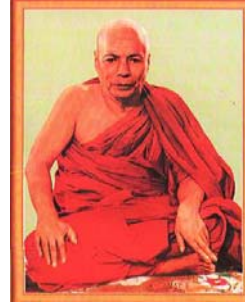


THE MOGOK SAYADAW

U Sway Tin

2000



Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammasambuddhassa

On the road to Mandalay in Myanmar, there is an older town, which its successor has caused it to be called the 'Southern City' or *Taung-myo*. Left sprawling amidst its thicket of tamarind trees, with houses, here and there beneath their spreading limbs, early settlers had seen it fit to plant them for shade in this once arid land. Its own name, sounding more Indian than Myanmar, perhaps was suggested by Brahmic soothsayers of Bodaw Bayin, the founder of *Amarapura*. Its people are now enjoying the shade that its thriving tamarinds have provided besides ripened fruit and tender leaves for its kitchens.

The people by tradition have been weavers of fine silk for the Court of Myanmar kings. Their looms needed much elbow room and as their industry grew, their town also grew along with add-ons to their homes. While the shuttles clicked and clacked under those roofs, outside there are sounds of childish shrieks as catcher caught flee-er who must now tag another. Sarong clad boys and girls wearing longyis short, so they, too, may outrun the boys. Their national garment is but a loop of woven cotton only needing a straight-line stitching and requires no elaborate tailoring nor wasting an inch of the cloth.

Kipling must have known this region as well as its clime. Perhaps stroked by the sun none too gently, he had dryly observed that only mad dogs and his fellow men go out in the noon-day sun. He was right about the heat.

All seasoned travelers have long promised themselves only to return there in the cool of November, when all scenes that meet the eye gave new hope Buddhist monks in tan or yellow robes, are free now to travel afar, in search of new knowledge or on pilgrimage to some remote hilltop shrine. They have been confined, in monasteries of their choice, for the three, four months of the "Monsoons season" which coincides with the Buddhist "Lent", beginning in the month of *Waso*. Our Buddha had made it a rule for them to complete their studies, "doing their own thing" or meditating for their own salvation and to remain within the confines of their monasteries, and not travel anywhere overnight. This has been also for a very practical reason not to burden the villagers during their farming season. Now, it is a season of pagoda festivals. People everywhere can enjoy the rain-postponed Festival of the Lights.

Thadingyut at Full Moon marks the end of the Buddhist lent - a time for the devout to assess their progress and contemplate on one's ageing process. By contrast, it is also the time for marriages.

[It seems that in Myanmar, every mountain top has a pagoda that is plainly visible from a great distance, because they are almost always white-washed, and they will serve as verifiable landmarks. A few of the yet unscalable mountain peaks, usually named Nat Taung (Spirits' Mountains), remain here and there for a new generation of mountaineers to challenge in this age of the affordable hand-held GPS navigation aids.]

Thus, two old friends and neighbors from the capital city of Yangon came North to the monastery of Buddhist learning, in this town of Amarapura. One of them knew this region well. He had spent his youthful years helping his father in their business of buying hand-loom silk from the weavers in and around Amarapura, walking mile upon mile, from house to house, and loom to loom. Earlier in the year, he would deliver silk yarn, dyes and tools to the weavers. When it was time to gather the finished shimmery silk fabric in various hues, he would take his time to pick and grade the choice and agree upon a fair price while discussing their future needs. It has been good meeting people, making friends, in a business partnership that he understood and worked at diligently to his best advantage. Now, thirty years down the road, he remembered some of the things that he had been through. He had known the pains and the pleasures of his youth. He could see much changes all around them. Gone now are those mental pictures of the places he had first known and touched, for they, too, have borne the havoc of time. Now, he understood why some have said that if you have fond memories that you wish to cherish about any place, never to return there for the fresh evidence of Buddhist awareness of impermanence would surely wipe off old memories with stark reality of the present. In the intervening years, he had been back to this place, and with each visit, newer impressions have been stamped over the old. The more profound the experience of those later visits, the less he is able to recall the events of the past, especially where fact and fancy had somehow become entwined. Much evidence of those earlier times only remained in the minds of people associated with those events, and who are still around, alive and well. He came to realize that many of his former associates have died, and more than a few were much younger in years. He suddenly realized the uncertainty of relying on the advice of his parents and his grandparents, *that man must apportion his life into three parts: the first to seek knowledge, the second to seek his fortune and lastly to seek his spiritual guide and mental development in bhavana.*

He continued to dwell on the fallacy in many more of the popular folklore of the country. He had been walking, while engrossed in such thoughts and even forgetting his companion, before he became aware of his friend's questioning look of concern and heard his friend's voice, saying: "Are you all right?" "Yes, I am now all right", and he left it at that. He suggested that they take a short rest,

pointing at an inviting wooden bench, under a nearby tamarind tree. This ploy enabled him to avoid any further explanation for his recent behavior.

After a while, as if appearing to have recovered from his slight discomfort, he broke his long silence: "Have you realized that nothing ever happens just by chance, Ko Tun Yin?" "Why do you say this Ko Than Daing?" his friend questioned, without answering his companion's half-statement half-inquiry.

U Than Daing paused a moment and reasoned: "Don't you see? You and I have had many a walk, back in Yangon on many a morning. We talked and we discussed so many topics. About my business, about your business. We discussed, too, about Buddhist concepts in general, but we have never talked about why certain things seem to happen at certain times. I have been wondering that some of these things do not just happen by sheer chance. What do you think?"

Datkawli U Tun Yin had been a writer and publisher, and was then very much involved in the business of making printing blocks for the local printing industry, while still maintaining a small print shop for his own pastime. He could elaborate on such a subject for anyone caring enough to listen to him. His answer has to be complete!

The two friends apparently decided that the *niyama* causes are at work to bring them both to this Mingala Monastery in Amarapura, to meet the presiding Sayadaw U Vimala (*U Wimala* in Myanmar) , whose fame barely reached Yangon, even though the great Abhidhamma scholar had been teaching the profound Buddhist Texts to the *Sangha* student monks for more than 25 years. The Sayadaw himself had been under the tutelage of that *Pathamagyaw Sayagyi* (Dean of Abhidhamma Teachings of the Buddha) U Ohn since an early age of thirteen, when yet a young novice *koyin*. U Ohn had been a great Buddhist Scholar through the reigns of three different monarchs: Mindon, Theebaw and the British Administration, and under him the young novice found fulfillment of his wish to study Abhidhamma. Possessing exceptional physical attributes of *upadhi* mental foundation, the young *koyin* had a talent for preaching; so much so that the presiding monk had to deter him from spending his time this way, so as not to interfere with his learning.

U Than Daing and U Tun Yin had learned that this Sayadaw, who has been a great teacher of Abhidhamma in the Pali language of the original texts, was preaching nightly to thousands of ordinary folks in their own easy-to-understand vernacular Myanmar (language). The nightly sermons began at the same hour and lasted no more than one hour, yet the huge crowd of devout listeners would come from all quarters, taking their respective places in an orderly manner, sitting quietly to await the striking of the Monastery clock. They came to understand that everything went by the clock at this great monastery. Formerly, only the monks who devoted their whole lives in the study

of the ancient spoken-language of Pali of the Buddhist Texts are able to unravel the true meaning of the Buddha's Teachings. Hearing their chantings of the selected portions of the Buddha's Texts, some people took to reciting them, too. Some believed that by just adding a prefix like *Aum* to their chantings they could achieve 'protection' from all things evil. The recital of the twenty-four Articles of the sacred texts from the Book of Relations (*Patthana*) while proportionately facing the eight directions of the compass, they could raise a shield of protection around their homes or person.

The Buddhist monks of those earlier times did little to correct such deviations from the Path, either because they were satisfied that the people were reciting the *Pali* words of the Buddhist Texts, rather than the unworthy incantations of sorcery, or that in such matters, it was best not to antagonize the providers of alms by telling them their objectives were wrong. All such pseudo-Buddhist practices were the work of the heretics who wanted to gain popularity for economic ends. These are the signs of the declining of Buddhism in the region. It had been like that in the past. The purer forms of Buddhism, that had spread throughout Southeast Asia, also flourished in Myanmar, when tens of thousands of stupas or pagodas were built. The ruins at Bagan bear testimony to the way Buddhism declined and heretics gained control over the way the people worshipped Buddha in combination with other deities. Nearly everyone of our pagodas also carry signs of an earlier period of worship of the Planets, but now serve to apportion various segments of the pagoda according to the seven days of the week, plus another for a dark planet" - Wednesday being divided in two at noon - for latter portion of the day. The worship of the "Nine Buddhist Deities" (*Phaya-ko-zu*) is one such example of pseudo-Buddhist beliefs.

