

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Ministry of Religious Affairs

International Theravāda Buddhist Missionary University

Dhammapāla Hill, Mayangone P.O., Yangon, Myanmar

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Date: 25th Jan, 2016

To
Dr Ottaranyana
Birmingham Buddhist Academy
Birmingham, United Kingdom.

On the 5th of December 2015, Dr Ottaranyana from Birmingham Buddhist Academy had submitted a letter of request to ITBMU academic board. In his letter, he applied to grant permission for establishing the Birmingham Buddhist Academy as an autonomous branch of ITBMU. In the meeting held on 18th of January, 2016, after a thorough discussion, the academic board of ITBMU has unanimously decided to grant " **An Autonomous Branch of ITBMU**" to Birmingham Buddhist Academy formally opened and established in July, 2013, Birmingham, United Kingdom.

Best Regards & Yours in the Dhamma,


T Z Naing
Prof Dr T Z Naing, Pro-Rector(Admin)
ITBMU, Yangon, Myanmar.

Professor Dr Thant Zin Naing
PhD, Minstp (London)
Pro-Rector
International Theravāda
Buddhist Missionary University

Warso (Dhammacakka Day)

Warso, the fourth month in Myanmar calendar falls between June and July. The full-moon day of Warso is very significant, because this is the day Buddha was conceived. Later in his life on this day Buddha renounced the worldly pleasure, and also on this very day that he preached his first sermon of Dhammacakka and performed the miracles of supernatural powers. Because of this, the full moon day of Warso is also called Dhammacakka Day.

After attaining enlightenment at Bodh Gaya the Buddha went to Isipatana (now called Sarnath, near Benares, India), and it was here that he preached his first discourse, the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta, which means the Turning of the Wheel of Truth.

At the Deer Park in Isipatana Buddha encountered five men who had been his companions of earlier austerities. On meeting the enlightened Buddha, all they saw was an ordinary man; they mocked his well-nourished appearance. "Here comes the mendicant Gautama," they said, "who has turned away from asceticism. He is certainly not worth our respect." When they reminded him of his former vows, the Buddha replied, "Austerities only confuse the mind. In the exhaustion and mental stupor to which they lead, one can no longer understand the ordinary things of life, still less the truth that lies beyond the senses. I have given up extremes of either luxury or asceticism. I have discovered the Middle Way".

The Four Noble Truths

Pāli	English
1. Dukkha	suffering
2. Samudaya	suffering has a cause
3. Nirodha	suffering can be ceased
4. Magga	The way is the Noble Eight Fold Middle Path

"Now this, bhikkhus, for the spiritually ennobled ones, is **the true reality which is suffering**: birth is painful, aging is painful, illness is painful, death is painful; sorrow, lamentation, physical pain, unhappiness and distress are painful; union with what is disliked is painful; separation from what is liked is painful; not to get what one wants is painful; in brief, the five bundles of grasping-fuel are painful.

"Now this, bhikkhus, for the spiritually ennobled ones, is **the suffering-originating true reality**. It is this craving which leads to renewed existence, accompanied by delight and attachment, seeking delight now here now there; that is, craving for sense-pleasures, craving for existence, craving for extermination (of what is not liked).

"Now this, bhikkhus, for the spiritually ennobled ones, is **the suffering-ceasing true reality**. It is the remainderless fading away and cessation of that same craving, the giving up and relinquishing of it, freedom from it, non-reliance on it.

"Now this, bhikkhus, for the spiritually ennobled ones, is **the true reality which is the way leading to the cessation of suffering**. It is this Noble Eight-factored Path, that is to say, right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right mental unification.



After hearing Buddha's sermon the five ascetics became his first disciples.

The Full Moon Day in Warso also marks the beginning of the Buddhist lent of three months when members of Sangha go into the rainy season retreats. A significant and meritorious deed for Buddhists in Warso is offering robes to members of the Sangha for use during the lent, a time when they are not allowed to travel. No weddings, feasts, or festivals are celebrated during the Buddhist Lent, and people try to follow the Five Precepts more conscientiously.

