil.

*Kaloñtam*- a stylus made of bamboo, reed or feather.

*Mañ*- pigment made by mixing soot produced by burning teakwood with animal or fish bile to be mixed with water and used as ink.

*Pe* or palm leaf used for writing on with a stylus.

A *parabuik* may be written in gold or black ink with a stylus. Also used were lacquered brass tablets for writing on with gold. Engraving were also made on gold and silver plates<sup>29</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> *Hponedaw Gyi Thin Pyinyar Ye Thin Kya Ye Maw Gun (The Record of Monastic Education)*, Social Welfare Department, 1959, pp. 4-5 (Hereafter cited as *The Record of Monastic Education*)

<sup>26</sup> U Tei Kyi, *Kyaung Hsayar Abidhan (Dictionary of A Teacher)*, Yangon, Gandawun Press, 1968, p. 334 (Hereafter cited as Tei Kyi, *Dictionary of A Teacher*)

<sup>27</sup> Tei Kyi, *Dictionary of A Teacher.*, pp.336-337

<sup>28</sup> Than Htut, *History of Myanmar Monastic Education*, p.64

<sup>29</sup> *The Record of Monastic Education*, pp.32-33

Monastic schools produced monks well-versed in the three *piṭaka*. They were sent by the successive kings to all over the kingdom of Bagan for teaching the people, resulting in the development of education in early Myanmar.

Throughout the Bagan period, although *Vinaya*, *Abhidhamma*, *Sanskrit*, etc. were studied, the emphasis was the study of *Pāli* grammar, as it was essential in studying *Tipiṭaka*.<sup>30</sup> It is surprising that the people of Bagan laid stress to the study of *Pāli* grammar and not on Myanmar grammar. Bagan period may be called a period of *Pāli* grammar.<sup>31</sup>

During the reign of King Narapatisithu (1172-1210 AD), as the king supported learned monks with the four requisites and made them promote *pariyatti*, Buddhist literature developed. Although Myanmar language was reduced to writing before the reign of this king, Myanmar was not as commonly used in writing as *Pali*, *Mon* and *Pyu* language. It is said that King Kyaswa (1234-1250 AD), a grandson of Narapatisithu, was named Kyaswa “thorough (in English)” because his thorough knowledge in the scriptures. He was a devout Buddhist and well-versed in the scriptures. Princess Thanbyin, a daughter of King Kyaswa, also was well-versed in *tipiṭaka* and she taught the monks seven times a day.<sup>32</sup>

As the main subject taught during the Bagan period was Buddhism, *Pāli* became the medium of teaching.<sup>33</sup> The schools during the Bagan period were monastic schools, and the students were not classified into different grades as in modern schools. Each student was taught separately. Each pupil had to commit everything to memory by parroting the teacher’s words. The account of Ven. Disāprāmuk of Bagan period illustrates how one can know many texts and become a learned person if one learns piece by piece for a long time, even though you do not learn much at once, and that the Bagan period education was centered in subject, not in students.<sup>34</sup>

The works composed during the Bagan period are”

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<sup>30</sup> U Than Byan, *Padetharit Khit Oo Myanmar Naing Ngan Pyinnyar Ye Thamaing (History of Myanmar Education in Early Monarchical Period)*, Yangon, Yan Aye Press, 1972, p.27 (Hereafter cited as Than Byan, *History of Myanmar Education*)

<sup>31</sup> *Myanma Swe Sone Kyan (Encyclopedia of Myanmar)* Vol.10, Yangon, Sarpe Beikman Press, 1966, p.279

<sup>32</sup> Than Byan, *History of Myanmar Education*, pp.27-34

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, p.50

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 55-56

- (1) The *Kārikā* by Shin *Dhammasenāpati*
- (2) The *Saddanīti* by Shin *Aggavaṃsa*
- (3) The *Sāmpyaṅ Tikā* by Minister *Sāmpyaṅ*
- (4) The *Suttaniddesa* ( a grammar work), the *Saṅkhepavannanā* ( on *Abhīdhamma*) and *Vinnayagulhattahaa Dīpanī* (on *Vinaya*) by Shin *Chapada*
- (5) *Dhammavilāsa Dhammasat* by Ven. *Dhammavilāsa*
- (6) *Paramatthabindu and Saddabindu* by King *Kyaswa*
- (7) *Gambhīrattagantha* (a grammatical work) by U *Kyibwe*.<sup>35</sup>

From 1044 to 1287, the teachers in the monastic schools were monks, and with their advice, the king laid down the education instruction. Hence, the development of monastic education depended on the king's support and his abilities.<sup>36</sup>

The hundreds of ink inscriptions and the epigraphy furnished strong evidence that the standard of education was high in Bagan. The literature written by the ancient scholars of Bagan long before paper was used may be found in epigraphy, copper inscriptions, bell inscriptions, silver inscriptions, palm-leaf manuscripts, and *parabaik*.<sup>37</sup>

#### **4.8. Monastic Education in Pinya Period**

Following the death of King *Narathihapate* in 1287, the Bagan kingdom disintegrated. The Shan Myanmar kings succeeded in reuniting the country. Intellectuals and craftsmen came to Pinya, Sagaing and Innwa.<sup>38</sup> Although Buddhism continued to be professed, there appeared Mahāyana and Theravāda sects, Sinhalese Theravāda sect, *Araññvasī* monks (forest monks) and *Gāmasvāsī* monks (village dwelling monks).<sup>39</sup>

It is stated in the *Sāsanālaṅkāra Cātam*<sup>40</sup>: how the lawsuits concerning fields and lands donated for the support of monasteries made some monks who disapproved of monk's involving in secular matters founded new sects as follows:

<sup>35</sup>Than Htut, *History of Myanmar Monastic Education*, pp.40-43

<sup>36</sup>Than Htut, *History of Myanmar Monastic Education*, p.65

<sup>37</sup>Dr. Toe Hla, *Pinya, Innwa Myae Hma Ceti Pahto Myar* ( *Temples and Pagodas in Pinya and Innwa*), Yangon, Shwe Oo Press, p.18

<sup>38</sup>Than Htut, *History of Myanmar Monastic Education*, p. 66

<sup>39</sup>Ibid, p.68

<sup>40</sup>Mahā Dhamma Thangyan, *Sāsanā Linkāra Sādam* ( *Record of Sāsanālaṅkāra*), Yangon, Hantharwady Newspaper Press, 1897, pp.128-130

In 702 Myanmar Era, seven monasteries made of *Campaka*-wood at Pañ:Kyā: together with field were donated to seven Sayadaws. Disputes appeared on account of the taxes on those fields. Dissatisfied with the situation, Shin Sāsanadhara and Shin Parakkama two brothers left the *Campaka* monasteries and lived in solitude. From then on, the monks who were left behind near the towns and villages came to be known as *Gāmavasī* monks (village dwelling monks) while the monks who lived in solitude were referred as *Araññvasī* monks (forest monks).<sup>41</sup>

The monasteries in which village monks dwelt were called *Pwe Kyaung*. In the Pinya and Sagaing Periods, these *Pwe Kyaung* monks took the responsibility to educate the people. The subjects taught in those monastic schools, apart from religious literature, included vocational subjects and training in crafts.<sup>42</sup> It is stated in the *Mranmā Mañ: Upkhyuppuṃ Cātam:* that the subjects taught in these schools included texts on secular subjects such as astrology, fortune telling, medicine, massage, military strategy, martial arts, arts and crafts, etc..<sup>43</sup> The students studying in these *Pwe Kyaung* monasteries were princes, and sons of ministers and royal officials and the people from all walks of life.<sup>44</sup>

During the Pinya Period, although *Pālī* texts were still used, Myanmar language was used in teaching. Caturaṅgabala, a learned minister, in that period was well-versed in the *tipiṭaka*.<sup>45</sup> He wrote *Pālī* verses the *Pādanaksan* and the *Eighty Auspicious Signs*. He also compiled the *Hitopadesa Vatthu*, a *ṭikā* (sub-commentary) on the *Pālī* lexicographical work known as *Abhidhānappadīpikā*, and the *Lokanīti Nissaya* translations of *Pālī* works began to appear during the Pinya Period.<sup>46</sup>

Shin *Nāgita*, better known as Sudwinbyit Sayadaw, a well-known monk of the Pinya Period, wrote a grammatical entitled *Saddasāratthajālīni*.<sup>47</sup> As Myanmar

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<sup>41</sup> Than Htut, *History of Myanmar Monastic Education*, p. 69

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>43</sup> U Tin, *Myanmar Min Oak Chok Pon Sardam Hnit Bodaw Phaya Ei Yazathat Khaw Ameindaw Tan Gyi (Records of the Administration of Myanmar Kings and Royal Orders of King Bodaw Phaya's Yazathat)*, Vol. IV, Yangon, Culture Department, 1983, p. 193 (Hereafter cited as Tin, *Records of the Administration of Myanmar Kings*)

<sup>44</sup> Than Htut, *History of Myanmar Monastic Education*, p. 71

<sup>45</sup> Maung Thuta, *Sasodaw Mya Attupati (Biographies of Literates)*, First Edition, Yangon, Shumawa Press, 1962, p. 215 (Hereafter cited as Maung Thuta, *Biographies of Literates*)

<sup>46</sup> Than Byan, *History of Myanmar Education*, pp. 91-92

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, pp.96-97

education of this period was based on on Buddhist scriptures, the works were composed in *Pali*. The works belonging to the Pinya Period were:

- (1) The *Saddasāratthajālīnī* by Sudwinbyit Sayadaw
- (2) The *Saddasīlinī Aṭṭhakathā Yojanā*, *Sammohavinodanī Aṭṭhakathā Yojanā* and the *Pārājikan Aṭṭhakathā Yojanā* by Shin Sīriṃaṅgala
- (3) The *Kaccāyana*, the *Vācakopadesa* and its *ṭikā* by Shin Mahāvijitāvī
- (4) The *Jātakharakosa*, the *Saddā Nay Kyam* and their commentaries, the *Liṅgatthavicarana* and its *ṭikā* by Shin Saddhammakitti.<sup>48</sup>

Monastic education of Myanmar during the Pinya Period was offered free of charge. The students even received free food and accommodations. The monasteries were in turn supported by the king and the rich by donating land and slaves to monastic schools.

The account of Sudwinbyit Sayadaw and the Minister Caturaṅgabala engaged in discussion reflects on the methods of holding examinations. An examiner would put the students very hard questions, and the success of the student depended upon his ability to satisfy the examiner by hard discussion. Sudwinbyit Sayadaw was regarded as learned monk only because he could please and satisfy the minister. Therefore, the method of examinations in the Bagan and Pinya Period were the same.<sup>49</sup>

#### **4.9. Monastic Education in Innwa Period**

Expending from 1364 AD to 1551 AD, the Innwa Period lasted for about two centuries. Some historians divided Innwa Period into three sub-periods: First, Second and Thrid Innwa Periods. The First Innwa Period ended with the death of King Mingaung I in 1422 AD. In the reigns of the six kings of the Second Innwa Period, the kingdom was not as united and stable as during the First Period. The country was not stable during the reigns of the seven kings of the Third Period either.

However, King Mingaung II (1480-1500 AD) and Shwenankyawshin Narapati (1500-1525) were able kings. They supported education by favouring learned persons. The people in towns and villages still gave their support and sent sons to be educated in the monasteries which survived the political and administrative chaos.

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid,pp. 97-99

<sup>49</sup> Than Byan, *History of Myanmar Education*, pp.100-105

As U Than Oo stated in his book “Myanmar Education Thought”:

Through the successive dynasties (Bagan, Myin Saing, Pinya, Sagaing, Innwa, Hanthawady, Taungoo, Nyaung Yan and Konbaung) monasteries offered religious education in the form of *tipitaka* studies on *suttas*, *vinaya* and *abhidhamma*, as well as literature and “the arts” which included linguistic skills, academic disciplines, handicrafts, vocational skills, and military disciplines. Some of the *Pwe Kyaung* monasteries offered courses of such breadth and depth in so many areas that were in fact Myanmar Universities of old.<sup>50</sup>

Successive dynasties arose before Myanmar was again reunified and emerged as the Second Myanmar Empire. It was a period of political changes with one king usurping another with the rise and fall of dynasties of short duration. But it was a period when new forms of learning and literature emerged and flourished. U Than Htut in his “History of Monastic Education” said this unstable period alternating between peace and conflict led to demand for more skills and learning in the arts that would benefit more mundane goals rather than religious and spiritual goals and that this rate of affairs greatly influenced the more advanced type of learning of the Innwa Period. He also added that there arose a greater demand for education.<sup>51</sup>

Since ancient times, the Myanmar have placed a great value on education and the desire was fulfilled by the monastic education system. Thus it was that when Bayinnaung finally succeeded the throne and established the Second Myanmar Empire, Myanmar literature was well established and firm foundations had been laid for a system of monastic education that also included lay subjects.

Monastic education of Myanmar which began in the Bagan period was in bloom in the Innwa Period. Monastic schools mushroomed both in villages and towns in this period. Many outstanding men of learning and letters had emerged even before the Innwa Period. Most of them were Buddhist monks such as the Taung Philar Sayadaw, Kyaw Aung San Hta Sayadaw and Sayadaw U Bok. The treatise on moral and social conduct by Sayadaw U Bok became a prescribed book in monastic education. This learned treatise lays great emphasis on the need for education as the

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<sup>50</sup> U Than Oo, *Myanmar Education Thought*, Yangon, Pyinnyar Tazaung Press, 2002, p.7 ( Hereafter cited as Than Oo, *Myanmar Education Thought*)

<sup>51</sup> Than Htut, *History of Myanmar Monastic Education*, p. 88

foundation on which a person must build his life. To quote one of the stanzas of this treatise in translation as follow:

In this world, if one gains no knowledge in the first stage in life, gain no wealth in the second stage, gain no understanding of the law in the third stage. Then when one reaches the fourth stage, one faces naught but futility.<sup>52</sup>

This verse shows that it is part of monastic education to encourage the search both for knowledge and wealth but the ultimate goal is nevertheless understanding of the *Dhamma* that will open to Liberation.

In another verse, it says:

How can there be proficiency for  
One who is indolent,  
Friendship with wealth,  
Happiness for the friendless,  
Merit for the unhappy and *Nibban*  
For the unmeritorious person.<sup>53</sup>

Another well-known Sayadaw of the Innwa Period is the Kandaw Min Kyaung Sayadaw who compiled the *Lokathara Pyo*; that is moral admonitions in verse. The writer, Myanmar Education Thought by U Than Oo quoted as follow:

For longevity for good health  
For welfare  
Parents and teachers admonish  
Day to day  
Listen to them and learn the books  
Avoid bragging and imitate the virtuous  
Let virtue live in you<sup>54</sup>

Taungphila Sayadaw also exhorts parents and teachers to see that their changes make every effort to obtain knowledge both for spiritual and moral welfare from classical *Pāli* texts. It was said that they should also be skilled in horsemanship and archery, wrestling, astrology which are included in the eighteen disciplines

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<sup>52</sup> Mr. James Gray, *Lokaniti*, London, Trubner Co., 1886, p. 2 (Hereafter cited as Gray, *Lokaniti*)

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, p. 3

<sup>54</sup> *Myanmar Education Thought*, p. 17

mentioned earlier. He also mentions that learning to add and subtract and make arithmetical calculations of figures large and small is necessary if they are to prosper in mundane life.<sup>55</sup>

This monastic education was available in cities, towns as well as village. There is the classic examples of a rural youth Maung Nyo who obtained his education in a village monastic school but who through his intelligence and diligence became a learned scholar and was later raised to the rank of minister in the king's court. Minister Pho Raza as he came to be known as a man of wisdom. One of the outstanding figures in Myanmar literature Shin Mahā Sīlavumsa, a contemporary of the equally famous Shin Mahā Ratṭhasara, was also an alumni of a rural monastery, and not of any of the greater monastic learning centers of the capital city.<sup>56</sup> This illustrates the fact that monastic education was widespread throughout the country and opened to all, rich or poor. It can thus be said that by the time of the Innwa period the Myanmar monastic system had not only put down roots but had reached maturity.

It would be necessary at this point to raise the question of whether women and girls had equal opportunities for learning. This must be answered in the negative since girls were not allowed to attend monastic schools with the boys as in the *Pyu* Era. Yet there have been outstanding women writers such as Mi Nyo, Mi Phyu during the reign of King Mingaung II and Yawei Shin Htwe of King Tha Lun's reign (1629-1648 AD). She is said to have composed a lyric on the Fifty-Five Ways of Knotting the Hair of the Bagan Era as well some other verses. One possible explanation is that these women may have belonged to royalty or to the family of ministers and courtiers for whom special arrangements had been made to enable them to learn to read and write.<sup>57</sup>

The method of teaching in the Innwa Era may have been traditional, mainly using learning by rote as a method but there is no doubt that the quality of education was high for it produced wise and learned men and monks of great learning and moral probity such as minister Hpo Raza and Shin Mahā Sīlavumsa. It can be said that teaching methods had improved greatly. *Pāli* canonical texts were as simple as possible and expositions were also written in both languages. Moreover, the teachers

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<sup>55</sup> Than Htut, *History of Myanmar Monastic Education*, p. 79

<sup>56</sup> Maung Thuta, *Biographies of Literates*, p.250

<sup>57</sup> Than Byan, *History of Myanmar Education*, p. 118

themselves from years of experiences had gained maturity and had begun to realize that learning by rote without understanding the meaning of the text was not fully beneficial ; that the meaning of a certain text or passage had to be explained and clarified from different aspects for full understanding. This was the view of the Venerable Shin Ariya Vumsa. The Venerable monk emphasized the fact that knowledge required thought and reflection.<sup>58</sup>

The next educationist of note of the Innwa is Shin Mahā Sīlavumsa. He was a famous writer of both prose and poetry and his *Parayana* Story contains the essence of his views on knowledge which are based on the Buddha's teaching. The term *Parayana* comes from *Para* – the opposite bank and *yana* – the way towards the opposite bank that is *Nibbana*. It concerns the way to *Nibbana* and the central figures are the Buddha and *Alavaka*, an ogre who is angry with the Buddha for trespassing his territory and is therefore threatening to harm Him unless the Enlightened One can give satisfactory answers to five questions he wished to raise. The essential theme of the story is that the Buddha's answers the ogre's questions satisfactorily by clarifying the Four Noble Truths. The ogre comes to understand the *Dhamma* and give up his evil ways. This is the gist of the story but there is one passage which gives in brief the Buddha's answer to one of the five questions concerning knowledge raised by *Alavaka*: To quote the dialogue in its English translation, *Alavaka* asks:

What is the method by which knowledge is obtained and the Buddha replies:

Listen (to what is taught) in good faith

Listen with great care

Memorize what you have heard

Reason and reflect on what you have memorized

To know the right meaning.<sup>59</sup>

This short dialogue in the story gives a clear and concise view of the relation between teaching and learning, and that it requires much more than learning words by heart. In other words, learning requires (1) faith, (2) concentration, (3) memorization, (4) reason and reflection. Translated into modern terms, it means one begins with certain

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid, p. 127

<sup>59</sup> Dr. Sein Tu, *Lokaniti; The Guide to Life*, Yangon, Innwa Publishing House, 2001, p. 41 (Hereafter cited as Sein Tu, *Lokaniti*)

beliefs or assumptions which the teacher introduces, and which the learners must try to follow and understand through concentration. Having understood he or she must then memorize it. Finally,

one must reflect and reason on what one has memorized and learnt. The implication is obvious-that is one must also use one's reason to differentiate between right and wrong or good and bad. The monastic education system thus makes allowance for reasoning. Although the principal method is learning by rote, knowledge is not based on blind faith.

Another characteristic feature of monastic education system in the Innwa Period is that it is founded upon moral education as it was in the Bagan Period. No matter how clever a person is, his cleverness does not constitute wisdom unless he is moral.

That is why it is said in the *Lokaniti*:

Go, only with the good man  
Keep the company of good men.  
To know the principle of good men  
Ever enables, never demeans.<sup>60</sup>

This is the very first admonition of the *Mangala Sutta* preached by the Buddha. *Caturangabla* has put it in simple words for the benefit of many. He says in another verse:

As the bee seeks the fragrant blossom,  
So the good man seeks virtue.  
As the fly seeks the purifying object,  
So the exits man seeks wickedness.<sup>61</sup>

Shin Mahā Silavumsa however was more concerned with moral and spiritual welfare. The goal of monastic education was to guide a person through the perils of daily life to ultimately achieve liberation. His written homili consists of exhortations for this life as well as for the ultimate goal. He places great value on education and thus urges diligence in learning adding that without knowledge and wisdom one will remain in a

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<sup>60</sup> Sein Tu, *Lokaniti*, p. 51

<sup>61</sup> Ibid

lowly status and that learning bestows dignity. Yet, he also warns against verbal and physical misconduct and advocates respect for elders, mutual help and compassion when others are in need as in times of illness. This shows that moral education has always played an essential role in monastic education. The Innwa Period is noteworthy for it is in this stage that monastic education emerges as a system with both form and content. Method of teaching and learning had also become more definable. This is clearly seen in the views of Shin Mahā *Raṭṭhasara*, a contemporary of Shin Mahā Sīlavumsa.

The outstanding figure both in the field of literature and education was Shin Mahā *Raṭṭhasara*, a contemporary of Shin Mahā Sīlavumsa. In fact their names invariably go together for the mention of one leads to that of the other. It can be said that monastic education in Myanmar became more systematic and organized due to the efforts of these two learned monks. As said earlier, knowledge and education had traditionally been valued in Myanmar since the *Pyu* Era but it was only in the Innwa Period that the goals, methods, and underlying philosophy of monastic education emerged systematically; and a study of Shin Mahā *Raṭṭhasara*'s theories on education bear evidence of this.

Shin Mahā Sīlavumsa had urged that diligence and concentration were vital in studying not only the Buddhist Canons but also the literature, history, chronicles, poetry and verses that had been written by, learned men of the past. He had emphasized the importance of memorizing, but the learning method laid down by Shin Mahā *Raṭṭhasara* was more detailed and comprehensive. His methodology for learning given in mnemonic form is still referred to in lay education to this day. The mnemonic is as follows:

The mnemonic verse ‘ **Su, Ci, Pu, Ba, Vi, Li, Si, Da**’ is formed from the first syllables of eight *Pāli* words that are guidelines for gaining knowledge. They are as follows:

- |                                |                           |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Su</b> for <i>Suneya</i>    | - to listen               |
| <b>Ci</b> for <i>Cineya</i>    | - to think and reflect    |
| <b>Pu</b> for <i>Puccheyya</i> | - to inquire and question |
| <b>Ba</b> for <i>Baseyya</i>   | - to discuss              |

<b>Vi</b> for <i>Vicereya</i>	- to examine and investigate
<b>Li</b> for <i>Likheya</i>	- to take notes
<b>Si</b> for <i>Sikkeya</i>	- to put into practice
<b>Da</b> for <i>Dareya</i>	- to memorize <sup>62</sup>

As educationist U Than Oo said:

Thus even in those days, Shin Mahā *Raṭṭhasara* had a clear insight into the learning process and devised guidelines for proper study.<sup>63</sup>

These are the eight principles of learning that have been an essential part of the learning process not only for Myanmar monastic education but for education in general. It can be said that these constitute part of the foundations of scientific inquiry. In today's world, science and technology has made such vast progress that it has given us knowledge of outer space and of the inner world of the human genome. But it must be acknowledged that such knowledge is based upon what has been learned and discovered by our human ancestors; that at some point of time, persons with sharp intellect and great foresight must have seriously thought about the best method by which knowledge could be gained, stored and improved upon. There must have been many such individuals in the ancient world who, like Shin Mahā *Raṭṭhasara* laid down guidelines for learning. This is not to claim that Shin Mahā *Raṭṭhasara* was the first to discover these principles of learning. But he was certainly one of the foremost in Myanmar to put forward a methodological system of learning.