Many of the astrological beliefs and worship of the planets or the deities that they supposedly represent began to merge with the worship of the Buddha and his Chief Disciples including the rightful ones like Ashin Sariputta and Ashin Moggallana.

About nine hundred years earlier, there appeared a teaching monk, named Shin Arahan. It is said that he was largely responsible for the revival of true Buddhist teaching in Burma. That period marked the Second Coming of Buddhism to Myanmar. History has shown that these monks of exceptional ability and with analytical knowledge of the *Abhidhamma*, only appeared in our midst, but once in about every eight or nine hundred year intervals.

The very site of the Mingala Monastery at Amarapura appeared to be truly a *Bhuminiisan* (the ground rightfully meant for an effect of *Kamma*). Here, the Burmese king Bodaw U Waing waited at the very spot, for the Mingala (auspicious time) period to begin his groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of his new Capital City. He was to name it on completion, *Amarapura*. Right therewith were his four Ministers, including U Paw U, his cavalry and over a hundred of his master masons and other craftsmen waiting

for his command. Also, during the reign of former rulers, this place was the very site of a monastery of *Kyet-thun-kin Tawya* (Onion Field Retreat Monastery), presided by an exceptionally learned Sayadaw who had earned the respect of the ruler and his court. Because of his knowledge of the Buddhist Texts, many of the presiding monks of other monasteries, who were about his own age, would come to him for advice and guidance. It is only now that people are wondering if the Mingala Monastery at Amarapura was meant to be the way it all happened after 1916.

At the time of Bo-daw U Waing, there was a royal garden bearing the name of *Moha-thiri-nandawun* in which were planted all kinds of fruit bearing trees. By the time King Mindon made Mandalay his capital, this parkland turned into a village that took on its descriptive name - *Uyindaw* (Royal Garden) Village. It is now located on the opposite bank of river Myit-nge. At the time of this story, there were about three hundred homes in that village. Many of the residents are well educated. Most of them would not hesitate to name his place of Origin.

In this village there once lived U Aung Tun and his wife Daw Shwe Ait. They already had four children at the time their mother became pregnant with their fifth and she dreamt that it was the embryo of one who came dressed in clean white robes. She also felt unusual longings for the kinds she never before experienced. These were:

1. She wished to maintain her observation of the eight precepts.
2. She wished to keep reading only religious texts;
3. She wished not only to hear sermons of the Buddha's Dhamma, but also to discuss such subjects with others most of the time.

Then, in the year 1261 B.E., On the 11th day of waxing of the moon of Nattaw, being a Wednesday at 2:30 p.m., the boy who was to become the famed Mogok Sayadaw was born. (By the English calendar, the year was 1900 AD and the month, December.) He was named Maung Hla Baw.

His first school: At the age of four, he attended the Primary School at the Village only to the 4th Standard, under the tutelage of Sayagyi U San Ya. Considering his later achievements, one should not be making sweeping statements for or against monastic education.

When he turned nine years old, his parents had him wear the robes of a novice, as most Myanmar Buddhist boy would at about that age. The young novice was placed under the guidance of the presiding Sayadaw of the Village Monastery, Sayadaw U Zargara. Being a Wednesday child, he was renamed

"Shin Vimala".

At the monastery, he received further education, and easily mastered the proper intonations and recitals of the *Pali* words and texts. He became quite adept at giving sermons to the people who would come to the monastery on Sabbath days. They fondly called him Shin Thivali, after an Arahant of that name who lived during the lifetime of the Buddha. The Buddha came to have this exceptionally fortuitous disciple accompany his bhikkhus whenever they traveled afar in a big group; because of his very presence, everything would turn out right for all who went with him. The young, too, was receiving the most support.

He performed his duties in an exemplary manner towards his tutor and head of the monastery that he came to receive special attention.

Bees swarmed on his robes the first time.

At the age of twelve, while residing at the Gwe-bin-tawya Monastery, in the Uyindaw Village, one day, the young novice left his robes on a line in the open. Within a short time the bees appeared and swarmed on his robes. The Presiding Sayadaw of that monastery came to hear of the incident and omen and declared that: "At a future period, he (the young *koyin*) will become one of the famous Sayadaws, with a great many followers of his own.

Nanavippharadhi?

"Those who are destined to acquire the *Ariya-Magga* in this lifetime would tend to escape all life threatening situations", so stated the sages.

They cited many names and quoted many parables about people who have escaped premature deaths, even though they were in far worse circumstances. The names and examples given in the abridged Biography included:

Ashin Bhakula to-be child who was swallowed by a large fish and recovered from the fish's stomach, as it was being dressed for cooking.

Bhlutapala Youth, as a child was left asleep on his father's bullock cart, outside the city's gate, in the forest for the whole night, while his father went after the draft animals that had somehow broken loose and ran away.

Because of past perfections a new being becomes more perfect, yet by our use of conventional terms to explain this phenomena we are apt to impart an inaccurate concept in the mind of the reader. There are many forms of such *kammic* effects that are taking place all the time, each kind, good or bad, imparts

fresh *kammic* formations that could and would influence yet newer formations. There could be *kammic*-formations with the arising of eye-consciousness state, each of a certain quality. Again there could be *kammic*-formation with the arising of another consciousness state, forming at another sense base, physical or mental with resulting effects. Life of the present goes on with a continuous stream of new, separate, consciousness states, sub-consciousness states. We can go on elaborating on what and how new arisings taking place during periods of unawareness, but to keep things simple at this stage, just take it that the *kammic* formations goes on when one being's last consciousness state is replaced by further *kammic*-formations in another being's future with certain similarities because of these *kammic* effects.

Thus, you will understand that, with such perfections, a being comes to be born, in whose present life, he is bound to find the Ultimate Truths that could gain final release from this vicious cycle of existences. For such a being, accidental death, before accomplishment of that full realization, will just not occur. It is well to remember that nothing ever happens by sheer chance.

Such must have been the state of affairs, in the case of the Young novice, Shin Vimala, at the age of 14 years, when, at the urgings of his cousin who also was a novice at the same monastery, the two began their crossing of the *Duthawadi*, river in a small dug-out canoe. Across the river there was a large field of corn with ears fully developed, ready for harvest. Cousin koyin Shin Sanda wanted to get some corn and koyin Shin Vimala paddled the canoe, heading across the river towards those cornfields. (Koyin=shin=novice) Unknowing to them, that particular portion of the river has been a treacherous one for many a boatman attempting to navigate that stretch of the river, amidst many whirlpools and undercurrents. Experienced boatmen on the shores were most concerned about the fate of the two young novices in their small canoe, and some shouted warnings, while others started out in larger boats to their aid, for they could clearly see the small canoe going around in circles. Koyin Vimala kept rowing calmly, unperturbed, and they reached the opposite shore safely, without any difficulty. The elders who had come out in their larger boats were most surprised when the young novice Shin Vimala, who had been rowing the canoe, and not even out of breath, told them: "Why are you all getting so excited about? There was nothing unusual about our short river crossing." So the young novice led his cousin up the bank, with calmness and composure, in a manner that those boatmen long remembered. It was a story which they told others of the village. Later, they were to recall this incident with awe, when the young novice eventually became that famed Mogok Sayadaw of the Mingala Monastery.

Buddhists texts showed records of many such similar occurrences in the lives of notable personages in the past. (*Visuddhi-Magga*).

[Making his way, alone to Amarapura, in search of further](#)

knowledge.

"For sweet taste - honey,

For Truth - *Abhidhamma!* " So they used to say.

As the young novice, Shin Vimala grew older, he noted that his mentor was no longer able to devote sufficient time for his further education, because of his age-induced infirmities. He therefore approached his parents, seeking their permission to join his elder sister, Daw Thusaree, a nun at the Mingala Monastery in Amarapura, for the purpose of furthering his education. His sister nun had been studying *Abhidhamma* under the tutelage of the noted *Abhidhamma* Master, *Pathamagyaw U Ohn*. According to her, the younger brother Shin Vimala was constantly expressing his desire to study *Abhidhamma* to the point of becoming an obsession for him.