Reference :

<http://www.saraniya.com/page/buddhism/buddhist-festivals-waso.html>

Jāti (Birth)

(THE TRUTH OF SUFFERING)

In Buddhism, Jāti ("birth") refers to the arising of a new living entity within saṃsāra (cyclic existence). Within the teachings on the Four Noble Truths, jāti is identified as an aspect of dukkha (suffering).

But why is it suffering? Because it is the basis for many kinds of suffering. For there are many kinds of suffering, that is to say, intrinsic suffering (dukkha-dukkha), suffering in change (vipariṇāma-dukkha), and suffering due to formations (saṅkhāra-dukkha); and then concealed suffering, exposed suffering, indirect suffering, and direct suffering.

(i) Herein, bodily and mental painful feelings are called intrinsic suffering because of their individual essence, their name, and their painfulness.

(ii) Bodily and mental pleasant feelings are called suffering in change because they are a cause for the arising of pain when they change.

(iii) Equanimous feeling and the remaining formations of the three planes are called suffering due to formations because they are oppressed by rise and fall.

(iv) Such bodily and mental affliction as earache, toothache, fever born of lust, fever born of hate, etc., is called concealed suffering because it can only be known by questioning and because the infliction is not openly evident; it is also called 'un-evident suffering'.

(v) The affliction produced by the thirty-two tortures, etc., is called exposed suffering because it can be known without questioning and because the infliction is openly evident; it is also called 'evident suffering'.

(vi) All of the forms of suffering, except for intrinsic suffering, that are given in the exposition of the truth of suffering in the Vibhaṅga (Vbh.99) beginning with birth, are also called indirect suffering because they are the basis for one kind of suffering or another.

(vii) However, intrinsic suffering is called direct suffering. Herein, this birth is suffering because it is the basis for the suffering in the states of loss as made evident by the Blessed One by means of a simile in the Bālappaṇḍita Sutta (M.iii,165f.), etc., and for the suffering that arises in the happy destinies in the human world and is classed as 'rooted in the descent into the womb', and so on.

Here the suffering classed as 'rooted in the descent into the womb', and so on, is this: when this being is born in the mother's womb, he is not born inside a blue or red or white lotus, etc., but on the contrary, like a worm in rotting fish, rotting dough, cesspools, etc., he is born in the belly in a position that is below the receptacle for undigested food (stomach), above the

receptacle for digested food (rectum), between the belly-lining and the backbone, which is very cramped, quite dark, pervaded by very fetid draughts redolent of various smells of ordure, and exceptionally loathsome. And on being reborn there, for ten months he undergoes excessive suffering, being cooked like a pudding in a bag by the heat produced in the mother's womb, and steamed like a dumpling of dough, with no bending, stretching, and so on. So this, firstly, is the suffering rooted in the descent into the womb.

When the mother suddenly stumbles or moves or sits down or gets up or turns round, the extreme suffering he undergoes by being dragged back and forth and jolted up and down, like a kid fallen into the hands of a drunkard, or like a snake's young fallen into the hands of a snake-charmer; and also the searing pain that he undergoes, as though he had reappeared in the cold hells, when his mother drinks cold water, and as though deluged by a rain of embers, when she swallows hot rice gruel, rice, etc., and as though undergoing the torture of the 'lye-pickling' when she swallows anything salt or acid, etc.— this is the suffering rooted in gestation. When the mother has a difficult delivery, the pain that arises through the cutting and rending in the place where the pain arises that is not fit to be seen even by friends and intimates and companions — this is the suffering rooted in difficult delivery.

The pain that arises in him when the mother gives birth, through his being turned upside-down by the kamma-produced winds and flung into that most fearful passage from the womb, like an infernal chasm, and lugged out through the extremely narrow mouth of the womb, like an elephant through a keyhole, like a denizen of hell being pounded to pulp by colliding rocks — this is the suffering rooted in parturition.

The pain that arises in him after he is born, and his body, which is as delicate as a tender wound, is taken in the hands, bathed, washed, rubbed with cloths, etc., the pain of which is like being pricked with needle points and gashed with razor blades, etc. — this is the suffering rooted in venturing outside the mother's womb.

