



**THE TREND OF THE ROLE OF RAMAÑÑA NIKĀYA IN
THE NEXT DECADE IN MON STATE**

Ven. Za Wa Na

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirement for the Degree of
Master of Arts
(Buddhist Studies)

Graduate School
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University
C.E. 2017



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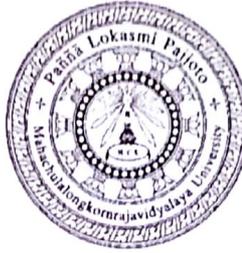
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The Graduate School of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University has approved this thesis entitled “The Trend of The Role of Ramañña Nikāya in The Next Decade in Mon State” in partial fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Buddhist Studies.

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Abstract

This qualitative research has three main objectives namely: (1) to study the origin and development of Rāmañña Nikāya in Mon State, (2) to study the characteristics and practices of Ramañña Nikāya Association, (3) to analyze the Trend of the Roles of Ramañña Nikāya in the Next Decade in Mon State. The result of the study found that Mon Buddhism began and develop before Pegan, during Pegan and after Pegan from three periods during conflict civil war. Based on the results of the analysis, the study presents possible solutions to the conflict. These periods will present and explain various conditions based on the results of the analysis from a long time in the history of Ramañña Nikāya. Secondly, by analyzing the characteristics and practice of Mon Buddhism in Mon State

some characteristics and practices may differ due to the difference national culture of Mon in Burma. This is because the Burmese people are influenced by the Mon culture. The results show that the conflict is caused by three major factors: threats to ethnic identity, nationalist sentiments, and image of out-group.

This research contains five chapters: the first of two chapters are introduction, history of Mon Buddhism the origin and development Rāmañña Nikāya, the last two chapters examine the characteristics of the practices and interview the Role of Rāmañña Nikāya that of relating to the state, Sangha education and propagation the religious title to the Sangha who is prompting in the Next Decade in Mon State. And the latest chapter will be conclusion of this research: Rāmañña Nikāya's role in Mon society and Mon Sangha association and Mon people in Mon State.

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Based on the requirement of the Master Degree of Arts in Buddhist Studies of the Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, I today have finished this thesis is submitted to Graduate School at International Buddhist Studies College, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University. I may express my thankfulness for those who helped me during my study and to accomplish the thesis. I am grateful to Thai Buddhism and the Thai king's support for Buddhism. First, I would like to express my deepest thanks to the Most Venerable Assoc. Prof. Dr. Phramaha Hansa Dhammhaso, Assistant to Rector for Academic Affairs, Director of Office of International Buddhist Studies College and a member of my thesis supervisory Ass. Prof. Dr. Sanu Mahatthanadull.

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List of Abbreviations

The references are given according to the volume and page number of the PTS editions.

A.D	: Anno Domini
B.C.	: Before Christ
B.E.	: Buddhist Era
C.E	: Christian Era
MNSP	: Mon New State Party
Op.cit	: Opera citato/as referred
P (p).	: Pages(s)
MNEC	: Mon National Education Committee
MLBCA	: Mon Literature and Buddhist Culture Association
MCU	: Mahaculalongkornrajavidyalaya University
MRN	: Mon Ramañña Nikāya
SPDC	: State Peace and Development Council
SLORC	: State Law and Order Restoration Council

Other Abbreviations

Ibid	: Ibiden/in the same book
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Chapter I

Introduction

1.1 Backgrounds and Significance of the Research Problem

Mon was one of the nation and big Empire in Southeast Asia who settles a foundation of Buddhism both Thailand and Burma From the 6th to the late 11th century Dvaravati Period.¹ They were ultimately defeated by the Thais who absorbed much of their culture. And the first major group of immigrants to arrive in present-day Burma were the Mon who were originally from China and settled in what is now northern Burma around the third century B.C.² In addition, it is one of the countries, which are complicated political and religious problems with many of ethnic groups with different kinds of cultural traditions living in union of Burma.

When talking about the history of Buddhism between Thai and Burma, it is evidence that most scholars mention the name of Golden land called Rāmaññadesa who live in lower Burma. Rāmaññadesa means country of the Ramnas because the Mons were called Ramans in the olden days. The name may be connected with Sanskrit word Rāmanikāya and Rāmaneyyaka meaning pleasant and lovely. Of course, it was in lower Burma comprising very fertile deltas of the three Mother Rivers such as Irrawaddy, Sittaung and Salween.³ These people became a minority after the king of Anarratha Burma conquered lower Burma in Thaton (sadium) the last city of Rāmañña (Mon) civilization residence. Mon Buddhism in Burma came to face with serious change when the Burmese king came to power. Buddhism became weaker than before. But there is still a minority of Mon Rāmaññ Nikāya Association and still rebuilding with the name of

¹ Dr. Nai Pan Hla, “**A Short History Of The Mons,**” Part (1), The Original Homeland of the Mons (Migration), (Japan: Okinawa, Meio University, 2007),

² Jeffrey Hays, **Ancient Mon People**, (2004): Retrieved on 12 November 2017, http://factsanddetails.com/southeast-asia/Myanmar/sub5_5a/entry-2997.html.

³ Nai Pan Hla, **The Significant Role of The Mon Language and Culture in Southeast Asia, Part 1**, (Tokyo: Institute of the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asian and Africa (ILCAA), Meikei, 1992), p.52.

the Mon Rāmañña Nikāya Association based on the three traditional Sri Lankan Nikāyas (sects) by the time Buddhaghosa prepared his Pāla commentaries in the fifth century.⁴

In Thailand there are two fraternities, namely, the Maha Nikāya and the Dhammayuttika-nikaya, which is descended from the Rāmañña sect of lower Burma.⁵ During Buddha's lifetime his religion did not spread far. Even the sects of Sangha organization did not have too many divisions. Mon are very old people in Buddhism based on the history of Buddhism Thailand and Burma. Now some of them settle and practice Buddhism in Thailand and some of them are in lower Burma as well. Most history of scholar who are writing about Buddhism of development of South east Asia always mention with the name of the Mon civilization as far as it can be seen from various kinds of history of Buddhist books written by English scholars. It is clear that the Mons of ancient Burma and Thailand were largely responsible for the transmission into mainland Southeast Asia of Indian influences in general and of Theravada Buddhism in particular.⁶ Some scholar mentions that they remain a shadowy civilization. Some says that they are disappeared in lower Burma. Anyhow it becomes minority of population with ethnic group in Burma even in Thailand with the name of the Ramen Nikāya. But in Thailand that Nikāya had already disappeared. In 1044, the Burmese king Anawrahta grew his power and conquered Theravada Mon in Thaton in 1057. This Nikāya became impressed by the simplicity of Theravada doctrine as taught to him by a young Mon Monk from Thaton, Shine Araham in 1057.⁷ And also Upper Burma and was united under one rule after Anawrahta king of Burma extended from pagan to lower Burma Ramañña kings From 12th century on. Under Burman rule, Mon People had been massacred after they lost their kingdom and many sought asylum in the Thai Kingdom also established Dhammanyu Nikāya Sangha in Thailand by Mon monk.

⁴ Stephen C. Berkwitz, **South Asian Buddhism A Survey**, (USA: Routledge Press, 2010) p.143.

⁵ Prof. P.V. Bapat S. Radhakrishnan, **2500 Years of Buddhism**, (India: Book House, 1959), p.137.

⁶ Noble Ross Reat. **Buddhism: A History**, (California: Berkeley, Jain Publishing, Asian Humanities Press, 1994), p.113-114.

But Mons remained a minority in lower Burma without a country with Ramañña Nikāya Buddhist Association. Although Ramañña Nikāya established a long time, Ministry of religious affairs Myanmar do not recognize as Ramañña Nikāya. This is one of challenges for Mon follower Ramañña Nikāya and laypeople to practice the Buddha's teaching. The case also effected and decline the number of the Ramañña Nikāya Buddhist Association also dominated with a small number of Mon Ramañña Nikāya Buddhist Association in lower Burma because of the limitation of freedom. The aim of this Nikāya and development are to gain dependence of freedom for Mon People and Mon civilization to be free from under the hands seized of military of Burma government.

It has undergone several changes for freedom of literature because Ramañña Nikāya Buddhist Association uses their own language in examination with Burmese Sangha Organization. Burmese Sangha Organization forced to take exam as a Burmese Monk in Burmese language so far. So some of Mon Monk from Dhammayutika Nikāya followed Burmese Monk Organization to take examination Pali literature as a Burmese language. Without Mon literature, Ramañña Nikāya and lay people cannot survive in Present time. However the reason is to ban language and make weak of patriotism for next generation. The Ramañña Nikāya Sangha Dhamma held a Dhamma examination both written and oral although facing serious difficulties. In summer, Mon Buddhist Monks patiently tried to open and teach the Dhamma to the children generations in Monastery for summer since 1988.⁸ It is hard mission for Mon Buddhist Monk to carry on to develop their own language under the military of government until now based on the The Ramañña Nikaya Association. As we can see from around the world, Buddhism flourished in a long period time. But, at that time Burma was not called as it is today.

In olden times, Mons started their settlement as the Yamanya Province the region between the Sittaung River and the Thanlwin River as Suvannabhumi.⁹ According to traditional accounts. Asoka sent Sona and

⁸ Marie Lall and Ashley South, **Education, Conflict and Identity: Non-state ethnic education regimes in Burma**, March 2012, p.11

⁹ **The Teachings of the Buddha** (Higher Level) Volume II, (Department for the Promotion and Propagation of the Sansana, A.D. 2001), p. 250.

Uttara s Buddhist missionaries to Burma, and they are the founders of the Theravada Buddhist community at Thaton.¹⁰ But at that time, the name of the Thaton is called as Suvarnabhumi according to the Kalyānī stone inscriptions of Mon and the Sāsanavamsa.¹¹ But the central of the city is situated in Thaton. It did not appear yet with the name of Rāmañña Nikāyaset, which is descended, from the Sudhamma fraternity that is the oldest and the largest set. In the thoughts of the Mon People in Lower Burma, Development of Buddhism and Rāmañña Nikāya is back born of the nationalism of its people because it only practice and study Mon Buddhism literature by Mon Monks and laypeople for a long time ago.

Rāmañña Nikāya has undergone several changes in the changing history of the Mon People. Even enforced policy to absorb culture the Mon people to Rāmañña Nikāya which compelled the Mon people to live according to Burmese culture did not change that. It included forcing to the Mon Buddhist studies language to exam as the same language as Burmese monk. Mon Buddhist Monks were not allowed to learn and take Government examination Mon language since 1992. Even the Rāmañña Nikāya Organization does not recognize officially. It is sure that Mon Buddhist Sasana and the nation of language probably made weak in the root of the Mon people Buddhist development in several years. Most monks only allow to teach and can develop Mon language for Mon Children in the Monasteries regarding a series decline the development of Mon Sangha Society and Mon Cultural for next generation. The Mon with their distinct language and culture competed for centuries with the Myanmar.¹² However, today their influence and language is limited to remote areas of the lower Burma. The aim of Rāmañña Nikāya is to struggle to spread Mon Language and Buddhist culture for society.