After being refused permission to leave the Village for the third time, he quietly slipped away to Amarapura, on his own. When his parents followed him to Amarapura, he preached the Buddha's sermons and bade them to return home, quite determined to stay on there with his studies. The sister nun, Daw Thusaree and her companion shared responsibility for the young novice and approached the presiding Sayadaw U Thuzata to accept the young novice under his charge. It was thus that Shin Vimala received permission to stay at a small residential quarter, named *Makula* (A bud). For the young *koyin* it was indeed a good beginning.

Mingala Taik (Mingala Monastery Building)

Located at the very spot of an ancient Kyet-thun-kin Tawya Monastery, and the site where Bo-daw Bayin U Waing waited for that auspicious *Mingala* moment for the founding of his Capital City - named Amarapura - and now finding himself occupying his own "bud" of a residence at this monastery, Shin Vimala had seemingly returned to his place of destiny, as it were. Everything was fitting in place for his future. Here he would have a teacher, second to none, for the learning of the Buddha's Teachings embodied in the *Abhidhamma*. With great enthusiasm, Shin Vimala devoted his complete attention to the learning of the profound subject that is being taught by the Dean himself. Shin Vimala had all the attributes of a model pupil. Not only was he ever attentive, he found time to fulfill all the duties of a novice at the monastery in every way and every day. His remarkable appearance and neatness were in keeping with his phenomenal capacity for learning, that the presiding Sayadaw U Thuzata gave him special attention. Even as a novice, Shin Vimala had earned a legacy of Sayagyi U Ohn's *Abhidhamma* knowledge by becoming his protege.

The bees swarmed on his robes (the second time).

When he reached the age of twenty, on the 8th day of waxing of the moon in the month of Wazo, in the year 1281 B.E., (1920 A.D), under the patronage of the Presiding Sayadaw of the Mingala Monastery. Shim Vimala the novice was ordained to the Order of the Sangha and became *Upazin* U Vimala. The ordination ceremony took place in the Sima of the Monastery, in the presence of other Sangha of the local community of Sanghas. (Upazin=Uzin=Monk; Editor)

The sponsors of the *Upazin* were U Win and Daw Daw Saw, Trader of Oh-daw-yat, Amarapura. After his ordination, *Upazin* U Vimala returned to his quarters, "The Bud" (*Makula*) - at the present time, the site is occupied by Bon-kyuang", just to the North of "Zin-gyan Kyaung". On this day, he removed his damp robes and changed into fresh, dry ones, leaving the damp ones on a clothes line to dry. Within minutes, the bees appeared in great numbers and swarmed on his robes for the second time.

[For the human beings, the providers of sweetness have always been the bees. Honey has served us all as a nourishment as well as a medicant.] The presiding Sayadaw of the monastery saw for himself this strange phenomena, and knowing that it had happened once before to the owner of those robes, as an omen of unusual significance, solemnly predicted: (*Pubba-nameik*) "*In this lifetime, he can attain the highest and most noble of the Truths.*"

This great Sayadaw was to remind his protege once more, while the latter was preaching his devout followers, in his later years. Of this phase of his life, you will learn later.

[Re-ordination in one other Sima in the City of Mogok for the second time](#)

As if somehow destined to be renowned as the Mogok Sayadaw, in 1922, two years after he had been raised to *Pazin-hood* (monk-hood) by higher ordination in Amarapura, his elder sister - Nun Daw Thuzaree and her *Abhidhamma* study-companion, a Mogok-born nun, held the second re-ordination of *Upazin* U Vimala in the City of Mogok.

It was also about the time, when the Dean of *Abhidhamma*, Sayagyi U Ohn, had his protege *Upazin* U Vimala to begin taking over the night classes in the teaching of *Abhidhamma* by recitals in darkness, without the aid of notes. During the afternoons, *Upazin* U Vimala had to travel to Mandalay by train to continue his learning of the rest of the Pali Texts of the *Three Pitaka(s)*.

It is an accepted fact that many of his former pupils have become presiding Sayadaws of many monasteries, including some in the Capital city of Yangon, (formerly named by the colonialists as Rangoon.)

[Becoming the presiding and teaching Bhikkhu at the Central](#)

Pitaka Kyaung, within the Mingala Monastery, Amarapura in 1925.

For the next thirty years the Sayadaw taught *Abhidhamma* at the nightly *Vaca* classes (learning by recitals in total darkness. The student monks would sit in long lines, facing inwards on either side a walk-way, while the Sayadaw would pace up and down that walk-way, while vocalizing the *Pali* Texts, as they should be uttered and the student monks repeating those words and passages after the Sayadaw, It is said that the Sayadaw could detect any errors in their annunciation and immediately correct them.) Monks from all over Myanmar came to attend those classes in such numbers that it came to be said that if anyone have not been to Amarapura, one does not yet know *Abhidhamma*! Amarapura was then known as the South City (*Taung-myo*) with reference of Mandalay.

The Mogok Sayadaw completed the banner book of *Abhidhamma* that his mentor U Ohn had not been able to finish writing when he died. After that the Sayadaw (*Venerable Teacher*) wrote and published several great treatises of his own, including *Yamaka myezari*, *Puthujjana enlightenment* series.

As Dhammakahtika U Vimala

While teaching his student monks at their nightly vaca classes, during the day, each day, he taught the ordinary folks at *Abhidhamma* classes. During the period of the Buddhist Lent, for three whole months, he made his rounds to deliver sermons at three locations, each in turn. Many of his lay students joined those night classes for the monks, too. While so engaged in propagating the Buddha's teachings, he had little time left for his own devotions.

A kindly admonishment from his elder Sayadaws.

"Maung Pazin, it only brings good merits for teaching others. Delivering sermons, too, will bring you but merits. Why not put your knowledge of the Truth to use to gain that Vija Knowledge and accomplish your own goals first - afterwards, you may continue with your preachings..."

These words of compassion came from none other than his Mentor who had predicted his future. the *Aung-chin Sayadaw*. These words made an impact by their suddenness so much so that from that time onwards, U Pazin U Vimala set aside a part of his night, that others would spend sleeping, for his Vipassana (Insight) Meditations.

It is so easy to remind those who can appreciate the true words of advice.

While others slept, U Pazin U Vimala continued to meditate even while pacing his walks or while sitting. From this it may be surmised that the Sayadaw's Vipassana was then at that beginning level of "Seeing things as they

truly are". *Udayabayanana*.

Sayadaw was aware that according to the Buddha's Teachings, he ought to look for and seek the guidance of truly enlightened meditation masters. With this as his prime objective, he set forth to such places as Mandalay, Monywa, Mingun to seek counsel and guidance, and spend some time in each place to meditate intensively.

The Sayadaw's mode of instruction.

The Sayadaw recognized that most people are prone to harbor some form of delusion about *self*. It was his wont to try and release them from such selfish thoughts of individualism, as much as possible, well ahead of giving them any instruction on how to proceed with meditation. Likewise, he seldom gave any regard for a person's position in society, while being firm and direct in pointing out their errors of concept or belief.

Before he would even talk about Vipassana practice, he would point out the extent of their wanderings in Samsara cycle of existence and their past misdirection as a direct result of their Wrong beliefs. With many a revealing anecdote he would keep paring off such common misconceptions that ever centered around the *idea of self*. He made them aware of the outcome of such beliefs. He made it clear to them that to make their meditative efforts rewarding, all such *ditthi* clinging wrong beliefs be completely cleared first.

He indicated that doing any form of meditation while the meditator is clinging to any delusions, that meditation would be just a weak form of *Vipassana* - insight meditation - and therefore, would not result in reaching the liberating stage of *Magga-Phala*. All such *ditthi* beliefs and delusions stemmed from not understanding one's own *Paticcasamuppada* conditioning steps of (the Doctrine of) Dependent Origination. This being one of his discoveries while researching the texts of the Buddha's *Abbidhamma* Teachings. Having found all collaborating evidence of the problem and recognizing the hindrances, he set about teaching the Doctrine of *Paticca-samuppada*.

[*paticca*=on account of, because of + *samuppada* =conditioning; *samuppada* =conditioned) Each of the factors is 'conditioned', as well as being the 'conditioner' of the factor following it. At each stage, the particular factor is conditioned by a preceding cause and itself constitutes the cause of a resulting effect; as in working out the next stage of evolving an 'individual' or 'being' - in short the Reader. This Chart may be considered as the WHEEL OF LIFE, representing your (Reader's own life and life-process.)]