The pain that arises afterwards during the course of existence in one who punishes himself, in one who devotes himself to the practice of mortification and austerity according to the vows of the naked ascetics, in one who starves through anger, and in one who hangs himself — this is the suffering rooted in self-violence.

And that arising in one who undergoes flogging, imprisonment, etc., at the hands of others is the suffering rooted in others' violence.

So this birth is the basis for all this suffering.

Reference : The Essence of The Path of Purification,(Visuddhimaggarasa) by Dr Ottaranyana, Page 266-268



Dear Dad,

11.06.2016

It's been 6 years this June 2016 that you left us all but you are always in my heart. Especially I miss the part that you always think I am the best in everything I do and I am always right even others think NOT! Where can I find such a person like you now Dad? But even the thoughts remained in my mind that my Dad will always be on my side and give me encouragement when I need it. I am writing this letter because I often ask this question in my mind. After you passed away I become a Buddhist. It hurts mum quite a lot but I think she is now coping well. I feel sorry for her but this is something I must do for myself.

Isn't it funny Dad that you changed from Buddhist to Christian and I changed from Christian to Buddhist? That's why I wonder what you will think or say to me for becoming a Buddhist. I remembered you told me why you converted to Christian. You said in Buddhist practice, you have to practice a lot which is really difficult in reality to reach Haven after you died. In Christian practice, if you believe in God (Father), Son and Holy Spirit, you will be saved (go to heaven) because God is so powerful that he alone can save people. But for Buddha, he cannot save people as he can only show the way. At that time, I thought you were right but I was not excited or happy that you become Christian. But I am glad in a way that you turn into religion which gave you peace until you died. You become better person when you became Christian. When you were a Buddhist, you were only born Buddhist and not a practicing Buddhist. Mum told me that I should pray for my husband to become Christian which I never did. Because I don't think it is necessary as he is doing well with what he believes.

Let me tell you this before I forget. My husband did not attempt even once for me to become a Buddhist. Most of the people think that he did including Mum. But that is not true. However, his true Metta and understanding helped me a lot I must say. If he had pushed me to become a Buddhist, I don't think I would.

Now is my turn to tell you why I become a Buddhist. To tell you in short is because it is **AWESOME Dad!** Lord Buddha's Dhamma is all about absolute truths which belong to all beings whether you are Buddhist or Christian. People used these label just to confuse among ourselves. Because of these labels, we have wars in the world. Buddha's Dhamma is just pointing out the natural laws and he admits that he didn't invent or create these natural laws. Since we are so ignorant, we cannot see the reality and therefore we develop greed, anger and delusion. Those things are poison for us and without that or even if we can reduce a bit, we will live much happier life. And Buddha's teaching is all about how to live life better and die better. His basic principle is cause and effect. How true and logical is that Dad? If you do good, you will get good results and if you do bad, you will get bad results. But Christian believe that when good things happened in our lives, it is a God's blessings and when bad things happened, it's God's will. And they tend to leave all in God's hands.

I was taught in that way since I was young and seem to cope well when I was young. But as I got older, I wonder why some of the things we prayed (asked from God) such as someone to get well is not God's will because that person died after you prayed to get better. Then it was believed that God loved this person so much that he didn't let him suffer a long time and took him to Haven. I really struggle to believe that Dad. This is just one example but I have many other similar experiences in my life. Although I find it hard to believe that, I am so afraid that God will punish me for thinking in that way as I believed that he can see my mind. But I cannot stop that thought keep coming back to me. Those kinds of doubts are developing more and more in my mind. So lately, I stop praying in other words asking for the things I want. I just give thanks to God for all the nice things I have in my life such as health, wealth ect. But I was not happy as I felt that I was not a devoted Christian.