But, under the hands of Myanmar government military is a mass of crisis to solve this problem for many generations for Rāmañña Nikāya Organization. After government reforms in 2010, Mon Cultural language

¹⁰ Charles S. Prebish, editor, **Buddhism a modern perspective**, (The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1975), p. 170-171.

¹¹ Bimala churn law, **The History of the Buddha's Religion** (Sāsanavamsa), (London: 46 great Russell Street, 1952), p. 44.

¹² Roger Bischoff, **Buddhism in Myanmar A Short History**, (Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1995), p. 12-13.

has a chance to open in Mon State lower Burma. As a result, Mon Buddhism turned over a new page in history. Gradually, it has been developed not only Rāmaññarattha Buddhist University in Mon State but also Mon Summer cultural School in several villages including Mon National School as a Government School. the aim of my study is to introduce the history of Mon Buddhist still under the development in Mon State as well as characteristics and present trend for the next decade in Mon State.

1.2 Objectives of the Research

1.2.1 To study the origin and development of Rāmañña Nikāya Buddhism in Mon State

1.2.2 To study the characteristics and practices of Rāmañña Nikāya Association in Mon State

1.2.3 To analyzethe trend of the roles of Rāmañña Nikāya in the Next Decade in Mon State

1.3 Statement of the Problems Desired to Know

1.3.1 How did the origin and development of Rāmañña Nikāya Buddhism Flourish in Mon State?

1.3.2 What are the characteristics and practices of Rāmañña Nikāya Association in Mon State?

1.3.3 How could it analyze the Trend of the Roles of Rāmañña Nikāya in the Next Decade in Mon State?

1.4 Scope of the Research

1.4.1 Scope of contents:

The following scopes will be discussed as follows; Firstly, the study will focus on the history of the Rāmañña Nikāya, and the difficult circumstances and the development of Buddhism in Mon State after the Burmese Regime.

Secondly, this study will focus on the present trend of the role of Rāmañña Nikāya in the next decade in Mon State.

1.4.2 scope of Location:

Mon state lower Burma where the majority of Mon Buddhist Monks resident in the depth-interviews were conducted with 10 key questions who are the leader of the Rāmañña Nikāya.

1.4.3 scope of population:

The proposing of this study is ten Mon Buddhist Monks who are interviewed in Mon State.

1.4.4 Scope of Timing:

The schedule of the research will be started form the April 2017 to April 2018 CE.

1.5 Definition of Terms Used in the Research

1.5.1 **The Trend** means a particular direction of Rāmañña Nikāya in the next 10 years.

1.5.2 **The Roles** refers to roles of Rāmañña Nikāya in terms of politics, Education and propagation of Buddhism etc.

1.5.3 **Rāmañña Nikāya** means the Nikāya, which is descended and situated from the Mon Buddhism (sect) in lower Burma. The branch of the Sri Lankan Sangha that serves the lower castes, founded in 1863 by a delegation sent to Mon State in Lower Burma. It has been copied by one of them. Observe the Vinaya rules more strictly in certain particular.

1.5.4 **The Next Decade** refers to 10 years from now 2017- 2027 C.E.

1.5.5 **Mon State** means the area of the place where majority of Mon people settle which is situated from lower apart of Burma. Mon State was created in 1974.

1.6 Review of Related Literature and Research Works

1.6.1 Michael A. Aung- Thwin, “**The legend That Was Lower Burma**”, University of Hawai’I Press, 2005.¹³

This book gave out a brief background of Mon History of Buddhism flourish and generation to generation under the military of Burma Government in Modern times and as well as in the past All Ramañña Mon Association. Hediscovers the origins of the word called Ramaññadesa, which became Raman, did not settled yet Mon people in lower Burma, later in Burma. The name of the Rmeñ did usedas the late nineteenth century as if he turned back for Mon history. As Ramañ It also found earlier in three Pre-Angkor (old Khmer) inscriptions. But in modern word occurs as the term Mon in Kyanzittha’s New Palace Inscription of AD 1102. Modern scholar denied his research that there was not Mon civilization in lower Burma before the thirteen century.this book give too much challenging for modern scholars who are not familiar to read from his book.

1.6.2 Noble Ross Reat, **Religions of The World Buddhism A History**. Jain Publishing Company, Fremont, California, 1994.¹⁴

This book gave brief about Mon Theravāda Buddhism for the transmission into mailand Southeast Asia. The author tries to explain about how Burmese tradition was converted to Theravāda Buddhism by a Mon monk named Shin Aahan, and overthrew the Mon capital of Thaton in lower Burma in 1057 in order to acquire Mon Buddhist Three Pitika scriptures. This book also stated Buddhism was introduced to the Mon under Aśoka and Buddhagosa introduced the Pāli scripture to Mon in the fifth century. This book also explains the period of year under General Ne win to enact state control of the all Sanghas.

¹³ Michael A. Aung-Thwin, **The Mists of Ramañña**, (United States of America: University of Hawai ‘I Press, 2005), p. 44.

¹⁴ Noble Ross Reat, **Religions of The World Buddhism A History**, (California, Fremont, Jain Publishing Company, Fremont, 1994), p. 113-114.

1.6.3 Naing Pann Thar, **History of Rāmañña Nikāya and its Sasna**, (Mon Translation Book) Published by Ko Tu, Yangoon, Myanmar, 2016.¹⁵

In this book, the author mentions about the history of Rāmañña Nikāya Buddhism and its Influence to Mon People from Sri Lanka. The author shows the way to struggle and face the problem under the crisis of society from Burma Government. And the author mentions that there were spread into to Nikāya from Mon Sangha Organization. So this book is certainly helpful to my research.

1.6.4 Mahinda Deegalle, **Buddhism, Conflict and Violence in Modern Sri Lanka**, Published by Routledge, USA and Canada, 2006.¹⁶

This book gave a great chance for my research from this book between the Sangha and the people when something was in colonial times. And also Sri Lanka Buddhist Monks are divided into three major monastic orders including one of the Rāmañña Nikāya referring to Rāmañña Nikāya in Mon State. So this book helps me for to step further for my research

1.6.5 Prof.p.v. Bapat, **2500 Years of Buddhism**, Publication Division, India, shastri bhavan. 35, Haddows Road, 1956.¹⁷

2500 Years of Buddhism book introduces the history of Rāmañña Nikāya was also split up over minor matters because of the Vinaya rules. This book is the great of missionary from Ceylon to Rāmañña desa in a long period before the Burmese occupied the lower Burma. Therefore, my research will be related to Nikāya in this book. This book explains broad of the history of Buddhism in lower Burma Mon State.

1.6.6 Bimala Churn Law, M.A., B.L., Ph.D., **The history of the Buddha's Religion**, India, 1952. (Sāsanavamsa)

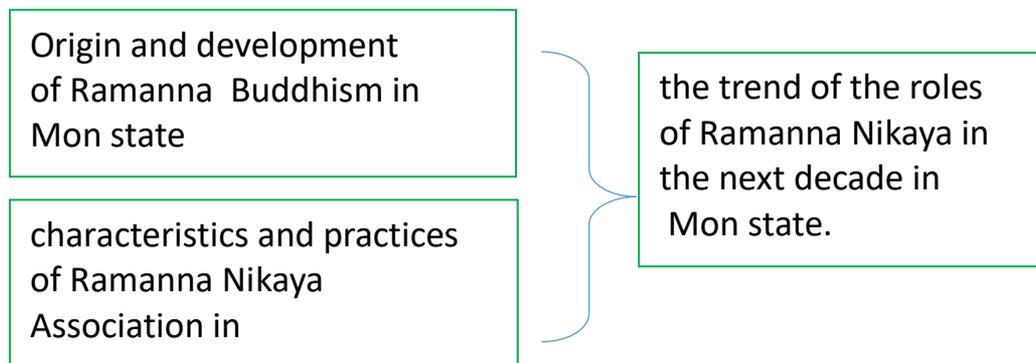
¹⁵ Naing Pann Thar, **History of Rāmañña Nikāya and its Sasna**, (Mon Translation Book), (Yangoon: Myanmar, 2016), p. 23.

¹⁶ Mahinda Deegalle, **Buddhism, Conflict and Violence in Modern Sri Lanka**, Published by Routledge, USA and Canada, 2006), p. 204-205

¹⁷ Prof.p.v. Bapat, **2500 Years of Buddhism**, (India: the Dipector, 1956), p. 137.

This book is translated by Bimala Churn Law and written by a monk named Paññasāmi in 1861. The text in side are useful informations concerning the nine regions visited by the first Buddhist missionaries as well as some other places of Rāmañña desa (Mon Country) regarding to my research sourceand also it explained one country among the three Rāmañña countries Hamsāvati, Muttima and Suvanabhumi when the Buddha attained the highest wisdom and met the Tapussa and Bhalika from Rāmañña country.

1.7 Conceptual Framework



1.8 Research Methodology

The research methodology can be divided into four stages as follow;

1.7.1 Collecting data from the primary source related to the roles of Mon Buddhist monk; and other historical books by well-known Buddhist scholars. In Secondary data: The following names will be interviewed by 10 members Sangha Scholar Namely:

1. The Most Venerable Zawdi, (First level of Rāmañña Nikāya Sangha Organization), Middle Monastery, Zabu Township, Mon State.

2. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta Uttara, (Second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization) Krena Village, Krena Monastery, Mon State,
3. The Most Venerable Bhadanta silācāra, Aggamahāpaṇḍita, (Second level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization), Auk Pegu monastery, Mon State.
4. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta phubbha Maha Thera, (Second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization), Kaban Htaw monastery, Mon State, Mon State.
5. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta Candobhāsa, (second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization), Pown Township, Mon State, Bhan neik Pagoda Monastery.
6. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta, Nandasara, (Aggamabannida), Middle Pariyyati Monastery, Kyaik kami Town, Mon State.
7. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta Kesara, (Aggamahāganthavācakapaṇḍita) BowtaDwon Township, Yangon,
8. The most venerable Bhuppha Rama (pariyyiti wedi Monastery, Mon State.
9. The most venerable Ketumala (Kawpaline Village, Mon State.
10. The most venerable SilaVanta, Hongsa Htaw Monastery, Zabu Township, Mon State.

Interview: Interviews were conducted with Mon laymen and laywomen. The total of number of Monks involved in the interviews were 10 monks and Participants were asked a total of 10 questions.

1.7.2 Synthesis and providing collected data.

1.7.3 Discussing the problems encountered.

1.4.4 Conclusion and Suggestion for further study

1.9 Advantages Expected to Obtain from Research

After doing the research, the following benefits can be achieved.