[The Relationship of *Patthana* such as that of *Anantara-paccaya*, relation of contiguity is also shown in a supportive manner for a better understanding of

all cause-effect of the life process.]

As a teaching aid, he devised [the Rounded Diagram of the Doctrine of Paticcasamuppada](#). In the form of a system of quartered (divided) concentric circles, around a central core or hub, the Diagram had been a tremendous help in reaching a concise understanding of the Doctrine. Persons of great learning have declared that, only after reading the expositions of the Doctrine by the Mogok Sayadaw, in his books have they clearly understood the profound subject.

It was like the time when the (Indo-Greek) Milinda Ruler posed some questions that the Arahants all around could not provide the satisfactory answers, save one Shin Nagasena, who was able to cite all necessary evidence and by quoting appropriate parables and giving illustrative examples, finally satisfied the curious king, who, it is said, eventually became a Buddhist.

The Mogok Sayadaw's sermons, each about one hour long, over a period of 11 or 12 years since the advent of the wire and tape recorders in Burma now renamed Myanmar, showed them to be almost work perfect, devoid of any error of fact or reference. The Sayadaw was never at a loss for anecdotes that are appropriate nor short of examples of people's modes of expression, as if he had been present right there during their discussions. Such were his gifts of delivery that it is not at all surprising to note in the (Burma's) Record of *Arahants* and personages of exceptional talent" in *Patipatti Sasana*, the following passage: (quote) *Let alone any who might be able to surpass him, it will be difficult to find any who can even approach like talents." Mogok Sayadaw is indeed (Burma's,) own "Shin Kumara Kassapa of this era.*

[A few of his most notable statements, not previously uttered by anyone:](#)

(a) "*Paticca-samuppada* exists, not as words in the Texts but in the khanda of the present, at the very moment of its arising or birth. (*Paticcasamuppada* is your present actuality.)

(b) "Be absolutely clear about the "*Paticcasamuppada* in the *Khandha*."

[Of Sassata and Uccheda:](#)

"Be sure to put yourselves to test, by self-examination, whether you have one or the other of such beliefs still residing in you; either *Sassata* or *Uccheda ditthi* is there resting within you."

Those with *Sassata*:

1. Believe in the existence of life here, and a life hereafter.
2. Believe in the law of *kamma* (karma): "What I sow, that I will reap".
3. Believe in doing all forms of 'good' deeds.
4. They are not so enthusiastic about realizing *Nibbana* (Nirvana) immediately.
5. They wish to remain in some (happy-sensual) abode.
6. They wish to remain with 'this son', 'this daughter', this 'grandchild', etc. at a "*bon-sin-san*" form of (happy-sensual) communal existence somewhere, just as present-time or better.

"Now, do you realize what is behind all such forms of prayer-wishings?"

Those with *Uccheda ditthi*, (are the) people who take to the view: 'you live then you die. One day you are alive, another day you are dead. That's that. When you are dead, you are at peace.

1. They say. 'Yes, we know there is life hereafter', but they do not long for this or that kind of life.
2. They also believe in the law of cause and effect, as of *Kamma* (Karma).
3. They do not believe that doing good now will do them good LATER.
4. They seldom hesitate about doing anything evil or immoral. They are also most likely to do such things with enthusiasm.
5. But then, if they meet up with a Buddha, they readily give up all their evil ways. They are not as hesitant as the *Sassata* people about striving for their immediate release from *Samsara*.

"Taga, Tagama, All - there resides within each of you, either one or the other form of *ditthi*." (Taga=male devotee, Tagama=female Devotee)

"The *Uccheda* believers are expanding hells."

"The *Sassata* believers are proliferating bones."

It is clearly indicated in the *Mula pannasa pali Maha Gosangha sutta* that **"only the Sangha who is capable of giving an analytical talk on Abhidhamma and have the ability to discuss the profound subject clearly can be compared to the likes of the great Ingyin Forest, adding to the lustre**

and fame of the Buddha's Sasana", so declared Shin Moggallana, the Buddha's Second Great Disciple.

Tathagata, Teacher has also declared that the *dhamma-kahtika* who is able to give instructions on and discuss Abhidhamma fully can truly be deserving of that title. In the early days of the great Ledi Sayadaw (1846-1923 A. D.), the people of Nyaunglebin were wont to celebrate the Pagoda Festival, noisily with all kinds of stage and puppet shows, and accompanying musical troupes, side shows and other fun and game attractions. It was the first Ledi Sayadaw who wrote an admonishing letter to the Trustees of the *Pyi Lon-chan-tha Pagoda*: "Like a hell's village, a village of humans should not hold such a pagoda festival every year." It was an advice well heeded by all the town's folks from that time. That was how the annual event of holding an *Abhidhamma* Lecture by the Ledi Sayadaw came in vogue at this Pagoda Festival in later years. That speaker's dais was meant exclusively for the great Ledi Sayadaw.

When the succeeding Ledi Sayadaw U Paduma became incapacitated, the Pagoda Trustees were greatly discouraged and, for a while, doubted that they would ever find a worthy replacement. It is as if by sheer providence that the great Ledi Sayadaw's Abhidhamma legacy came to be handed over to Mogok Sayadaw, who thus became the nation's leading *Dhamma-kahtika Sayadaw* in one great leap.

From that time, Mogok Sayadaw was able to fulfill his own goals in both *pariyatti* and *patipatti Sasana(s)*, right to their peaks. Achieving mastery of the *Three Pitakas with the five sets of Nikaya(s)*, like the bee that has had its fill of nectars from different blooms of exquisite fragrance and flavors, and a hive full of sweet honey, the Sayadaw began feeding his *veneyya* (followers) *with the essence of the Buddha's Teachings*.

From the way the bees have somehow become involved in the life and work of this great pathfinder, such a comparison seemed most appropriate. The bees were yet to appear for a third time, at the very hour and date of this writer's forty-sixth birthday.

The place of *nana-dassana-visuddhi* of the Mogok Sayadaw.

Mogok - noted for its rubies of incomparable quality, color and brilliance - is a town that lies in the far North of (Burma) Myanmar, in the foothills of a range of mountains and lies within those highlands at a height of 3,850 feet above sea level. The nearest railhead at Kyaukme is 78 miles by road that follows the contour of the hills down to that town, just above the Goteik gorge and the scenic railway bridge that spanned it over a river so far below.

From the year 1294 B.E. (1933 A.D.) Mogok Sayadaw would visit Mogok, every year, at the invitation of the donors of his monastic buildings. The donors

were U Latt and his wife Daw Thaing Chon of Mogok. The inhabitants of Mogok attending those sermons of the Mogok Sayadaw swelled in numbers day by day, with many foreigners putting in their appearance.

Then in 1316 BE. (1955 A.D.), two ladies from Mogok, Daw Ohn and Daw Phon built a new Monastic building, naming it Mingala Taik Kyaung, and donated it to the Mogok Sayadaw. It is the same name as the one at Amarapura.

During the Japanese occupation of (Burma) Myanmar, Mogok Sayadaw moved up to Mogok from the year 1303 BE. (1942 AD.) until the end of the hostilities. Wherever the Sayadaw stayed, he would regulate all activities to a daily schedule that he would follow and saw to it that everyone did the same. Setting a time for veneration at the Buddha altar, a time for meditation, time for him to deliver a sermon, a time to teach, a time to go for a walk, a time for serving his forenoon meal. All knew what to expect. His audience would take their place in an orderly manner and would wait for the sermon to commence on the stroke of the monastery clock. The Sayadaw would end his talks within a minute of the end of his hour-long sermons. To the amazement of his disciples, the Sayadaw would jot down a word or two in Pali, the main topic of his day's sermon, and he would confine his entire talk to that subject, and remembering where he had left off on a previous meeting, if his lecture was to be a continuation of it. All of his talks have been almost letter perfect, and his delivery always to the point, without any hesitation.

He would encourage audience participation by allowing his listeners to complete the repeat of his sentences. In this way, he could gauge from their response, how well they understood what he had told them. He would slow down, repeat what had been said or back up as needed, in the manner of a certain bhikkhu instruction during the lifetime of the Buddha.