Form a philosophical point of view he has given an answer to the crucial question- How do we obtain knowledge? Shin Mahā *Raṭṭhasara* is not interested in metaphysical questions concerning the source or origin of knowledge. He does not get involved in metaphysical problems of whether reason or experience is the source of knowledge. He is more pragmatic. He is concerned more with the questions of how to learn, to attain wisdom and live a good life.

Both Shin Mahā *Sīlavumsa* and Shin Mahā *Raṭṭhasara* were concerned not only with knowledge for the sake of knowledge. They did not lose sight of the fact

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<sup>62</sup> Maung Thuta, *Biographies of Literates*, p.47

<sup>63</sup> Than Oo, *Myanmar Education Thought*, p. 41

that discipline and self-control were important not only for the religious life but in daily mundane life as well. A person who has self-control will not give in to greed, anger and delusion. He or she will not be slothful and lazy. One who is full of loth will fail to do his or her duties.<sup>64</sup>

The Buddha's teaching, they both believed will endure only as long as the monk who keep it alive live strictly in accordance with the *Vinaya* . So it was that young novice monks were taught to have discipline and to maintain good relations among them. "Monks and novice who are like brothers are admirable" was one such motto and specific rules concerning both morals and manners were laid down for monastic schools. These rules included table manners, how to wear one's robes and how to behave at all times, whether sitting, walking or sleeping.

The goal of monastic education was (a) how to pay homage to the Buddha, *Dhamma*, *Sangha*, parents and teachers, (b) to be of good moral character and (c) to control ones actions, mental, verbal and physical, (d) to gain knowledge pertaining both to life in this world and to liberation from the cycle of birth and rebirth. Thus, the monastic education in the Innwa Period became more systematic and saw the flowering of Myanmar language and literature.

#### **4.10. Monastic Education in Taungoo Period**

Hanthawady (Bago) became the royal seat from King Tabinshwehti's reign onwards, and became Myanmar's administrative, political and economic center as well as the center of culture and education. The learned monks from Innwa, Taungoo etc. moved to Hanthawady, where education was gradually flourished.

In accordance with tradition, King Bayintnaung based on Buddhism, endeavoured to promote national education. He made the monks in his kingdom to receive re-ordination. Then, he built monasteries all over the country and donated them to the monks for teaching scriptures.<sup>65</sup>

As in the Bagan, Pinya and Innwa Periods, the education system during the Taungoo Period was free monastic education. *Pāli* was the medium of teaching and

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<sup>64</sup> Than Oo, *Myanmar Education Thought*, p. 42

<sup>65</sup> Than Byan, *History of Myanmar Education*, p. 127

the Buddhist scriptures were the main subjects taught in the schools. It is reflected in contemporary literature that depending on the monks' interest, the pupil could study the texts on law, history, medicine, astrology, poetry, Myanmar and Mon literatures, etc. in some monasteries.<sup>66</sup>

King Bayintnaung supported the education by favouring all learned persons regardless of their races. For instance, Banyadal, a learned Mon, was appointed as a minister. Even though Banyadala was a Mon, apart from Mon and *Pāli*, he knew Myanmar language very well. He translated the famous historical narrative of the campaigns of King Rājādirit, *Rājādirit Are:taupum* into Myanmar. There was a learned minister Mahāpaññkyaw, the governor of Chittagaung, during the reign of King Min Rājāgri: of Rakhine. He wrote a law text known as *Mahāpaññkyaw Lhyokthum*: (The Presentations of Mahāpaññkyaw to the king). He was educated in a monastic school and had learnt Myanmar and *Pālilanguages* and Buddhist scriptures before studying laws in which he was interested.<sup>67</sup>

A significant feature of the Taungoo Period was that there were many lay scholars. Famous authors like Banaydala and Mahāpaññkyaw were Natshinaung (Prince of Taungoo Governor and famous *Ratu* poem composer), Shin Than Kho, Yawe Shin Htwe, Hlawga Thone Htaung Hmu, Nawade Gyi of Pyay etc. As most of the works written during this period were *ratu*, *egyin* and *aingyin*, this period is known as a period of *ratu* and *egyin*.<sup>68</sup>

The monks in monastic education during the Taungoo Period not only taught religious scriptures in *Pāli*, but also the Myanmar, Mon, Shan and Yunn literature. Secular subjects such as history and law were also taught in some monastic schools. However, there was no common curriculum for all monastic schools in the country. Only after completing the normal courses, Myanmar, Mon, Shan or Yunn languages were taught; this was allowed by scriptural texts such as *Miṅgala Sutta*, *Paritta*, *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* and *Pāligrammar*. Only then, it seems, students turn to the works that were of great interest of them, such as *Dhammasat Laṅkā*, *Aloṅ:caṅsū Phratthum*., *Manūddhammasat Akyay*, etc. The learned men probably took advice from

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<sup>66</sup> Than Byan, *History of Myanmar Education*, pp.144-146

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, pp.147-150

<sup>68</sup> Than Htut, *History of Myanmar Monastic Education*, pp. 85-86

the Sayadaws when they found difficulty in studying a subject. Thus, a learned person needed to know a wide range of subjects.

It can be concluded from the *ratu* and *egyin* written during the Taungoo Period that Myanmar language, and Buddhist scriptures in *Pāli* were not the only subjects taught in monastic schools. In addition to these, history, poetry, martial arts as well as horsemanship, rowing, etc. were probably taught. It can be assumed that monastic education of Innwa and Taungoo Periods was an education system that provided knowledge and skills essential for the monarchical administration.<sup>69</sup>

#### 4.11. Nyaung Yan Period

During the reign of King Nyaung Yan, large monasteries were built at Innwa, where monastic education was highly supported. Hence, many learned persons, skilled in both religious and secular matters, appeared during this period.

The *Lehtat Kyaung* (Four-storied Monastery), which could be called the University of Innwa, was the largest educational institution. When Shin Tarup, a usurper, staged a coup, the abbot of this monastery ordered his assistant, the abbot of Sangyaung to protect the king. The abbot of Sangyang arranged to protect the king with more than a thousand monks, all armed. Therefore, the abbot of Sangyaung monastery seemed to have been a monk who emphasized in teaching martial arts.<sup>70</sup>

King Thalun, who was the donor of *Rājamañicūla Cetī* close to the west of Sagaing, constructed four monasteries on the four side of the stupa, and donated them to learned monks for teaching scriptural texts. The abbot southern monastery and that of the western monastery composed *Saddā Rhac Coṅ Nissaya* and *Vigruih Vacanattha Arakok* together with the work *Ñāsa* respectively. Their works clearly points to the fact that the medium of teaching was, as during the Bagan, Pinya, Innwa and Taungoo Periods, *Pāli*.<sup>71</sup>

Well-known learned monks and laypersons of the Nyaung Yan Period were: Taunghpila Sayadaw, Shwe Umin Sayadaw of Pakangyi, Taung-nan Kyaung

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<sup>69</sup> Than Byan, *History of Myanmar Education*, pp.150-154

<sup>70</sup> Than Byan, *History of Myanmar Education*, pp.180-184

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*, pp.188-189

Sayadaw of Innwa, Shin Agga Dhammāṅkāra, the abbot of Myauk-nan Kyaung, U Kala, Minister Padesarājā, and Khingyi Hpyaw, the Atula Sayadaw. The works written by these Sayadaws and the learned persons indicate how monastic education had developed by the Nyaung Yan Period, what the curriculum was, and what the methods of teaching were.<sup>72</sup>

With regards to the literature courses offered by the monastic schools, U Tun Pe states:

The two mothers, Shin Mahā Sīlavumsa and Shin Uttama Kyaw, entrusted them to the care of the Natmhi: Sayadaw at Hngetpuittaung. Taungdwingyi, Shin Mahā Sīlavumsa, having learnt by rote the Myanmar Primer, the *Miṅgala Sutta*, *Namakkāra*, *Ratanāshwekyuiṅ*, Eight Victories (of the Buddha), *Paritta*, Ten Great Jatakas, the 550 Jatakas, was novitiated when he came of age. Then, he learnt the books such as Kaccāyana on grammar. *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, etc. and canonical texts, commentaries, and minor *Pāli* works. When he was 19 years old, he received *bhikkhu* ordination.<sup>73</sup>

#### **4.12. Monastic Education in the Konbaung Period**

The monastic education of the Konbaung Era, as in the previous eras, was firmly founded on propagating the Teachings of the Buddha. Monarchs were traditionally known as “*Sasana Dhayaka*” that is Patron of the Buddhist religion. It was their duty to ensure that *Piṭaka* texts together with learned monks were present in all corners of the country for the propagation of Buddhism. The presence of monks country wide meant that there were monasteries everywhere –in every villages and every towns large and small. Buddhist monks, residents in these monasteries created to the religious and social needs of the people. It was part of their duties to educate sons who as part of Buddhist tradition enter monkhood as novices to learn the tenets

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<sup>72</sup> Than Byan, *History of Myanmar Education*, p. 209

<sup>73</sup> U Tun Pe, *Myanmar Sar Niddham (Introduction to Myanmar Language)*, Yangon, Pyinnyar Alin Press, 1955, p.145

of Buddhist. But as has been mentioned earlier this religious education was expanded over the years to teach other vocational subjects.

Whether these novices returned to lay life or be ordained as monks on reaching the age of eighteen, they could still continue their education in the monasteries to become learned monks or men of letters who could take up service in the court as per their wish. This remained the system of monastic education. But by the time of the Konbaung Dynasty many changes had taken place and great strides made in the system of monastic education.

As in modern times, parents sent their sons to the monastic schools to learn to read and write at the age of five. The basic goal was for them to grow up as morally upright individuals in society and to instill in them the basic tenets of Buddhism.

Once a child had grasped the fundamentals of reading and writing they entered the monastery as novice monks to continue their studies. Then on reaching the age of eighteen they were usually ordained as monks to continue higher studies. Then those who chose to return to lay life could also continue their studies. Some of these students were provided board and lodging free of charge in return for which they undertook a few chores for the monks in the monastery.

According to the “Thar Shwe Taung” homily the main syllabus after primary education consisted of :

1. The *Mangala Sutta*
2. The Ten Final *Jatakas*
3. The Eight-Volume *Pāli* grammar
4. The Seven *Abhidhamma* Texts
5. The Five Texts on *Vinaya* (Rules).<sup>74</sup>

In addition, they were taught poetry and composition, medicine, *Dhammathat* (Law) astrology and history.

As stated earlier, the secondary aim of monastic education was to train and educate an individual to lead a good and wholesome life and be a useful member in

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<sup>74</sup> Dr. Toe Hla, *Konbaung Shwe Pyi* (*Konbaung the Golden Land*), Yangon, Sarpe Lawka Press, 1989, pp. 196-200 (Hereafter cited as Toe Hla, *Konbaung the Golden Land*)

lay society. The *Mangala Sutta* and the Ten Final *Jatakas* concerning the last ten reincarnations as a human of the Buddha-to-be were taught with the aim in view. The students were taught about forbearance, courage, diligence, wisdom, generosity, renunciation or sacrifice, moral purity, final piety and above all that knowledge and wisdom are priceless treasures who no one robs and that only the wise not only prosper in this life but also achieve *Nibbana*.

From the Western Philosophic point of view it can be said that Myanmar monastic education accepts that “Knowledge is virtue”. The “Thar Shwe U” (Son like a golden egg) homily of the Konbaung Period says:

Without knowledge, a person is unwholesome and of ill-repute; has to do hard labour as a galley slave for a living. But he who is learned in the arts and science will be rich and be able to easily seek his future easily ....<sup>75</sup>

The *Mingala Sutta* and the *Ten Jatakas* also instill discipline and obedience to one's elders and betters. It also paves the ways for service in the royal court.

In the early part of the Konbaung Period, there were many monasteries of different Buddhist sects under different names, such as the “Ton Taw Kyaung” (Monastic School) the *Pwe Kyaung* and “*Gama Vasi Kyaung*”. But usually the two main divisions were the *Taw Kyaung* (*Arañña Vasi*) and “*Ywa* (Village) *Kyaung* (*Gama Vasi*) the village school. The *Taw Kyaung* school was for training principally in *vippassana* meditation. It was the *Gama Vasi Kyaung* (Village School) that provide monastic education.

The *Gama Vasi* Schools are again of three kinds.

1. Those that gave priority to religious education
2. Those that provided education for both the religious life and lay life and
3. Those that gave priority to education for mundane life.<sup>76</sup>

There were many monastic schools belonging to categories of First and Second but very few of the Third type. But this Third type of *Gama Vasi Pwe Kyaung*

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid, p. 197

<sup>76</sup> Toe Hla, *Konbaung the Golden Land*, p.198

needs special mention for it contributed much towards progress in vocational training. The *Per Kyaung* syllabus included a course in elementary *Pāli* texts but concentrated mostly on training in medicine, nutrition, astronomy, astrology, military strategy, and methods of massage. Other subjects included dance, music, art, painting, sculpture, carving and martial arts such as boxing, wrestling, dueling with swords, spear and staves. It is said that competitions were held in boxing and dueling between laymen and monk novices, and in one competition eleven novices won with only three suffering defeat during the reign of King Bodawphaya. These novices were said to be students of *Pwe Kyaung*.<sup>77</sup>

Historian and Professor of History Department Dr. Toe Hle mentions in his book on the Konbaung Period that evidence concerning the *Pwe Kyaung* is scant, but he also says that such schools were closed down and banned once in the reign of King Bodawphaya and in the reign of King Mindon because they were thought to be exerting influence detrimental to the purity of religion and to political stability. These statements therefore indicate that such *Pwe Kyaung* did exist though detail about them are lacking.<sup>78</sup>

#### **4.14 Significance of Monastic Education in the Konbaung Period**

The venerable monks of the Konbaung Period noted for their learning and contributions made to Myanmar education were:

Kyee Gan Shin Gyi  
Shin Okkantha Marlar  
U Awabatha  
Shin Nanda Meda  
Shin Pyinnya Teikka  
Sint Par Sayadaw  
Mon Ywe Sayadaw  
Kyaw Aung San Htar Sayadaw the Second  
Maung Htaung Sayadaw

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<sup>77</sup> Toe Hla, *Konbaung the Golden Land*, p.199

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*, p. 199

Bagaya Sayadaw  
Mya Taung Sayadaw  
Man Le Sayadaw  
Ledi Sayadaw  
Ledi Sayadaw  
Thingaza Sayadaw  
Taungtwin Sayadaw  
Nyaunggan Sayadaw and  
Atula Sayadaw Khin Gyi Phyaw.<sup>79</sup>

There can be no doubt that these learned monks strengthened and propagated *Theravāda* Buddhism through their writing, but the training and education, they provided also enhanced the monastic schools over which they presided, and the monastic education system as a whole.

For example, the venerable Kye Gan Shin Gyi (1757 -1813 AD) homilies written for the benefit of harmonious social relations have been prescribed as a school text up to modern times. His homilies in proverbs form are also famous. In these homilies, he has much to say about knowledge and the essential qualities of teachers and students. He stated that one should regard knowledge as a guiding light, morality as fragrance, diligence a golden cave, integrity is like Mount Meru but that pride is the ground (to be walked on); that one should cultivate morality and to lower one's pride in the search for knowledge; but that diligence is essential for achieving morality.<sup>80</sup>

With regard to the qualities of a good teacher, Kye Gan Shin Gyi says that he must be learned in the *Pāli* canon, grammar, spelling, pronunciation and semantics. In other words, a teacher needs to be learned and clever. With regard to students, his advice is to be humble and pleasant; to be diligent and obedient and to learn well what is taught.<sup>81</sup>

Shin Okkantha Marlar ( circa. 1778-1838 AD) compiled an orthography known as "*Wunna Bhodhna that Inn*". Myanmar language and literature had reached

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<sup>79</sup> Than Htut, *History of Myanmar Monastic Education*, p, 198

<sup>80</sup> Maung Thuta, *Biographies of Literates*, pp.294-296

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid*, p. 296

maturity but there was an ongoing debate as to the spelling and meaning of Myanmar terms. Shin Okkantha's treatise was an attempt to regularize the spelling of Myanmar words and thus avoid confusion. This contributed to the teaching of the Myanmar language.<sup>82</sup>

Another monk teacher scholar of note is the Sint Par Sayadaw ( circa. 17788-1838 AD) who wrote a book of maxims important for education and social relations known as "*Dhamma Niti Cho*". One of the maxims which is still in use today is one form or another states that:

Knowledge is something which no thief can steal; that in the  
mundane world earth cannot compare with knowledge and virtue.<sup>83</sup>

It must also be noted that this time the number of educated among laymen had increased and many entered royal service as ministers, secretaries, members of the King's council, and teachers of royalty. They were all products of the monastic education system. The monastic education system also produced a large number of authors, historians and poets, and there were a number of women who were distinguished poets and writers. The emergence of educated women was probably due of the fact that teachers summoned to royal circles to teach boys often taught daughters of royalty as well as members of court circles. Among the women were Mei Khwey, Ma Mya lay (a queen) and Crown Princess Hlaung Htaik Khaung Tin.<sup>84</sup> According to research done by Luce and Than Tun, there is inscriptional evidence to show that there were bhikkhunis as well as bhikkhus in Pagan. Daw Mi Mi Khaing says that one bhikkhuni (rahan-ma, or female monk) was even a bishop!<sup>85</sup>

By the time of the Konbaung Period, lay people came to outnumber monks in the world of literature. Among these, U Aw and *Letwe* Sundra need to be mentioned for their contributions towards monastic education. U Aw was the author of a learned text under the title "*Kawi Lekhanā Thatpoñ Thanpauk*", devoted not only to orthography as its name implies, but also includes ancient folklores, history, prosody, grammar and *Pāli* verse compositions.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid, p. 342

<sup>83</sup> Than Htut, *History of Myanmar Monastic Education*, p. 105

<sup>84</sup> Maung Thuta, *Biographies of Literates*, p.358, 387, 440

<sup>85</sup> <http://www.bhikkhuni.net/buddhist-nuns-in-burma/> last accessed on 3/9/2019

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, p.241

He was also the author of a special book of homilies written in verse form detailing do's and don'ts concerning social and moral conduct. It includes table manners and clothing etiquette; relations between teachers and pupils; to control one's anger; exhortations to be diligent and even includes a section on proper conduct for the king and ministers. Letwn Sundra, a minister during King Hsin Phyu Shin's reign was another notable literary figure. He had the misfortune to be deported to Meza due to a royal misunderstanding. His lyrical verse expressing his loneliness and longing for his family, relatives, friends and the royal city of Innwa known as "*Meza Taungche* (At the foot of Meza Hill)" was prescribed as a text book in monastic schools it is because of a literary classic.<sup>87</sup>

However, the monks were the principal teachers, administrators and disciplinarians of the monastic schools. They were the ones who supervised the education and moral education of the pupils. Their main goal was to inspire their charges with the religious spirit so that following the Buddha's Way they would ultimately achieve liberation. But in the being their secondary goal was to give all-round training so that their pupils would become educated men as well as moral and upright citizens. But it cannot be emphasized enough that the monks were the sole educationists in ancient Myanmar. They were educationists in the literal sense and the work of Atula Sayadaw Khin Gyi Phyaw provides further evidence.

The homilies titled "*Puttaw-vada-Hsonmasar*" by Atula Sayadaw Khin Gyi Phyaw is of immense importance for this one book can be found necessary evidence that Myanmar monastic schools have all the essential features of an advanced system of education. Sections 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 and 24 are especially relevant for they furnish detail about the syllabus in use in monastic schools.<sup>88</sup>

Section 18 provides prescriptions for elementary writing practice for young beginners. It contains instructions on how to hold the stylus for writing; how to position the fourth finger, the forefinger and the thumb and when to press or lift the stylus as necessary. This is the first exercise in transcription for legibility and neatness in hand writing. Section 19 gives primary lessons in reading and writing. The pupils

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid, p. 251

<sup>88</sup> Nann Nyunt Swe, *Hanthawady Hsonma Sa Paung Choke* ( *Hanthawady Homilies Compendium* ),  
Hanthawady Press, 1960 (Hereafter cited as Nann Nyunt Swe, *Hanthawady Homilies Compendium*),  
p. 138

are taught proper pronunciation and to write the alphabets systematically. The Myanmar script is a rounded script and there are rules that must be followed to this day as for example to begin and proceed from left to write or from lower to upper in forming the letters.<sup>89</sup>

Section 20 prescribes the elementary reader known as *Thinpon Gyi*, this primary reader was in use right up to the colonial and post-independence period. Having mastered the primary reader, the pupils go on to learn and memorize the first thirteen stanzas of the *Mingala Sutta*, which is a Buddhist sermon that comprehensively prescribes social, moral and religious rules of the conduct. The pupils learn the verses in *Pāli* as well as the Myanmar translation. Once a pupil has learned all 38 stanzas of *Mingala Sutta*, he or she has become fully literate.<sup>90</sup>

Section 21 prescribes the final 10 *Jātaka* Tales beginning from the *Temī Jātaka* and ending with the *Vessantara Jataka*. The final ten *Jātakas* are stories of how the Buddha-to-be fulfills the Ten *Paramis* that is the highest virtues such as forbearance, renunciation, courage, filial piety, wisdom generosity and so forth. This the *Jātakas* instill both knowledge and morality in the student. Section 22 prescribes a course in *Pāli* Grammar and qualified in this course, the student has reached a higher education level. He is now ready to study the *Tipitakas* as well as the principles of prose and verse composition. Once he has mastered this level he has become a highly qualified scholar in *Pāli* as well as Myanmar language and literature. What is significant about Section 24 is that we come to realize that mathematics was also part of the curriculum in monastic education.<sup>91</sup>

As U Than Htut stated in his history of Myanmar Monastic Education, the principal economy of the country is agriculture. So it is important for monastic schools to impart knowledge about methods of planting, growing and ploughing and mathematical knowledge grew out this vocation. One had to learn for example how to measure plot of land and this knowledge had been handed down through generations. But by the Konbaung period, it had become an important subject in its own right. Mathematical terms for measuring land such as ‘*tar*’ came into use. Such terms were used by *Shin Maha Rahṭhasara* of the Innwa Period. He used the terms

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<sup>89</sup> Nann Nyunt Swe, *Hanthawady Homilies Compendium*, 139

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid*, p. 140

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid*, p, 141

“*Letthit, Taung, tar*” in one of his well-known homilies. He used the finger-length of an average male, ‘*taung*’ means the length of two hand-spans and ‘*tar*’ means ‘*taung x 7*’ times. These terms however had been in use since the Bagan Period. The “*Puttaw-vada-Hsonmasar*” provides concrete evidence that mathematics was part of the syllabus of monastic education.

This was the situation of Myanmar monastic education in the Konbaung period. As the British had annexed Rakhine and Tanintharyi in 1824 by waging the First Anglo-Burmese War and the whole of Lower Myanmar including Bago Province in the Second Anglo-Burmese War in 1852 onwards, monastic education in Lower Myanmar (British Burma) began to decline, and colonial education was introduced. Missionary schools were opened by the colonial administration were forcing out the monastic schools.<sup>92</sup>

#### **4.15. Summary**

The monastic school education has been found to be successively involved in every period of the country. Education plays an important role in the development of a country. In every sector of the country, such as health, economy, military and national defense, the art and knowledge for these sectors must be at the topmost. Continuous analytical study and updated observation on these sectors should be made and also must be upgraded in accordance with the changing time and situation. The present era is an era of rapid developments and as the techniques are developing too rapidly that today’s now technique would become obsolete in the very next day.