1.8.1 Having knowledge ability clearly about the Origin and Development of Rāmañña Nikāya in Mon State

1.8.2 Understanding fully the characteristic and practices of Rāmañña Nikāya in Mon State

1.8.3 Gaining a comprehensive knowledge the analyzing Trend of the Roles of Rāmañña Nikāya in the next decade in Mon State

Chapter II

The Origin and development of Rāmañña Nikāya In Mon State

2.1 The Origin of the Rāmañña Nikāya in Ancient times

The first major group of immigrants to arrive in present-day Burma was the Mons who was originally from China, Yangtze River Valley and settled in what is now northern Burma around the third century B.C. They reached Dvāravatī (Old Siam) and Rāmaññadesa (Lower Burma), the old country of the Mon people.¹ The Mon were a highly cultured Buddhist people with a classical North Indian heritage who settled in Central Burma. Pegu (50 miles from Yangon) was established by the Mon in the 6th century, it was the capital of southern Burma in the 13th century, when the Mons ruled the region. In 1757, it was sacked and almost completely destroyed by the Burmese monarch, King Alaungpaya. The Mons were heavily influenced by Indian Hindu culture and Asoka Buddhist kingdom in India. They established the Dvaravati Kingdom (A.D. 6th to 11 century) and several centers in mainland Southeast Asia. The Dvaravatis controlled the Menam Valley area in present-day Thailand from the 6th or 7th century to the 11th century. Mon belong to the Austroasiatic subfamily.

They were the old inhabitants of both Burma and Thailand who had contacts with India from very early times. Mons were known as a seafaring people. Significantly, the Mons had played a major role as the most prominent agent in spreading and propagating Indian civilization in Southeast Asia in the historic period. Historically, Mahanagara was the smallest and the last dynasty of the Mons in old Siam and the last king was known as King Yiba, whose country was invaded by the King Mangrai in 1292 A.D. after that, Mons had no further role to play in Thailand as rulers of an independent kingdom. They were ultimately defeated by the Thais who absorbed much of their culture.

¹ Dr. Nai Pan Hla, “A Short History of The Mons” Part (1) The Original Homeland of the Mons (Migration), (Japan: Nago City, Professor of Southeast Asian Studies, Meio University, 2007), p.12.

The oldest records of the ethnic name of the Mons were found not in Burma or Thailand but in Khmerland. In Khmer inscriptions of 6th -7th century A.D. the term was written as Ramañ² and Rmmañ and in the 9th - 10th century as Rāmanya. Next it was found in Java in 1021 A.D. as Rmen. In the 11th century Mon inscriptions of the Burmese King Kyanzittha it occurs as Rameñ. Later, in the 15th century, in Mon inscriptions and on a Mon copper plate now in the National Library of Bangkok, the spelling had changed to Rmañ. Such a name had never occurred in the earlier Mon epigraphs both in Thailand and Laos.

In the year 103 of the Maha Era, he became an Omniscient Buddha after 49 days of the enlightenment while residing near the Bodhi tree. The two of Mon Merchants called Tapaw and Tabaw who came from Ukkalapa Emperor, (Rangoon now) Ramannadesa received eight hairs relic from the Buddha and took the two refuges in the Buddha and Dhamma after offering some honey cakes. At the time Sangha did not exist yet. So, the Ramañ (Mon) is the first of all amongst the Buddhists who take refuge to the Triple Gems, for the two brothers had been taking only Couplet Gems that were the Buddha and Doctrine, and for the Bhikkhu order had not come into being yet. Ramañ is the first who is who is able to offer alms to the Master amongst of off all Buddhists, Raman is the first devotee who had great dedication to Buddha among of all Buddhists.

Ramañ had accepted sacred eight hairs relic in the morning on Wednesday on fifth day of commencement of fourth Mon month in hundred and tree of great era. So, the Ramañ (Mon) is the first of all amongst the Buddhists who take refuges to the Triple Gems, for the two brothers had been taking only Couplet Gems that were the Buddha and Doctrine, and for the Bhikkhu order had not come into being yet.

The hair relics, offered by the Buddha, build and enshrined on the top of Singuttara hill in Rammadesa. So, the real devotee who erected originally Kyaiklagon is of course the Mon Emperor Ukkalapa. This is the

² JSS, **The Journal of the Siam Society**, Bangkok, Thailand Volume 79, Part 1, Amarin Printing Group Co., Ltd., 1991, p.15.

first time the Buddhism of the Buddha arrived and flourished into Rammnadesa Mon land. The area of Yamanya Province was very wide and extensive. For effective administration it was divided into three divisions: Pathein district, Dalla district and Muttama district each of which was composed of thirty-two towns. Totally, there were 96 cities. Suvannabhumi was also known as the golden land because of its products of gold, ivory and honey.³ In addition to the overseas trade, it also had overland trade with the eastern countries by crossing over the Tanintharyi mountain ranges. The overseas trade between India and Suvannabhumi was very good.

In the Second time, When the Buddha residing in Rājagaha near Makulapatta's mountain, The brothers named Maha-sala and Cula-sala, from Zaungtu about 20 miles north of (Hongsawadoi in Pegu) visited the Buddha in His life time bestowed during the six-rainy season or vassa, and presented food offerings. The Buddha presented the brother with hair relics, two in total. At Rajagaha the Buddha also uttered a prophecy that the relics should be enshrined on Sudasana Hill in the near future the city that is created by the brothers Samala and Wimala and enshrined the hair relics after the Buddha's parinibbāna.

Later on Samala and Wimala who came and enshrined on the Sudasana (Pali) Hill. Where the two legendary Hongsā birds and who are called Samala and Wimala in 825 AD and 840 AD.⁴ Some history record it had been enshrined eight hair relics. Mon stone inscription almost disappeared about the history of kyaik Mau Tau pagoda that is called in Burmese Shwemawdaw in the present time. Stone inscriptions Mau Tau Pagoda breaks offs and only remained in Kalyani Inscription in Pegu. So that most scholar are difficult to get sources based on the stone inscription that can be recognized fully. Even the name of the pagoda all lower Burma and built by Mon king in ancient time could be changed because Burma people were hard to pronounce called by Mon local people.

³ **The Teachings of the Buddha**, (Higher Level) Volume II, (Yangon: Department for the Promotion and Propagation of the Sasana, A.D. 2001), p. 251.

⁴Donald M. Stadtner, **The lost Legend of the Shwemawdaw, pagoda**, (Walnut Creek California, USA, 2010), p. 2.

Third, it related the history of the Kyaik Htei kyo pagoda and zin-kyaik pagoda, when the the Buddha had eight years of enlightenment, Maha sasana era 111 years, The Buddha, Being invited by Gavāmpati to the Golden land (Suvarṇabhūmi)," a region identified with lower Burma, including apart of Thailand with the six hundred thousands people, became non-returned and win-stammer Mon kingdom of Thaton. Gavāmpati was the first disciple of the Buddha to preach the Buddha's doctrine in the Mon kingdom of Thaton according to Mon inscriptions.⁵At the same time a Mon king named Soihayarsa requested the hair-relics to be worshipped in next generation. The Buddha proclaimed that the cremation of tooth relics would brought to Thaton by my disciple named Gavāmpati Thera after the Buddha attaining mahaprinibana in 37 years later. The tooth -relics enshrined in Zing-kyaik Pagoda. The Buddha turned towards the East for a second stay at a side from the Zing-yaik Pagoda, he saw a hermitage and requested him the hair-relics for the purpose of building Pagoda as a hermitage's head. The Buddha touching with six hairs relics with finger received by the hermitage. Later on the hermit explored the Rock stone as if it looks like hermit's head to be enshrined the relics.

One major change after the Burmese seizure of Pegu 1538 was the total disappearance of the Mon myth underpinning. Only after the capture of Pegu, the Mon capital, in 1538, lower Burma became gradually populated by Burmas. Burmese absorbed major Mon sites, such as the Shwedagon and Kyaik-hti-yo.⁶This is the third time of Buddha's Sasana flourished into Rammadesa.

According to Mon Buddhist history, Mon Ramañña Nikāya appeared and recognized into Rammadesa for the third time during the reign of king Asoka, the great king in India. He sends the elder monks Venerable Sona and Venerable Uttara to Suvarṇabhūmi after the third Buddhist Council in India. Suvarṇabhūmi⁷ is a combination of the world Pali. Suvarṇ means golden and bhumi means land. So it is called the

⁵ Lagirarde, François, "Gavāmpati" **Encyclopedia of Buddhism**, No.1 (2000): 57. 78.

⁶ Don Stadtner, **Burmese and Mon Foundation Myths**, p. 6-13.

⁷ World fellowship of Buddhists Held, **Buddhism in Thailand**, (Bangkok: WFBH, 2523), p.5.

golden land. Golden land is so wide in Southeast Asia because Mon settles in this area before Burma and Thai influence. Therefore, it can be concluded that Ramañña Nikāya was appeared after the third Buddhist Council 236 Buddhist Era. When the King Siridhammasoka (Asoka) sent nine Missions to nine countries, a mission led by Venerable Soṇa and Uttara came to Suvāṇṇabhūmi (Rāmañña Province)⁸ At that time sedum was known and ruled by King Sīridhammasoka. But Burmese chornorcial stated as Sirimasoka. Before that time, an ogress of the sea used to be in the habit of eating young born child everyday. When the Theras arrived there it coincided with the birth of a prince in the city. As soon as the people saw the theras coming away from city, they thought the ogress came from the sea again. Fortunely, whil the Sona and Uttara were explaining to the people that they were the Buddhist monks, the ogress came out of the sea with her retinues. And then the two theras created Manussa Siha, which means half of the head's lions and half human body to drove the ogress away.

And then the theras also expounded the Brahmajāla Sutta⁹ to people who has assembled there. Sixty thousand people became ariyas and Three thousand five hundred men and one thousand five hundred women entered the Order. Buddhism became a strong faith firmly in that period. Now we could have a look just like a sea and surrounding island around the village and villager, which is called now the ogress of the island in Mon State. To protect the ogress from the seashore, the two Theras created the image of the Manussa Shiha, which is like as a half of body's human head and half of body's blow lion by protection of eating young child in the city. Some house, made of necklet of child and entrance of the monasteries are still building every monastery.

This is the first time of the Rāmañña Nikāya Sangha Organization that Appeared in the history of Mon Sangha until the present time.

2.2 Development of Rāmañña Nikāya in Mon State

⁸ **The Teaching of the Buddha**, (Higher Level) VolumeII, (Department for the Promotion and Propagation of the Sāsana, A.D. 2001), p. 270.

⁹ Presentation on 51st **Anniversary, Mon National Day**, (USA: 1998), p. 4-5.