On day while I was on leave because I was having chest infection and a bit of fever, I get a bit bored lying on bed alone at home. So I thought I will listen to some of Buddha Dhamma talk. And the only Sayadaw I knew back then was Thidagu Sayadaw. So I looked for something interesting for me to listen and I found Dhamma Talk about Basic Principles of Buddhism. There are 10 in total one hour each. I started to listen the first one and it talked about how religion started. Religion started from people who feel afraid and want to hang on to someone who can help or protect them. It also explained how the world started from Brahma and so on. I find it so interesting and cannot stop listening

until I finish all 10 series. After that, most of my doubtful feelings or questions are answered. It makes all sense to me. Have I become Buddhist at that time? No not yet because I was so scared that God will punish me. That feeling was so terrible that I cannot even describe Dad. I feel like I can go mad. I realise that changing religion is so very difficult and need a lot of courage. At least for me. Not sure for you. I'm sure you've been brave too. So I lived with this feeling for a couple of months but I keep listening more and more Dhamma talks from different Sayadaws. I listened lots of Sayadaw Dr Nanda Mala's Dhamma Talks too.

Believe it or not Dad, as I know more and more about real Buddhism, I become stronger and stronger. I understand that God cannot punish me. I believed in cause and effect. At that time I was at peace Dad and I can declare myself that I am a Buddhist. At that time, I feel very privileged and proud to become a Buddhist. All my horrible feelings were absolutely gone. I feel like I found the real truth. I remembered when I was filling up a job application, it asked for my religion. First time in my life, I clicked on "Buddhist". Dad, how can I explain that feeling? I was so content.

And what I want to tell you is that it is not God who saves you. It is your Kamma (Actions) which decide your present and future life. So if you do more good, no doubt you will be in good place. And most importantly Dad, Buddha's teachings didn't end just after one life and go to heaven or hell. It teaches about circle of lives (Samsara) and how it all started and how we can end it. For Christian, they also do all the good deeds such as forgiveness, loving kindness, charity and much more. For that reason, they will be in good place after they died and live good life here and now. But they think it is Power of God.

I also want to tell you about prayers. Christian believes that God answers prayers according to his will and in his own time. So when your prayers are answered it is because of God's will and if not, it is not God's will. Buddhists also pray and sometime they got what they prayed for and sometimes they don't get it. So which God is granting them these wishes or prayers? According to Buddha, no one is granting those wishes. It is all about cause and effect. Cause can be either one cause or various causes to get one effect. I don't want to go into detail Dad. Just want to point out that Buddha's theory is true and you can test it. There is nothing in this world that is without cause and effect.

After I become Buddhist, I feel happier as I know the real truth about my life and how to live my life. I don't need to ask happiness from anyone and wait for their mercy. I can develop my own happiness and I know exactly how to. So I have a very good method for my way of life by becoming a Buddhist. I will write to you in my next letter how my Buddhist life carries on. But I think it is long enough for this letter.

So what will you say to me Dad? Will you be upset that your daughter is happy and doing better things in life? Do you think I will not be saved because I did not believe in God but I am trying to reduce my greed, anger, delusion and doing more good deeds? I wish I can hear your answer but I don't think I can now. I still have lots to tell you about my Buddhist life Dad. May be next time!

May you rest in Peace.

Your beloved daughter

Dhammapada Verses

Verse 5

Hatred is, indeed, never appeased by hatred in this world.
It is appeased only by loving-kindness. This is an ancient law.

Verse 182

Hard to gain is birth as man; hard is the life of mortals;
hard to get is the opportunity of hearing the Ariya Dhamma
hard it is for a Buddha to appear.

Verse 183

Not to do evil, to cultivate merit, to purify one's mind –
this is the Teaching of the Buddhas.

Verse 212

Affection begets sorrow, affection begets fear.
For him who is free from affection there is no sorrow;
how can there be fear for him?

VIHARA NEWS

Educational Visits

The number of educational visits to the Pagoda, and the number of students present in each group, has once again continued to rise significantly. Over one hundreds schools and three thousand students visit our Pagoda yearly. In addition to the increasing numbers wishing to visit, it is very reassuring that the student knowledge and understanding of Buddhism prior to their visits is also significantly improving.

Dr Nagasena and Ellen Parker help with school visits.

For a school visit please contact:

Yanda Lovelock : yanda_lovelock@yahoo.co.uk

In addition, Jenny has taken over direction of the Buddhist segment of the Ladywood Interfaith Education Programme(LIEP).

U Ratthapala is taking care of the Pagoda and vihara, and Dr Mar Mar handles the kitchen as well.