This was at a time when the Bhikkhunis were being admitted to the Order. The Buddha had his Sangha disciples chosen for the task, to take turns to preach and instruct the Bhikkhuni audience. For some reason or another, this particular Bhikkhu teacher would manage to be unavailable whenever it was his turn to teach those female members of the community. At last this was reported to the Buddha, who knew why and of their past association with this Bhikkhu, already an *Arahat*, by the name of Shin Nandaka. The Buddha in his wisdom knew of their standard of development, their tendencies, their character and even of their mental makeup. Only the Buddha possesses this knowledge called *Indriyaparopariyattanana*. Shin Nandaka when he finally appeared before that audience, he broke all precedence in the manner of communication between the Sangha [male members - Bhikkhu(s) and the (female members - Bhikkhuni(s))] of the Order.

He began his lecture with the words: "In the course of my talks from time to time, I shall ask you certain questions and you shall provide appropriate

answers. And, when I repeat some of my statements, and make a pause, you shall complete those utterances." He explained that, in this way, he would know from the way they responded how much each of them understood what he had said.

This must have come as a complete shock to his listeners, who had previously understood that only a Bhikkhu could address them, but that it was not proper for any of them to even initiate conversation with a Bhikkhu for any reason. It was a condition of their acceptance. It is said that, at the beginning of that first lecture by this teacher, Arahat Shin Nandaka, those Bhikkhuni(s) had each set a goal. When the lecture came to its conclusion, all the five hundred Bhikkhuni(s) reached their respective objectives.

It was by listening to his audience response and gauging from their reaction to his statement or question, he could take his cue whether he repeat or back-up whatever that they had been talking about, or proceed with his talk. He would press on or slow down his delivery by this method of instruction. His listeners could also hear the repeated questions and learn from hearing the responses. Needless to say, this is the only correct way for mass education, with audience participation in a self-supportive way.

Mogok Sayadaw's repertoire of sermons and meditation instructions over a period of thirty years have been of this kind.

[At the Village of Bawbatant, 4000 Feet above sea-level.](#)

To ensure the safety of everyone, during those days of indiscriminate bombings by opposing forces, during the last war, the Mogok Sayadaw moved to higher land, at the Village of Baw-ba-tant, where he found numerous naturally formed caves. These natural caves proved to be conducive for safe and quiet meditation. When the donors of his monastery and their families - Daw Daw On and Daw Daw Phon, too, moved to that village, it was a very good opportunity for them to take care of the Sayadaw's needs, and have the benefit of continuing to hear his sermons and to carry on with their meditative efforts. It was as if the village had suddenly become a place that the *deva nat(s)* had created, replete with pond and lotus.

During the entire period of World War 2, while elsewhere, there have been death and destruction, looting and plundering with loss of life and limb, that *vipatti* era turned out to be *sampatti* era for the Sayadaw.

For those who have true knowledge of the value of time and existence, wherever they may be, their *kammic* resultants ensured them of a suitable haven at the gateway to realization. Those caves of Baw-ba-tant Village thus proved to be the place for the Sayadaw's complete realization of *Arahatta-magga*, though

he resorted to various stratagems to veil this from everyone.

For the Sayadaw, who had taken on such commitments, before this time, as the taking care of and seeing to the education of all those student monks from all parts of the country, as fulfilling the wishes of so many of the followers who gathered to hear him preach, he then had little free time left for his own meditative efforts, though he gave up hours of his sleep each night. Thus, the period of the hostilities proved to be one of opportunity for him.

Few people realized that the Sayadaw had quietly worked during those hours of the night when everyone else at the great monastery had gone to bed. They knew that he had been engaged in leading those nightly *vaca* classes for the student monks, since he himself had completed just 5 or 6 years as an *Upazin*. When the Sayadaw took to preaching full time, after the hostilities ended, these people surmised: ***"This school-teacher monk, too, has joined the ranks of those who sought popularity by preaching to the masses"***

Others who have heard him preach on the serious subjects of *Abhidhamma* (as at Nyaunglebin) also criticized him for preaching and teaching the public on the subject of *Vipassana* (Insight Meditation or Mindfulness Meditation) as an act of "keeping up with the times."

It would be unfair to heap the blame on his critics of that period, as, indeed, there were many who took to preaching in the style of those *kwet-seik* (entertaining story-tellers) teachers, while imitating the full vocal range of an opera singer. These street-side preachers, too, were beginning to talk about the jhannic benefits of meditation. Few people realized that the Path that the Mogok Sayadaw had followed was free of all such motives, it was of the kind that only those with *Parami-bhisa* (sprout of perfection followed in solitude out of sight, which others are unable to conceive.

[HE WHO KNOWS NOT - KNOWS NOT THAT HE KNOWS NOT](#)

On one occasion, during one of his sermons, Mogok Sayadaw made an observation, in an effort to urge his listeners, not to miss the opportunity of gaining the right knowledge, while *Patipatti Sasana* was blossoming once again. The observation that he had then made was: ***Your fathers and mothers, your grandparents, too, did not get to hear this kind of sermon. They had been donors of pagodas, donors of monastic buildings and died. Pay close attention,"***

Some *Abhidhamma* "perfectionists" took exception to the above statement, and someone among them took up the matter to the Council of Elders. *Alas! How self-destructive are such acts of animosity towards those who are truly Ariyas.*

[During the lifetime of the Buddha, too, there was an occasion when the *puthujjana* (a worldling) bhikkhu became engaged in a bitter squabble, over the question whether it was an infringement or not of the Buddha's own disciplinary code of behavior, for someone to leave a bowl with water remaining in it, after he had used it for self cleansing during his visit to the 'rest-room' of the monks. This matter caused a division not only amongst the monks, including their elders. *Sutta* specialists who thought that by the letter of the law, the offender ought to be penalized. *Abhidhamma* specialists said that an unintentional act may be forgiven. This division among the *Sanghas* reached even to the highest levels, and their own elders. Ananda reported of this to the Buddha. They would not even listen to the Buddha himself, which caused the Buddha to leave their monastery and went away to the forest, alone. It was because of their squabbles, that the monks found themselves without any providers of food nor alms. Ananda was left behind by the Buddha to watch over them. It is said that, during the entire period, the Buddha was cared for by an elephant in the forest. The Buddha had foreknowledge of this strife.

When the bhikkhu(s) finally realized the error of their ways, they begged for the return of the Buddha to the monastery and resume his preachings. All of this took place at Kosambhi country.

That was the occasion when the Buddha preached on the seven differences in behavior patterns of the *puthujjana bhikkhus* who are mere worldlings and the *Sotapanna(s)* who are the "Stream-Entrants". The Buddha pointed out that while both kinds of bhikkhu(s) or people are yet subject to such defilements as anger, giving cause to be quarrelsome at times; greed, that gives rise to possessiveness, such as the object of their quarrels, dullness of the mind, sloth and torpor, distractions, worry and even such thoughts about evolution do arise in the mind of both the worldlings and the Stream - entrants, the latter group realizing *immediately* that the defiling thoughts are arising and is quick to respond to put an end to them, whatever they may have been.

The worldlings, on the other hand, continue to give vent to their emotions for a long time, doing little to put an end to the cause of their problems. (See *Mula pannasa - Kosambhi sutta* for full details of the seven differences between worldlings and the Stream-entrants. Not applicable to those who have reached the higher stages: *Sakadagami* and *Anagami*.)

Because of *Vipaka vuutta* we have become possessors of such divisions between people and even bhikkhus to this day...

In the early days of Buddha Sasana, on the island of (Ceylon) Sri Lanka, there was such a worthy personage. His name was *Maha Gamiya Tessadatta*. He was also a master of the Abhidhamma knowledge. While he was on his pilgrimage to the site of Buddha's Enlightenment, and was crossing the sea in a raft-boat, he contemplated on the Buddha's Doctrine in the Book of Conditioned

Relations - *Patthana*. He was trying to compare the depth and extensiveness of this Doctrine with the depth and extent of the ocean, and while so engaged, he became an Arahant.

There is no reason to doubt that a truly great master of Abhidhamma like the Mogok Sayadaw also reached his goal in a like manner. Who could deny that the Mogok Sayadaw have been mindful of the Ultimate Truths at every stage of his deliberations?

The true worth of Buddha's Abhidhamma Teachings for realizing Nibbana.

In an exemplary manner, the Mogok Sayadaw has showed that for those who have acquired penetrative mastery of the Abhidhamma, it is not necessary to go into complete isolation, to become enlightened: that the ultimate goal of every monk may be reached, even while doing recitals, teaching and preaching work of *Pariyatti Sasana*, provided that proper concentration in *Samadhi* is reached after eradication of all clinging defilements of *kilesa* that are a part of the Thirty-one abodes in *Samsara*.