In this review of Buddhist Development, the researcher defined (3) periods of Development of Rāmañña Nikāya as follow:

1. Ramañña Nikāya Before Pagan occupation
2. Ramañña Nikāya During Pagan occupation (10th to 14th centuries)
3. Ramañña Nikāya After Pagan occupation

2.2.1 Ramañña Nikāya Before Pagan occupation

The Emperor Ukkalapa kingdom was an important kingdom to introduce Mon Theravāda Buddhism in ancient times regarding to his image by the mystique of a golden era in the minds of Mon people.¹⁰ The historical background of Emperor Ukkalapa is quite different to other human beings.

According to Mon historical chronicles, the king's mother was not born from a human mother as usually as other beings used to be done. Regarding to this connection, four kinds of birth should be explained first clearly. According to Buddhism, there are four kinds of birth, namely,

1. Egg-born beings (Andaja),
2. Womb-born beings (Jalabhuja),
3. Moisture-born beings (Samsedaja), and
4. Bings having spontaneous births, (Opapatika)

But, Here, the king's mother's birth belonged to the third class. Thus the history said, Once upon a time, the Hamsavati district included Rangoon area was not as populous as a nowadays. An anonymous Mon ascetic who was wandering about in the forest in western part of Singuttara hillside,¹¹ marvelously found a huge mangrove fruit near a cleak and took it to the hermitage and kept well. As the time went on, the fruit gave birth a female baby as the moisture born being when it became well mature and ripped enough. The old ascetic reluctantly had to take care of a great disturbance to his meditation practice that resided lonely. When he became of age in this way, in eighty seven of great era, the lord of the devas came again to consecrate him as a king under the title of Ukkalap Emperor and all of territories under His sovereignty was called

¹⁰ Charles S. Prebish and Damien Keown, **Introducing Buddhism**, P.155.

¹¹ Presentation on 51st Anniversary, **Mon National Day**, (USA, 1998), P. 4-5

Ukkaplapa district embodied Hamsavati and, Dala arer. The lineage of Empeore Ukkalapa thus descended up to thirty-two in number ruled Rammanadesa, Mon region with their own sovereignty. The Ukkalapa Emperor was the first king of Ukkapapa district.

According to historical chronicles, King Okkalapa, the King of Suvannabhumi (Golden Land), lived in the region near Singuttara Hill, skirting the lower region of Burma. In his reign, The king received the relics with great ceremony from the two brothers in India. The king welcomed them by guarded 1000 men. Meanwhile, while the stupa was being built, he placed the relics on the spot where the present Kyaik Botataung Pagoda stands. Thus Kyaik Botataung Pagoda became the first pagoda to enshrine a hair relic of the Buddha. The other hairs were enshrined in Kyaik lagon now (shwedagon). Shwedagon is not the first pagoda to build under the king Okkalapa. And then the second one is called Kyaik Athoke now (Sule pagoda). Finally the hair taking by king Okkalapa and two brothers by guarded 1000 men,¹² enshrined on Singuttara Hill.

When the king opened the golden casket in which the brother had carried the hairs, incredible things happened as the following:

“There was a tumult among men and spirits... rays emitted by the Hairs penetrated up to the heavens above and down to hell... the blind beheld objects... the deaf heard sounds.. The dumb spoke distinctly..the earth quaked.. the winds of the ocean blew.. Mount Meru shook... lightning flashed..gems rained down until they were knee deep... all the trees of the Himalayas, though not in season, bore blossoms and fruit.”¹³

In the reign of King Okkalapa, the king led his people to build many pagodas in his reign. Especially well-known is Kyaik lagon (shwedagon pagoda) among Kyaik Dayaie (Botataung now) and Kyaik Athoke (Sule pagoda now). Kyaik Dayaeik (Botataung) became known at that time as the spot where Mon King Okkalapa welcomed the brothers back from India and where the hair relics intended for the Shwedagon were guarded

¹² W. Vivian De Thabrew, **Buddhist Monuments and Temples of Myanmar and Thailand**, (UK: AuthorHouse, 2014), p.42-45.

¹³ Markus Burman, **This is the real Burma**, 2014), p.7-10.

by the king's one thousand soliders.¹⁴ Buddhism was not a very strong enough nor develop to the whole country because the third refuge did not exist yet from that time.¹⁵The original stupa is said to have been 27 high in his reign. In his reign, there were only two refuges in the Buddha and the refuge in the Dhamma.

The reign of King Okkalapa is as a great champion of Buddhism because he set up the foundation of Buddhism and laid the foundation for its glory. However, he is famous as the great of Kyaiklagon (Shwedagon) Pagoda in his reign. Even today King Okkalapa' statu is adhered by the Pagoda.

During 783 C.E., the twenty-fifth kingdoms of Suvannabhumi (Thaton), in the dynasty of Siharaja, gave great encouragement to religion. Rāmaññadesa received Tipitaka translation from Buddhaghosa Thera. He, Maha Thera Buddhaghosa stayed in Sri Lanka at the invitation of his mentor Maha Thera Revata in order to translate the Tipitaka. Having completed the translation, Buddhaghosa returned to Thaton and presented King Dhamapalla of Thaton the translation of the *Tipitaka*. This event marks the arrival of the Buddha's Words in Myanmar.¹⁶

Who was Maha Thera Buddhaghosa? “Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa was a 5th century Indian Buddhist Theravadin commentator and scholar. Buddhaghosa means ‘Voice of the Buddha’ in the Pali language. He translated extensive Sinhalese commentaries on the Pali Buddhist texts into Pali. Certain commentaries are also attributed to him, including one on the Vinaya and one on the Dhammapada that includes 305 stories for context. His *Visuddhimagga* (Pali, ‘Path of Purification’) is a comprehensive manual of Theravada Buddhism that is still read and studied today. The book is divided into sections on *Shila* or ‘Ethics,’ *Samadhi* or ‘Meditation,’ and *Pranna* or ‘Wisdom.’ This is a traditional division in Buddhist teachings, which suggest that ethics are

¹⁴ Donald M. Stadtner, **Bulletin of Burma Research**, (Berkeley, University of California, 2008), p. 63.

¹⁵ Roger, Bischoff, **Buddhism in Myanmar a Short History**, (Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society Kandy, 1995), p.18.

¹⁶ Gaby Hollmann, “**How Buddhism was brought to Burma**,”(May, 2006):
Retrieved on 10 November 2017, <http://www.rinpoche.com/stories/burma.html>.

essential to meditation, and that meditation is essential to developing wisdom. From the Buddhist point of view, this is the 'path of purification' because it purifies the mind of the defilements of greed, hatred, and delusion."

The chronicles of Mon and Myanmar firmly maintain that Buddhaghosa was of Mon origin and a native of Thaton. They state that his return from Sri Lanka, with the Pali scriptures, the commentaries, and grammatical works, gave a fresh impetus to the religion. However, modern historians do not accept that Buddhaghosa was from Thaton while some even doubt his existence.¹⁷

According to Mon conical of scholar written by Thera Uppalitta, in Buddhist Era (900), 450 AD. One thing occurred in his mind thinking who was going to be understood if I would not go to translate from Sinhalese to Magadhese version for the well-beings of mankind to Jambudipa. Therefor, Buddhaghosa crossed over to Ceylon and entered the monastery of Anurâdhapura.¹⁸

He heard the atthakathas and the discourse of the old theras expounded by Sanghapâla the mahâthera and having first of all composed the Visuddhaimagga, he translated all the atthakathas into Mâgadhesse. Buddhaghosa carried the religion to Sudhammavati (Thaton) The whole of Râmaññadesa was in a state of great ferment and excitement at his arrival, and went forth to meet him with offerings and festivities, and escorted him as if he were the omniscient Buddha himself.

If not Buddhaghosa, who brought Pitakas to Thaton (sedum)? New yazawin declares he went from Majjhimadesa. Up to nine hundred years of the Era of Religion, the disciples of the theras Mahâdhammarakkhita, Sona, and Uttara preserved the three Pitakas orally already, but not letters being in use in Jambudipa. In Jambudipa the Pali exists, but there are no Atthakathas. During the time of Sona and Uttar's mission (B.C. 307 or 308) the religion of Buddha became firmly established in Thaton, but as the law was unwritten in the language of the country. The study of the

¹⁷ Smith, **Asoka's alleged mission to Pegu**, (1905), p.185-86.

¹⁸ James Gray, **The historical romance of the rise and career of Buddhaghosa**, (New deli: Madras, 1008), p.13.

Pitakas had to be transmitted orally from one set of teachers to another in succession.

A.B. 930, when Buddhaghosa, a priest of Thaton, crossed over to Ceylon, where, having devoted himself to the study of the Sinhalese language, he copied the whole of the three portions of the Pitakas with their commentaries, and brought them over to his native place. From this circumstance, Thaton, which had been known as Suvannabhumi (the “Land of God” was now called Sudhammavati (the “land of the True Law”). The return of the ships of Buddhaghosa from Ceylon with the sacred cargo on board is said to have been celebrated with great pomp and splendor. The king, attended by all the members of royalty and the nobility, and followed by a large retinue of attendants, went down to

The landing, and there, having made great offerings to the holy rahan, had the sacred writings conveyed on a white elephant under a canopy formed of the red, the gold, and the white umbrellas, into the town, and having celebration seven days and seven nights. The chronicles of Mon and Burma firmly maintain that Buddhaghosa was of Mon origin and a native of Thaton as Mon people believe until now. Mon people still celebrate his arrival of translation Tipitaka every year from coming back Sililanka in 308 B.C. based on Mon Chronicles.

However, modern historians do not accept that Buddhaghosa was from Mon while some even doubt his existence. The Burmese tradition that Buddhaghosa was a native of Thaton and returned thither from Sri Lanka merits more attention than it has received. It can easily be explained away as patriotic fancy. On the other hand, if Buddhaghosa's object was to invigorate Hinayanism in India the result of his really stupendous labors was singularly small, for in India his name is connected with no religious movement. But if we suppose that he went to Sri Lanka by way of the holy places in Magadha (now Bihar) and returned from the Coromandal coast (Madras) to Burma where Hinayanism afterwards flourished, we have at least a coherent narrative.¹⁹

¹⁹ Roger Bischoff, **Buddhism in Myanmar A Short History**, (Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publicaiton, 1995), p.37.

The Sinhalese chronicles, especially the *Mahavamsa*, place Buddhaghosa in the first half of the fifth century. Although he spent most of his active working life in Sri Lanka, he is also credited with imbuing new life into Theravada Buddhism in South India, and developing such important centers as Kancipura and Uragapuram that were closely connected with Prome and Thaton. Proof of this connection can be found in archaeological finds in the environs of Prome, which include Pali literature inscribed in the Kadambe script on gold and stone plates. This script was used in the fifth and sixth century in southern India. There is imagining for a moment, early Mon and Mainland Southeast Asian history without the Mon influence's Buddhism. What would it look like? There would be no Sona and Uttara nor Buddhaghosa bringing the most orthodox version of the Tipitakas to lower Burma Rāmaññadesa in Thaton there.²⁰The religion of Buddha became firmly established faith in Thaton under the king Dhammapāla and Mi Arakka Devi princess lasted long peace at the beginning of the 236 to forward. Both oral teaching and practical teaching of the Buddha had perfected in that time. So the Buddhism developed such as sunshine and its glory.