Garden Maintenance

Alena couple and Mariana always looking after our garden and all visitors are very happy in our Pagoda. Ko Kyaw Min Lwin and his friends from London always lend a helping hand in every ceremony in our vihara. Thank you to all our gardeners and volunteers.

Devotee days

There is an opportunity for devotees to offer lunch dana to the monks in the vihara. After lunch everyone may take part in a short meditation and in the cleaning of the vihara and Pagoda happily together. The event takes place on the first Sunday of each month organized by Mr Gordon and dhamma friends.

Four Days Easter Retreat

As part of the Buddhist Studies online course, the Easter Retreat took place from 25th March to 28th March 2016 in the Buddhist Academy (Rewata Dhamma hall). Our students and Meditators joined together and studied the Metta Sutta as a guide for universal loving kindness meditation. Bhante Dr Ottaranyana and students also had face to face discussion about the ongoing lessons and term paper preparation. Thank you to Ko Anug Kyaw Soe & Aye Aye Moe and Diploma students for your supporting meals to sangha and meditators.



Buddha Day (Vesak) Celebrations

2560 years of Lord Buddha's Mahaparinibbana was celebrated in our Peace Pagoda on the Sunday 22nd May 2016 together with the twelfth year anniversary of our founder, great teacher Dr Rewata Dhamma (Aggamahapandita). Finally, the day concluded with paying respects to senior community members.



The Civic Buddha Day was also celebrated in Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery on Saturday 21st May 2016. Presentation of flowers took place, with chanting by Birmingham Buddhist groups in various styles in the New Buddha gallery and a brief talk from the curators. People are also happy to pay respect to Bodhi Tree which Bhante Dr Ottaranyana brought to the ceremony.



Diploma in Buddhist Studies Online Course

Birmingham Buddhist Academy started to run one year online Diploma course in Buddhist Studies during academic year 2014-15. Students are now successfully completed their Diploma course and their certificates will be awarded for the first time on the Sunday, (**Dhamma Day**) 17th July 2016.

Master Course in Buddhist Studies online Course

Students who completed the Diploma started their first year master class and now completed in May 2016. Second year course will begin in academic year 16-17.

Dr Ottara Nyana's activities

During Bhante's visit to Myanmar in (27/11/15-25/01/16) he was able to attend the Thamangon state High school (Secondary) anniversary on the 6th December in the home village of our great teacher Sayadaw Dr Rewata Dhamma. Sayadaw's 86th birthday as well as the Themangon school's anniversary occurred on 6th Dec and was marked by awards being presented to the school's brightest students who had passed their examinations with flying colors ranging from primary to high school students.



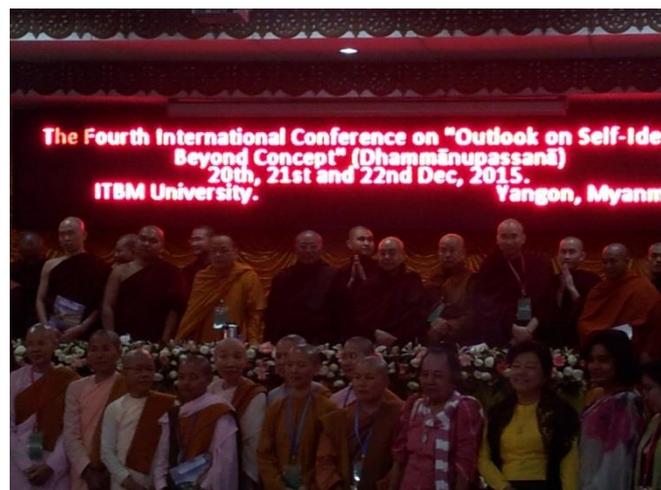
Scholarships were also given to University students according to their results, with K-50,000 being awarded for one distinction. The total cost of these awards amounted K-25,000,000. This award is donated by Bamaw Sayadaw (Chairman of the State of Sangha Council, Myanmar) – K 300,000, Dr Mar Mar Lwin (£1000), Mr Antoneo (Brazil) Euro 300. Hundreds of copy books are donated by the U Kyaw Nyein family from Yangon for students. Donations are always welcome to support Dr Rewata Dhamma's village school. Bhante donated K 500,000 for the Themangon school path.