The unusual dream of the Sayadaw.

Just after the last World War, one night, the Sayadaw had a strange dream. "That he flew across to (Ceylon) Sri Lanka and from the air he was able to pay his homage at *Maha Ceti* and that he had all jungle cleared from its grounds and to begin his missionary work."

Not long after that, he received a lengthy letter from the Trustees of the same Maha Ceti Pagoda, in which they tendered an appeal to the Sayadaw. They respectfully extended an invitation to the Sayadaw, to come to (Ceylon) Sri Lanka and kindly deliver a sermon for the benefit of Sayadaw's well-to-do disciples at that place, and then to accept in donation the bejeweled "*Seinbu*" (Diamond Bud) for it to be placed at the very peak of that renovated Pagoda. Thus, it so happened, just as he had dreamt. He was able to carry out his wish in being a party to the restoration of that pagoda of great historical importance.

In the year 1307 B.E. (1946 A.D.) the Sayadaw was able to make his disciples at Nyaunglebin, Amarapura, Mandalay and especially those of the city of Mogok, by whose name he is addressed, to become aware of the need to renew the '*Seinbu*' of the Botataung Pagoda, in (Rangoon) Yangon. This mission, too, was successfully completed. With these toppings of the two ancient pagodas accomplished, as he had dreamt, the Sayadaw commenced his missionary work of preaching to increasing numbers of devotees, eager to learn the Noble Truths.

In the year 1314 B.E., (1953 A.D) the Mogok Sayadaw returned to Amarapura. He gave up all former activities, such as training of novices to become full-fledged monks, or teaching and training of the monks at nightly *vaca* classes by tradition; instead, gave full attention to preaching about the proper ways of *Vipassana* Insight Meditation

The Sayadaw opened the "Mingala Magga Yeiktha" meditation center. Donor aid began pouring in; with no shortage of funds for the construction of all kinds of facilities within the monastery. Attendance at all meetings was also increasing beyond all expectations. People were coming in all forms of transportation in such large numbers that the place took on the appearance of a pagoda festival at the monastery. Not only was the huge hall of the meditation center filled to capacity, additional marquee space, outside, was proving to be insufficient. The huge crowd of devoted listeners took their places in an orderly manner with a minimum of noise or commotion. They all knew that the Sayadaw would make his appearance and begin his sermon on the stroke of the clock.

Government appealed to the Sayadaw for his acceptance of their donation of the medallion and the title of *Aggamahapandita* at the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Yangon (Rangoon) on July 8, 1962.

On his journey by train to Yangon (Rangoon), some of his disciples from the Town of Nyaung-le-bin, appealed to the Sayadaw to again visit their Town for the annual event at which the Sayadaw had been present for the last thirty-years. That date was to be exactly eight months later. This time, the Sayadaw told them: "Aye! If the mental-physical components of the body do not collapse and if conditions are right, I will have to bestow you that wish. With all haste, be sure to complete all of your respective tasks. This 'big' *Khandha* body is rushing headlong towards death."

The Sayadaw arrived at the (Rangoon) Yangon Central Railway Station, on the morning of July 6th, 1962. He had kindly agreed to consider the family residence of his disciple, U Than Daing, as his temporary "*Kyaung*" while he remained in (Rangoon) Yangon.

The Sayadaw accepted the medallion and the conferring of the title of *Aggamahapandita* from the Revolutionary Government of the Union of Burma on the morning of July 8, 1962.

Earlier, arrangements had been made for the (Rangoon) Yangon populace to hear the Sayadaw's sermons at the *Dhammayone* on the Campus of the University of Rangoon, beginning July 7, 1962. Unfortunately, because of civil disturbances, the entire area came to be sealed off to the public. And on the evening of his arrival, notwithstanding his long overnight train journey, the Sayadaw held his first introductory talk for the benefit of his new disciples of

Rangoon (Yangon), at 33 Sandwith Road, Rangoon. (since renamed as *Bo Yar Nyunt Street, Dagon Township, Yangon*). The specially constructed roundel on which the Sayadaw's enlarged circular Diagram of the Doctrine of Dependent Origination, (*Paticcasamuppada*), to be used for his talks had been reproduced in accordance with his instructions, was already at the University *Dhammayone*.

(The writer was able to retrieve it by special permission and to transport it back to Sandwith Road. The Sayadaw decided that, in view of somewhat unsettled conditions, he would make best use of available facilities at his "temporary Kyaung"

Hasty but best possible arrangements had to be made for the disciples of Rangoon, who could be expected to come, regardless of the rains. This was in the midst of the Monsoon Season and rains could come with surprising swiftness, and usually in a deluge. There was no time to put up shelters, for the people outside, that first evening. And it rained, but the people stayed. opening their umbrellas.

Supplies of bamboo and dhani would come the next morning. Temporary rain shelter for the people who were not able to get inside the building was completed by the third day. Those bringing their own tape recorders were able to be connected into the central microphone pre-amplifier and distribution divider network and were freed from having to make use of their own microphones.

The entire ground floor and both wings of the building had been cleared of furniture and the floor fully carpeted. A raised dais at the corner of the L-shaped space so made available was prepared for the Sayadaw. It was fortunate that there was adequate sound reproduction and distribution equipment on the premises. During the entire period of the Sayadaw's stay, when the Sayadaw preached once in the morning, from 7.00 - 8.00 A.M, and again from 7.00 - 8 P.M. each day, until his last talk in Rangoon on the morning of the 14th the writer was at the feet of the Sayadaw)

The Sayadaw while encouraging *dana* and *sila*, he showed support for those whose interests lay in *Samatha*; at the same time showed them how they should have the right attitude; and graduated reliance; placing *sila* over *dana*, *bhavana* over *sila*, stage by stage. He reminded them to listen with their ears, while directing their mindfulness within. From time to time, he would advise them to listen with "big, big ears" meaning a receptive ear. He preached about *sacca-nana* - the knowledge that it is the Truth; *kicca nana* - the knowledge that a certain function or action should be performed, and *kata nana* - the knowledge that the function or action with regard to this Truth has been performed (that one's task has been completed).

On the morning of his departure, the Sayadaw made the writer take down a

few Pali words that formed a short verse, and he then handed over his 108-bead rosary - the significance of that simple act of compassion was not to be known until many years later, while in California, the writer came upon a small abridged version of the biography of the Mogok Sayadaw. It was a thin 36-page booklet, with an orange-color front page.

This English translation is based on that booklet, but with a new beginning and certain additional comments and observations, where deemed necessary. On page 34 of that booklet there appeared a date and time of the third and final appearance of the bees. This event is described on [page \(35\) of this paper](#).

While walking in Rangoon, one morning, with Myan-aung U Tin and Henzada U Mya, the Sayadaw advised U Mya: "Be sure to press on with your meditations until you have surpassed and overcome *vedana*, otherwise death might overtake you." U Mya responded lightly, "Asthmatic disciple like me do not die easily, Sir."

On his return to Amarapura, during his walk with his disciple U Saw Maung, the Sayadaw remarked: "It is just one month since my return from Rangoon. Henzada U Mya has since died." He continued: "Maung Saw Maung, take good heed of the words of the noble ones; they do not speak without good cause." Adding: "Those Tagas and Tagamas from Rangoon have been too late in getting to me."

U Saw Maung asked the question: "Sir, are you going to Rangoon again next year?" Sayadaw gave him a reply that U Saw Maung failed to take any note of its significance until much later: "My *Khandha* will provide you with the answer."

Another month passed by. The Sayadaw was again out walking with his cousin, U Ba Toke. Near a street corner on the Bazaar Road, the Sayadaw pointed to a patch of road surface obviously needing some repairs. He directed: "Maung Ba Toke, have this road repaired quickly. I wish to see it in good shape by the time I am ready to leave." Again, no one attached any significance to the remark, for such directives would be relegated to those in charge of such matters. Everyone thought that the Sayadaw was making those remarks, quite naturally, because he was planning on revisiting Rangoon. Right up to a few hours before his death, no one even imagined that the Sayadaw was, in fact, advising them of his imminent demise.