It is quite the same in the Education Sector also “New man and techniques are innovated based on the old ones”(Innovation of new means and techniques are based on the old ones). Nowadays more advanced and developed subjects and techniques are materializing in the education sector that we should not lose in touch with these developments. Monastic education also is not an exception. Only when the persons involved in this sector have awareness updated information about the modern educational techniques and their developments, the monastic school education could be sustained and well established.

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<sup>92</sup> Than Htut, *History of Myanmar Monastic Education*, p. 137

Bagan Era is the most important era in the history of Myanmar. Economy, social and religion (Buddhism) flourished brilliantly in this era. Due to the untiring efforts of King Anawrahta, Buddhism (Theravāda Buddhism) became the religion of the entire country.

The art of writing in Myanmar language also started in the Bagan Era. But with reference to the Stone Inscriptions, it can be said that it was first in the initial stage in the invention of the art of writing in Myanmar language. Pāli language is the basic foundation for the development of Myanmar language.

During the Pinya period, those appeared Pwe Kyaung Gaing (Village monastery sect) which not only teach lessons to the people but also trained them in martial arts. The monks from this sect became popular among the people that some of them even became the Sangharaja (Head of the Sangha) honored by the rulers. However, this Pwe Kyaung Gaing lost its reputation and was abolished by the King's order during the reign of King Badon in the Konbaung era. Sutwinpyit Sayadaw and the Caturangabala minister were the renowned scholars during the Pinya period.

During the Innwa period, Myanmar literature and culture flourished brilliantly. King Min Khaung has made his utmost for the propagation of Buddha Sāsana. In the year 1373 AD, he invited all the learned monks throughout the whole country who were well versed in Buddhist scriptures and held religious examinations. Thus in this era many learned monks in Buddhist canons appeared. Some of the monks to be mentioned were Sagyo Thumyat, Kantaw Min Kyaung Sayadaw, Shin Ottama Kyaw, Shin Ohn Nyo, Shin Mahā Thīlavamsa, Shin Mahā Ratthasāra, Shin Aggasamādi, Shin Tejosāra who were famous laureates of the time. They had written letters of admonition, maxims for their pupils and followers which were translated from Pāli language in versification. The lyrics order, poems, epistles, jātika stories and admonitions written by these poet laureates Sayadaws are still honored and praised by modern scholars as classical Myanmar literature. This literary works are found to be excellent guides to the readers that Myanmar literature of Innwa Era has reached its zenith in the literary field in Myanmar history.

The emergence of such outstanding scholars is the outcome of the monastic school education of the time. During the reigns of Myanmar monarchs, the monastic

education was the one and only one system in the education sphere. Therefore, all the learned monks and the wise laymen were the products of the monastic schools.

During the time of Thohanbwa (1527-1542 AD) the Buddha Sāsana in Innwa was found to be deteriorated. However, it was found that the status of monastic education became more elevated during later eras such as Innwa, Taungoo, and Nyaung Yan. Through there appeared some threatening episodes in these eras, Buddha Sāsana was not hampered because the ruling monarchs of these eras were Buddhists and they had made their best for the propagation and perpetuation of Buddha Sāsana.

When King Thalun ruled the country (1629-1648 AD), the religious examination called *Pathamanpyan* examinations were found to be introduced. King Thalun had the examinations for the advancement of Pāli language. The candidates, i.e. monks who sit for the examination, passing the examinations were offered with the eight prescribed articles for use by the Buddhist monks and other offertories with great ceremony in the month of Wazo (July) which encouraged the monks to be more interested in learning the Buddhist canons (Pariyatti).

The learning of the Pāli language which had been along together with the early Myanmar history flourished uninterruptedly and became more developed and supremacies in the Konbaung period. The religious examination was first called in Myanmar as “Cā Pwe Sabin” (literary meaning the ceremony holding for (answering) Buddhist scriptures) and later it was called “Cā Pyan Pwe Sabin” (the ceremony for holding examination in the recitation of the Buddhist scriptures), because in this examination the candidates had to recite the Vinaya rules considered to be the mainstay for the steadfastness of Buddha Sāsana. Therefore, the objectives of holding the examinations in the recitation of Buddhist scriptures embraces not only the development of Pāli education but also for the steadfastness of Buddha Sāsana. The Pāli education system became more systematic and advanced in the Konbaung era because the level of the Pāli education were designated, the rules and regulations for Pāli examination were defined and the subjects prescribed.

King Mindon, as the patron of Buddha Sāsana, had paid great interest in the religious affairs of the country. He had taken the responsibility to sponsor in

convening the Fifth Buddhist Synod and the country became the land where Buddhism flourished brilliantly. He had also opened diplomatic relations with western countries. However, the administration in Myanmar started to deteriorate under his son King Thibaw. The political situation became confused and was threatened by colonialism. As the Myanmar administrators could not comprehend and withstand the colonialism by the British, they lost their independence and King Thibaw was taken away as a captive in 1885 AD. The whole country was annexed and the long cherished Myanmar monarchical rule was totally abolished.

## **CHAPTER-5**

# **THEORY AND PRACTICE OF BUDDHIST MONASTIC SCHOOLS**

## THEORY AND PRACTICE OF BUDDHIST MONASTIC SCHOOLS

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### 5.1. Introduction

Myanmar became a victim of imperialism from 1824 to 1885.<sup>1</sup> However it was since 1600-1824 that the Christian missionaries from the west entered the country. European missions included Roman Catholic and Protestant, and the American Baptist Mission was the only one American mission.<sup>2</sup>

It is believed that Christian missionary education was introduced in Myanmar in about the Nyaungyan Period. The earliest missionaries were the Italians of the Congregation of the Barnabites. Among them, Father Clachi, who came to Myanmar during the reign of King Tanninganwe (1714-1733) was the best known. Some believed that the Roman Catholic missionaries were able to establish themselves in Myanmar only from about 1721 onwards. The best known British missionary was Adoniram Judson.<sup>3</sup>

Due to the efforts of these missionaries, printed books and newspapers (printed by the ABM (Asia Bible Mission) Press) appeared in Myanmar. Missionary schools were established and textbooks were published, grants-in-aid system was introduced after 1813, and Judson's works on Myanmar, a work on grammar and a Burmese-English dictionary, were published. There were some of the development resulted from the efforts of Christian missionaries. Monastic education in Myanmar became a rival of the missionary and colonial education.<sup>4</sup>

#### 5.1.1 Conditions of Monastic Education in Colonial Period (1826-1948)

In 1835, the British laid down the education system based on the report of Lord Macaulay, Chairman of the Education Committee.<sup>5</sup> The main feature of this policy were as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> BhoHmu Ba Shin, *Myanmar Naing Ngan Taw Thamaing (History of Myanmar)* Third Edition, Yangon, Myanma Alin Press, 1950, p. 285 (Hereafter cited as Ba Shin, *History of Myanmar*)

<sup>2</sup> Than Htut, *History of Myanmar Monastic Education*, p. 139

<sup>3</sup> U Minn Htwe, *Khit Haung Pyinnyar Ye Sanitn Arr Lei Lar Chat ( Study of Old Education System )*, First Edition, Yangon, Thazin Press, 1972, p. 9

<sup>4</sup> Than Htut, *History of Myanmar Monastic Education*, pp. 139-141

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p.144

1. To encourage the students to learn English language and literature instead of oriental education,
2. To use English as the medium of teaching and,
3. To nurture a class of people who, though dark-complexioned, were fluent in English and who would behave and think like an Englishman, so that they would act as intermediaries between the ruling class and the indigenous people.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, the education offered by the colonialists was just the advancement of colonial administration by producing low-ranking officials, civil servants, clerks, etc. The original aim of the British when they introduced colonial education in Myanmar was to spread primary education.<sup>7</sup>

The system preferred by Sir A. P. Phayre, the former Commissioner of British Burma, was an education system based on monastic education<sup>8</sup>. Although it was thus intended to set up a Myanmar education system by modernizing traditional Monastic education, Macaulay's policy and the recommendation in Charles Wood's memorandum to encourage teaching English in the schools suppressed this intention in 1854.<sup>9</sup>

In Lower Myanmar, Anglo-Vernacular schools were introduced in Mawlamyaing, Kyaukphyu and Sittwe in 1835, 1837, and 1844 respectively.<sup>10</sup> In 1896, an Anglo-Vernacular school was opened at Pyay. All these schools were middle schools. Education Department has not been established yet, and the management of the schools was in the hands of the municipal, and military officials. Grading, curriculum and examinations were not yet systematic. The schools were graded and divided into High School, Middle School and Primary School in 1870-71. The

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<sup>6</sup> *Amyo Thar NeiHnit Amyo Thar PyinNyar Ye Hlup Sharr Hmu Thamaing Akyin (A Brief History of National Day and Movement of National Education in Myanmar)*, Yangon, Sarpe Beikman Press, 1970, p. 68 (Hereafter cited as *A Brief History of National Day*)

<sup>7</sup> (a) Taw Sein Kho, *Burmese Sketches*, Yangon, British Burma Press, 1913, p. 26 (Hereafter cited as Taw Sein Kho, *Burmese Sketches*)

(b) Furnivall J.S, *Colonial Policy and Practice*, New York University Press, 1956, p. 134 (Hereafter cited as Furnivall, *Colonial Policy and Practice*)

<sup>8</sup> Furnivall, *Colonial Policy and Practice*, pp.134-135

<sup>9</sup> Than Htut, *History of Myanmar Monastic Education*, p.146

<sup>10</sup> *Report of the Administration of Burma (1864-1865)*, Rangoon, Government Printing Press, 1871, p. 20 (Hereafter cited as *RAB (1864-65)*)

education Syndicate was formed in 1881, and it made the grading of school curriculum and examination more systematic.<sup>11</sup>

In implementing Macaulay's education policy, the British imperialists introduced the grant-in-aids system<sup>12</sup>, which was effective and which made the government allocated a low expenditure for education.<sup>13</sup> Implementation of the grants-in-aids system turned monastic schools and private schools into Vernacular schools and missionary schools into Anglo-Vernacular schools.<sup>14</sup>

The British government tried to take monastic schools under its control first by making the monastic schools registered. After the monastic schools had been registered, the government tried to change the curriculum in those schools and provided books for secular instruction including those in science. However, the monastic schools were not satisfied with the books distributed by the government. The monks, who had always taught the sublime philosophy of the Buddha, were against teaching Mathematics, Geography, and English under the British rule. As their main intention was to teach ecclesiastical matters, most of the monastic schools became separated into two kinds: traditional monastic schools and secular schools.<sup>15</sup>

Although the British government attempted to register the monastic schools and offer grants to them, the result was not satisfactory. Hence the British turned their attention to the lay schools, which were given grants. The education offered in the lay schools, which appeared in the early days of the colonial period, was very basic. These schools adopted the curriculum prescribed by the Education Department. Girls and boys who were not old enough to go to the monastic schools went to study in the lay schools. Not only was the number of monastic schools higher than that of lay schools, but the education offered by monastic schools was better than that offered by lay schools. Moreover, monastic schools were more important in Myanmar education. The number of lay schools was small, and they were meant to prepare young children to be ready to attend monastic schools. They did not differ from monastic schools in

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<sup>11</sup> U Thaung Htut, *Myanma Pyinnyar Ye Shu Khinn (Myanma Educational Scenery) Pyinnyar Tazaung Magazine*, Yangon, 2000, p. 69 (Hereafter cited as Thaung Htut, *Myanma Educational Scenery*)

<sup>12</sup> Kaung, "A Survey of the History Education in Burma", p. 73

<sup>13</sup> U Aye Kyaw, *Myanmar Amyo Tharr Pyinnyar Ye Thamaing (History National Education in Myanmar)*, First Edition, Yangon, New Press, 1970, p. ix (Hereafter cited as Aye Kyaw, *History National Education in Myanmar*)

<sup>14</sup> Kaung, "A Survey of the History Education in Burma", p. 73

<sup>15</sup> Than Htut, *History of Myanmar Monastic Education*, pp. 158-159

their objectives, teaching method and curriculum. The only difference was that they did not train students for a long period of time like monastic schools.<sup>16</sup>

The reasons why lay schools were not mentioned in the works on pre-colonial period Myanmar education written by Europeans were probably because they were not important enough to be regarded as schools, because their number is too low, and they were not as important as monastic schools. The earliest list of indigenous schools made by district administrative officials for Education Department in 1868 is mentioned in Appendix III.

A researcher of colonial educational system, U Khin Zaw Win remarked on the endeavors made by the British colonialists for Myanmar education in the early colonial period from 1860-1890 as follow:

In controlling Myanmar education during the thirty-years of early colonial period (from 1860-1890), the British began with primary education. Even when they were introducing education, the British authorities did not have benevolence to indigenous people. Finding ways to make so that they will have to spend, to work and to take as less responsibility as possible, they thought of using monastic schools which played an important role in Myanmar society. Although (their decisions) to spread education through monastic schools resulted from concerns about defraying the expenses of opening government schools, the reason they gave was that if they open government schools, they would be competing with monastic schools, and thus would be incurring the dislike and misunderstanding of the monks and of indigenous people. In doing so, however, all the monks would not accept their persuasion and offers, the results of organizing monastic schools fluctuated between 1860-1890. After turning monastic schools to serve as the centers of learning for the government, lay schools and mission schools all over the country, receiving grants from the government, became education centers to teach the pupils in accordance with the ways approved by the government. After Primary,

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<sup>16</sup> Kaung, "A Survey of the History Education in Burma", p. 9

Middle and High Schools had become schools to educate the people on behalf of the government, mission schools became schools that received more grants from the government than lay schools. The British authorities' turning (the indigenous schools) into Primary, Middle and High Schools for educating the children did not result from their goodwill. Their intention was to train and provide clerks, etc. which the government needed to lubricate the administrative machinery. The same was true in opening the schools for training for drafting and surveying, which resulted from the economic theory concerning supply and demand. The schools were opened to meet the needs for surveyors and draftsmen who were in great demand at that time. These can be seen clearly after analyzing the British efforts for Myanmar education.<sup>17</sup>

Divisional School Boards for vernacular schools are formed in 1916. Municipal and District School Boards came into being in 1921. The number of public monastic schools that were recognized by the Education Department declined, whereas that of public lay schools increased<sup>18</sup>.

The number of registered monastic schools which was 2,998 in 1892-93 decreased to 1,804 in 1898-1899. Although the number of registered monastic schools was on the decline, that of registered lay schools increased considerably. The number of registered lay schools increased from 704 in 1889-90 to 1,280 in 1898-99. The increase of lay schools was not because the pupils desired to study English but because of the parents, especially who did not care much about Myanmar culture, wished to send their children to lay schools so that it would be easier for them to get jobs. Therefore the number of lay schools was on the rise, while that of monastic schools was on the decline.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> U Khin Zaw Win, "Kolonī Khet Oo (1860-1890) ga Myanmar Pyinnyar Yew Twin Britisha Asoeyaei Hsaung Yut Chat Apaw Hsann Sit Thone That Chinn" ("A Survey to Educational Measures Carried out by the British Government in Myanmar in the Early Colonial Period (1860-1890)"), *Journal of Burma Research Society*, Vol. LII, Part. II, December 1969 (Hereafter cited as Khin Zaw Win, *A Survey to Educational Measures*)

<sup>18</sup> Than Htut, *History of Myanmar Monastic Education*, p. 164

<sup>19</sup> VERC, p. 136

The decline in the number of registered monastic schools was accompanied by the decrease of pupils in unregistered monastic schools. The author of “*History of Myanmar Monastic Education*” has pointed out some of the reasons as follows:

- (1) It was impossible to get a job for a student trained in monastic schools.
- (2) It was possible to get social acceptance and to get a good job only if one know English and modern subjects during the colonial period.
- (3) It was not possible to receive secular instruction in monastic schools, the subjects imparted at which was religious and Niti literature.
- (4) Parents sent their children to monastic schools to learn to read and write only in the villages where there were no lay schools.
- (5) Poor parents sent their children to study and dwell in monasteries.<sup>20</sup>

A 15-member Committee was formed in 1881 to compile textbooks, and it prescribed the books in 1881-82:

- (1) *TemiJāt*
- (2) *Dhammapada*
- (3) *Sudhammacāri*
- (4) *Sanpun:kri*
- (5) *Khrokcontwai*
- (6) *Saddābrūhā*
- (7) *Dhammapadakathā*
- (8) *Handbook of Agriculture* by E. Matini
- (9) *The Hill Tracts of Arakan* by Capt. Hughes
- (10) *Aid to Land Surveying* by J.C. Clancey Ham
- (11) *Sanitary Primer* by Dr. Cunningham
- (12) *Translation of the Preceding*
- (13) *JanakkaJāt*
- (14) *Jinathapakāsani*
- (15) *Stilson’s Complete Arithmetic*
- (16) *Eastern Primers*
- (17) *Aesop’s Fables*
- (18) *The House I Live In*
- (19) *Sanpun:krī: Akyay*

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<sup>20</sup> Than Htut, *History of Myanmar Monastic Education*, pp. 164-165

The books published by the Education Department in 1882-83 were:

- (1) *MahosadhaJāt-tau* (Volume I and II)
- (2) *Sanpun:krī:Akyay*
- (3) *Sudhammacāri*
- (4) *Mranmā Pathama Phatcā-up*
- (5) *Ferror's Wall Map of Burma*
- (6) *Legendary History of Burma* by the late Capt. C.J.F.S. Forbes
- (7) *Handbook of Agriculture* by E. Matini
- (8) *Clancey's Anglo-Vernacular Aid of Land Surveying*
- (9) *First Lesson in Paliby* Gray
- (10) *Stilson's Arithmetic Part*
- (11) *Myanmar translation of Aesop's Fables*
- (12) *Sanpun:krī:Akyañ:*
- (13) *Hitopadesa*
- (14) *NemiJāt*
- (15) *VessantarāJāt*
- (16) *DhaññvatīAre:taupun*
- (17) *Pali text and Glossary*

The books published by the Education Department in 1883-84 were:

- (1) *Khrokcontwai*
- (2) *Sudhammacāri*
- (3) *MahājanakaWatthu*
- (4) *MranmāPhatcā-up*, No. 1 New Version
- (5) Myanmar translation of Cally's *Handbook on Surveying*
- (6) *Selected Arithmetic* in English by Mr. Nicholas
- (7) Translation of the preceding
- (8) *History of Burma* by Sir Arthur Phayre

In the same year, copyrights for *Khrokcontwai*, *Sudhammacāri*, *Mahājanaka Watthu*, and *History of Burma* by Captain Forbes were obtained, and the Education Department bought the copyright of Maung Kyi's *Mranmā Saddā* and arranged for the translation of Dr. Hunter's *History of India*. Such books were popular in the colonial period schools. Monastic schools gradually accepted the idea of using

prescribed books, and the monks began to use *Sanpun:krī: Khrokcontwai*, and *Jataka* stories in their schools.<sup>21</sup> As regard the textbooks, it is recommended in a report of the National Education in Buddhist Monasteries Enquiry Committee (NEBMEC) as follow:

Books should be prescribed only if the Ovādacariya Sayadaws regard them as suitable. Only then, it will be accepted that those books are not against the Religion and will be used in monastic schools.<sup>22</sup>

To improve and modernize the methods of teaching, Government Normal Schools were opened to train teachers, and certified teachers, whose salaries were paid by the government, were sent to indigenous schools including monastic schools. As there were not enough qualified teachers, qualified circuit teachers (or itinerant teachers) were appointed to improve teaching in the indigenous schools. In 1921, trials of monastic training classes were opened in three monasteries. In the same year, monastic training classes were opened at U Vimala's monastery in Mandalay and at U Mun Nandi's monastery in Mawlamyaing were opened.<sup>23</sup> These classes were managed by the abbots, and a university graduate (certificated teacher) was among the teachers.

However, the monks did not want to change the established customs and those who wished to follow the traditional method of teaching believed that monastic schools were not meant for secular training. Therefore, the British Government's attempts to foster education were not effective, but just melted away.<sup>24</sup>

The NEBMEC concluded that the reasons why the colonial government failed to take control of monastic schools as follows:

- (1) The use of inappropriate methods in asking help from the Buddhist monks for fostering primary education.
- (2) The failure to follow the Vinaya rules in donating rice to Buddhist monks

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<sup>21</sup> Than Htut, *History of Myanmar Monastic Education*, pp. 165-168

<sup>22</sup> *Report of National Education in Buddhist Monasteries Enquiry Committee*, 1948, p. 62 (Hereafter cited as *Report of NEBMEC*)

<sup>23</sup> U Than Oo, *Myanmar Naing Ngan Pyinnyar Ye Htana Thamaing (History of Education Department in Myanmar)*, 1999, p. 92

<sup>24</sup> Than Htut, *History of Myanmar Monastic Education*, p. 170

- (3) The rules and regulations laid down by the central government and the regional authorities as well as their summons made as if the Buddhist monks were their servants or workers
- (4) The British authorities did not have the right attitudes towards monastic schools; the Buddhist monks rightly regarded that their duty concerning education was to make meritorious deeds by educating the children and training them to be ethical.<sup>25</sup>

The British education made the Monastic education out of date. Nevertheless, Monastic schools did not disappear from the history of Myanmar education till the Second World War. They continued to exist as centers for studying literature. During the reign of Myanmar kings, the only schools in existence were monastic schools. Later, as a result of British education system, three types of schools appeared: English Schools, Anglo-Vernacular Schools and Vernacular Schools. In 1921, National Schools came into being. However, they did not last long.<sup>26</sup>

Although the schools during the British colonial period can be divided roughly into three categories, various types of schools were included in the Anglo-Vernacular Schools and English Schools. Among the Anglo-Vernacular schools were Anglo-Myanmar, Anglo-Karen, Anglo-Chinese, Anglo-Indian Schools, etc. English schools can be subdivided into schools under the control of various Christian missionaries, missionary schools and special English schools run directly by the government. Although these schools adopted the curriculum prescribed by the Education Department they could choose the books they preferred from among the prescribed textbooks.<sup>27</sup>

While monastic education, which played a vital role in Myanmar education before the colonial period, was fading away, the British Government declared its policies in 1941 as follows:

In accordance with the policy to offer free primary education and to make primary education compulsory, government authorities have decided to work seriously. As the number of Buddhist monks was high

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<sup>25</sup> *Report of NEBMEC*, p. 70

<sup>26</sup> ThaungHtut, *Myanma Educational Scenery*, p. 43

<sup>27</sup> Thaung Htut, *Myanma Educational Scenery*, p. 48

and as they had access to innumerable monastic buildings, and as they could provide food and shelter to poor children, the government authorities believed that (the monks can provide) priceless help for the successful implementation of the plan for making free primary education compulsory all over Myanmar; hence, Myanmar government authorities will be implementing the policy to receive all the strength of Buddhist monks for the promotion and propagation of Myanmar national literature.<sup>28</sup>

With this declaration, a committee of laypersons and a board of Ovādacariya Sayadaws were formed in April 1941 to enquire how to review the Myanmar customs of many children studying in monastic schools throughout Myanmar. Although this committee and the Sayadaws submitted a report and an Ovādacariya respectively in January 1942, the policy was not implemented, but destroyed by the Second World War. Nevertheless, it can be regarded that the monastic schools continued their duties to spread Myanmar culture by serving as centers for educating young children in rural areas until the eruption of the Second World War.<sup>29</sup>

## **5.2 Conditions of Monastic Education under Japanese Occupation (1942-45) and during the Post War Period (1945-48)**

Under the Japanese occupation (1942-45), the people could not pay attention to education and religion because of war and instability. The Fascist Japanese caused much damage to Myanmar society, and under their occupation monastic education was on the wane. With regard to education, although the focus of attention shifted to handcrafts, technical and vocational training, the schools were in a state of chaos, and hence education deteriorated. The benefits, however, were that the schools became standardized, Myanmar became the medium of teaching and that curriculum directing towards vocational training was prescribed.<sup>30</sup>

When the Government of New Burma was formed under the Japanese occupation, U Ba Win became the Minister for Education. In his speech broadcasted on 25 November 1942, he said that there would be two types of schools, one directing towards primary to higher education and the other directing towards technical and

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<sup>28</sup> *The Record of Monastic Education*, pp.12-13

<sup>29</sup> Than Htut, *History of Myanmar Monastic Education*, pp. 181-185

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, pp.198-199

vocational training. He went on to state his intention that students should be able to choose either type of schools, and should be able to earn a living after completing the higher standard and should be able to enter a university for further education. In practice, however, apart from a few crafts, with regard to technology, medicine science, performing arts, etc., education was in a state of despair.<sup>31</sup>

A committee to prepare the new curriculum was formed. The curriculum for general education prescribed by the Education Department was as follows:

Primary Schools (First to Fourth Standards)

Myanmar Language

Mathematics

History

Social Science

General Science

Middle Schools (Fifth to Seventh Standards)

Myanmar Language

Mathematics

Algebra and Geometry

Geography

History

Social Science

General Science

High Schools (Eighth to Tenth Standards)

Same subjects as in Middle Schools

Some distinguished features of education system in Japanese occupation period are:

- (1) Japanese language can be studied from Third Standard onwards if there is a teacher.
- (2) Indigenous languages such as Mon, Kachin, Karen, etc. can be studied.