2.2.2 Ramañña Nikāya during of Pagan Period (1362 C.E.)

Pagan is believed to have been founded in the years 849-850 AD, by the Anawratha, who was born as rice growers in the region around Kyauksai near Mandalay. Anawratha began to unite the region by subjugating one chieftain after another and was successful in giving the Myanmar a sense of belonging to a larger community, a nation. The crucial event in the history of Myanmar is not so much the founding of the city of Pagan and the building of its walls and moat, but more Pagan's acceptance of Theravada Buddhism in the eleventh century. The religion was brought to the Myanmar by a Mon bhikkhu named Shin Arahan.

At that time, the beginning of the eleventh century, the Buddhist religion among the Mon in Suvannabhumi Rāmaññadesa was on the

²⁰ Michael A. Aung-Thwin, **The Mists of Rāmaññadesa, The legend that was lower Burma**, (United States of America: Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 2005), p.299.

²⁰ To Cin Khui, **The Kalyani Inscriptions, erected by King Dhammaceti at Pegu In 1476 A.D.**, (Rangoon: Text and Translation, 1892), p.49.

declines as robbers and raiders disturbed people, by plagues, and by adversaries of the religion.²¹ These most probably came from the Hindu Khmer kingdom in Cambodia and the north of Thailand. The Khmer were endeavoring to add Thaton and the other Mon Kingdoms of the south to their expanding empire. Buddhism under attack in other places as well. The great Mon city, Davravati, a Theravada center in Southern Thailand, fell to the Khmer, the masters of the whole of Thailand. On the other hand, King Manohari in Thaton came very weak. This happened in the 1600th year that had elapsed since the attainment of Parinirvana by the fully Enlightened One.

However, the power of Rāmaññadesa declined, because civil dissensions arose and the extensive country was broken up into separate principalities, because the people suffered from famine and pestilence, and because, to the detriment of the propagation of the excellent Religion, the Owing to these calamities, the priests, residing in Rāmaññadesa, were unable to devote themselves, in peace and comfort, to the acquisition of scriptural knowledge, or to the observance of the precepts and the Religion also declined. According to history of Buddha's Religion statement, there were three cases Buddhism to decline in Rāmaññadesa, which are namely, fear from village-plundering thieves, fear from a kind of burning fever and fear from the adversaries of the religion. From Anawrahta reign (1077) until to Narapatisithu (1174-1211) Mon lose Empire Kingdom and became under the slave of Burmese civilization about 400 years.

Reestablished Hongsawadi Kingdom Pyinnya U

In 1348, Pyinnya U became king at the age of twenty-one. He was the twenty on kingdoms of generation on Hongsawatoi Period. King has five wives and he ruled forty-four years in peace relationship with Burmese king in Ava.

From the 5th century onwards, the Mon in possession of lower Burma split up into two kingdoms, the one at Thaton and the other at

²¹ Bimala Churn Law, M.A., B.L., Ph.D. (Cal.), D.Litt. (Lucknow), Hony. D.Litt. (Allahabad), **The History Of The Buddha's Religion (Sāsanavamsa)**, (London: Baptist Mission Press, 1952), p.44.

Bago (Hongsawatoi). After the fall of Thaton and its eclipse as religious center in the 11th century, Hongsawatoi (Pegu) became the principal center of Mon influence. Since the time of king Byinnya U, all the Mon kings made a great effort for the flourishing of Buddhism. In 1369, King Binnya U made Bago the capital. The city remained the capital until the kingdoms fall in 1538/39. King Binnya U is best remembered in Burmese history as the father of King Razadarit. He ascended the throne with the title of Hsinbyushin (“lord of the white Elephant”) because he possessed a white elephant, a propitious symbol of Burmese monarchs. One enduring legacy of his reign was Pegu's (Bago's) emergence as the new power center in Lower Burma. The city would remain the capital of the Mon-speaking kingdom until the mid-16th century.²²

His reign was marked by several internal rebellions and external conflicts. He survived the initial rebellions and an invasion by Lan Na by 1353. But from 1364 onwards, his effective rule covered only the Pegu province, albeit the most strategic and powerful of the kingdom's three provinces.

King Binnya U renovated and raised the Dagon Pagoda to a height of 20 meters (66 feet). He also invited 3000 Bhikkhus to make offerings in his kingdom. The decade between 1353 and 1363 were the golden years for Binnya U. The country was at peace, and prosperity returned at least to the capital Martaban. He actually built a Buddhist Pagoda; housing a holy relic he had received from Ceylon, at the hilltop where he atop his elephant began the counterattack. In his reign, he always supported the propagation of Theravada Buddhism until he died in 1384 C.E. at the age of sixty²³ because Peace of the country could develop both the Buddhism and economic without war. Although we have little evidence of such contacts, he also sent a mission to Sri Lanka (A.D.1335-85) of Pegu obtaining Buddhist relics, which were then enshrined a stūpa built on the spot where the king had defeated a hostile army from Chiangmai.²⁴

²² Nai Pan Hla, **The Razadarit Ayedawbon chronicle**,(Yangon: 2005),p. 31.

²³ https://wikivisually.com/wiki/Binnya_U date.26, Oct, 2017.

²⁴ W.M. Sirisena, **Sri Lanka and South East Asia**, (University of Sri Lanka, Peradeniya Campus, Sri Lanka University Press, 1978),p. 79.

Buddhism during The King Razadarit (1383-1421)

King Razadarit was a son of Binnya U and Mwei Daw who gave birth to Razadarit.²⁵ (Micophu) Shansawbu. He was the ninth king of Hongsawatoi Pegu Kingdom from 1384 to 1421. During the reign of King Razadarit, Bago and Ava Kingdom were engaged in the Forty Years during his reign. He was very famous fighter in Mon history. He defeated Ava's first wave of invasions in the 1380s, and by 1390, was able to reunify all three Mon regions. He met Minye Kyawsaw head-on in lower Burma, Upper Burma, and Arakan. Razadarit is remembered as a complex figure: a brave military commander, who defeated Minkhaung in a single combat, and kept the Kingdom independent.

The king died of hunting a wild elephant in 1421 at the age 53 near Pegu Yoma Hills. He left a strong, independent kingdom for the Mon people that would prosper for another 118 years. Three of his offspring later became rulers of Hongsawatoi. His daughter Mitala Htaw (shin Sawbu) was the first and only female regent, and one of the most enlightened rulers in Mon history. Strategy was important in this quickly changing environment. Rajadhirat's history is a part of the "ayeidawbon kyan" genre of Burmese historical literature, which stresses the strategy and heroic role of king as military commander. "(1) How individuals of prowess consolidated their power and fought to obtain the throne. (2) How these kings retained their power by military means and other endeavours like diplomacy, alliances and stratagem, (3) How rebellions were crushed, (4) How wars were waged for the expansion of their territory, (5) Important achievements of a particular king like building new towns and cities, pagodas and palaces etc."²⁶ The story of Razadarit's reign is recorded in a classic epic that exists in Mon, Burmese and Thai language forms. By 1390, Razadarit had reunified all three main provinces (Pegu, Martaban and Bassein/Irrawaddy delta) under his leadership. According to the Mon chronicles, the king reportedly further

²⁵ Pan Hla, **Razadarit Ayedawbon**, (Burma version), (Yangon, 2005), p. 47.

²⁶ Jon Fernquest, **Rajadhirat's Mask of Command: Military Leadership in Burma, (C.1348-1421)**, Vol.4, Issue 1, (Spring 2006), p. 3.

organized the three provinces into 32 districts.²⁷ He also renovated and raised the Kyaik miutoi pegu from (152 feet to 165 feet), But not in Dagon. At that time Dagon is under the control of Hongswatoy kingdom.

Buddhism during Mon queen Michobu (1436 -1471)

In 1452, Michobu, a daughter of Rajadarit, ascended the throne as a queen. She was also known, as Binnya Thau and Queen Jamadevi of Haripunjaya are the two most famous among the small of queens who ruled in mainland Southeast Asia.²⁸ The queen, at the age of 20, was married to Binnya Bwe, Rajadarit's nephew and had a son, called Binnya Waru. Her husband died when she was just 25. Being invited by Binnya Kyan, king Thihathu of Ava, she went to Ava. During her residence at Ava, queen Michobu became the patron of two Mon monks, Dhammanyana and Pitakahara, who resided at the Ariyadhaza monastery at Sagaing near Ava. In 1429, at the age of 35, the queen escaped with the help of her Mon monk preceptors and returned to Pegu accompanied by them.²⁹

She chose a monk to succeed her on the throne of Pegu. The monk Pitakahara, who had helped her escape from Ava, left the Sangha, was given the titles Punnaraja and Dhammazedī, and became her son-in-law and a suitable heir to the throne by marrying her younger daughter Mipakathin.³⁰ He was declared heir apparent, with the title of Dhammazedī. The queen reigned for seven years. After ruling for only seven years, she decided to abdicate. She devised a method to choose which one of the two monks had accompanied her during her residence in Ava should succeed her as ruler. And she also built white-faced Buddha built by her in 1455 which is called Kaikmaraw, 15 miles southeast of Mon state now. She has two titles names, which are called Mi chow bu,

²⁷ Shorto, H.L. "The 32nd Myos in the Medieval Mon Kingdom." Bulletin of the school of oriental and African Studies, University of London, (Cambridge University Press, 1963), p. 572-591.

²⁸ Pe Maung Tin, **Hmannan Yazawin**, (English Translation), (Kala Vol.2, 2006), p. 58.

²⁹ Saya Thein "Shin Sawbu," (Journal of the Burma Research Society, 1910), p.58.

³⁰ Singer, Noel F, "The Golden Relics of Bana Thau," (Pak lat, Siam, 1912), p. 81.

and Baña Thau, later on Burmese called her name Shinsawbu. in Dagon, the queen devoted her time and attention to the Shwedagon Pagoda, enlarging the platform around the pagoda, paving it with stones and placing stone posts and lamps around the outside of the pagoda. She built round and strengthened the sevenfold wall. Between the walls her Majesty Banya Thau had them plant Palmyra and coconut trees.³¹

Queen Bannya Thau starts to renovate and enlarge the Dagon Pagoda she terraces the Singuttara hill, paves the top terrace with flagstones, gives the pagoda its present shape, raises it to a height of 40 meters (131 feet) and begins to gild the stupa with gold leaves made of gold equalling her body weight of 40 kg. From this time on the Dagon Pagoda becomes the kyaik Dagon in Mon language (Kyaik means Pagoda, thus Dagon means hill).