[Other strange occurrences of note in that period:](#)

1. *The Sayadaw sat before five of his disciples, who had come to pay homage in traditional manner. When they had completed their oblations, the Sayadaw gave the following instructions: "Maung Hla Bu, there is a red snake in my room. Go catch and release it afar in a safe spot." Though several people*

made the search with care, they did not see the snake, until the Sayadaw told them: "It is on the door handle, don't any of you see that snake?" Those five visitors, too had not been able to find the snake. U Hla Bu approached the door with care, and right there, where the Sayadaw had indicated, he saw the snake positioned in the loop of the doorknob, its hood raised in a posture of defiance. The entire body of the snake was bright red in color. Though U Hla Bu was a skilful physician and knew much about snakes and their venom, he was taken aback by its proximity. It was a rare specie, known as mercury snake. U Hla Bu used a pot and trapped the snake and took it away to be released afar, as instructed. Afterwards, he came to realize that no ordinary snake could have reached that handle of a highly polished door to he so positioned. He could not see how it got there.

2. Close to the month's end (of Tawthalin), the Sayadaw told the donor of his monastic building.: "Maung Kyaw Thein, you, too, come and stay here. Don't do any trading business at this time. Come now with me, you and I will go around and look at these buildings on the monastery ground. " While doing the rounds, he again made another of those statements that sounded rather strange at the time: "Have all those works that are being done completed and everything in good order ", this time addressing the master mason U Hla and U Kyaw Thein, together.

3. One day after the Full Moon of Thadingyut (October 14, 1962).

Near midnight, U Hla Bu was laying in his bed, on the floor, just outside of the Sayadow's room, the door of which was shut, he was startled by' the flash of something of great brilliance coming from the Sayadaw's room. He also heard a voice coming from that direction.

4. Second day after the Full Moon of Thadingyut (October 15, 19622

Mogok U Chit Hla and his wife arrived at the Monastery. Their son was being made a novice on the morning of the next day, and there was to be a Kahtein (Kathina) Ceremony for the Buddhist monks (Sangha,) of many surrounding monasteries who have been invited to come to the Mingala Monastery the day after that - the Fourth day after the Full Moon of Thadingyut, (October 25, 1962). Because of these ceremonies there was much activity at the great Monastery that night. U Hla Bu related what he had seen and heard the previous night, and to many who were staying at the monastery and those working outside in the grounds, asking them to be watchful and be on the alert for anything unusual. As on the previous night, at the hour of midnight, those present were witness to the same strange phenomena of great brilliance. He heard the sound of conversation coming from the Sayadow's room. U Hla Bu opened the door and begged to question the Sayadaw: "Sayadaw, who have you been talking to?" The Sayadaw answered. " "You know very well, Hla Bu!"

U Hla Bu went outside and was met by some of the people who were making preparations for the big day, two days hence. They told U Hla Bu of seeing a light of great brilliance above the roof and descending and then, shortly after, reappearing in a flash that shone upwards before disappearing.

When U Hla Bu again addressed the same question to the Sayadaw, he received the same sort of vague answer: "Hla Bu, you know quite well what's going on, and you keep asking me the same questions. There is not much time left."

He recalled that on the night of the Full Moon of Thadingyut, the Sayadaw had delivered a sermon that carried the theme. "When I die, do not perform any 'Thabeik-thut' ceremony of appeasement at my funeral." (Thabeik-Thut ceremony=Merit Sharing ceremony after someone dies; Editor)

Then, too, the Sayadaw had included the words in that sermon: "Well Taga, Tagama, All, if we have a corpse on this "Kyaung ", what do you think will come out of it?"

Then, also on that very evening, his evening sermon included his remark: "The train is about to leave, you have just enough time, you barely have the time to get on board. You must be aware that the train is about to leave.

To U Tin, the Sayadaw had said: "U Tin, what have you to worry about U Than Maung is already well in years. You, U Tin is also old. U Aung Zan Wai and Phongyi (referring to himself) are both old. Accept the fact that afterwards, this Sasana will be no more. Just make sure that you have accomplished your respective tasks (meditating). Also, to many, the words that were to come to mind a short time later were. "This Sasana is about to end. It will be no more." (Phongyi=monk)

The Sayadaw had instructed all those who were present at the nightly oblatory ceremony. "Tomorrow, on the Fourth day of waning of the Moon of Thadingyut, at 5 a.m. you must all come here. However important, drop everything and be sure to come. There is Cause. "When U Tin reached home, he immediately contacted U Saw Maung and the entire household of U Saw Maung thus came to the monastery on the morning of that fateful day. They all thought the Kahtein as being the "Cause" mentioned by the Sayadaw.

The fourth day after the Full Moon of Thadingyut ("or the Fourth day of waning of the Moon of Thadingyut) at 5:00 AM. (October 17, 1962)

To the donor of his monastic building, Daw Tin Hla: Go and prepare my bed afresh." Then he asked: "Tin Hla, You are much younger in age. There are yet many mundane obstacles yet to be faced " While, later, talking about the shelter afforded by great trees to all those who sought relief from the heat, he

asked Daw Tin Hla: "Who resembles that old tree?" None of them even imagined that he was about to die. Daw Tin Hla replied: "Yes, Sir, the old tree resembles yourself the Sayadaw Phayagyi, as you have said so, in the past." (Phayagyi=Great Buddha, Phaya=Buddha; often used traditionally in reference to Eminent Sayadaws; Editor)

A while later, he addressed his remarks to U Kyaw Thein, thus: "Kyaw Thein, come here, close. You listen very carefully'. When I am no longer around, you will have to face up to a lot of problems of the mundane world. Do your utmost to overcome all such problems by completing your meditative tasks. Cast off and cast away in your mind, all of your possessions. Pay off all your debts. The waves of mundane world can overwhelm you. " U Kyaw Thein was at a loss to understand why the Sayadaw was saying all those words to him, but he kept his silence. There were no signs of anything unusual about the Sayadaw's physical appearance, nor any change of his voice as cause for any concern. The Sayadaw looked quite healthy. He was steady on his feet, too. When he left the Sayadaw's presence, he approached U Tha Saing, who had been always near the Sayadaw, as to what could be the meaning of all those statements. He asked U Tha Saing, because the elder had been present. U Tha Saing did not hesitate in giving his reply: "The Sayadaw is probably going to Rangoon (Yangon.). That must be the reason."

The Sayadaw broke his fast, with a bowl of "Quaker Oats ". He then changed his robes for a completely new set, which he donned unaided by anyone, and left the Kyaung for the place where the "Kahtein Hsoon Kywe (the end-of-Lent) annual event for the donation of 'Kathina" new robes for every monk, mostly very senior ones from all monasteries in the vicinity. There would be a "Money-tree" for each of those monasteries. represented at the event, along with bags of rice, cooking oil and other provisions that various donors, too, have brought as offerings. Hsoon Kywe, the morning's food would be served. The monks would come from different monasteries, in separate groups, and it has been customary for the Sayadaw to receive them personally and guide them to their seats on a raised dais, that faces the length of a huge marquee. This would have been occupied by all members of the public, participating in the event, some having made their own contributions towards one form or another of the objects of Dana-Charity. (Hsoon Kywe=Offering meals to monks; Editor)

The principal donors were U Chit Hla and his wife, Daw Thaung of Mogok. They were holding the Kathina Ceremony, in concert with the yellow-robe donning ceremony that had been completed the previous day, when their son became a novice, at the feet of the great Sayadaw. To-day's event was to culminate in the feeding of the two hundred (200) monks in the Main Hall of the Mingala Monastery. The Sayadaw did not join in the partaking of any food, but sat among the very senior monks, appearing to be in deep meditation. It was not unusual for him to sit so.

After the "Hsoon-kywe ", when it was time for the robe-sets to be offered, the Sayadaw received the different objects from his subject donor and handed them to the recipient Sayadaws who had come from other monasteries. As each of those senior Sayadaws took turns to depart, the Mogok Sayadaw, himself accompanied them from the Big Hall to their respective vehicular transportation at the curbside, with appropriate words of felicitations. He made many such trips, escorting each of the presiding Sayadaws from other monasteries.

After the successful completion of the ceremonies, the Sayadaw left the scene, accompanied by his attendant U Hla Bu and walked back towards to his quarters. On the way', ,he Sayadaw remarked: "Ah! This Khandha of mine has become a big burden." U Hla Bu did not seem to understand what had been said, so the Sayadaw smiled at him kindly and commented. " You are a simple fellow!"

Later, the Sayadaw asked Daw Tin Hla, to prepare some coffee for him, which he drank quietly' as on previous occasions. He then asked his monastery's donor, "Tin Hla, within the last few days, have you had any dreams of unusual import?"