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<sup>31</sup> U Min Htwe, *Khit Haung Pyinnyar Ye Sanit Lei Lar Chat (Survey on Old Education System)*, First Edition, Yangon, Thazin Press, 1972, pp.60-62 (Hereafter cited as Min Htwe, *Survey on Old Education System*)

(3) Drawing, national anthem, physical education, health education, Buddhism and domestic science (for girls) will have to be trained.<sup>32</sup>

The curriculum was basically the same as those prescribed during the British colonial period. The only difference was the removal of anything written in praise of the British (that on King George, for example). Occasionally, the word “British” was replaced with “Nippon”; for instance. “British Burma Film Company” was changed to “Nippon Burma Film Company.” The number of people who knew English dwindles while the number of those who knew Japanese increased. Schools for Japanese Language and literature appeared. Similarly, a school where German, French and Thai Languages were taught was opened at Saint Augustine’s school on Inn-ya Road. This was the first school of foreign studies opened by the government.<sup>33</sup>

Before Myanmar regained independence, the schools were not recognized as government schools as under the Japanese occupation, but were classed as State Schools controlled and supported by the government and non-government Private Schools. This system brought about many types of schools: mission schools which were in existence before the Second World War, religious schools for Christians, Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists, schools for Indian, and Chinese communities, schools for ethnic people like the Karens, socially-privileged schools for the sons and daughters of Shan chieftains and ministers, schools in which pupils were prepared for university entrance, and tuitions where only one or two subjects were taught.<sup>34</sup>

The remark of U than Htut about the education condition of Japanese occupation is cited as follow:

As military and technology were the most important in time of war, of the reconstruction of the nation, and of the struggle for independence, there was no time to consider for revitalizing monastic education. Although the British made various attempts to include monastic schools in colonial education, monastic schools melted away under the Japanese occupation. When the country was in a state of chaos with pagodas, monasteries and villages devastated by enemy bombs, it was not surprising that religion and education were at low ebb. Therefore, monastic education in Myanmar under the Japanese rule could not fill

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<sup>32</sup> Thaung Htut, *Myanma Educational Scenery*, p. 49

<sup>33</sup> Min Htwe, *Survey on Old Education System*, pp. 66-67

<sup>34</sup> Thaung Htut, *Myanma Educational Scenery*, p. 73

many pages (in the written history of Myanmar education). Undoubtedly, the knells of the bell from the village monastery had been a reminder for the villagers for education.<sup>35</sup>

When the Fascist Japanese retreated, the British reoccupied Myanmar and the Southern Command of the East Asia Theatre announced on 1 January 1944 that they would impose military rule known as CAS B.<sup>36</sup>

Governor Sir Dorman Smith, who was in exile during the war at Simala, drew up a plan for the re-administration of Myanmar to revitalize colonial economy crippled by war. The British government proclaimed the White Paper Plan, and Sir Dorman Smith came back to Myanmar on 20 June 1945. Myanmar political leaders demanded the British to end the military rule, to form a coalition government, and to hold election within a year. The first Nethuryein Conference was held on 19 August 1949, and General Aung San became president of Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL). On 18 November 1945, another conference was held on the western side of the middle terrace of the Shwedagon Pagoda. On 27 September 1946, the Governor's Advisory Council headed by General Aung San was formed. General Aung San proclaimed that Myanmar would regain independence within two years, and Aung San visited London in early January 1947. Aung San-Attlee Treaty was signed. On 7 February 1947, Panlong Conference was held. General Aung San and leaders of ethnic nationals from Hilly Region agreed to gain independence from the British and signed the Panlong Agreement on 12 February 1947 marking the birth of the Union of Myanmar. Interim government was formed on 22 February 1947, and Major Po Kun became the Minister for Education. The election was held on 9 April 1947. A constitution was drafted, and the deliberation on it was made on 9 June 1947. General Aung San and his colleagues were assassinated on 19 July 1947. On 17 October 1947, Nu-Attlee Treaty was signed, and Myanmar became a fully independent country on 4 January 1948.<sup>37</sup>

The education system in Myanmar during the struggle for independence from the British after the Second World War was not at all satisfactory. Monastic education

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<sup>35</sup> Than Htut, *History of Myanmar Monastic Education*, pp. 199-200

<sup>36</sup> Theikpan Soe Yin, *Myanma rNaing Ngan Oak Chok Ye Thamaing (Myanmar Administration History)*, Yangon, Pinnya Press, 1973, p. 196 (Hereafter cited as Soe Yin, *Myanmar Administration History*)

<sup>37</sup> Angelene Naw, *Aung San and the Struggle for Burmese Independence*, Chiang Mai, Silkworm Books, 2001, pp. 139-170

was on the wane as during the early colonial period. Preoccupied with the struggle for independence, Myanmar leaders could not turn their attention to monastic education. Therefore, monastic education did not made much progress when the war ended. The promotion of monastic education would become a priority only after Myanmar regained its independence.<sup>38</sup>

### **5.3 Conditions of Monastic Education After Independence (1948-1962)**

After the colonial and Japanese occupation period, Myanmar regained independence on 4 January 1948. In October 1948, the Parliament issued the Public Education Council Act, and the Council was formed on 20 March 1949.<sup>39</sup>

In the ancient times, monastic education prevailed as a pillar of Myanmar education. But, when the country fell into the hands of the colonialists, this pillar drooped, and the religion, culture and moral value declined. Therefore a plan to foster monastic education was drawn up at the Phydawtha Conference in 1952, and the Public Education Council was entrusted with the task to implement it. The plan was known as “Education Plan for Revitalizing the Prosperity of the State”. The objectives of this plan were as follows:

- (1) To make all citizens to be able to read and write
- (2) To train and provide skilled workers and technicians to meet the demands of the building and development of the nation
- (3) To train and provide sufficient young men and women who would be able to give services demanded by the nation
- (4) To lower the illiteracy rate in the nation and to produce the citizens who were strong in five aspects
- (5) For the prevalence of the principles and practices of democracy in the nation.<sup>40</sup>

In accordance with the plan drawn up in the Pyidawtha Conference of 1952, the government arranged to open five thousand monastic schools from October 1952 onwards.<sup>41</sup> The arrangements include:

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<sup>38</sup> Than Htut, *History of Myanmar Monastic Education*, pp. 203-206

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, p. 218

<sup>40</sup> Min Htwe, *Survey on Old Education System*, pp. 71-72

- (1) If a monastic school that has accepted a minimum of twenty pupils is located in a village with no government schools, and if the presiding monk agrees, it will be recognized as a Public Education Council's registered school;
- (2) Teacher's handbooks, stationery and furniture will be donated to the monk and textbooks for various classes and necessary stationery will be distributed to the pupils without charge; and
- (3) The pupil from the registered monastic schools will be allowed to enter the Fourth-Standard local examinations held by the examination boards of the State Education Department.<sup>42</sup>

The Public Education Council implemented the plan for the development of monastic education in three phases:

- (1) To list and register monastic schools
- (2) To support the registered schools, by donating educational equipments and furniture, and
- (3) To give necessary help for the education of children.

For these tasks, a branch for monastic education was established in the Public Education Council, and duties were also assigned to all the public education officers through the divisional and district education officers in the rural areas.<sup>43</sup>

The monastic schools with twenty or more pupils in the localities with no State Primary Schools and in those in which there were not enough teachers, were registered if the monks or the teachers whom those monks had entrusted the responsibility taught the curriculum prescribed for the State Primary Schools.<sup>44</sup>

Registered monastic schools were divided into two- those in the localities with no State Schools were registered, and those in the localities with State Schools were registered. Additionally, the schools affiliated to the Parahita Sangha Organization were recognized as registered schools, and textbooks and stationery were donated to them. The numbers of registered monastic schools between 1952 to 1956 were 4,239

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<sup>41</sup> *Hpone Taw Gyi Thin PyinNyar Thin Kya Ye Asinyin Khan Sar from 1952-1954( Report of the Monastic Education Learning from 1952 to 1954) , Public Education Council, p. 3 ( Hereafter cited as Report of the Monastic Education from 1952 to 1954)*

<sup>42</sup> *Report of the Monastic Education from 1952 to 1954, p. 4*

<sup>43</sup> *The Record of Monastic Education, pp.12-13*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid, p. 30*

schools. The pupils in the registered monastic schools were taught for four years – First to Fourth Standards. When the pupils reached the age of ten and passed the examination of reading, writing and arithmetic, they could go to the Fifth Standard in a State School or to a State Vocational School.<sup>45</sup>

The implementation of the Monastic Education Scheme commenced in 1952, and the accomplishments were:

- (1) Although it had been estimated that there would be twenty to twenty-five students in a monastic school, the actual number of students varied between 40 and 212 according to the reports.
- (2) Monks and laypersons, including departmental officials and teachers supported by providing necessary assistance since the commencement of the Monastic Education Scheme.
- (3) Sir Arthur Phayre's attempt to utilize monastic education failed during the colonial period. The Enquiry Committee for Monastic Education formed in 1941 and chaired by U Ba Yin of Meikhtila also failed to achieve its goal. In contrast, the Monastic Education Scheme of Public Education Council met with successful outcome since its commencement.
- (4) The achievement of the students from monastic schools taking Fourth Standard examination held locally by the Education Department also were really satisfactory.
- (5) Thirty-six monastic schools had been handed over to the government as State Schools, which contributed to the opening of State Primary Schools by the government.
- (6) In some areas, the monks serving as headmasters of the monastic schools of a whole township, after having a meeting for competence in teaching, decided to request the educational officers to demonstrate the methods of teaching for all the subjects for them, which was an indication of the success of the scheme.
- (7) The demand to let the students from monastic schools to enter the Middle School scholarship examination held by the Education Department points

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<sup>45</sup> *The Record of Monastic Education*, pp.20-22

to the fact that the standard of primary education offered by the monastic schools was satisfactory.<sup>46</sup>

The effects of the Monastic Education Scheme in the Parliamentary period may be given here in brief:

- (1) Even before the enactment of compulsory education, even before State Primary School did not exist in all the villages, all the children had a chance to study in monastic schools with very low costs.
- (2) The implementation of this scheme solved the want of qualified teachers, class rooms and school buildings for 263, 095 students studying in 5,545 monastic schools.
- (3) If there was to be a teacher per forty students, more than six thousand teachers would have to be appointed for over two hundred and sixty thousand students. However, there were 74, 411 monks who out of piety taught the students under this scheme.
- (4) As the registered monastic schools followed the curriculum prescribed for State Primary Schools, and as other subjects, including moral behavior were taught, out of 7,345 students 3,207 passed the Fourth Standard examination held by the Education Department. In addition, four students received District Scholarship awards in 1955-556 Academic Years.<sup>47</sup>

On 1 October 1958, the Public Education Council was incorporated into the Department of Social Welfare in accordance with the act dissolving the Public Education Council. Public Educational Officers were transferred to the Education Department. In this way, monastic education came under the control of Education Department from 1 November 1962 onwards.<sup>48</sup>

## **5.4 Conditions of Monastic Education during Revolutionary Council (1962-72)**

### **5.4.1 Forming of Monastic School Education Section**

Under the Department of Basic Education, a section for Monastic School Education was formed. Section head and the assistant heads were appointed. Fifty monastic school education officers were appointed to implement for the revival of the

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<sup>46</sup>*Report of the Monastic Education from 1952 to 1954*, pp. 4-7

<sup>47</sup>*The Record of Monastic Education*, pp.28-29

<sup>48</sup>Than Htut, *History of Myanmar Monastic Education*, p. 239

monastic school education system. Experimental schools for compulsory primary education system were also kept under this section. This section had to give training courses to the monastic school education officers, re-registered the monastic school, offered text and reference books to these schools, held seminar and discussions with the presiding monks from these monastic schools, updating the monastic school curriculum in line with the time and formed the Examination Board for the monastic schools with the teaching monks to be abolished in the year 1972. Nevertheless, it was found that in the rural areas the monastic schools were still maintained and practiced their traditional way of giving secular education and Buddhist knowledge to the people at their respective villages.<sup>49</sup>

#### **5.4.2 Monastic School Education System under the State Sangha Nāyaka**

##### **Organization**

Throughout the history of education in Myanmar, the monastic school education was always found to form a part of the country's educational system. When the modern science subjects were included in the educational sphere, the monastic education, which paid little interest to the modern science subjects, came to lose its foothold and gradually lost its popularity among the Myanmar populace. As the monastic schools became to lose touch with the people, especially the younger generations in Myanmar society were found to be ignorant of Myanmar Buddhist Culture, less knowledge in the teachings of Lord Buddha, and were weak in love and devotion in race, religion and creed.

The patron Mahāthera of the State Sangha Nāyaka Organization had noticed the situation of the country and they unanimously decided to urge the government to resume the monastic education system, at the Third State Samgha Mahā Nāyaka Committee meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> days of the waning moon of Tazaungmone 1352 Myanmar Era (4-5 November 1990) attended by 47 members of the Organization. This meeting had recorded the resolution No. 18 which stated that

The minister of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, General Hpone Myint, had promised to implement the request made by the Vice-chairman of the State Samgha Mahā Nāyaka Committee, the Venerable Baddanta Sobita (*Agga Mahā Pandita*) to allow the pupils from the monastic schools to sit for the

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<sup>49</sup>Ashin Pyinnyar Nanda, “*Myanmar Hpone Taw Gyi Thin PyinNyar Ye (Koloni Khit Hma Myat Hmauk Khit Ahti)*” ( “Myanmar Monastic Education ( From Colonial Period to Present”))M.A Thesis, State Pariyati Religion University, Yangon, 2000, p. 118 ( Hereafter cited as “Myanmar Monastic Education(From Colonial Period to Present”)

fourth standard examination held by the government provided that these pupils had completed lessons prescribed and the ten topics on Buddhist culture.<sup>50</sup>

The Ministry of the Religious Affairs, with due regard to the request of the State Samgha Mahā Nāyaka Committee, requested the Ministry of Education to take the matter into action. The Ministry of Education responded the request of the Ministry of the Religious Affairs by letters dated on 2 January 1992.<sup>51</sup>

### **5.4.3 Monastic Schools in Theravāda Buddhist Missionary Schools**

Among the religious tasks and activities undertaken by the Department for the Promotion and Propagation of Sassana is the work of hill-tract Buddhist missionary monks. Since the State Law and Order Restoration Council took up the regime in 1988, the monks formerly called hill-tract Buddhist missions has been replaced by the Department for the Promotion and Propagation of Sassana, which was freshly reformed by the government so as to do its best to promote and propagate Buddhism.

To this end, three training courses for hill-tract Buddhist missions have been given between 1991 and 1993 and there have been altogether 274 trainee monks for propagating Buddhism throughout the hilly regions. These monks have been serving the responsibilities of Buddha's sassana in the far-off regions of the country, also establishing primary-level monastic schools for children of different national races in accordance with the monastic education project. The statistical data for these schools are as follow:

- In Sagaing Region, there has been one monastic school each in Khamti and Tamu, both of which are affiliated to their respective Theravāda Buddhist missionary monasteries. The total number of students is 473.
- In Mandalay Division, there has been one monastic school in Pyawbwe. The total number of student is 99.
- In Magway Division, there has been one monastic school in Ngaphe. The total number of students is 58.
- In Rakhine State, there has been one monastic school in Minbya. The total number of students is 51.

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<sup>50</sup> The New Light of Myanmar Newspaper, 6 November 1990

<sup>51</sup> "Myanmar Monastic Education ( From Colonial Period to Present)", p. 119

- In Chin State, there has been one monastic school each in Kanpetlet, Mintat, Hakha and Paletwa. The total number of students is 220.

To sum up, the works of the Department for the Promotion and Propagation of Sassana concerning on monastic education produced a good result. Chances are that the good and intelligent students will inevitably come out from those monastic schools since there have been opportunities for learning not only school subjects but also rudiments of Buddhist cultural aspects.<sup>52</sup>

## **5.5 The Role of Monastic Education in Myanmar Education**

### **5.5.1 The Buddha and Sangha as Teachers**

In Buddhism, Gotama Buddha is regarded as the Supreme Teacher. He taught his followers, members of the Sangha or monks, as well as the laity the Four Noble Truth and the Eight Fold. Noble Path is a way of liberation from the endless cycle of birth and rebirth. He taught them how to cleanse the mind of all impurities and gain realization that everything is impermanent (*anicca*); that all is suffering (*dukkha*) and that there is no permanent self or soul (*anatta*). This is the religious aspect. But the Buddha did not neglect the area of lay inter-personal and social relationships. His teaching in this area were in the form of sermons and exhortations and in the form of *Jātaka* tales. He explained how through my lives, he had endeavored to achieve enlightenment and that through similar efforts any one could, like Him, aspire to wisdom and liberation. Thus through the Buddha's teachings knowledge and wisdom came to be considered as one of the highest values in human life. Moreover members of his Sangha following the Buddha's examples became in turn teachers of the laity.<sup>53</sup>

The Buddha himself emphasized to his monks that "good friendship" (*Kalyāna-mitta*) was the whole, not the half of holy life that they should act "good friends" to each other and to the laity, through example and teaching. So it was only natural that monks became the teachers for the laity, and monasteries, the centers for education. But from the beginning as it has been discussed previously, the focus was on the religious and moral. Contemporary monastic schools may have expanded their curricula to include other secular disciplines such as the teaching of foreign languages, and other vocational subjects to morality and discipline remained the

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<sup>52</sup>*Hpone Taw Gyi Thin PyinNyar Thin Kya Ye Sardam (Record of Monastic Education Learning)*, 1993, pp.20-22

<sup>53</sup>*The Teaching of the Buddha*, Yangon, Ministry of Religious Affairs Department Press, 1997 , p.249 , (Hereafter cited as *The Teaching of the Buddha*)

backbone of monastic education. Even the Myanmar term for knowledge (*Pañña*) includes not just knowledge of nature, the world and living being including human beings, but includes morality and character building. As U HpoKyar, an eminent educationist said, education means the nurturing of the arm (meaning physical health), nurturing of the head (meaning intellectual education) and the nurturing of the heart (meaning morality). The Myanmar notion of education has thus always included morality.<sup>54</sup>

In Myanmar, what is termed the Three Gems, that is the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha are the most revered treasures for they are the sources wisdom and insight that will light the way of liberation. All Buddhist seek refuge in the Three Gems. But to seek refuge does not mean a passive dependence and blind trust. One has to learn and practice what has been taught by the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, and once a person has grasped these teachings he or she has gained valuable treasure that will make his or her life secure in this world and also smooth the way to *Nibbana*. This is an age old belief which has moulded Myanmar culture. Here there are sayings such as “knowledge is a treasure which no one can steal. Most Myanmar have a great respect for learning and learned persons, even if they themselves are not educated.

### **5.5.2 The Five Infinite Benefactors, or Infinite Venerable**

The term treasure is also applied to one’s children and they are often referred to as “treasured son or daughter”. But here a distinction is made between religious or other worldly treasure and treasures of the mundane world. Inanimate objects such as gems and jewelry are secular wealth as are animate beings like sons and daughters. Only the Three Gems are considered to be immeasurable treasures to be revered forever, they are also referred to as *Tri-ratanaor* Triple Gems.<sup>55</sup>

Of the many incomparable and infinite noble attributes of the Buddha, the following three things are directly concerned with knowledge. Thus the Buddha is revered as

- One who has perfect wisdom
- One who is able to bring about realization of good to reform evil ways
- One who is the Supreme Teaching of all beings?<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> U Hpo Kyar, *Myanmar Gon Ye Yazawin Hpat Sar* (Reader of Myanmar Goneye History), Yangon, Universities Press, 1995, p. 1

<sup>55</sup> Than Oo, *Myanmar Education Thought*, p. 24

<sup>56</sup> Ibid

Due to these noble attributes, the Buddha's Teachings have spread and benefited a vast multitude. Thus the Buddha, the greatest teacher is also the noblest of all benefactors who has shown the Path to wisdom and salvation. According to U than Oo, this is underlying principle of Myanmar philosophy of education. The Buddha is as stated above, the Supreme Teacher, and the monks who have inherited this legacy are also teachers who carry on the noble tradition of teaching the laity to distinguish right from wrong, and good from bad. They are also benefactors to be revered. This notion of reverence for the Buddha and the Sangha as teachers were then extended by the Buddha himself in Theravada Buddhist tradition to include parents as the foremost teachers of children as well as lay teachers who take on this task when the children are old enough to be taught not only to read and write, but on how to conduct themselves in the family and in society. Evidence of this tradition can be found in the *Singālovāda Sutta*, a discourse on social duties preached by the Buddha to a young man named *Singālo*. This later came to be known as the *Singālovāda Sutta*.

In the five kinds of duty laid down for the parents the first two states:

- Parents must prevent their sons and daughters from misconduct i.e. teach them the difference between good and bad
- They must teach their sons and daughters the way to good conduct.<sup>57</sup>

The first is knowledge and the second concerns practice. Parents are thus the first teachers. They teach their children not only morality but how to conduct themselves in society. They are taught to be polite and well-mannered.

Then the five kinds of duty for a teacher state:

- A teacher must teach his pupils good behavior
- He must impart knowledge to him in such a manner that the pupil may thoroughly grasp the subject
- He must train his pupil without any discrimination
- He must speak well of his pupils virtues and attainments to his friends
- He must prevent his pupil from danger.<sup>58</sup>

Here it can be seen that priority is given to the teaching of good conduct. There are thus four kinds of teachers. The Buddha who is the Supreme teacher, the

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<sup>57</sup>*The Teaching of the Buddha*, p. 252

<sup>58</sup>*The Teaching of the Buddha*, p. 254

Sangha who belong to the congregation of monks who have pledged to spread the Buddha's teachings, parents who are the foremost teachers of their children and finally professional lay teachers. The Buddha passed away to *Nibbana* but has left His Dhamma one of the Triple Gems (His teaching of the Way) as a legacy which is perpetuated by the Sangha.