During her reign the queen Banya Htaw known as Michobu (Shin Saw Bu in Burmese now) made great efforts for the development of the Buddha Sāsanā. She offered food to monks at Myatheindan Pagoda in Muttama and donated Wuttaka Myay for Kyaikmaraw pagoda. She left a stone inscription that proved Queen Michobu was a staunch Buddhist. This inscription mentioned that she donated for religious purposes in the presence of monks who gathered at the foot of the Myatheindan pagoda in Muttama. Queen Mi Sawbu's performance of Sāsanā was widespread not only in the country but also abroad. The Ceylon King Siripa Gottama Barhu (AD 1410-68) had sent to Queen Shin Saw bu, three golden shrines of the pattern of a relic casket made with Ceylon artistic craft. During the reign of Shin Saw bu at Hongsawatoi, there was peace and prosperity in the country. The people enjoyed peace, physically and mentally.

Buddhism Mon King Dhammazedī (1471)

³¹ Halliday, Robert, **The Mons of Burma and Thailand**, Volume 2, (Bangkok, 200), p.102.

Dhammazedī was the 16 King of the Hongsawatoī Kingdom in Mon from 1471 to 1492 considered one of the most enlightened rulers in Mon history, by some accounts call him “ the greatest of all Hongsawatoī Kings.”³² The former Buddhist Monk, educated in the rival kingdom of Ava in his youth, was a trusted adviser and son-in- law of Queen Shin Sawbu. During Dhammazedī’s long reign, the Mon-speaking kingdom reached the peak of its golden age.

He became a famous centre of Theravāda Buddhism, with strong ties to Ceylon, and resumed the practice of sending missions to Buddhagaya. He ascended the throne in 1458 AD. He decided to carry out the religious purification in Rāmaññadesa. At the time of king Dhammazedī in Rāmaññadesa, there were two Buddhist sects: Kanpucha sect and Siri Lanka sect³³. He was not prepared to support any one of these two. Because of the various sects, King Dhammazedī remarked:

“When doing Sangha deeds such as, designating the ordination hall and initiating the entering of priesthood, there were no monks who had general knowledge, courage and strength and ability to unite to meet and discuss. Thus the Maharhtays of the various sects believed that they were the only one who were polite and capable. With these views, they accepted the Sangha deeds.”³⁴

Therefore, in the reign of King Dhammazedī, it became his duty to take the purification of the Sāsana of lower Burma. In his carrying out the above acts, the king Dhammazedī believed that the ordination hall was fundamental. As Sangha are the main strength of Buddhism, any more to improve the religion means a drive to keep them in so good a condition as prescribed by the scriptures. Thus he started a religious purification work because he was worried that the Upasampada. Ordination services were not correct in Rāmaññadesa. If the ordination hall were not designated properly, the entering into priesthods would not be legal. If this priest

³² U palitta, Sayadaw, **Pragon Wan Sāsana** (Mon version), (Kamarwat: 1938), p.61.

³³ Khin May Aung, **Historical Perspective on Mon Settlements in Burma**, (Thailand: Chiang Mai University, 2015), p.7.

³⁴ Ibid., p.7.

initiated the entering into priesthood, the novices would not become legal priests.

With the glorious intention of reorganizing the order of monks in Rāmaññadesa, a mission of twenty-two theras went to Sri Lanka on 21 January 1476. The king of Sri Lanka welcomed the Rāmaññadesa country monks and permitted them to pay obeisance the tooth relic on 6th July 1476. According to the Sri Lanka system the monk had chosen to his satisfaction. As they had new monks in Rāmaññadesa, Sri Lanka's Sāsana had reappeared again in a new form. Dhammazeti believed that the Mahavihara was the only center of Theravad Buddhism, which had remained pure and unsullied throughout the centuries.³⁵ The controversy lasted for nearly three hundred years until a king Dhammazeti settled it in a favor of the Ceylonese tradition. All the monks who were reordained by these twenty monks became junior to them; thus the king could control the monks.

What Dhammazeti did was that he had all the monks reordained by the twenty monks who, under his arrangements, had been ordained at the Mahavihāra Kelaniya Raja in Ceylon. After the monks had returned, Dhammazeti built the Kalyani Ordination Hall. He built three hundred and ninety seven (397) Simas all over the countries including Muttama.³⁶ He also set of 10 sandstone pillars inscribed in Pali and Mon in 1480 later on adding Burmese language. The inscriptions are important records of Theravada Buddhism history and of that era.³⁷ It is interesting to note how forcefully the king reformed the Order through royal decrees that would hardly be tolerated today. He declared that all bhikkhus who were, for example, practising medicine or other arts and crafts would be expelled. On the other hand, Dhammazedi's support for the religion was so great that his fame spread well beyond the borders of country as Thailand came to his realm to receive ordination there.³⁸ It can be said that with the help of the Sri Lanka monks in Rāmaññadesa was able to

³⁵ By Kenneth K. S. Ch'en, **Buddhism The light of Asia**, (New York: Princeton University, Barron's Educational Series, 1968), p.126.

³⁶ Nai pan Tar, **Rāmañña Nikaya and its Sasana**, (Yangon: 2016), p.39.

³⁷ South, Mr Ashley, **Mon Nationalism and Civil War in Burma: The Golden Sheldrake**, (New York: USA, 2013), p. 68.

³⁸ Epigraphica Birmanica, **Kalyani inscription**, Vol.III, p.249.

carry out the purification and unity of Sasana and the emergence of Monks who were well-versed in Pariyatthi and Patipatti.

The new Kalyana Sima was consecrated and a total of 14,265 monks were ordained. On imitation of the Sima of Sri Lanka, the Sima was named as Kalyanisima. The consecration of new Simas all over Rāmaññadesa began in 27 November 1476. To let the people know about the Sima, he left a stone inscription, which became famous as the Kalyani inscription. King Dhammacedi renewed the ordination of the Ramañña Nikaya sect leaders and Monks of the new Kalyani Sīmā. The Ramañña Nikaya was presumably founded by Bhikkhus who had received ordination reforms and who had fled to southern Thailand from the warth of the Burma kings later.³⁹

Therefore, in the reign of Dhammazedī in lower Burma, there were many monks who accepted the Ceylon monk ordination. King Dhammazedī and the ministers donated soon, robes, prescribed articles for use by Buddhist monks and other articles. During the reign of King Dhammazedī, he made renovations to Kyaik Depazaw, Kyaik Zanan, Kyaiklunbun, Kyaik Mouk, Kyaik Tale and Kyaik Manaung, the meritorious buildings of former Mon kings. According to DEG Hall, He was a Buddhist ruler of the best type, deeply solicitous for the purification of religion, Under him civilization flourished, and the condition of the Mon country stands out in sharp contrast with the disorder and savagery which characterized the Ava Kingdom.

He was the 29th king of the Hongawatoi kingdom. He died in 1492 at the age of seventy-two. From the eleventh century until the fifteenth century A.D. close religious contacts were maintained between Sri Lanka and Mon with only occasional interruptions caused by unsettled political conditions. In this way, there was created a widespread conviction that Sri Lanka was the great centre of Theravāda Buddhism, which preserved the religion in what was believed to be its original form. Consequently it was to Sri Lanka that Dhammazedī turned for help in reorganising the Order in Rāmañña, and he finally achieved his goal with the assistance of Sinhalese monks.

³⁹ A.G.S. Kariyawasam, **Buddhist Ceremony and Rituals of Sri Lanka**, (Buddhist Publication Society, Sri Lanka, 2014), p. 269.

2.2.3 Ramañña Nikāya After Pagan (Thaton Kingdom)

According to the Mon tradition, the kingdom of Thaton was founded during the time of the Buddha, and was ruled by a dynasty of 59 kings who founded Thaton during the time of the Buddha in the 6th century BCE.

Suwarnabumi was a Mon kingdom, believed to have existed in lower Burma from at least the 4th century BC to the middle of the 11th century AD. One of many Mon kingdoms that existed in modern-day lower Burma and Thailand, the kingdom was essentially a city-state centered on the city of Thaton. It traded directly with South India, Sri Lanka, and became a primary center of Theravada Buddhism in South-East Asia. Among the outer provinces, which received Sinhalese influence was Thaton. Before Pagan became the Centre of Theravada Buddhism, Thaton had been the center, with its sacred scriptures, relic and learned Buddhist monks.⁴⁰ Therefore the Sinhalese form of Buddhism would have been known there at any early date.

From the fifth century until the conquest of lower Burma by Pagan in the 11th century AD, there is a continuous record of Buddhism flourishing in the Mon and Pyu kingdom. The Mon kingdoms are mentioned in travel reports of several Chinese Buddhist pilgrims and also in the annals of the Chinese court. In the fifth century, Thaton and Pegu are mentioned in the Buddhist commentarial literature for the first time.⁴¹ They were now firmly established on the map as Buddhist centers of learning. Buddhism was not without rivals in the region. The Theravada Buddhist of the Mon flourished in Dvaravati, Thaton and Pagan as well. However, the Mon civilization in Thailand did not survive the onslaught of the Khmer in the eleventh century who were worshipping Hindu gods.

The Pagan Period (A.D. 1044-1287) was the heyday of Buddhism in Burma, when it spread more or less to every corner of the country.

⁴⁰ W.M. Sirisena, **Sri Lanka and South-east Asia**, (Australian: National University, Canberra, 1978), p.73.

⁴¹ Roger Bischoff, **Buddhism in Myanmar A Short History**, (Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society Kandy, 1995), p.10.

Though the Ari Monks were powerful in Upper Burma before the accession of Anawrahta. In short, what we know about the arañ of the pre-Pagan period so far is that they wore black robes, and that they were connected with nāga-worship and that they were practicing the custom of Defloweringbrides prevalent in Southeast Asia and they were not regarded as Buddhist by the chroniclers even though they were reciting the paritta.

The practice of arañ monk is never mentioned in connection with the Pagan-period monks in the chronicles. Arañ Monk practiced as the follow:

They set all monastic rules at naught, were great drinkers, and had a weakness for the other sex; they kept their hair about two inches long, wore a kind of cylindrical hat and robe of a color nor orthox; they dabbled in a alchemy and popular medicine, and were reciters, for a consideration, of mantras; they sold amulets and recipes for the attainment of magical power; and they bred, rode and sold horse and exercised themselves in the use of arms. Their decline and final disappearance is placed at the end of the XIXth centuries.⁴²

Thera Arahan arrived in the vicinity of Pagan and was discovered in his forest dwelling by a hunter. The hunter, who had never before seen such a strange creature with a shaven head and a yellow robe, though he was some kind of spirit and took him to the king, Anawratha. Thera Arahan naturally sat down on the throne, as it was the highest seat, and the king thought: "This man is peaceful, in this man there is the essential thing. He is sitting down on the best seat, surely he must be the best being". The king asked the visitor to tell him where he came from and was told that he came from the place where the Order lived and that the Buddha was his teacher. Then Shin Arahan gave the king the teaching on mindfulness (*appamada*), teaching him the same doctrine Nigrodha had given Emperor Asoka when he was converted. Shin Arahan then told the monarch that the Buddha had passed into Maha-Parinibbana, but that his teaching, the Dhamma, enshrined in the Tipitaka, and the twofold Sangha

⁴² Win Than Tun, **Myanmar Buddhism of The Pagan Period** (AD 1000-1300), A thesis Submitted for The Degree of Doctor of Philosophy southeast Asian Studies Programme, (National University of Singapore, 2002), p.35.

consisting of those who possessed absolute knowledge and those who possessed conventional knowledge, remained.