On the same day, special celebrations were arranged to pay respect to the elderly, with K10,000 being given to 30 elders - all were over 80 years of age. This event was sponsored by U Aye Myint and Daw Khin Thandar Wai (Hla Thidar Gold & Jewellery, Yangon) and U Kun and Daw Htay Htay family, Yangon.

Bhante was also invited to the opening ceremony of Pali Gramma and Sutta study course of May International School which was held at Karawait Hall in Yangon. Over 100 students and their families attended the opening ceremony happily. The course runs from 12th Dec 2015 to 21st Feb 2016.

20th to 22nd Dec - Bhante attended the International Vipassana conference on Dhammanupasanna at the International Theravada Buddhist Missionary

University. On the final day of the conference, Bhante performed as a moderator in the afternoon session.



24th Dec – 1st Jan - Bhante Ottarana's 9 days Vipassana retreat took place in his native village, Gyogone. Over 50 people meditated during this retreat. Bhante also taught English for Buddhism to Secondary and High school students 2 sessions a day and around 50 students attended. Bhante donated K500,000 for pagoda's Mable floor and K300,000 for new constructing Cetiya in Natkan (heavenly lake) village.

25th Dec – Bhante attended the memorial service of his Dhamma mother Daw Thoun Kyi at Ngathaingaug. In remembrance of his Dhamma mother, Bhante donated K300,000 to Dhamma Nuggaha Examination Board. Bhante also donated K300,000 for new Dhamma Hall in Satdautgyi village.

28th Dec – Bhante attended Sayadaw U Pandita 96th Birthday and gave evening Dhamma talk at Leingone village, Kyon Pyaw and over 3000 people came to listen to his Dhamma talk. Bhante donated K750,000 which he received as dhamma puja to the local secondary school.



6th-9th Jan – Bhante visited to Myeik Taninsari division.

21st – 23rd Jan – Bhante was invited to attend World Peace Buddhist Conference at Sagaing Thitagu Buddhist Academy. Over 500 delegates from 50 countries and over 500 observes participated in this conference from different religions including Christin, Buddhist, Muslim, Hindus and Tibetan Lama. Venerable Bamaw Sayadaw (Chairman of the State of Sangha Council, Myanmar) and President U Thein Sein attended the conference. Relics were also brought by Tibetan Lama to the conference and people enjoyed together paying respect to relics.

During visit to Myanmar, Bhante donated K1,200,000 to individual students who are needing support for their education.

6th - 16th Feb – Bhante conducted 10 days meditation

retreat at Dhammaramsi Meditation Centre, Belgium and also taught *PaticcaSamupāpda*. Around 45 meditators participated.



VIHARA EVENTS IN FUTURE

10-Day Insight Retreat

19th – 28th Aug (experienced) Led By Dr Ottranyana
Designed to enable meditators to experience the characteristic of impermanence and nature of non-selfhood as part of the process of insight meditation.

Abhidhamma&Pavarana Day - 16th October 7.00pm

Kathina – 23rd October 10:30am

Diploma in Buddhist Studies (2016-17)

Overview

This course is designed to provide the student with an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the Theravada Buddhism.

Application Form & Educational Requirements

See details at

www.birminghambuddhistacademy.org

Application Submission date and contact

Between 1st July 2016 - 31st July 2016

Please send completed application and documents required to venuttaranyana@gmail.com

Entrance examination

Sunday 21st August 2016

Interview

Saturday 27th August 2016

Confirmation of the acceptance to the course

Wednesday 31st August 2016

Duration of the course?

One year (full time)

Course Start Date and Time

Saturday 3rd September 2016 7pm to 9pm

Course running time

Every weekend (Saturday & Sunday from 7pm to 9pm)

Course method

Online and occasional face to face attendance at Birmingham Buddhist Academy at 29-31 Osler Street, Ladywood, Birmingham, B16 9EU
Tel: 0121- 4546591

Diploma Course Modules

Abhidhamma, Meditation, Pali Grammar, Basic Buddhism

Fees

£600 for four modules (full Diploma Course) as donation payable to Birmingham Buddhist Academy by cheque.

Note : Students may also take individual modules for the fees of £150 per module