In Myanmar Theravāda Culture therefore there are five benefactors to whom homage is due. They are the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Sangha, the Three Gems, and parents and teachers. Thus in Myanmar culture and society, parents and teachers are given a place of honor together with the Three Gems. This is the notion of “Anandaw Ananda Nga Par”, the Five Infinite Venerable, which is the keystone of Myanmar Theravada Buddhist Culture. This is not only a religious concept but has become a cultural norm in Myanmar society irrespective of religious faith. This paying of respect and homage to parents and teachers is now part of our culture, and at the end of the Buddhist Lent, children pay obeisance to parents and students to teachers bearing gifts. Even students of other faith acknowledge their gratitude by generously donating towards “Saya Kandaw Pwe” that is the ceremony for paying homage to teachers. Those of the Buddhist faith of course will pay obeisance with palms together and bowed heads at the foot of the parents or teachers, but non-Buddhists are not required to do so. So other religions also honor parents and teachers in their own way, but Theravada Buddhism has raised parents and teachers the Five Infinite Venerable to the Level of the Three Gems. There may be bad parents and bad teachers, but that is not the concern of the child or pupil, for this is a cultural norm; the duty of the child or pupil, is to respect and honor one's parents or teachers. The first vow or pledge that a Myanmar Buddhist child is taught is that he or she shall pay homage to the Three Gems as well as parents and teachers. That is the prelude to every prayer.<sup>59</sup>

It is interesting to note at this point that a Buddhist monk is revered both as a monk that is one who has abandoned the lay life with vows of poverty and chastity but also as a teacher. This is the reason why most monks are addressed as Sayadaw, royal teacher-for in the days of the Myanmar monarchy they were the teachers of kings and princes.

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<sup>59</sup>*The Teaching of the Buddha*, p. 255

The foregoing account provides evidence of the fact that Theravāda Buddhism, from the time it took root in the Bagan Era, has permeated almost every aspect of Myanmar life and culture. But most of all it would not be wrong to say that it provided the foundations of Myanmar national education, and that monks and monasteries have been its chief architects and builders. Monastic education in fact not only educated the people but has played a principle role in shaping the Myanmar world view and Myanmar character. It put into practice what the Buddha taught through education and in the process the monk-teachers consciously or unconsciously made original contribution of their own. The monks were after all Myanmar and although greatly influenced by Buddhism, the geographical and climatic conditions, the economic and social conditions must also have influenced how they practiced their religion and taught their pupils. This being so, it confirms U Than Oo's view stated in his book *Myanmar Educational Thought*, that the Myanmar Monastic Education System is the Myanmar National Education System. It is stated as follows:

--- the Myanmar National Education System those was in place since the Sriksetra (Pyu) Period had been formed on sound foundation of and were primarily interconnected with the Buddhist religious thought and beliefs, as well as the Buddhist culture. The strength of the Myanmar National Education System was the result of the willing efforts put forth by the Buddhist Sangha who, in addition to the spiritual endeavors took the responsibility for secular education generation after generation by offering classes at their monasteries.<sup>60</sup>

### **5.5.3 Management of Monastic Schools and the Donor Tradition**

In any school good management or administration is important if it is to function well and achieve success. But this again depends on the funds available to run a school. So, it would be well to touch upon the funding aspect of monastic school before discussing management.

As said earlier monastic schools do not charge tuition or boarding fees, this is made possible because in the Buddhist tradition “dāna” is considered to be one of the prime virtues. Some interpret “dāna” as charity or alms-giving, but it has a deeper meaning. It is a giving up of what one possesses to help another. It is generosity which is the opposite of greed and clinging. But performing an act of “dāna” or giving, a Buddhist learns to lessen greed. This is the general belief and for the affluent it is one of the easier ways of gaining merit. But to be fair, it must also be

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<sup>60</sup> Than Oo, *Myanmar Education Thought*, p. 5

said that even those not so well off will save up for acts of “dāna” like donating alms food for monks, donating towards building pagodas and monasteries or zayats (rest houses), requisites articles for use of monks such as robes, alms-bowls, umbrellas etc. and other necessities. Most Buddhist families also donate the daily food to monks on their prescribed alms round, for monks are not permitted to earn a livelihood for payment in cash; that would be like encouraging greed for possessions which is against their vow of poverty. Earning a livelihood also means giving up precious time required for meditation and other religious activities like propagating the Buddha’s teachings. So it is up to the lay devotees to provide monks with food for sustenance. A village or a ward in towns or cities give daily offerings of food even it is a spoonful each.<sup>61</sup>

The monks who go on his daily round of ‘Hsoon or alm-food’, share it, once back in the monasteries with other monks, novices and lay pupils who are in their charges for education. The main meal for monks is usually before noon, for after twelve noon monks go on a fast till daybreak the next day. Thus larger monasteries with many monks have food left over to provide the evening meal for their lay pupils. Food that is obtained in this way is provided free of charge to pupils who board in the monastery. It is the same with other necessities such as slate, books, chalk and blackboard (or palm leaf and stylus in ancient days) are donated for merit. Larger donations in the way of dry groceries such as rice, onion, dried chilis, garlic, beans and pulses are made on specially holy days like Thadingyut which marks the end of the Lent and in Tazaungmon which is traditionally the month for “Hsoongyi Laung” , the nearest interpretation of which means, “large donations of food”. So most monasteries especially in densely populated villages and towns have sufficient basic necessities. They can afford to provide young boys board and lodging free of charge. So the practice of “dāna” largely provides for the running of monastic schools. “Dāna” or giving, an important cultural, moral and social custom, is the keystone for the administration and functioning of monastic schools. This has been the tradition since the days of the monarchy. Myanmar kings could make donations on a large-scale. Nowadays, although monasteries are funded with the “dāna” of the people, the government often subsidizes monasteries with necessary consumer goods.

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<sup>61</sup>*The Teaching of the Buddha*, p. 260

#### 5.5.4 Monastic Schools Administration

The actual day to day running of the monastery and the monastic school is in the hands of the chief abbot, since ancient times. He lays down the policy of the monastery and his word is law, although he may hold consultations with the more senior monks. In the purely monastic schools meant for training and educating monks the rules followed are those laid down in the Vinaya Pitka? These rules must be followed strictly both by the teachers and student monks for they apply to all members of the Sangha. In all monastic schools there is also a deputy to the Chief Abbot known as the “Sarcha Sayadaw” who oversees both discipline and teaching. Discipline is strict and punishment is swift if any rules are broken. The Vinaya is the code of discipline together with prescribed punishment which may be severe, moderate or light according to the level of transgression.<sup>62</sup>

For lay pupils however corporeal punishment, such as caning, or having to pull one’s ears while squatting and standing a number of times, is allowed. In the olden days, even parents could be chastised with a beating if their offspring repeatedly broke the rule of the monastery or failed to do their lessons properly. Absenteeism was often punished in this way for sometimes pupils were absent from school because they had been made to do chores by parents. Obedience was also the watch word, so monastic schools either for monks alone or for laymen as well, the authority of the Chief Abbot and teachers was absolute. It applied to all pupils and no distinction was made between rich and poor, high-born as low. There is an anecdote concerning discipline and punishment. It is said that:

At one time, the future King Mindon of the late Kone Baung Period (1853-1872) was a pupil studying at the Nan Oo Monastery; he was then known as Maung Lwin. One day the Chief Abbot told Maung Lwin to keep a slab of dried fish. The next day when the abbot asked him to bring the slab of dried fish to him, Maung Lwin had to confess that the monastery cat had eaten it. The abbot then gives Maung Lwin a caning saying “If you cannot keep a slab of dried fish safe, how are you going to rule the country”.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>*The Teaching of the Buddha*, p. 144

<sup>63</sup> Maung Arnt, *Lokaniti Ahpwint Kyan* (Introduction to *Lokanīti Treatise*), Yangon, Ministry of Religious Affairs, Religious Affairs Press, 2001, p. 74

There is an incantation in the *Lokanīti* Homily which corresponds to the English proverb “Spare the rod and spoil the child”, which says that a teacher should be like a potter. A potter who does not beat the wet clay into shape will only produce utensils which will soon crack. Likewise, a teacher must punish a pupil and beat him if necessary, so that he will learn his lesson well. It is also said that just as a leaf that is used to wrap a fragrant flower takes on its fragrance, so also a pupil who respects and emulates his teacher will gain benefit. This view shows how much teachers are held in esteem and the authority they have over both pupils and parents.

Due to the fact that monastic schools had necessary funding from the “dāna” of devotees and the monks had absolute authority, it would seem that monastic school administrators had less problems than those in charge of secular schools.

#### **5.5.4 Influence of Monastic Education in Myanmar**

The traditional Myanmar Monastic Education was based on Pali Language and Literature. At the early beginning years, the students were taught Pali primer. Basically, Pali is the first medium for Myanmar monastic education at monasteries. Almost all the students were much familiar with Pali literature especially on Buddhist culture and teaching.

At first, they were learnt *Namo Buddhāya Siddhanr* (Paid Homage to Buddha) and after that they were going to recite the Buddhistic homilies by heart. This kind of tradition is the basic way of teaching in monasteries.<sup>64</sup>

The great work carried on from day to day in every monastery is gratuitous education. With rare exceptions every Buddhist lad in this country is taught to read and write by the monks and there are very few men who are not able to read and write. There were three favorable facts to monastic education, namely, a suitable environment, the power of powerful monks, and curriculum.

With the respect to a suitable environment, every village in Myanmar had at least a monastery. It was usually situated on the east or south of the village. Myanmar people regarded the east and the south as good directions. The monastery was donated by the village or a single rich villager. Consequently, villager named him ‘monastery donor’. Monasteries in towns and cities were also similar to village-monasteries but town or city monasteries are grander. The compound of a monastery was demarcated by stone-pillars. People’s houses were far enough from a monastery so that their

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<sup>64</sup> Khin Thein, “British Burma Pali Education (1885-1941)”, M.A Thesis, Rangoon Arts and Science University, 1970, p. 244

shades do not fall in a monastery compound. Usually, in a monastery compound there were buildings more than one. Every monastery had a chief monk called 'taik-ok' who managed it. Monastery buildings were as attractive as pagodas. Moreover, every monastery had at least a big box or big shelf called 'Sar Taik' in which palm leaf inscriptions were kept. Students could study and read these ancient palm leaves and books from these.<sup>65</sup>

A monastery compound was flat and even. It was always cleaned and sometimes sand was spread in it. It was a playground for monastery boys. In fact, the environment of a monastery was quiet, peaceful and pleasant. It had big trees with eatable fruits, which gave shelter to men, animals and birds. As to water, there was a well in the monastery compound. The villagers use it for drinking and using. In monastery compound, there was a pavement to walk to and fro for monks. According as a monastery was a pleasant place to those who keep away from secular affairs, it was full of people who observe precepts. A monastery was situated outside a village but not too far from a village, because monks and devotees depend on each other; in towns it was in an isolated area from homes. Therefore, a monastery was quiet and peaceful. However, Buddhist monasteries are not like old European monasteries which were surrounded by walls and locked and absolutely dissociated with secular affairs. Buddhist monasteries were always open to everyone. In Myanmar, a village was surrounded by thorns and in the evening closed its door. In spite of that situation, monasteries are always open. Besides, they allowed visitors from distant places to stay here. So in the past, there were no hostels and lodging houses in Myanmar.<sup>66</sup>

The second of three favorable facts to monastic education is the power of powerful monks. Naturally, when the association of teacher and pupil turns into the type of association of leader and follower, there arises personal influence which gives rise to breakthroughs. This fact was more obvious when a boy, about 16 years of age, becomes a novice and studied higher lessons. According to the Monastic Code or Vinaya, every novice should have an instructor who guides him in spiritual and learning affairs. The instructor closely instructs a newly novice on behalf of the abbot. The duties of an instructor are mentioned in Vinaya. Although these duties were not followed in Myanmar as in India, essence of these duties were still being

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<sup>65</sup>Dr. Forehammers, *Report of Literary Work Performed on behalf of the Government during 1819-90*, Yangon, Government Printing, 1882, p. 72

<sup>66</sup>Kaung, "A Survey of the History Education in Burma", pp. 25-26

maintained. That is why there is no doubt that the instructor, to some extent, influenced his pupil's improvement through teaching, explanation, etc. Having known this fact, one can understand why there was no regular Buddhist higher education system in Myanmar like Tibet.<sup>67</sup> Novices' education could constantly improve through monk's teaching. Therefore, novices could achieve successful life more than ordinary students. That personal influence was very effective to novices, similarly that was helpful to boys who live together with the monks.

Curriculum of monastic education was very suitable to each teach moral character and Myanmar culture. Main curriculum was of Pali language, Buddhist scriptures and Myanmar translations. In addition to them, secular subjects like mathematics, astrology, indigenous medicine science as well as religious and ethical sections from Myanmar literature were included in the curriculum. However, teacher and students assumed that only Buddhist literature was most important in studying. Consequently, to study Pali language played an important role in the curriculum.

When a new student came to monastery to study, the abbot gave him a wooden blackboard or a Parabaik (writing tablet made of blacken paper) on which the abbot wrote 33 Myanmar letters by neat handwriting with a soap stone. Then the student repeated them reciting by his mouth. In this way, he had to practice reading and writing at the same time. Generally, in this stage, a senior student or assistant teacher helped him; he has to learn in this way up to finishing *Sonbongri*<sup>68</sup> only in one place. After it, he has to study some lessons such as *Mingala Sutta*, *Singālovāda Sutta*, etc. so that he can read meaningful sentences. Then he keeps on studying *Dhammapada*, *Mahāprīnibbana Sutta*, etc. Having studied such ethical lessons in Pali and Myanmar, a student early came to understand Buddhism and ethical ideologies. In this stage, he has to learn some basic religious lessons such as how to take precepts, how to say formal worship, *Paritta*, and etc. Moreover, he has to study some other non-religious lessons. These are not religious but very helpful to social affairs. Some popular lessons are:

Lokaṇīti by Sayadaw U Boke

Punnovada Son-ma-sa

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<sup>67</sup> Das. S.C, *Indian Pandits the Lord of Snow*, 1893, p. 4

<sup>68</sup> *Sonbongri* is a well-constructed spelling book, and systematically arranged. It is used in all schools at present and forms part of a good sense of modern Myanmar readers.

## KyikanSayadaw's Questions and Mon-yweSayadaw's Answers

### Ten kinds of Speech

Anusasana Son-ma-sa, etc.<sup>69</sup>

One could understand main points of the basic curriculum by studying the above lessons. Afterwards almost every monastery taught Myanmar mathematics. Students in the primary level had to study subtraction, multiplication and division by using sums of agriculture and trading.

The above are basic lessons for boys and novices. Most students had to learn them. However, few students kept studying in the monastery until over twenty years of age and they became monks to achieve higher education. First, they studied Pali grammar and then studied *Tipitaka* which contains *Suttanata* (discourse), *Vinaya* (monastic rule), and *Abhidhamma* (higher Dhamma). They studied them together with *Attakathā* (commentary) and *dhikā* (sub-commentary). Myanmar people regarded Pali as sacred language ran on account of annual *Pathamabyan* religious examinations. Those examination are sponsored by governments through management of Sayadaws (senior monks) from *Sudhamma* assembly.

*Suttanawas* most studied of three *Paitakas*. It contains five collections (nikāya), namely *Angostura*, *Majjhima*, *Dīgha*, *Samyutta* and *Khuddaka*. Out of them, *Digha-nikāya* was described most<sup>70</sup>. Fifty-five stories and *Dhammapada* were well-known and popular too.

*Vinaya Pitaka* also had to be studied. However, it could not dominate in education because it is just rules of monk. In fact, the aim of monastic education is to understand the Buddha's *Abhidhamma* which is of spiritual development. Out of many *Abhidhamma* books, *Dhamma-sangani*, *Abhidhammattha-sangaha* and *Abhidhamma-vibhavini* were most popular. After finishing *Abhidhammattha-sangha*, young monks did not continue the other arts because the arts and science like astrology, fortunetelling, and medicine science are not suitable for monks. However, they began to write even before finishing their learning.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Than Htut, *History of Myanmar Monastic Education*, pp. 213-216

<sup>70</sup> Bode, *Pali Literature of Burma*, pp.2-3

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*, p. 61

As a matter of fact, such writing was an affair of monastic education which is religious education system because all learning in Pali or Myanmar was not only poetic and beautiful but also of literary and cultural values. English officers tried to replace Myanmar education with western education however it did not make students better except at mathematics. Monastic education of Myanmar could give good foundation of culture to those who studied religious lessons in the monastery and cultivate moral character of those who studied only basic lessons. In order to possess moral character, firstly, a student was asked to conduct some works of monastery; secondly, he was taught literature of good character. In addition, monastic education could give a standard idea. That idea could not be given by English school because of narrow vocational aims of teachers and students. That idea was ‘education for education’. That agrees with the people’s view” the aim of learning is learning; the knowing of an art or science is a great boon because of its natural value.<sup>72</sup>

Monastic education is free for everyone regardless of the rich or the poor. The aim of education also was nothing but understanding. Westerners and Americans who were interested in education have been criticizing since early colonialism in Myanmar that Myanmar education emphasized only memorization and could not improve mental development. They might criticize so even now.

In fact, such criticism sprang from seeing mind and body separately. Such seeing is not correct. Moreover, there is no evidence for the statement ‘the studying of literature cannot be as useful as that of science. In spite of accusation the curriculum and teaching method of monastic education hindered the mental development of students, it is evident that the education was conducive to better character. Actually, one cannot understand genuine value of monastic education without knowing simple nature of native civilization. In agricultural civilization, the function of education is to cultivate good character according to religious stands of that civilization. There is no need to doubt that monastic education was dutiful up to past one hundred years. In addition, one could train oneself in workshops, factories and fields throughout Myanmar. People who are more skillful than monks had been working in various jobs. Moreover, monks and novices can disrobe at any time because monastic rules are not absolutely separated from lay life. There was a common happening that students could take part in agricultural work. Thus teenagers grew up with

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<sup>72</sup> Than Htut, *History of Myanmar Monastic Education*, pp. 216-217

instruments they would use in the future. Every house had simple devices like hand mills to husk grain, cotton-gins, spinning wheels, looms and etc. Craft-workshops ran openly, not secretly, so everyone could see and study their methods. They started their art by making instruments for home and field with very simple tools; they achieved from shopping money for the daily needs and pocket money to big business. For them there were no gap between the period of schooling and working.<sup>73</sup>

Monastic education was sufficient for such as a simple environment. Although a monk taught this education by using old methods, it was suitable for the majority of people. Geography, hygiene and other new subjects were not taught in monasteries; nevertheless, in term of basic education, reading and writing in Myanmar, old monasteries were better than modern schools and monasteries. There may be some weakness in monastic education but in monasteries there were no incongruities that trained teachers dictated in kindergarten. Whatever monasteries taught, all were meaningful and important. Therefore, what students learned in monasteries was a guide although they were not completed for their life. Monastic education taught students to know how to respect wiser and elder people; it prescribed duties of teachers, leaders, and parents; it showed that despite life's limitations, one can achieve his or other's benefit. This, it can be said monastic education could confer necessary ability to students for their life after leaving monasteries.<sup>74</sup>

Compared with environments of monasteries, those of schools were lower in terms of beauty and comfort. A school building is a mere ordinary house; it has no large rooms and *verandahs*. In schools, there are no buildings to live for students, so they could not dominate ordinary people's life, like monasteries. On the other hand, school fulfilled important duty of Myanmar society by accepting and teaching girls who monasteries did not so. In the time of Myanmar kings, situation of schools was lower; but according to aim and objectives of the new government (British) their future had been clear. The objectives of the new government had nothing to do with religion and culture but were to give only knowledge. According to instructions of educational ministry, schools could teach geography, mathematics and land-surveying while the monasteries could not do them according to Vinaya rules. There were no prohibitions against teaching science in schools.

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<sup>73</sup> Max Fearnans, *Burma*, Government Printing Press, 1901, p. 10

<sup>74</sup> Kaung, "A Survey of the History Education in Burma", pp. 27-33

From the beginning, the Directors and Inspectors of education in colonial period understood that the education project of the government would succeed. In 1875, four years after launching the project they expressed that the project of schools were successful and it was sad for disinterest of monasteries. For example, Mr. Unwin, First Inspector of School, wrote in his report “Salaried teachers and schools are right things for firm mass education; it will continue in this country”.<sup>75</sup>

Hadern also reported like this:

“It is found that schools obtain firm foundation and harmonious success. Now although schools cannot be established everywhere, they have been firmly found more than ever before. They are a satisfactory result of current education. Therefore, recommend them best. Moreover, it is satisfied that according to our current project, the number of school girls are increasing”.<sup>76</sup>

With instructions of the department were constantly used, although there were significant number of schools compared with monasteries in 1879, schools increased up to 4,770 in 1927. They became an important backbone of primary education department. The government was almost absolutely responsible for the increasing of schools. Such increasing was different from increasing of English-Myanmar schools which were a result of emulation of English education; they were just due to agitation of the salary system. Volunteer teachers also became professionals who depended on salary for their living. Producing such a new kind of teachers achieved the original aim that according to the salary system, native schools should follow rules and regulations of the department.<sup>77</sup>

### **5.5.5 The Importance and Benefits of Monastic Education in Myanmar Society**

The aim of learning at monastic schools for children is not only to learn literacy but also to learn the conduct of manners. The latter, being characteristic of civilization, is of greater importance and depends much on the context of learning including the school environment, the character and virtues of the teachers-morally as well as academically, the behavior of the teachers that reveal their character and virtues, and the peer children.

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<sup>75</sup> *Report of the Administration of Burma (1874-75)*, Rangoon, Government Press, 1876, p. 60 (Hereafter cited as *RAB( 1874-75)*)

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, p. 162

<sup>77</sup> Kaung, “A Survey of the History Education in Burma”, Pp. 36-37

Generally speaking, the monastic school compounds and environs throughout the country are much better than the lay school compounds and environs. The monasteries usually possess the best compounds with the culturally rich best decorations in the country villages. The premises are broad enough to serve as a playground for children. With all these things considered, the monasteries are the best place for a school in the Myanmar villages.

The students also learn the conduct of behavior from the teacher monks who have to abide by the strict Buddhist moral code. Consequently, it would be better to send children to monastic schools rather than to send them to lay schools. It is worth nothing here that a monk teacher, the presiding monk-to-be as well must be at least five *vassas* (years of monkhood) at least according to the Buddhist tradition. When he starts to preside a monastery, he must be ten *vassas* at least. Furthermore, he must have knowledge of the two basic *Vinaya* treatises, must have some experience in monastic matters, and must have some practice in meditation. It is the right age for a monk to have disciples or students, they say.