The king must have felt that he had found what had been missing in his life and a genuine alternative to the superficial teachings of the Ari monks. He built a monastery for Thera Arahan, and according to some sources, stopped all worship of the Ari monks. Tradition has it that he had them dressed in white and even forced them to serve as soldiers in his army. The Ari tradition continued for a long time, however, and its condemnation is a feature of much later times, and not, as far as contemporary evidence shows, of the Pagan era.

The *Sasanavamsa* gives an alternate version of Anawratha's conversion according to which Thera Arahan had originally come from Sri Lanka to study the Dhamma in Dvaravati and Thaton and was on his way to Sri Ksetra in search of a text when he was taken to Anawratha by a hunter. The king asked him, "Who are you?" "O King, I am a disciple of Gotama." "Of what kind are the Three Jewels?" "O King, the Buddha should be regarded as Mahosadha the wise, his doctrine as Ummagga, his order as the Videhan army."⁴³

This version is interesting in that Anawratha is portrayed as being a Buddhist with knowledge of Jataka stories, such as the Mahosadha Jataka referred to above, even before meeting Shin Arahan. This assumption that he was no stranger to Buddhism is supported by the fact that earlier kings had been followers of Buddhism in varying degrees. Anawratha had a strong ambition to receive pure Buddhism and the original Teachings of the Buddha. He tried to find the scriptures and relics of his new religion in different quarters. In his enthusiasm he did not limit his quest to Thaton, but also searched among the Khmer in Angkor, and in Tali, the capital of the Nanchao, a kingdom in modern day Yunnan, in China, where a tooth of the Buddha was enshrined. But everywhere he was refused. He then went to Thaton, where his teacher Thera Arahan had come from, to request a copy of the scriptures. The *Sāsanāṅkārā Cātam* stated that Thera Arahan was well versed in the four Vedas in the

⁴³ Cf. Maha-ummagga-jataka, No.546, The Jatakas (reprint: PTS, 1973), p. 156.

Tipitaka and the commentaries after he was novitiated, because of his fame; people invited him to Sokkatai (Sukhothai), where he stayed for more than ten years.⁴⁴ Then he returned to Thaton and lived as a forest monk.

Guided by the advice of Thera Arahan, the King Anawarahta sent envoys to the court of King Mahuha (1057 AD) of Lower Burma for bringing copies of the Pitakas his own land because they were no sacred texts in Bagan. At that time, the original text of Buddha rested in the country of Thaton in Lower Burma under the rule of King Mahuha. According to the tradition of Myanmar, Anawratha's request was refused, and unable to endure another refusal he set out with his army in the year 1057 to conquer Thaton and acquire the Tipitaka by force.⁴⁵ He brought with him loaded on the back of thirty-two elephants not only the thirty-of the Tipitaka, But also with some 30,000 monks and artisans were brought back to Pagan. Between 1050 and about 1085, Mon craftsmen and artisans helped to build some two thousand monuments at Pagan. However, asked and was allowed to build the Manuha Temple in Pagan

In 1059, Inside the temple three giant Buddha Statues-two sitting, and one reclining seem too large for their enclosures, and their cramped, uncomfortable positions are said to represent the stress and lack of comfort the captive king had to endure. Since the captured King did not have the money to build a temple, he sold a precious jewel to a rich Myinkaba merchant for six cartloads of fine silver. The King used the silver to pay for the construction of a large image of the Buddha, in which Buddhist relics were enshrined. Later he had three more images build. After the completion of the four images, the temple was built around them. The rooms are barely large enough to contain the four images; it is believed that Manuha wanted to express his frustration about his captivity. The stone inscription found at the temple tells the storey of the Manuha temple and the Buddha images enshrined in it. After having spent 10 years in captivity, Manuha wanted to gain religious merit, as he wanted to attain Nirvana. He also wished that during the cycle of rebirths (Samsara), he would never be conquered by enemies and had to live in

⁴⁴ Mahā Dhammasankaram, *Sāsanāṅkārā Cātam*, p.88-91.

⁴⁵ Taw Sein Kho, *The Preliminary Study of the Kalyani Inscription of Dhammcheti*, 1476 A.D. (1864-1930), p. 17.

captivity again. He therefore request Anawrahta permission to build a temple.⁴⁶

When the king named Anuruddha in the town of Arimaddana in Pagan had conquered the city of Sudhamma with its king and had brought them to ruin, then the Rāmañña country was without a king. In the town of Muttima in the Rāmañña country there existed six schools, separated from each other, and belonging to various communions and various groups. In the year one hundred thousand and sixty-one, (1601) B.E, the king named Anuruddha of the town of Arimaddana brought an Order of monks from there together with the Pitakas. After that, in the year one thousand seven hundred and nine of the Conqueror's wheel (1709), the great king in Ceylon called Sirisamghabodhi-Parakkamabahu purified the religion in the island of Lanka. Six years later on, in the year five hundred and thirty-two, (532) a group of Mon bhikkhus led by Uttarajiva from Rāmaññadesa in order to worship prigiame. He became famous in the religion. He was the pupil of the Elder Ariyavamsa, a resident of the Rāmañña country.⁴⁷

Accordingly it is also to be known that at that time the Elder Uttarajiva, accompanied by the novice named Chapada, who had completed his twentieth year, went to the island of Sihala with him from Bassein. When Uttarajiva had finished his act of worshipping the shrine and the like, he returned to the town of Arimaddana accompanied by the Order of monks. Chapada had ordination in island of Sihala and having have a hindrance to his study of the sacred texts owing to troubles with his many kinsmen. So he stayed in the very island of Sihala, study the sacred texts and return later after having asked permission of his teacher Uttarajiva. After having studied enough the sacred texts in the tradition adopted by the Elders, he had desire to go back again to the Jambudipa by boat with four Elders: Thera Sivali, Thera Tamalitti, Thera Ananda and Rahula.⁴⁸ When they had reached the town of Kusima, the time for

⁴⁷ Bimala Churn Law, M.A., B.L., Ph.D. (Cal.), D.Litt. (Lucknow), Hony. D.Litt. (Allahabad), **The History of Buddha Religion**, (Sāsanavamsa), (India: Baptist Mission Press, 1952), p.44.

⁴⁸ **King Dhammaceti At Pegu In 1476 A.D. Text and Translation**, (Burma: Government Printing, 1892), p. 37-46.

spending the rainy season was drawing near, so they were unable to reach the town of Arimaddana. On the way back to Arimaddana, UUtтарajiva passed way. After cremation of the funeral Uттарajiva ceremony, the four elder Theras came back to Arimaddana.

When four Elders, Thera Sivali, Thera Tamalinda, Thera Ananda and Thera Rahula arrived to the town of Arimaddana, They separated themselves from the monks living in the town of Arimaddana. They did not perform the acts of the Vinaya together with the monks residing at Arimaddana, but lived separately because they were born in Rāmañña country and formerly lived there. But Burmese King Narapati-can-su venerated them much faith in those Elders and increasing the number of the group's monks with the name of the Chapada set in Pagan, which is very famous during the King Narapati can-su in 1601 to 1725.⁴⁹ Chapada set is very famous in Pagan from Anarattha king 1601 to 1725 until Narapati can-su. The Elder Rāhula, taking a boat from Kusimatittha, came to the island of Mallāru married with womenfolk. And among the remaining Elders, the Elder named Chapada died first. Only the three Elders Sīvali, Tāmalinda and Ananda, lived in the town of Arimaddana, making the religion firm by way of studying and remembering the sacred texts. And at one time the king gave one elephant to each of these three Elders. When the Elders Sīvali and Tāmalinda, had accepted them, they had them to kusimatittha and put it on a boat, saying: “ Send this to the twon of Kāñcīpura and give it to my relatives.” was it not spoken of by the Blessed One to support relative?” When the Elders answered: “if you will not do our bidding then do as you please. We will not, however, live in communion with you,” they lived separately.

After Chapada passed away, the Elders Sīvali and Tāmalinda split off into to two sets. Thereafter totally, three sets were split off in Pagan. Thus, in the town of Arimaddana, there were the four sets: one was the line of the Elder Arahanta, one of the Elder Sīvali, one of the Elder Tāmalinda and one of the Elder Ananda. Because the first of these to come from the city of (Sudhammawade) was the school of the Elder Arahanta, it was called the first school, while the others, because they came later, were called the later schools. The Elders Sivali, having

⁴⁹ Nai Pan Thar, **The History of Ramannan Nikaya and its Sasana** (Mon version), (Yangon: 2016), p.26.

supported the religion in the city of Arimaddana as long as he lived, died in the year five hundred and ninety of the Kali age.

But the Elder Ananada, having supported the religion in the city of Arimaddana, died in the year five hundred and ninety six of the kali age. The Elder Tāmalinda also, having supported the religion as long as he lived, died in the year five hundred and ninety eight. In this way, in the city of Arimaddana, the religion of the Conqueror shines forth, as does the moon in the sky, because of the arahant,s autors, and ordinary people.

The line of the Sona and Uttara was one school, and the remaining were the lines of Sivali, Tamalinda, Ananda, Buddha, and Mahanaga. The religion established by king Dhammacetiya remained undivided. It was of the same communion and formed one group. The three countries of Rāmañña comprising Hamsāvati, Muttima and Suvannabhūmi, also remained united with the Maramma country under the name of Sunāparanta. In earlier times also, they were the places under the command of the chief rulers of the Maramma country. Therefore some monks from the Maramma country having gone to the Ramañña country took their training again at the Kalyānī boundary. The religion established by king Dhammacetiya was extended over the entire Maramma country, entering into the heart of it.⁵⁰ But nowadays even in the three countries of Ramañña, only the religion founded by king Dhammacetiya exists.

The last Hongsawatoi Kingdom Bannya Dela (1747-1757)

King Binnya Dala was the last king of Restored Kingdom of Hongsawatoi, who reigned from 1747 to 1757. Binnya Dala continued the war against the Toungoo dynasty, launching a full-scale invasion of Upper Burma in 1750, and capturing the capital of Ava in April 1752. The city surrendered, and the king was taken prisoner to Pegu, where he was well treated.⁵¹ Ava was destroyed by fire, and the Burmese kingdom seemed to be at an end. Binnya Dala mistakenly thought Upper Burma had been won, and withdrew tow-thirds of the invasion force back to

⁵⁰ Ibid., Page,53

⁵¹ By S.W. Cocks, M.A., **A short History of Burma**, (Cornell University, 2th Edition: 1919), p. 61.