Daw Tin Hla replied, "Sir, I saw the Sayadaw sitting in meditation near a Ceti (pagoda) within this monastery. Then, there appeared some smoky vapors arising from the Ceti which then seemed to have eased downwards, from the area of those bands, (much like a waxen object getting soften by heat would do) and fell on the Sayadaw, sitting at its base but nothing happened to the Sayadaw as I saw it."

It was then that the Sayadaw made his comment: "Huh.! Tin, Hla ya, your dream is so straightforward. Such Pabbha-nameik (omens) always appear so. Like me, to survive such burdens, press on strenuously with your efforts (meditations). Then asking her to wait a moment, he entered his room. A short while later, he came back wearing another set of robes, and holding out the ones that he had been wearing that morning, all three pieces to her, he instructed her: "Take these back to your 'Zayat' (quarters, and keep) them well, and, don't wash them.

At 11.30 A.M., that same morning, he had some soup and, later, some more coffee. He had his picture taken with three of the Sayadaws who had remained with him, They had been listening to the Sayadaw just before the picture taking, but they had been unable to comprehend what the Sayadaw had told them. They were truly amazed.

When the Tagas who were present suggested That they called in the doctors to examine him, the Sayadaw made light of it all and said simply, "Perhaps, yesterday, I had been sitting too close to a fan. Not to worry." "Well, maybe, if you wish, you can bring in the doctor about 1.30 P.M. " The

Sayadaw's voice sounded perfectly normal as he gave those directives.

He made a quiet comment, then: "I can feel the burden of this old Khandha. Come, U Than Maung, help me have my enema," so saying, he led the way to the 'rest room', referred to as "Ku-de" in Pali. He appeared quite normal. After some considerable time, more people had arrived at the Sayadaw's living quarters. Around noon, Dr. Soni and Dr. Saw Mya Maung arrived.

There is no indication anywhere in the abridged version of the Mogok Sayadaw's Biography where the Sayadaw was when he spoke to his doctors: **"Well, if you wish to get on with those injections do so now, for there is not much time left. Anyway, your medicines will not do any good."**

The time was 1:00P.M.

Surrounded by his disciples, the Bhikkhus and nuns, men and women, their faces showing great anguish and concern, all looking so very downhearted, the Sayadaw made his final statement in a firm and even voice: ***"Well! All of you, Upazins and Tagas, Tagamas, too; everyone who possesses Khandha, observe the nature of Vedana that must be experienced..."***

though the Text carry a passage for Dhamma Sanvega:

"As in all past, that just viewed here,

By one law for all, sattva to face,

death in chase, down life 's road,

with no escape, no exception.

None may know, which date which season,

Nor time of fate; Marana-min decrees

All sattva be anicca so death its due

Unswerving, straight and true, on this course.

(Marana Min=King of Death; Editor)

But for Ariyas, who had long since shed all attachments, this Khandha, this bhava, like a flame finally extinguished with no wick nor fuel left for its support, the great Benefactor, our Mogok Sayadaw left none such as he, too, shed his last khandha for ever this time: 1.20 P.M of October 17th, 1962 (this 4th day of waning of the Moon of Thadingyut, in the year 1324 of the Buddhist

Era,) Finally passed away, fully blown out, fully extinguished!

U Sway Tin, D.S.C.
61 ,Tetkatho Yeiktha
Bahon Township & Post Office
Yangon, Myanmar

November 2, 1999

Yet more of seventy-five days hereinafter ...

[Some of the unusual events as reported by unnamed disciples of the Sayadaw.](#)

Most of his disciples who were close to the late Sayadaw had seen and heard enough to be convinced that, indeed, by the time he had returned to Amarapura, after his war-time sojourn at that mountain retreat, among the caves of *Baw-ba-tant*, the Mogok Sayadaw was already a fully enlightened Arahats. Many of them reported how the Sayadaw had veiled this fact from the general public.

Since the time of the Buddha, the remains of his Chief Disciples, *Shin Sariputta* and *Shin Mogallana* were cremated and the Buddha had held the relics that are characteristic of fully enlightened *Arahats*. Thus by tradition, the physical remains of all members of the Sangha came to be cremated in full view of the public to this day.

It is also customary for followers of the venerated Sayadaws to sift the ashes, after each cremation, in the hope of finding *dhatu* relics remaining. When no relics showing certain well-known characteristics have been found, the sad followers would console themselves that their greatly venerated Sayadaw had probably taken the vow to remain in *Samsara*, to follow the route of the *Bhodhisattas*, to pass through many existences and many stages of progress before the last birth in which they would fulfill their great destiny.

[October 17. 1962. 9:00 p.m.](#)

With the assistance of some members of the medical profession. Suitable precautionary measures were taken for the preservation of the remains of the Sayadaw. It is said that the infusion process was repeated for seven days. *For*

some who have not seen this before and are also lacking in the knowledge of physics, they would tend to describe the scene of that first night with varying degree of awe and amazement. Such statements many be discounted

October 25, 1962.

"Lay-in-state" period of the remains of the Sayadaw begins in the pavilion that is called "*Nibbana-Kyaung*" (Here they would remain for seventy five days counting from the day of his death.)

January 4, 1963, 12 Noon(on the 10th Day of Waxing of the Moon of the (Burmese) Myanmar Calendar month of *Pya-tho*, 1324 BE.)

On this date the remains of the Sayadaw were transferred from the '*Nibbana Kyaung*' for the ceremony of '*Sadhukilana*

January 8, 1963 (the 14th Day of Waxing of the Moon of *Pya-tho*, 1324 B.E.)

On this date, the remains of the Mogok Sayadaw were being transferred to the last pavilion, donated by the monastic buildings donors, U Kyaw Thein - Daw Tin Hla. The time was in the afternoon hour.

The appearance of the Bees for the Third Time

As the procession of transferring of the remains of the Sayadaw from the Main Pavilion advanced towards the Final Pavilion of the Principal Donors, while skirting the structures that are to be used for the cremation ceremony the next afternoon, the bees appeared in great numbers, noisily buzzing and flying overhead above the huge crowd, as if leading them towards the Final Pavilion, where they swarmed above the very entrance, without causing any one any harm. By the time the funeral cortege arrived. The bees had accomplished their swarming and had settled there quietly. This is the third time that such a remarkable phenomena has occurred in connection with the Sayadaw. The first time was when, as a novice, *ko-yin* the bees first swarmed on his robes that had been left out on a line to dry. The second was also on his robes left out on a line, immediately after his ordination as a senior monk, an *U-pazin*, while at his own small dwelling within the Mingala Monastery.

Bees seem to appreciate the nectar sweetness of the flowers. Perhaps they are as omen of how our people would get to appreciate the teaching of the Mogok Sayadaw, not only during his lifetime, but also affecting anyone who would get to hear his sermons and learn to achieve their own goals, The Mogok Sayadaw's Way.

This date of appearance of the Bees for the third time, coincided with the writer's own birth period in such a remarkable way as to offer encouragement for his greater efforts, to accomplish his own tasks in a timely manner. The sands of time are running out, and many of us are yet preoccupied with our everyday tasks. Before he died the Sayadaw had warned his many disciples, many of them merchants, "you will all have to face up to a lot of problems of the mundane world — the waves of mundane world can overwhelm you. Cast off and cast away in your mind, all of your possessions. Pay off all your debts. Do your utmost to overcome all such problems by completing your meditative tasks." We did not have long to wait for such an economic upheaval did take place and we did not know then that we would be obliged to make a new living far from this land. But for this rare opportunity we might not have had the time to carry out our meditations at a place free from outside interference. When we left, little did we know that we would never see our benefactor again.

When first I saw the sign that my father-in-law, U Than Daing had made for himself in 1963, the year he began his missionary work to form "The Society for the Propagation of Vipassana, (Mogok Sayadaw's Way) " which had its registered address, then, at 33 Sandwith Road, Rangoon, I was frankly dismayed. The sign reads: "I WILL SURELY DIE, ONLY A PORTION OF THE TIME REMAINS". Though afflicted with a heart problem, he survived most of his close fiends, stronger than himself and lived to see the installation of the Society at its present location, at 82 Natmauk Road, Bahan, Yangon. It is listed in the Phone directory as Mogoke Wipathanar, No. 54-1860

Like everything else, there is an end for everythiring. We now have some peace.

Ehi Passiko,

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