While in monastic schools, moreover, students always see the things related with the Triple Gems all of which can increase merit and their knowledge of the religious culture. As regards the peer pressure, children do their learning in piety and virtue because pious children generally meet each other, which also support the recommendation for monastic schools. In ancient times in Myanmar, therefore, all the inhabitants- from the court family to the common people regardless of their social and economic life-sent their children to the monasteries as seats for learning. In the contrary, only underprivileged children decided to go there, nowadays. Today is the time when the monastic schools are in dim light, conjuring a wrong impression that they are meant for paupers and a feeling of loathsome can be heard in mocking rhyme sung by naughty children goes, ‘Monastic boarders, just like mocking beggars’. In vice-versa, the monastic school pupils sang ‘Monastic boarders, just like a deluxe superior’. As once suggested by the school inspectors and the Ovādacariya Sayadaws, there needs to be positive encouragement of the government or the local authorities for the monastic education’s golden days of yore to return.<sup>78</sup>

The monastic schools played an important role in improving Myanmar education. But the importance of monastic education had diminished since the advent

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<sup>78</sup> *Report of NEBMEC*, pp. 28-29

of modern education into the education sector though it had been on the improving in the days of Myanmar kings.

Since 1993, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, together with the Ministry of Education, has carried out the monastic education programmers' in accordance with the instructions given by the State Sangha MahāNāyaka Committee and with the polices laid down by the Myanmar Education Committee. According to the statistics in 2004-2005 Academic Years, there are 1,255 monastic schools all over the country. There are evidences that monastic education helped to bring forth good citizens with high moral and cultural values because there was high accessibility to it for all the inhabitants of the country ranging from the general public to the royal family.

The monastic education in the days of Myanmar kings was wide-ranging in the sense that it educated not only the court family but also the commoners, rich or poor. The instructions given by the monastic teacher, i.e., the abbot of the monastery, commanded the due respect of all the classes. Now, too, all people regardless of their status can go to the monasteries for learning.

Myanmar being a land of Buddhism, its people never hesitate to perform any religious duty that will fulfill the needs of the Order of the Monks. The world is often surprised to see the generous Myanmar people vying with each other to give their things away. By inherited nature, they are even ready to sacrifice not only their property but also their life to the interest of their faith. On the other hand, the Buddhist monks are trying to their utmost ability, to learn, teach and practice the Doctrine of the Buddha but also to impart their knowledge, worldly as well as religious, to the children of lay Buddhists. All parents who have to toil to be able to bring up four or five children would never forget the merits of these Buddhist monks nourishing thousands of their children with education, facing troubles of all kinds as if they were just smiles, and signing the motto of 'Maybe we are poor, but education for us must be sure. The monastic schools, the fruits of the labours of our benefactor's monks, need support from every Buddhist, because they have to take care of the daily needs of numerous students. To fulfill these needs the venerable benefactor's monks are still trying to get support from the people as well as from the state.

## 5.6 Summary

The western education system was introduced to Myanmar after it had been occupied by the British. It came along together with the western missionaries. Nevertheless, the British rulers had laid down the policy to continue to hold Pāli Pathamanpyan examination. They founded a committee for this work and select subjects and level of classes. Like in the times of Myanmar monarchs they offered rewards in cash to those who were successful in the examinations. The British had maintained this examination policy in the context of political interest rather than to encourage the Buddha Sāsana.

The significant feature of the Pāli education policy in the colonial period is the attempt to introduce Myanmar language in the curriculum. But the result was found to be unsatisfactory. However, it can be said that it laid down the seed for the Myanmar language to be included in the coming new system of Pathamanpyan examinations. Pāli subjects and matters were submitted to the government.

Apart from the Pathamanpyan examination sponsored by the colonialists, Sakyasīha Examination (Mandalay), Cetiayangana Examination (Yangon), Sudhama Pariyatti Pathamanpyan Examination were held by the respective organization of these organization that Pāli education in the colonial period under the British was well flourished and developed.

The monastic school education, however, lost its popularity in colonial period. Three kinds of schools came into existence according to the colonial education system and discrimination also appeared. The first commissioner of British Burma, Sir Arthur Phayre made some attempts to reform the monastic education system with the help of the abbots of the monastic educations but was unsuccessful due to the Macaulay's education policy.

Exercise books were came to be used in the colonial period, the colonialists tried to establish their colonial education and abrogate the syllabi of the monastic schools. The majority the monks did not accept the British plan and therefore the British drew their own educational system and established their own schools. The monastic schools were kept as registered schools. The subjects taught in the monastic schools and the colonial schools were found to be different. The colonial schools gave professional lessons (job oriented subjects) and therefore the number of pupils attending their schools were found to be more numerous than the monastic schools.

The monastic schools became less popular and according to the registered list the number of registered monastic schools was reduced to 928 in the year 1933-34 while there were 4,619 monastic schools in 1892-93.

The monastic schools education system took responsibility to give education mainly in the rural areas. The children of the rural areas had to learn their lessons in their respective villages where the monks had opened monastic schools up to the time of World War II.

The country's economy became worse during the Japanese Occupation period (1942-45). Not only was the economy of the country but also the conditions of the country in other school spheres found to be deteriorated. Three kinds of schools that existed during the colonial period disappeared and only one kind of school had taken their places. Myanmar language became the medium of teaching during this period.

Myanmar became an independent sovereign state on 4 January 1948. The Myanmar government drew up a plan called *Pyitawthar BwaThit Phan Ti Mu* (creation of new life for the prosperity of the country). Officer for Pāli language education was opened in 1951 and "CāChā Tan Cā Mei Pwe (Examination for Lecturing Buddhist Canons) were held. Moreover, the prescribed texts for Pāli Pathamanpyan examination and the level of classes were recognized. The time to hold examinations was fixed to be held in the hot season. Holding of Pāli Pathamanpyan examinations systematically in the post-independence era reveals that Pāli education rehabilitated together with the rehabilitation of the sovereignty of the country.

It would be inaccurate to generalize and say that the sole aim of the monastic education system is the preservation and propagation of Buddhism. This may have been the aim at the very first beginning when the teachings of the Buddha were put into writing for the first time at the Fourth Council held in Sri Lanka four centuries after his passing away in the first century B.C. Up to that time, the whole of the Tipitaka had been handed down orally from generation to generation. The elder Theras or Bikkhus decided to do this to prevent misinterpretations and further schisms which had already arisen by that time. But, it soon expanded to include education for laymen; for the Great Teacher himself had meant His Teachings for everyone, monk or laymen, sinner or saint.

Similarly, the coming of Theravāda Buddhism in Bagan in the time of King Anawrahta was followed by the setting up of Pariyatti monasteries for teaching those

who wished to enter the Sangha as mentioned earlier. But when laymen entered these monasteries on novitiation and left the monastery to return to lay life the monasteries took on a whole next task-that of educating the people. It was a secondary aim but in a way it was also a way of propagating Buddhism. For according to Buddhism ignorance is the cause of misconduct and only those who have knowledge can cultivate moral purity that is the first step on the path to liberation. Thus Myanmar Society since ancient times has always considered knowledge a moral value. So as explained in the course of the dissertation another aim of monastic education was to make people literate.

The great Pariyatti monasteries for purely monastic education have flourished throughout the ages. Myanmar monarchs were great patrons of Buddhism, building large monasteries and rewarding monks who excelled in Tipitaka examination. Under the British rule this came to an end but lay devotees through their Dana still maintained the Pariyatti monasteries. With the independence it could be said that Buddhism and the Pariyatti Sāsana enjoyed a revival and renewal with the Sixth Buddhist Council held in May, 1956. Today also there are large Pariyatti universities and the International Theravāda Buddhist University in Yangon now gives undergraduate as well as post-graduate courses for monks and laymen alike. Many foreign students now come to study in Myanmar. These are the purely religious universities of Myanmar monastic education system. But what are central to this chapter are the monastic schools that provide both secular and religious education based on Buddhist culture and values.

Such schools, as stated suffered have many setbacks since the British colonization of Myanmar and even after independence, for many reasons, parents themselves would rather send their children to secular government schools or even expensive private schools, rather than to monastic schools, if they could afford it. So only rural folk and people earning low income send their children to monastic schools. One of the main reasons is that they consider monastic schools outdated, and that their children will not get a good educational foundation. This was the case under British rule and is still so today. One cannot blame the parents and some monastic schools, especially in isolated area are indeed out of touch. On the other hand, even these small monastic schools, although outdated, at least give children in their care a rudimentary education and moral uplift. It should not be forgotten that Myanmar has a fairly high literacy rate even though some of the people have not had the

opportunity of a modern education. Those who have attended monastic school have learnt the very least of an elementary Myanmar reader. They have knowledge of the five precepts, the duties prescribed for each person as parents, children, wife, husband, teacher, pupil, friend, etc. according to Myanmar Buddhist culture.

Moreover, the pupils learn discipline in a monastic school. The pupils are few, the teacher-monk is strict and has full authority. These pupils therefore learn about the importance of respect for the Three Gems, the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, Presents, Teachers and Elders. They also learn the value of discipline and obedience. This respect for obedience and discipline is grounded in the Vinaya Pitaka, the Disciplinary and Procedural Rules for the Sangha.

The Buddha had a large following of bikkhus who lived together to pursue the Buddha's path. They came from all walks of life and were required to live in amity. But being human, most had weaknesses, so the Buddha laid down a particular rule when some transgression occurred. The Vinaya rules not drawn up at one; sitting – they were not pre-determined; each new rule was prescribed as and when necessary for the sake of harmony and peace and required for the practice of religious life in the brotherhood.

There are altogether 227 Vinaya rules. This evidently shows that the Buddha was not on authoritarians, not even where the bikkhus were concerned. Rules of discipline were laid down only when necessary. If such rules are necessary for the monks, then it is even more of a necessity for lay society. It is for the good of the many that discipline is necessary for regulation of human conduct in society.

Discipline teaches a child self-control and self-control later leads to awareness that one must not be selfish; that society can function smoothly only if one takes into consideration the feelings of others. Discipline is also necessary to avoid sloth and laziness. In Buddhist teachings sloth does to benefit oneself or other. When a person is lazy he or she fails to be dutiful. It is leads to ignorance. There are some of the reasons why monastic schools place emphasis on discipline.

If one reflects carefully, it will be seen that without self-discipline and some necessary regulation in school, there can be no learning or morality. Knowledge requires mental discipline and morality requires disciplines of both mind and body. Some may think the rules of a monastery are too rigid to allow for independent

thinking. But modern educationists are now concerned about too much freedom for youngsters who are still too immature to make judgments about good and bad, right and wrong and about what are moral or immoral. Schools in the west emphasize freedom of decision-making without giving any guidelines as to moral content, and this has led to many social problems such as drug addiction and juvenile sex that leads to breakdown of family values and parents are ignored and in many cases take no responsibility for their children. Intellectual freedom is essential but that does not mean freedom to do as one pleases with no regard for the freedom of others. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, mental discipline is necessary to sharpen the mind, and for self-control.

In conclusion, the value of Myanmar monastic education lies in the fact that through the teaching of the Buddha, it installs moral and social awareness. The Buddha preached the Singālovāda Sutta to a young man on social duties for all human-beings and this is taught to pupils at monastic schools. They are taught the Mangala Sutta where guidance is given on how to conduct oneself morally. They are taught about respect for others as well as self-respect. The concept of Hiri-Ottappa is central to both moral and social conduct. Hiri means a feeling of shame to commit misdeeds and ottappa means fear to do evil. Such attitudes are installed in the young monastic schools' pupils to regulate their moral and manners. Today, moral education also is part of the curriculum of state schools. In this way, in monastic schools, lessons in morality are as important as learning to read, write and do sums with the goal of letting the people become virtuous and well-behaved citizens under the guidance of The Lord Buddha. Hence, we can see clearly that Monastic Schools play an important role in Myanmar.

CONCLUSION

**CHAPTER-6**  
**CONCLUSION**

## CONCLUSION

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Myanmar is a Theravada Buddhist country, and it is located in South East Asia. Myanmar became a member of Association of South East Asia (ASEAN) on 23rd July 1997. Her neighboring countries are China, India, Bangladesh, Laos and Thailand. According to Myanmar tradition, it is said that Buddha himself had arrived in Myanmar during his life time. For that matter, it is very hard to say whether true or false. However, if we say that Buddhism had arrived in Thaton that is located in lower Myanmar in third century B.C during the reign of the king Asoka of India, nobody can deny this statement because two Buddhist missionary monks, Thera Sona and Thera Uttara sent by the king Asoka had already arrived in Thaton since third century for the dispensation of Buddha's doctrine. On account of King Asoka's contribution and zealous mission of Thera Sona and Uttara from India, Buddhism had widely flourished at Thaton, in lower Myanmar. In other words, it could be said that Thaton was the first center of Buddhist education in Myanmar by seeing the historical evidence.

According to Burmese tradition, Buddhism had reached that country during the life-time of the Buddha himself. This may or may not be true but it had certainly reached Thaton in the third century BC at the time of Asoka, the first Buddhist Emperor of India. Thera Sona and Thera Uttara were the two missionaries deputed by Asoka to preach the Dhamma in Suvannabhumi (Suvarnabhumi), including Thaton, a trading centre in lower Burma. From the first century onward, trade between India and Burma expanded and there was increased contact with India. As more Buddhist missionaries arrived people. In due course, Thaton became a centre of Buddhist learning and culture.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, although Theravada Buddhism had arrived in Thaton, lower Myanmar in third century B.C, its teaching could not introduce to Bagan kingdom in Upper Myanmar until ten century A.D. As regard the religion practiced in Bagan, before Theravada Buddhism was introduced, people were influenced by Tantric

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<sup>1</sup> D.C Ahir, *The Great Buddhist Kings of Asia*, Buddhist World Press, India, 2011, p, 39 (Hereafter cited as Ahir, *The great Buddhist Kings of Asia*)

practice which is completely opposite of Theravada's doctrine. It could be clearly understood by seeing the following passages what religious sect dominated Bagan kingdom before Theravada Buddhism arrived.

While Theravada Buddhism continued to flourish in lower Burma, Bagan in upper Burma was in the eleventh century in the grip of a degenerated form of Mahayana Buddhism, mixed with Tantric practices. Its priests, called Aris resorted to all sorts of immoral practices and encouraged animal sacrifices.<sup>2</sup> Theravada Buddhism fortunately was introduced to Bagan by the mission of Ashin Arahan in eleven century A.D. In relation to history of Ashin Arahan missionary in Bagan, it is said that one day a hunter had found Ashin Arahan in the forest near Bagan, and then he brought Ashin Arahan to the palace where king Anawrahta lived. Ashin Arahan was asked by king Anawrahta on arriving of the palace. He then replied to the king that he was a Buddhist monk from Thaton, Mon kingdom and preached a sermon to the king. Anawrahta, the king of Bagan, after hearing true teachings of the Buddha from Ashin Arahan, was delighted in his mind on Buddhism. From then on, he became a Buddhist, and asked Ashin Arahan to dwell in his kingdom for the propagation of the noble teaching of the Buddha.

It is said that one day a hunter found an ascetic, 'with a shaven head and yellow robe' in the forest near Bagan. Knowing that king Anawrahta was interested in such holy men, he took him to the king's presence. When questioned by the king, the wandering ascetic told the king that he was a Buddhist monk from Thaton where the Dhamma flourishes. He also explained to the king the noble teachings of the Buddha. Satisfied with the profound teachings of the Buddha, King Anawrahta accepted Theravada Buddhism, and requested the monk to stay at Bagan and preach the Dhamma in his kingdom.<sup>3</sup>

King Anawrahta heard of from Ashin Arahan that there were holy texts in Thaton; that was why, he sent his minister to king Manuha of Thaton for asking for Theravada holy texts. In this case, D.C. Ahir, mentioned in the book of Great Buddhist Kings of Asia as follows. Ashin Arahan informed him that the holy texts as well as some sacred relics were available at Thaton. Keen to have the sacred

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Ahir, *The Great Buddhist Kings of Asia*, p. 40

scriptures, Anawrahta immediately sent one of his ministers to Manuha, king of Thaton, asking for the scriptures and the relics. But the later refused to give the same saying that ‘it is not befitting to despatch the Pitaka and the scared relics to a place of wrong view likes yours’’. Infuriated by this refusal, Anawrahta set out with his army to conquer Thaton. Manuha was defeated and captured. Consequently, thirty sets of Pitakas (texts of the scriptures) were carried away from Thaton to Bagan on ‘thirty-two white elephants. Anawrahta not only took scriptures to Bagan but he also took the king and his family as well as a large number of skilled workmen of Thaton, both artisans and artists, to his own capital.<sup>4</sup>

Monks and monasteries that later came up depended on donations by lay Buddhists and became great promoters of education. A monk went around the village for instance for alms food, and monasteries to give them shelter were built with donations by the people of the village, town or neighbourhood concerned. In return, it was the compulsory duty of monks to spread the word for Buddhism among his congregation. A monk was often invited for meals in their houses where he would give instruction on the Fifth, or Eighth or Tenth Precepts and preach a sermon on morality, wisdom etc.: He had to officiate at funerals if invited or oversee noviciation ceremony of the son of the house; and when a boy on reaching his teens entered the monastery as a novice he was taught to read and recite and later write, whatever sermon he has taught. In olden days, such boys would stay for quite a lengthy period of time to learn to read and write probably became customary practice. Thus, began the monastic system of education in Myanmar, with monks and monasteries as the source of education.

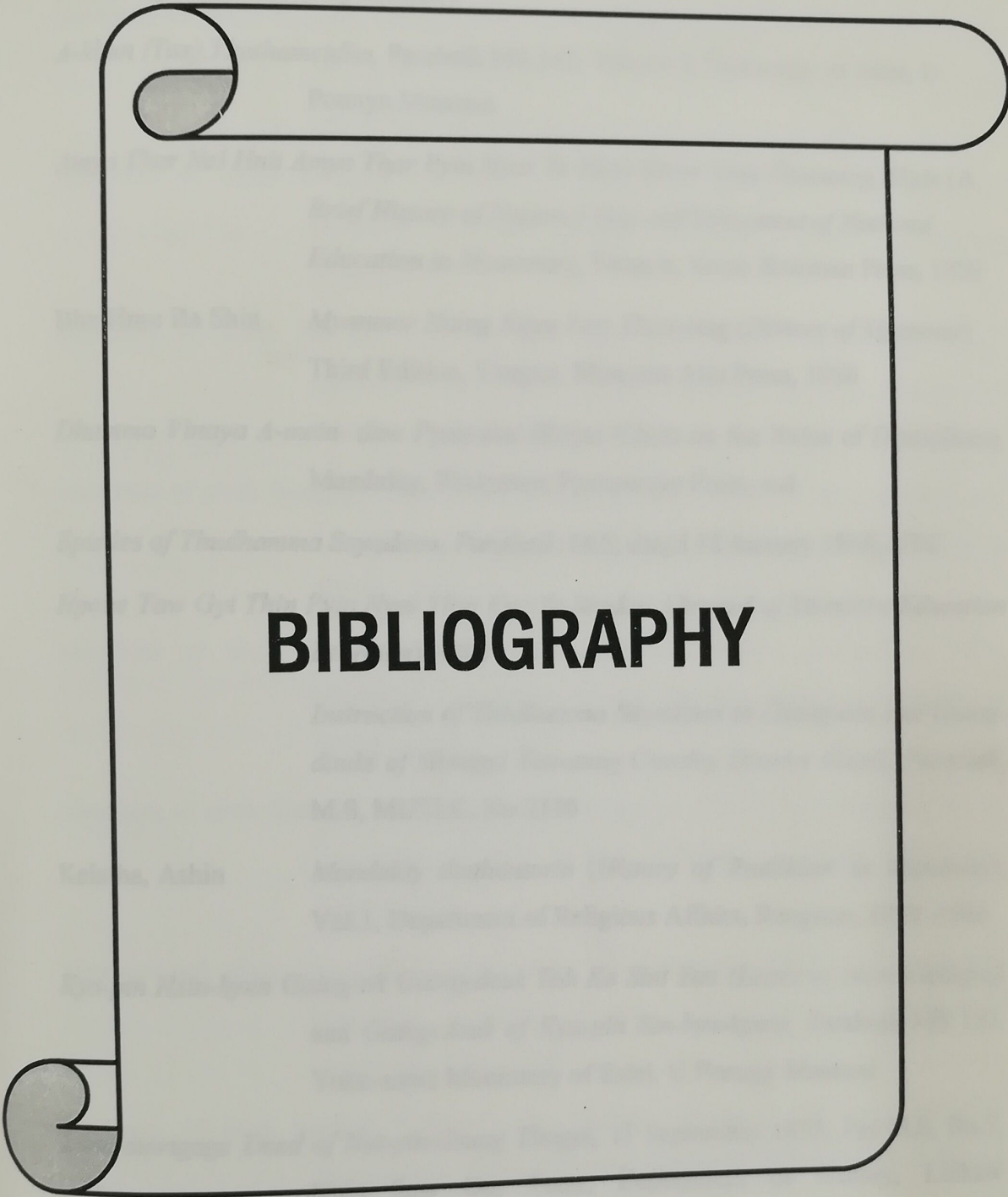
The monks who were literate provided education to Myanmar children and the lay people provided alms food and the four requisitions, such as food, robes, medicine and monasteries. The monastery building itself was donated by the village people who made contributions according to their means.

In some cases, a wealthy villager would donate the cost of the whole building and other would contribute what they could in cash and materials for the upkeep of the monastery and the monks. Buddhist monks with their vows of poverty depended entirely on the people’s generosity. But they in turn looked after the spiritual welfare

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid

of the people and their most understanding service was the teaching of the scriptures to the young and training them to develop *pañña* (wisdom), *sila* (morality) and *Samadhi* (integrity and concentration of mind). The outstanding service provided by the monks and monasteries can never be overestimated. In fact Myanmar as a nation owes a great gratitude to the *Sanghas*. Myanmar culture as a whole – its literature, art, morals and manners- was shaped and created by the education provided by the monastic system of education.



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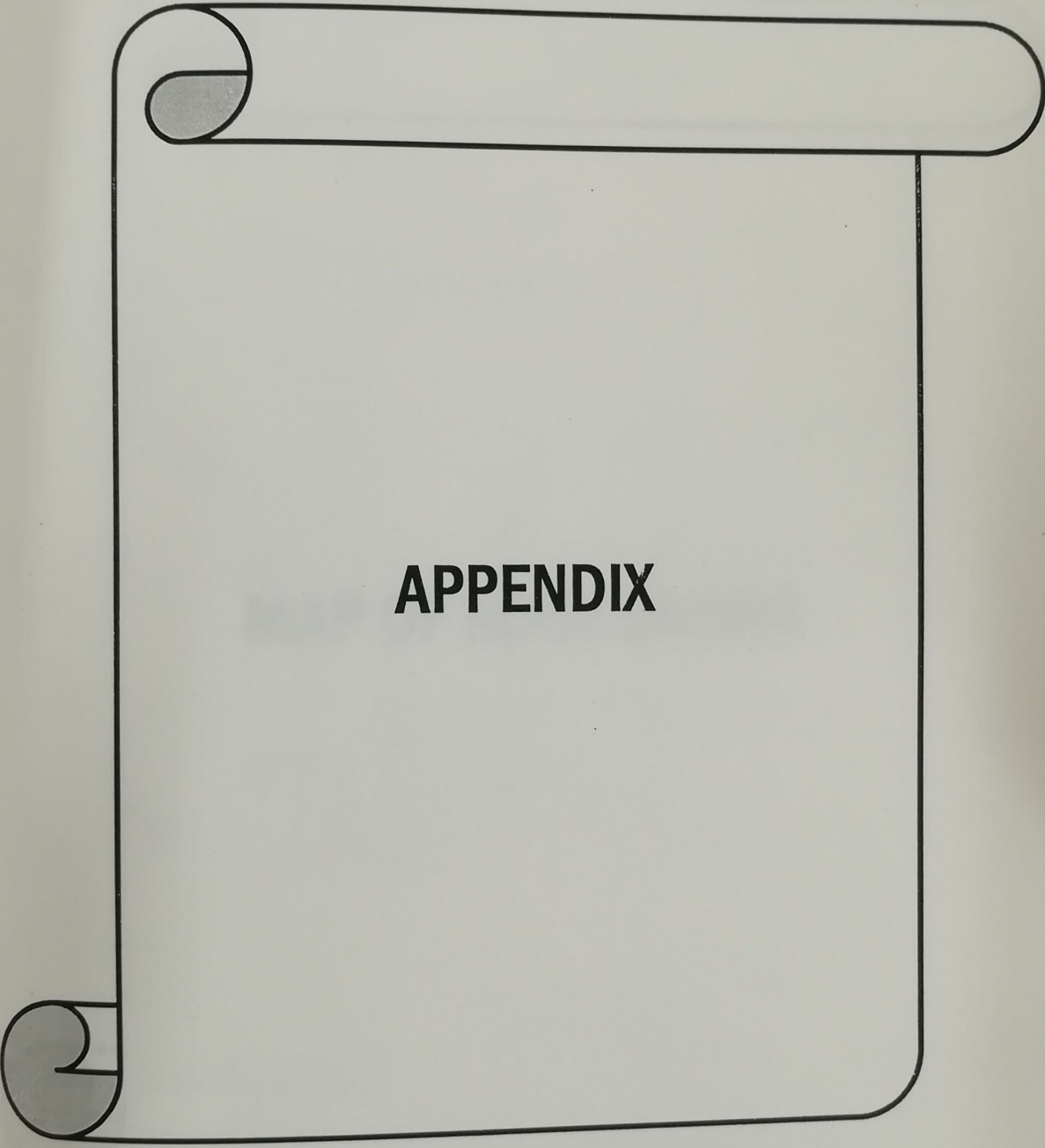
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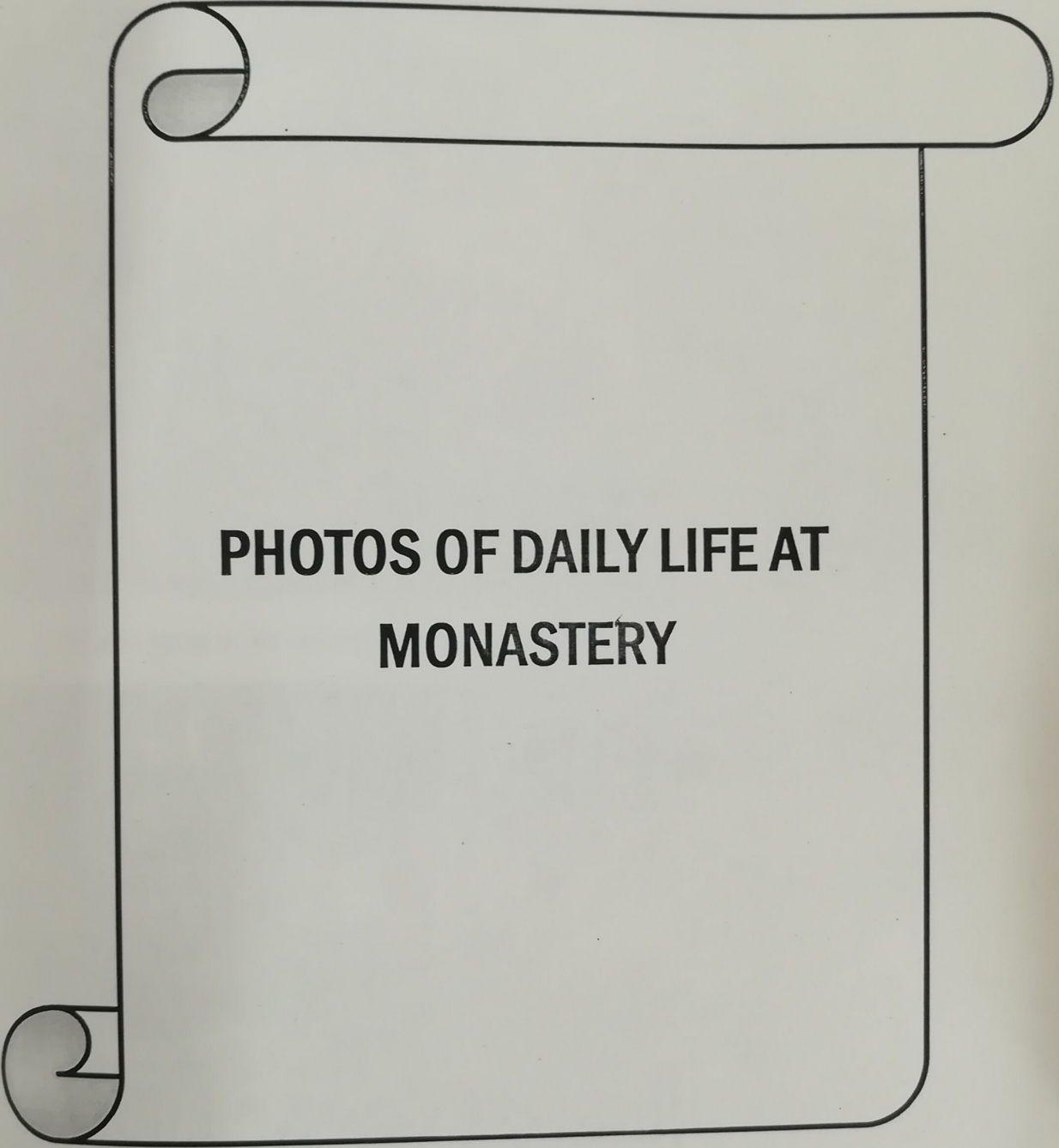


**APPENDIX**

A hand-drawn scroll frame with a title in the center. The scroll is drawn with a simple black line, featuring a rolled-up top edge and a rolled-up bottom edge. The title is centered within the scroll's frame.

**MAP OF KONE BAUNG**





**PHOTOS OF DAILY LIFE AT  
MONASTERY**



Monks going to the shrine hall



Monks paying homage to Lord Buddha



Monks doing meditation



Learning the Tipitaka



Round for alms food



Praying for donors before eating



Monks eating together Monks and Nuns



Giving Examination in Monastery



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## CONTENT

▶▶▶ प्राथमिक शिक्षा का विकास एवं सरकार के प्रयास डॉ० सीमा पाण्डेय	: 110-114
▶▶▶ सूत्र बाइमय का रचनाकाल : एक अवलोकन डॉ० ध्यानेन्द्र नारायण ढूँड़े	: 115-117
▶▶▶ नकल अध्यादेश की समाप्ति में मुलायम सिंह का योगदान तथा शिक्षा व्यवस्था डॉ० शशिकान्त शर्मा त्रिपाठी	: 118-120
▶▶▶ नयी कविता का आन्दोलन उसकी विकास यात्रा डॉ० ज्योति मिश्रा	: 121-124
▶▶▶ माध्यमिक स्तर के शिक्षक-शिक्षिकाओं की संवेगात्मक बुद्धि एवं अनुभवित कार्य दबाव स्तर का अध्ययन डॉ० मीरू सिंह	: 125-129
▶▶▶ कोल विद्रोह : एक ऐतिहासिक अध्ययन रोहित कुमार	: 130-133
▶▶▶ TRENDS OF FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT INFLOWS IN INDIA SINCE 1991 Dr. Rajni Kant Ojha	: 134-139
▶▶▶ पुराणों में अचोर पथ डॉ० आशुतोष विजयन	: 140-142
▶▶▶ भारतीय एवं आधुनिक परिप्रेक्ष्य में समग्र व्यक्तित्व की संकल्पना: एक तुलनात्मक अध्ययन Ms. Mevash Parmar	: 143-159
▶▶▶ युक्रनीति सार में परिलक्षित सामन्तवाद डॉ० सतीश कुमार वर्मा	: 160-164
▶▶▶ AN ASSESSMENT OF FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENTS ON INDIAN ECONOMY Isha Baranwal	: 165-175
▶▶▶ शिक्षासावस्था में दी जाने वाली शिक्षा का उनके सर्वांगीण विकास में योगदान : संजय कुमार सोनकर	: 176-180
▶▶▶ प्राचीन भारत में द्वितीय नगरीकरण का स्वरूप, विकास एवं उसका संदर्भ दीपक कुमार	: 181-186
▶▶▶ UNDERSTANDING CIVIL SOCIETY Ram Praveesh Pal	: 187-195
▶▶▶ MONASTIC EDUCATION IN MYANMAR (BURMA) Thaw Bana	: 196-206
▶▶▶ देशी रियासतों के एकीकरण में सप्टार पटेल का योगदान रमेशकर यादव	: 207-209
▶▶▶ कथक नृत्य एवं तुमरी का सम्बन्ध अंकित मिश्र	: 210-212
▶▶▶ आधुनिक काल और दलित कविता सूर्य प्रकाश	: 213-216
▶▶▶ उत्तर बांग्लावस्था में अवसाद व आक्रामकता : एक मनोवैज्ञानिक अध्ययन डॉ० शालिनी सोनी	: 217-222

## MONASTIC EDUCATION IN MYANMAR(BURMA)

### Abstract

In Myanmar Monastic Education is essential and teaching technique is so significant, for those who want to learn education based on Pali Language and Myanmar literacy. It bases on Buddhism has flourished in Myanmar since the eleventh century. Many Buddhist monasteries have provided Buddhist education. Myanmar is one of the countries with high literacy rates because of monastic education which the Theravada Buddhism leads everyone to carry out his welfare and prosperity freely based on his own Kamma, wisdom and effort. Since over one thousand years ago, the people of Myanmar have taken refuge in pure Theravada Buddhism with firm confidence and conviction. In the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the Theravada Buddhism was introduced in Bagan of Myanmar by Ashin Arahana and King Anawratha. Monastic education spread throughout the kingdom. In the Ava dynasty which was known as the golden era for Myanmar literacy, the teaching system of monastic education was changed by Venerable Maharatthasara. The Fifth Buddhist council was held in 1871 at Mandalay. The contents of thirty-one books were inscribed on marble slabs by King Mindon. The Sixth Buddhist Synod was held in 1954 at Yangon. The purpose of this topic is to elaborate four steps: the first is an elaboration on Theravada Buddhism and Monastic education in Myanmar, the second is development of Buddhist monasteries and Monastic education in Myanmar and the third is the significance of monastic education, the fourth is benefits of monastic education.

**Keywords:** Monastic Education, Buddhist monasteries, Theravada Buddhism, education system, Buddhist council, contemporary society.

### Introduction

Nathivijjī Ēsamamittam, na ca byadhissamopuri,

Na ca attasampemam, na ca kammamambalam.<sup>1</sup>

In this world, there is no friend like learning. There is no enemy like disease. There is no lover like oneself. There is no strength equal to one's kamma.<sup>2</sup>

Friendship is not equal in value to knowledge; there is no enemy like sickness; no love is equal to self-love; no power equal to moral merit.<sup>3</sup>

Education alone helps and supports man. There is no enemy greater than disease. There is no love equal to the love of oneself. Kamma is one's own strength. If one is educated, one's education of life will be good. Kamma is what man has to depend on and what man has to rely on. What good or bad one does in this existence and what he did in the

former existences determine the condition of one's present life.<sup>4</sup>

In this world, the most important thing for all human beings is education. Education is one's like ears and eyes. If one has no eyes or ears, one will not be able to participate in social affairs. In the same way, one has no education will not be able to participate in social affairs.

The attitude regarding learning and studying in ancient Myanmar was identical with the above verse from *Lokamiti*. The mind is like an empty vessel at the time of a human's birth, it keeps developing as the human grows with knowledge and experiences learnt from life. Parents are eager for their children to learn and study to building up their ability to improve their social level otherwise to fill the empty vessel of the mind with knowledge. Learning is a never ending process which starts with the birth of mankind and it will go as long as mankind exists. It does not indicate to particular things, subject or place, in the same way, there is no time, limit or age for it. Yet learning for employment and for survival of life has an exact limit of education. In this contemporary world, education for employment is a basic principle which is followed everywhere. Everyone understands that a person with degree gets better chance for a job than without. A person with higher degree will get better salary than a normal one. At this juncture, schools become vested ground where everyone can gain education.

To effectuate human Community, the improvement of human resource is significant as human power can achieve everything. In building up this improvement for the good of many otherwise capable and useful citizens, education is the essential key which opens the door to a better and well-disciplined community. From this, it cannot be denied that everyone needs education. Making education free and accessible for everyone based on compassion is the theme of all Buddhist Monastic Schools. They provide not only free education together with ethical improvement but also food and shelter at no cost especially for children from needy families and orphans. Buddhist monastic education was still alive after arrival of Theravada Buddhism in Myanmar as one of the Buddhist contributions to society. Therefore, Buddhist Monastic education stands not only great expectation of royals and rich but also poor and indigent families.

### Theravada Buddhism and Monastic education in Myanmar

Since over one thousand years ago, the people of Myanmar have taken refuge in pure Theravada Buddhism with firm confidence and conviction. The Theravada Buddhism leads everyone to carry out his welfare and prosperity freely based on his own Kamma, wisdom and effort. On the other hand, it reminds and prohibits everyone to avoid evil conduct and evil speech which can cause harm to the human society. Moreover, everyone must dutifully perform his duties related to the society, to the State and to the nation, including oneself, one's family and one's relatives.

Education in Myanmar was carried on from the time of the Introduction of Buddhism in Myanmar before the 10<sup>th</sup> century by the Buddhist monks in their Buddhist monasteries (Hpongyee-Kyaung). There were also Lay School (Ain-Kyaung) which gave education to girls and little boys too young to go to the monastic schools. Higher learning with its

<sup>4</sup> U Tet Toe, *Lokamiti*, p 24.

<sup>1</sup> *Lokamiti*, Verse - 23.

<sup>2</sup> U Tet Toe, *Lokamiti*, p 24.

<sup>3</sup> James Gray, *Ancient proverbs and maxims from Burmese sources; or, the Niti Literature of Burma*, (1886), P. 6.

necessary adjunct of primary education has had a continuous existence in the whole of Myanmar from the 11<sup>th</sup> century onwards.<sup>5</sup>

The main aim is to provide religious culture and not to prepare the pupils for worldly success in the narrow sense. The three main influences in Monastery education were those of the monastery environment (spacious and clean precincts, the buildings beautiful in shape and color), the monk teachers (a spiritual and intellectual guide), and the content of instruction (Pitaka in Pali with their Myanmar translation, arithmetic, astronomy, indigenous medicine, religious and moral portion of Myanmar literature, together with books written on dried palm leaves).<sup>6</sup>

The people of ancient Myanmar learned the basic education with respect to writing, reading and arithmetic and also the Buddha's teachings at monasteries and proceeded in the journey of their life; they were not separated from the Buddha's Teachings, and so, they were able to lead their life to peaceful and prosperous goal. For this reason, Myanmar has existed under self-rule peacefully for many years.

In 1885, Myanmar lost independence under the colonial rule for about a hundred years. During this period the Theravada Buddhism in Myanmar was on the decline as it lacked the support of the State, and the colonial government encouraged the spread of western culture and western religions.<sup>7</sup>

The Union of Myanmar regained independence and became a sovereign State again in 1948, just after World War II. Since that time, the authorities concerned made every endeavour to upgrade and promote Myanmar culture and religion which has been on the decline under the colonial rule. However, their effort was not successful as it should be, because of the long destructive civil war and the change in the education system from monastic education to modern education.

The Government of Myanmar is trying to build a modern, prosperous and peaceful nation with great effort, and it realizes the importance of Buddhism in the nation-building. If the people abide by the teachings of the Buddha and give a helping hand in the nation building, the objectives of rebuilding the country will be accomplished smoothly and rapidly.

Accordingly, now the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Union of Myanmar effectively supports the activities for propagation of Buddha's teachings throughout Myanmar. Especially the Ministry encourages the dissemination of Buddhism in hilly regions and border areas in which Buddhism could not flourish in the past. Moreover, the monastic education system that had faded away during the colonial period has been reintroduced into the country. Besides the Ministry of Religious Affairs has appointed some learned persons as advisers to the Ministry and requested them to write "Reader Text Books on the Teachings of

the Buddha" which can be studied easily by young people as well as adults. This is why, besides the Buddhist monastic schools provide supplementary education for needy children and orphans, filling a significant gap in the education system. They provide free lodging and free learning to the pupils regardless of their birth, rank, social status, race and gender. "We established a monastic school because we were worried that if the children didn't get an education, they would become street kids or irresponsible adults. We think we should give them a chance to study," said Sayadaw U Vilarsa, a founding monk of the Pyinnya Shwe Taung Post Primary Monastic School in Southern Zaiganai, Pegu. It is a really interesting history how Buddhist monastic education from the Pyu<sup>8</sup> dynasty has transformed time and again up to the present time. Basic education in Myanmar currently consists of five years of primary education, four years of lower secondary education and two years of upper secondary education. In effect, a child receives 11 years of schooling (grade 1 to 11) before entering tertiary education. Kindergarten or grade 1 is taken to be part of the primary education cycle making it a de facto 'standard one'. A Myanmar child starts his or her schooling at five years of age and takes his or her matriculation examination at 16 years of age.

#### Development of Buddhist Monasteries and Monastic Education in Myanmar

Myanmar literacy education is originated in Buddhist monasteries. It is an old education system with a very long history. High literacy rate in Myanmar is creditable to the widespread monastic education. Monasteries are well supported by the state and the public. Monks, teachers impart secular and religious knowledge to the pupils. The secular knowledge comprises literacy, numeracy, grammar, literature, history, astrology, alchemy, etc. and religious knowledge includes scriptures, *Tipitaka*, Buddhist literature, philosophy, meditation, etc.

#### Bagan Period

Theravada Buddhism was introduced to Bagan of Myanmar by Shin Arahana and King Anawratha in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Since it was introduced to Myanmar, Theravada Buddhism has exerted a profound influence on Myanmar's daily life. It spread throughout the kingdom and monastic education flourished in the entire domain. Teachers are Monks who teach knowledge, preach dhamma and propagate Theravada Buddha Sasana. The schools provided important education needs throughout Myanmar's history and they were the only source of education for lives ranging from royal princes to unskilled workers and poor person.

In the Bagan dynasty (1044-1287 ME),<sup>9</sup> monastic education had two parts; *Tipitaka* learning in *Pali* and other secular knowledge comprises literacy, numeracy, grammar, literature, history, astrology, alchemy, etc., in Sanskrit. The aim of monastic education on that age is to value the Triple Gems, to propagate the three kinds of *Sasana*<sup>10</sup>, to attain *Nibbana*

<sup>5</sup> Hla Tun Aung, The study of processes and patterns, National center for human resource development, Myanmar: Ministry of education, 2003.

<sup>6</sup> U Kaung, A survey of the History of Education in Burma before the British conquest and after, Journal of Burma research society, vol. xvi, 1929, 1963.

<sup>7</sup> The Department for the Promotion and Propagation of the Sasana translation officers Group, *The Teaching of the Buddha*, (Basic Level), Yangon, Myanmar: Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2001.

<sup>8</sup> Pyu is a kind of Tibet-Myanmar tribe lived at the border of Yunnan at the beginning of 1<sup>st</sup> century. At the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, they migrated to the Ayarwaddy river basin of Myanmar. Their cultural and civilization was at the peak during 3<sup>rd</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>9</sup> Than Htut, History of Buddhist Monastic Schools in Myanmar, Yangon,

<sup>10</sup> Pariyatti (learning and teaching the Dhamma), Patipatti (practicing the Dhamma) and Pativedha (liberation)

and to be able to read and write in Pali and Sanskrit scriptures. Pedagogy is emphasized on memorizing by heart.

### From Pinya to Nyaung Yang Period

The main aim of Monastic education had changed from the Pinya dynasty up to Nyaung Yang dynasty (1287- 1752 ME)<sup>11</sup>. To value not only the Triple Gems but also parents and teachers, to well restrain in bodily, verbally and mentally, to have strong morality and to be fluent in other mundane subjects such as mathematics, history, law, etc. In the Ava dynasty which was known as the golden era for Myanmar literacy, the pedagogy of monastic schools is changed by Ashin Maharathasaraand that pedagogy is regarded as the best instructions for learners until now. According to it, a student must follow the eight rules in studying.

- (1) *Suneyya* (listening carefully)
- (2) *Cinteyya* (thinking)
- (3) *Puccheyya* (questioning)
- (4) *Bhaseyya* (discussing)
- (5) *Vicareyya* (analyzing)
- (6) *Likheyya* (taking note)
- (7) *Sikkheyya* (practicing)
- (8) *Dhareyya* (learning by heart)

At that long period, depending on the political situations, the economic, the education and the social of country was rise and fall.

### Kone Baung Period and British Colonial Time

In Kone Baung period, the political situation was complex and there were wars with British Empire. The curriculum of monastic education added western knowledge and King Mintone send young people to study in aboard. It is the first step to acquire of learning from western country. During 1824 - 1885 ME, it was the colonial age governed by British Empire. It is the starting of western education and appearing of different schools such as European schools, Western schools, Vernacular schools and Monastic schools. Monastic education has its origins in Pyu era but became popular in Bagan dynasty and for centuries played a major role in nurturing children with secular knowledge for living through the teaching of Buddhist literature. Even at the time of colonial occupation, the authorities permitted monastic education because they saw it as imparting moral values in students. After that, monastic schools become fade amongst the secular educations for a particular time being.

### Nowadays Monastic Education in Myanmar

Nowadays in Myanmar the Buddhist monastic schools mean "Ba Ka" schools. The

term "Ba Ka" is abbreviated form of Phonetavgyithin Pinyinryay Kyauing and Thilashinthin Pinyinryay Kyauing in Myanmar. There are aims and objectives of monastic education:

1. For the students, rich or poor, to be efficient in writing, reading and arithmetic like in basic education and modern-day education
2. To be affordable and easily accessible
3. To be good in character and become good sons and daughters who are willing to serve the public and the country
4. To understand Myanmar's traditional Buddhist culture and adopt it devotedly
5. To become good Buddhists who will willingly take responsibility of future Sasana after understanding and practice of Buddhist Teachings and culture
6. To be able to safeguard longevity of the nationalities, traditions and Buddha Sasana.

Monastic schools are administered by the Ministry of Religious Affairs' Department of Promotion and Propagation of Sasana. They are founded by monks and nuns and provides totally free education for everyone. This contribution of the *Sangha* to the contemporary society is recognized as socio-religious services of Buddhist monks and nuns. Even though government provides free education starting from 2015-2016 academic year, Ba Ka schools will still be vital and essential for poor and needy families because of three reasons:

1. Low-income families cannot afford additional cost in government schools;
2. In remote areas, there may not be government schools; and
3. For orphans, Ba Ka Schools give parental care and love.

They teach modern subjects as teaching in the government schools. Total number of these schools is 1,431 in 2010-2011 academic years. According to 2010-2011 academic year record, there are totally 215,202 students studying in monastic schools in different places. There are 12,075 novice students; 4,377 nun students; 104,062 boy students and 94,688 girl students in different states and divisions. Thousands of monks and nuns are working in free education services for the people.

For 2013-2014 academic years, the government supports Kyats (Myanmar currency) three billions (it is equal to 3,000,000 US \$ in current exchange rate) for paying salary for the teachers. Most teachers either monastic members or lay teachers are actually volunteering without any payments. In some schools, they get 38,000 to 50,000 (38 to 50 US \$) per month. The department of religious affairs under which Ba Ka Schools are running states that in 2013/2014 academic years, there are totally 1,579 Ba Ka Schools consisting of 1,136 primary level schools, 329 secondary level schools, 112 middle level schools and 2 high schools.

<sup>11</sup> Pinya dynasty, Sagaing dynasty, Taunggyu dynasty, Ava dynasty and Nyaung Yang dynasty.

### **The Significance of Buddhist Monastic Education**

In Theravada Buddhism monastic education is very significant because children are taught to the Buddha's Teaching mainly by monk teachers. In Buddhist literatures, children play an important role for the realization of the truth, preservation and propagation of Buddhist teachings. It can be found that there are many children enter to *Sangha* order and many of them realize the truth. Besides, the Buddha also gives special attention to children and he recognizes children as social units for better world and peaceful society. Teaching to children, therefore become a part of Buddha's life.

The Buddha said in Dighanikaya

*"Silapannanacapanā Bhikkhava Lokasmim Aggamakkhayaṇi"*<sup>12</sup>

O monks! Morality and wisdom are called the best in the world.

According to the Buddha's teaching, there are two kinds of *Sila* (Morality) in the Buddhism; they are *Caritā Sila* and *Varitā Sila*. The Buddha preached the *Singalovada Sutta* with the intention to show up the *Caritā Sila* for lay people. *Caritā Sila* means abiding by the rules of conduct and performing one's duties and responsibilities. In *Singalovada Sutta*, the Buddha described the rules of conduct or duties for sons and daughters, for parents, for pupils, for teachers, for husbands and wives, for friends, etc. Nowadays, phenomenal material progress a lot in the world but not in spiritual wellbeing. Therefore, everyone need today is a code of ethics and morality which will guide them to the way of peaceful and purification of their mind. In Buddhism, the Buddha taught in Dhammapada

*"Sabbapappaasaakaranam, kusalassaupasampada*

*Sacittapariyodapanam, etambuddhanasasanam"*<sup>13</sup>

1. To refrain from all evil,
2. To do what is good,
3. To purify the mind.

In this verse, "To purify the mind" is a need of nowadays people. The only way to purify one's mind is observing *Sila* (morality). We don't need to find the way how to purify the mind, just only walk along on the way which was already laid down and lighted up by the Lord Buddha. Morality can control one words and actions. It can make us good ladies and good gentleman in the worldly wise sense. At this juncture, Buddhist monastic schools pay attention in the morality or ethical practices of students.

Furthermore, there are many rules concerned with respecting of old aged people and acting polite manners. For example, one should respect one's parents, teachers, elders and monks. One should bend one's body forward when one passes in front of them. One should not eat first before they start to eat, etc. This *Sila* can bring harmony between human beings

<sup>12</sup>Digha Nikaya. Vol. I, p. 116-117.

<sup>13</sup>Dhammapada, Verse No. 138.

and can maintain the good in social community. Regarding with *Varitā Sila*, five precepts<sup>14</sup> are instructed to practice and apply in daily life. This *Sila* is not concern with social life but only for purification of your mind. It prevents one from doing immoral actions and unwholesome things.

Apart from modern subjects prescribed in the government schools, Buddhist monastic school teach fundamental Buddhist teachings such as the chronicle of the *Buddha*, *Mangala Sutta*, *Singalovada Sutta*, *Lokaniti*, *Abhidhamma*, and meditation techniques etc. These fundamental Buddhist teachings aim and focus on personal development in cultivating moral, educational and behavioral management. The Buddha delivered all moral virtues into thirty-eight rules<sup>15</sup> in *Mangala Sutta*. If these *Mangalas* are practiced, one can become a good human being for his country, for his family and also for his life.

### **Benefits of Monastic Education**

Education of Myanmar based on the teachings of the Buddha provided by Buddhist monasteries are likewise a pond with clear and cold water for a thirsty person as well as a great Buddhist contribution to the society. Basically, the *Sangha* organization totally relies on laity for its worldly needs: food, clothing, shelter and medicine. As the benefits earning through Buddhist monastic education, there were lack of crime and rule of law and justice prevail in the whole country and the nation reached the highest stage of peaceful society.

### **Conclusion**

*"Natthivijjāsamammittam"*<sup>16</sup>

*Friendship is not equal in value of knowledge;*

Education alone helps and supports man to perform so. "Education means in Buddhism, bringing knowledge and skills to a person, enabling him to translate such knowledge and skills to appropriate situations in life- finally, developing discipline, insight and wisdom."<sup>17</sup>

Therefore, Buddhist monastic education free and accessible for everyone based on compassion and loving-kindness is incomparable contributions of Buddhist monks and nuns

<sup>14</sup> Abstaining from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and from using drinks and drugs  
<sup>15</sup> non-association with fools, association with wise, honoring those worthy of honor, residence in an appropriate place, having merits in the past, keeping oneself in the right course, vast knowledge, skill in art and handicraft, good learning in moral discipline, having well-spoken word, attention to one's parents, support of one's parents and children, performance of un-conflicting, doing charity, practice of Dhamma, supporting of relatives,

non-negligence of blameless actions, avoidance of evil thought, avoidance of evil speech, avoidance of intoxicants, gratitude, timely listening to the Dhamma, being respectful, having humbleness, having contentment, knowing timely discussion of the Dhamma, being tolerance, obedience, meeting of noble persons or monks, realization of Nibbana, self-restraint, leading a noble life, having insight into the four noble truths, having peace of mind.

<sup>16</sup>Lokaniti, Verse - 23.

<sup>17</sup>Ratnapala, Nandasena, *Buddhist Sociology*, Delhi, Sri Satguru Publication, 1993, p. 177.

in Society Myanmar. It leads to the improvements of human resources which are the fundamental need for a country as well as to the peaceful society.

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ग्रामीण विकास में प्रौद्योगिकी की भूमिका डॉ० ओम प्रकाश सिंह	: 1-5
राष्ट्रीय स्वामिान के पक्षधर भूषण डॉ० सुभाष शर्मा	: 6-15
नर-निष्पक्षित सम्प्रदायों का प्रत्यक्ष प्रो० संजीव कुमार गुप्ता	: 16-20
डॉ० प्रमोद कुमार त्रिपाठी	
लघु उद्योग एवं ग्रामीण विकास डॉ० प्रमोद कुमार त्रिपाठी	: 21-25
सिद्धेयी पुष्पा का साहित्य डॉ० निरंकर राम त्रिपाठी	: 26-28
परिणामों का विश्लेषण एवं व्याख्या डॉ० सरिता मिश्रा	: 29-35
देवरिया जन्मद के लघु उद्योगों के वित्तीय स्रोत डॉ० अशोक शर्मा	: 36-41
भारतीय संगीत परम्परा में राग-रागिनी पद्धति प्रियका	: 42-47
भारतीय भारत में आर्थिक विकास : एक संक्षिप्त अध्ययन शाशिकांत यादव	: 48-55
गोपी दास आधुनिकतावाद की आलोचना : एक अध्ययन निवेदिता सिंह	: 56-62
RIGHT TO FOOD IN INDIA: ISSUES AND CONCERNS Mahendra Kumar Gautam	: 63-73
नारी जीवन का सत्य डॉ० अंजू	: 74-80
महात्मा गांधी का शिक्षा दर्शन डॉ० संजय कुमार	: 81-86
EFFECT OF MARITAL FERTILITY, MARITAL STRUCTURE AND AGE : STRUCTURE ON CHANGE IN CBR OF KERALA Akshitha Yadav	: 87-93
T.B Singh Minalakshi Yashwakarma Navin Kumar	
Ausaf Ahmad	
भारतीय शिक्षा परम्परा में अनुशासन शिवाल कुमार जयसवाल	: 94-101
हिमाचल प्रदेश के कुल्लू जन्मद में स्थित शिव एवं शक्ति मंदिर डॉ० आनन्द कुमार शर्मा	: 102-107
भारतीय साहित्य के प्रतिष्ठित का महाकाव्य 'रामायण' में भारतीय संगीतशास्त्र की महत्ता : गायन के विशेष सन्दर्भ में शुषि रमणध्याय	: 108-113
हिन्दी की दलित आत्मकथा एवं संघर्ष पूजा सोनकर	: 114-123
EFFECTIVENESS AND BENEFITS OF BUDDHIST MONASTIC EDUCATION IN MYANMAR Thaw Bana	: 124-131

## EFFECTIVENESS AND BENEFITS OF BUDDHIST MONASTIC EDUCATION IN MYANMAR

### Abstract

Since the eleventh century Buddhism has flourished in Myanmar. Reliable historical evidences show that the people of Myanmar have always lived peacefully according to the Buddhist teachings, the Buddhist view and the Buddhist culture. In olden days the children in Myanmar traditionally learned the Buddhist literature and culture in monasteries. Historical evidences point out that even in the Pyu era, which is earlier than the Pagan era, both boys and girls, from 7 to 20 years of age, had their heads shaven and stayed in monasteries to acquire monastic education. Nowadays the state is giving support for the revival of monastic education. Many Buddhist monasteries have provided Buddhist education. Myanmar is one of the countries with high literacy rates because of monastic education. The Fifth Great Buddhist Council was held in 1871 at Mandalay. The contents of thirty-one books were inscribed on marble slabs by King Mindon. The Sixth Great Buddhist Council was held in 1954 at Yangon. The purpose of this paper is to explore briefly the appearance and development of Theravada Buddhism in Myanmar and effective benefits of the Buddhist Monastic Education in Myanmar.

*Key words:* Theravada Buddhism, Great Buddhist Council, Monastic education, Monasteries and Buddhist literature.

### Introduction

Laying down the foundation firmly is the basic need to build a great grand building. The long endurance of that building depends on its foundations. In the great grand building of the Buddha Sasana, monastic education based on the Pali Texts is the basic foundations. The genuine Pali Texts of the Buddha's Teachings have already existed in Myanmar. The Myanmar culture, language, literature and tradition have the Buddha's Teachings as their base. They will fade out when the Buddhist doctrines fade out. Knowing this fact, the government has been holding the dhammacariya examinations, the pathamapyan examinations and the likes. Moreover, the bhikkhus

and the nuns who passed these examinations have been awarded worthily by the government and the people. In addition, the examinations of Tipitakadhara and the five Nikayas, the Visuddhimagga and the Abhidhamma exams for laity, and the basic examination of Buddhist culture for children have been held annually. Therefore, monastic education based on Buddhism is essential thing for Myanmar people.

### Arriving Theravada Buddhism in Myanmar

Over 2600 years ago, the Buddha attained Enlightenment in India as well known the Middle Region, Majjhimadesa and expounded the Dhamma for forty-five years. Owing to the Dhamma taught by the Buddha, many human beings, devas and brahmas were liberated from the round of sufferings. As disciples of the Buddha generation after generation expounded the Dhamma, Buddhism has spread throughout the world. In this way, Buddhism was introduced into Myanmar and it has flourished here.

Theravada Buddhism, established and purified in Bagan era, has flourished though out Myanmar. The unity and national spirit of Myanmar citizens have been cultivated by Theravada Buddhism. As the Buddha's teachings have always brought about the welfare and prosperity of all Myanmar citizens, we should systematically study the complete history of Theravada Buddhism.

Long ago, before the Buddha appeared, there arose a battle in India, between the king Pancala and the Sakyan Kings of Devadaha, Kapilavatthu and Koliya. When the Sakyan kings were defeated in the battle, Abhiraja, a Sakyan king of Kapilavatthu fled his country and came into Myanmar together with his troops and retainues. When he reached Tagaung, he founded a new city naming it Sankassanago and lived there. The former residents of Tagaung and the Sakyan race of Majjhimadesa were the descendants of the same race called Tibeto Burman. Therefore, they could live together peacefully. The time when King Abhiraja founded Tagaung was 600 B.C.

### The Circumstance in Myanmar Before the Buddha Arose

According to the authentic records, at the time Tagaung was established in Upper Myanmar, the Pyus had settled in the eastern region, the Karyans in the

western region, and Thets in the northern region, and the Mons in the southern region in the valleys of the Ayeerwady, the Sittaung and the Thanlwin rivers.

According to discovered evidences the ancient fortified cities of Myanmar were situated thus: the city of Tagaung in the east bank of the Ayeerwady river in Upper Myanmar, the city of Vesali in northern Rakhine State of western Myanmar, the city of SuvaŌŌabhimi or Thaton in the coastal region of southern Myanmar, the city of SarekhetarĒ at the site of Hmawza village in eastern Pyay township, and the Pyu cities of Bissano, Pyu, Hanlin in central Myanmar.

The city of Tagaung, had already been founded before the Buddha attained Enlightenment. It is communicated to northern India by the mountain passes, Patkoi and Hukaung. Moreover, it is situated on the Silk Road connecting India and China. Therefore, Tagaung is the trading center between India and China. After the Tagaung citizens had associated with Sakyā Kings and their retinues, the Pali and Sanskrit names became popular. Being the citizens of India, they gave Pali and Sanskrit names to the cities, rivers and mountains in Myanmar after the names they had come across in India. Therefore, the names such as the Ayeerwady river, the Sallawady river, Sankassanago, Pancalarj, etc., came into existence.

#### **Introduced Buddhism into Myanmar**

The Buddha attained Enlightenment on the Aparajita throne at the foot of the Bodhi Tree in Uruvela Grove of India, in the year 103 Maha Era (600 B.C.). After attaining the Buddhahood, the Buddha enjoyed the blissful peace of Phalasamapatti for forty-nine days, seven days each at seven places, without taking any food. During the last seven-day period of Rajayatana Sattaha, the Buddha enjoyed the blissful peace of Phalasamapatti under the buchanialalifolia tree called Rajayatana.

At that time the two merchant brothers Tapussa and Bhallika, from UkkĪĒ Province together with five-hundred carts loaded with goods were travelling to Majjhimadesa for trade. They were guided by a deva, who was related to them in a past existence, to go to the Buddha for paying homage.

The two brothers offered the Buddha rice honey cake made of honey, butter and rice- powder. The Buddha accepted them with the alms-bowl offered by four

celestial kings (Catumaharajas) and ate them. The merchant brothers not only had a chance to offer the very first meal to the Buddha but they also had a chance to take refuge in the two Sacred Gems, the Buddha and the Dhamma. They were the very first devotees of the Buddha who took 4-refuge in the two Sacred Gems (DvevasikaSaranagamana). The disciples of the Buddhas (Samgha) had not appeared at that time and so they did not take refuge in the Samgha. Then they pleaded with the Buddha to give them something to be worshipped forever. Thus the Buddha touched his head with his right hand and gave them eight sacred hairs. It was the third waxing day of Wazo (July).

Then the brothers went back from Majjhimadesa to their native land, UkkalĒ, Suvannabhumi Division and reached there on the fifth waning day of Wakhauung (August) in the year 103 Maha Era. The King and the citizens welcomed them and venerated the sacred hairs of the Buddha. Then they built a shrine called Tigumbacetiya on the Singuttara Hill and enshrined the hair relics in it. That shrine is now known as the Shwedagon Pagoda in Myanmar.

The Buddha foresaw that his teachings would flourish there forever. Therefore, he himself gave his sacred hairs to the merchant brothers. This was the first and the most significant gift of the Buddha. These sacred hairs are symbols of the Buddha's Teachings and they will remain as long as the Buddha's Teachings exist.

These sacred hairs were given by the Buddha himself during his lifetime and so they are regarded as living hairs and called Sajjivakesadhātu in Pali. It is called Jivamanaka. The Shwedagon Pagoda is the very first pagoda built and venerated in the world.

#### **The Circumstance of Myanmar and The First Great Buddhist Council**

In the year 148 Maha Era (544 B.C.), three months and four days after the demise of the Buddha, the five hundred arahats headed by Venerable Mahakassapa Thera held the first Great Buddhist Council in Sattapaimi Cave Pavillion at Mt. Vebhara near the city of Rajagaha where the Alstoniascholaris tree grew. King Ajatasatthu gave support to that Council which lasted for seven months. At the successful completion of the first Great Buddhist Council, the Maha Era 148 was

written off and the Buddhist Era was established counting that year as 1, that is, the Buddhist Era began at the eighth year of the reign of King Ajatasatthu in Rajagaha, and the fifth year of the reign of King Jambudipadhaja in Tagaung. The two kings were contemporaries. At that time Buddhism flourished both in Tagaung and Vesali (Rakhine). Because India and Myanmar could be easily communicated by land and by sea, Buddhism spread easily from India to Myanmar.

#### **The Circumstance of Myanmar and The Second Great Buddhist Council**

One hundred years after the demise of the Buddha, there appeared ten unlawful modifications in the Rules of the Order (Adhammavayathu) which were the causes for the decline of the Buddha sasana. The Vajjian bhikkhus from Vesali preached and practised ten unlawful principles such as that "Bhikkhus could accept gold and money as offerings". They also tried to convince other bhikkhus to accept these unlawful principles as lawful principles. Therefore, Venerable Yasa, a disciple of Venerable Ananda, made attempts to correct these unlawful principles. Owing to his attempts, the arahats such as Venerable Revata, Venerable Sabbakami held a meeting at Valikarama monastery in Vesali. In order to purify the Buddha's teachings, they held the second Great Buddhist Council for eight months under the patronage of King Kalasoka. That was the tenth year of the reign of King Kalasoka in Vesali, Majjhimadesa. In Sri Ksetra, Myanmar, it was a year before the coronation of King Dvattabaung. King Kalasoka and King Dvattabaung were contemporaries.

#### **The Circumstance of Myanmar and The Third Great Buddhist Council**

The Third Great Buddhist Council was held at Asokarama Monastery in the city of Pataliputta, India in 235 B.E.(308 B.C). Sixty thousand ascetics infiltrated into the Samgha Order, polluted the Sasana by their corrupt lives and heretical views. That is the main reason why the Third Council washed by one thousand arahats in order to protect the Sasana. Venerable Mahamoggaliputta Tissa presided over the Third Great Buddhist Council. King Asoka gave the necessary support to the council. It lasted nine months. After the Third Council, nine missions were sent to nine different places to propagate the Sasana. The mission of five arahats to Suvannabhumi. Myanmar, was led by Venerable Sona Thera and Venerable Uttara Thera. That time was the eighteenth year of the reign of King Asoka in Pataliputta city of Majjhimadesa, India

and the twenty-first year of the reign of King Yanpaung in Sri Ksetra (Sarekhetara) of Myanmar. It was in the year 235 Buddhist Era.

#### **The Circumstance of Myanmar and The Fourth Great Buddhist Council**

In Sri Lanka (Ceylon), King Dutthagamani ascended the throne in 377 B.E. He built several sacred edifices such as Lohapasada monastery roofed with copper plates, also Maricavatti Shrine and monastery, and the great pagoda called Mahaceti for the prevalence of Buddhism. He gave away one thousand crores of coins in donation towards the Buddha's Teaching. In his reign, Theravada Buddhism flourished very well in Sri Lanka. It was recorded in Mahavamsa that the sixty thousand bhikkhus from Mount Kelasa monastery of Suvannabhumi (Thaton) Myanmar, went through space to the foundation laying ceremony of Mahaceti, the most prominent pagoda known as Suvannamali in Sri Lanka. Being Theravada Buddhist countries, Suvannabhumi and Sri Lanka had mutual relations since then.

In 450 B.E the fourth Great Buddhist Council was held and the Buddhist scriptures were inscribed on palm leaves. These scriptures were checked and edited for one hundred times. In 930 B.E. the Venerable MahaBuddhaghosa left south India for Sri Lanka and wrote new Pitaka commentaries in Magadha(Pali)language on the basis of Ceylonese commentaries. According to the Myanmar chronicle a Mon monk also named Buddhaghosa from Suvannabhumi went to Sri Lanka, brought the Pali commentaries to Myanmar and translated them into Mon Language.

#### **The Fifth Great Buddhist Council in Myanmar**

Theravada Buddhism, established during the Bagan Era continued to blossom in the age of Yatanabon, Mandalay. In 2395 B.E.(1214 Myanmar Era). King Mindon ascended the throne and held the fifth Great Buddhist Council with the noble aim of perpetuating Theravada Buddhism forever.

Commencing from the Myanmar month of Tazaungmon (November), in 2404 B.E (1222 M.E), the three Pitakas were inscribed on 729 marble slabs; Vinaya Pitaka was inscribed on 111 slabs, Abhidhamma Pitaka on 208 slabs, and Suttanta Pitaka on 410 slabs. This inscription work was finished on the fourteenth waxing day of Kason(May) in 1230 M.E. Later, when Myanmar lost her independence and became a colony of Britain, Theravada Buddhism declined.

### **The Sixth Great Buddhist Council in Myanmar**

When the Myanmar nationals struggled for independence, they had the intention to reform Myanmar with full development in nationality and religious affairs. After regaining independence in Myanmar, Buddhists held the sixth Great Buddhist Council at Mahapassana Great Sacred Cave, Kaba-Aye, Yangon, in 2498 Buddhist Era (1316 Myanmar Era, 1954 A.D). Two thousand and five hundred bhikkhus from five Theravada countries convened to recite and a scrutinize the Scriptures which were later spread v throughout the world. Those Pitaka scriptures are now accepted by scholars throughout the world as the purest Buddhist scriptures.

With the generous support of the government and the people of Myanmar and due to the energetic efforts of the Theras headed by the State Maha Nayaka, Buddhism flourishes in Myanmar. Grand and new religious buildings such as pagodas, and monasteries, are appearing everywhere within Myanmar. Two new great Sangha Universities, Pariyatti Sasana Takkasilas, and the International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University have been also established. Seven Tipitakadharatharas, who are well versed in Buddhism scriptures, and many other learned Buddhist monks have also appeared. These learned persons are striving for the propagation of Buddhism not only in the whole country including border areas but also throughout the world. Therefore, the Teachings of the Buddha is becoming much more developed and much more purified, and is spreading far and wide.

To sum up, the Myanmar Buddhists have always been living peacefully under the guidance of the Buddha's Teaching. They should take pride in the fact that they belong to a race that arose contemporaneously with the Buddha's Sasana. Accordingly, the present-day Myanmar Buddhists should also strive for the promotion and propagation of the Sasana as much as possible.

### **Effective benefits of the Buddhist Monastic Education**

It is the practical application of the Buddha's Teachings that every layman, monks and nuns depend on for their liberation from miseries. That practice is also known as the Threefold Training, namely Morality (Sila), Concentration (Samadhi) and Wisdom (Panna). The basic requirement of the practice is the learning of the

Buddha's Teachings and its result is the attainment of Magga, Phala and Nibbana. One can attain Magga, Phala and Nibbana only by practising according to the Buddha's Teachings.

That peace and happiness cannot be achieved by the physical progress alone have been demonstrated by the people of technically advanced countries. The moral progress is very essential to achieve true peace and happiness in life. The Buddha's Teaching can actually furnish the spiritual and moral progress to all human beings.

Therefore, every citizen should participate in the noble missionary work of propagating the Buddha's Sasana in the community as well as in the whole country so that all the people are spiritually and morally developed to enjoy peace and happiness to the fullest extent

### **Conclusion**

Buddhism and Buddhist institutions have deeply influenced the tangible and intangible aspects of Myanmar culture in general, daily life from cradle to grave in particular. Buddhist thoughts on living within one's own means and enjoying deathlessness, on protection of environment (planting shady trees and fruit trees for public use) providing drinking water on the road-sides, digging wells and ponds for public use etc. as meritorious deeds, establishment of peaceful and prosperous world etc. are invaluable teaching for mankind.

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### Instances where selected sources appear:

63