Pegu, leaving just a third for what he considered a mop-up operation. Binnya Dala transferred to general DalaBan in order to govern the city of Ava.

When general Dalaban in accordance with his instructions sent out detachments to collect the revenue for the king, a party of fifty men arrived at an adjacent village and attacked the general Dalaban forces in a fit of sudden anger and that he had been unable to restrain them, that he was sorry for the accident, but he could not prevent it. He then wrote to the governor of Ava saying that the Burmeses had attacked and sent the troops again for help. And when a larger force was sent against him he ambushed them in the jungle and defeated them. A second detachment suffered the same fate, and refugees from Ava rallied round the Burmese Leader, who bore the name Aungzeya, “the Victorious,”⁵² the history is generally known as Alaungpaya. He upgraded his name called now called Alaungpaya.

In April 1755 A.D., Alaungpaya continued his journey down the river and captured Dagon. At the last named place he marked out a site for a new city, and show his confidence in his own success called it Rangoon, “the end of the strife.” Pegu, the capital, still remained to be captured. In three months the city was starved into submission. Finally the city was captured in a night assault and given up to plunder, the king being taken prisoner. Most of the leading citizens, including the monks, were massacred, and thousands were sold into slavery. General Dalaban, who had escaped to Sittaung, was afterwards captured and entered the service of Alaungpaya, with who he remained until the king’s death.⁵³ But the chronicle states that his life was spared.

Prior to Alaungpaya’s conquest of Pegu, he wrote, “the name Talaing was entirely unknown as an appellation of the Muns (Mon). Talaing meant, in the Mon language, being “trodden under foot,”⁵⁴ he postulated that the “word ‘Talaing’ is the term by which the Muns

⁵² Ibid., p. 65

⁵³ S.W. Cocks, M.A., **A short History of Burma**, (TBE University Press, Second Edition: 1919), p. 69.

⁵⁴ Michael A. Aung-Thwin, **The Mist of Ramanna, The legend that was lower Burma**, (United States of America, Univerity of Hawai’ I Press: 2005), p.266.

acknowledged their total defeat, their being vanquished and the slaves of their Burmese conqueror. The word talaing did not exist earlier than Alaungpaya to be incorrect. It makes the word 'Talaing' originate with Alaungpaya in the 18 th century.

The classical period of Mon history came to an end in 1757,⁵⁵ when the great Burma warrior-king Alaungphaya defeated the last Mon ruler of Pegu. In the following year, 1761, he invaded Martaban (mutama). Two hundreds Thousands of his followers including monks were driven into exile in Ayuthaiya (Thailand), led by Bannya sein where they settled in the border areas adjoining Burma to the entrance of Davaravadi city. In 1816 A.D. under the Burmese king named Bodawpaya, Mon people fled to Southern Siam group-by-group to avoid from the wrath of the Myanmar kings. The Ramañña Nikaya was founded by bhikkhus who had received ordination from Mon bhikkhus in the tradition of the Dhammazedī reforms also fled to Siam.

2.2.4 Ramañña Nikāya during British colonial Period

British rule in lower Burma lasted for more than a century, from 1826-1949 (not including the Japanese occupation of 1942-45). During the British Colonel time, Mon Samgha and Lay people from Siam came back to the native places of their residence in lower Burma 1826.⁵⁶ Two hundreds thousands men and women including Bhikkhus taking by boats settled into to Dalla provinces Assam and Martaban (mutama) east of the Salween river. Mon was to be included in the peace as an ally of the British. Buddhism lower Burma moved into a period of peace, which means improved conditions for Mon Bhikkhus.

After the conquest of Lower Myanmar, many bhikkhus had fled north in order to remain within the jurisdiction of the Myanmar kings. Many monasteries in British Myanmar were left without an incumbent and whole villages were therefore bereft of the opportunity to receive religious and general education. The people of ancient Mon learned the

⁵⁵ Ashley South, **Ceasefires and Civil Society: The Case of the Mon**, (Nordic Institute of Asian Studies 2007), Chapter 6, p.3.

⁵⁶ Naing Pan Thar, **Ramañña Nikaya and its Sāsanā**, (Burmese version), (Yangon: First Edition, 2016), p.44.

basic education with respect to writing, reading and also the Buddha's teachings at monastic schools and proceeded in the journey of their life. They were not separated from the Buddha's Teachings, and so, it was hard to convert to be Christianity. But soon it became clear that without the king's ecclesiastic officials to control the discipline of the Sangha, many bhikkhus developed a careless attitude towards their code of discipline. So that, Thudhamma sect was well known by Mon Bhikkhu at that time Founded by king Mindon under the British Empire. King Mindon tried to convince bhikkhus to mission to lower Burma in order to serve their people. From that time, Burmese bhikkhu started to influence in lower Burma, taking advantage of new opportunities in agriculture and business.

The British had made it clear at the outset that they would not take over the traditional role of the Myanmar kings, that of protector of the Sasana. The new masters' religion, Christianity, rapidly gained influence through the missionary schools. The schools were popular because their education provided much assistance in securing a job and favour with the colonisers.⁵⁷ Christian religious education was a compulsory part of their curriculum. The changing socio-economic environment caused Mon and other predominantly lowland peoples to change their patterns of residence, livelihood and education. Indeed, so great was the erosion of Mon Buddhism and language under the British that, by the time the colonialists departed, there were very few Mon speakers still living in the Irrawaddy Delta or Pegu. According to the last colonial census, by 1931 all but 3% of the Mon population was confined to Amherst District, in what is today central Mon State. Over the course of the nineteenth century, large numbers of Mon speakers came to adopt the Burmese language, and associated forms of political culture. The 1921 census recorded 324,000 Mons by race, but only 189,000 speak of Mon. Their ancient culture and language persisted, but the era of Mon political dominion was at an end.

In 1824, after the Second Anglo-Burmese, The British promised Mon their own leadership and recognition after defeating the Burmese; However, Mon sovereignty was never realized. The Mon elites were able

⁵⁷ Roger Bischoff, **Buddhism in Myanmar: A Short History**, (Srilanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1995), p.130.

to assert themselves through the patronage of religious work. Under the British colonial rule, Sakka abbot was appointed as a leader of Mon Sangha organization in Bilu Kyun Island organized by British ruler. And the second senior appointed abbot of Thein kappa. The pupil of the Thein kapa abbot from Bilu Kun Island sent to Mandalay to study Pali literature in order to promote Buddhist education. After having achieved enough Buddhist education in Mandalay for five years, he came back to open Pariyatti-sasana (Buddhist teaching) in lower Burma gaw neik village in Bilu kyun Township Mon State. From that time, Mon Buddhist Ramañña Nikāya Nikaya opened Pariyatti-sasana under British the colonial period from differences states in lower Burma as the following names:

1. Abbot Puppharama
2. Abbot kawslla
3. Abbot Kaung gyi
4. Abbot Var Ya Ma
5. Abbot ka lanyana
6. Abbot Kyaraik
7. Abbot pa laoud
8. Abbot Vanta te za
9. Abbot Aein dda Sa Ra
10. Abbot Gun Na Vanta
11. Abbot Siridda
12. Abbot Pown
13. Abbot Aeindda Sara
14. Abbot Ane
15. Abbot Can di mar

Monks established Mon language schools. And by 1847 the Baptists were publishing Mon tracts in Moulmein. Later, a Mon Buddhist press was set up on Bilu Kyun Island, and the Hanthawaddy Press was established in Rangoon, which printed Mon language history texts, as well as regular journal.

2.2.5 Ramañña Nikāya after British colonial Period

Burma gained independence on 4 January 1948, just after World War II. Since that time, Mon people with Burma authorities had serious

problems, which has been on the decline under the colonial rule. Mon revolted against the central Burmese government in 1948 to demand their ethnic rights. The government created a small Mon State in 1974, however without political power and under the rule of military dictators. The desires of the ruling Burmese were forcefully imposed on the Mon people and resulted in a civil war.

During this period the Ramañña Nikāya in Mon State was on the decline as it Mon ethnic nationalist against revolution with Burma authorities. Other ethnic groups take up arms against the state as well in order to defend a particular idea of nation because they were not quite successful in ensuring equality of opportunity for different groups in the country. But, after the British colonial period, minority ethnic people in Burma have not received an education nor have not been open to their ancestors. The wartime regime in Burma outlawed the teaching of minority language, espousing a quasi-National Socialist ideology of “one voice, one blood, and one nation.”⁵⁸ So, Mon Ramañña Nikāya’s movement became weakness of propagation in Sasana. In order to promote weakness of Buddhist Sasana, in full moon day of November 1308 M.E, The whole Mon Buddhist Monks Ramañña Nikāya held meeting on the platform of the Kyaik Than Lan Pagoda, Mon State with two hundreds Mon Monks based on the primary patron leader from Pa Nga village Pa loud monastery. Second primary leader was appointed from Phar-out Veluwom Monastery.

A. Under the Military U Nu’s Rule

After independence in 1948, the new authorities were aware of the role of Buddhism for national in the new state. Prime Minister U Nu organized the 6th Buddhist Council and invited the most learned Buddhist monks from all Theravada countries to recite and edit the Tipitaka and

⁵⁸ Ashley South, **Ethnic Politics in Burma: States of the conflict**, (New York: Routledge Press, 2008), p. 23.

commentaries.⁵⁹ Military U Nu declared that Buddhism is as the official state religion. But among Karen and Kachin Christian ethnic minorities and strengthen animosity in the already weak union. In that case, Ramañña Nikāya hold meeting second times in Kyaik Than Lan Pagoda. Anke abbot from Zabu Township was appointed as a leader of Ramañña Nikāya who was ninety-nine years old. And he transferred his duty to the mudoen abbot called Bandanta kassala to carry on duty.

During the period of the multi-party government, which saw U Nu in power from 1948 to 1962, Buddhist monks and monasteries received generous state funding and support from the socialist government. U Nu's recognition of Buddhism as the official religion of Burma and his pledge of support for the Buddhist monasteries, legitimate role enhanced the position of Buddhism and Buddhist monks in contemporary Burma.⁶⁰ But Mon Buddhism did not receive funding nor did not recognize from Burmese Sangha Central Working Committee. So that, Mon Buddhist Famous Uttama fled to Mon border with 60 other Mon Families from first to avoid abuse during the civil war in Burma under the military rule in 1949. Mon Buddhist Monks became weaker due to decrease of population and Sangha.

In 1980, nine Myanmar Buddhist sects were united in one body of monks and novices. After having elected one thousand, three hundred were appointed to the Sangha Central Working Committee and then forty-seven of their members were chosen to organise the Executive Committee- the State Mahanayaka Committee. One hundred abbots from different parts of the country are organized in the State Ovadacariya Committee, the advisory board supervising the different levels of sangha organizations. Under the leadership of the State Sangha Mahanayaka Committee there are different levels of organization: State and Division, Town-ship, Village and Wards Committees. The idea of military Burmese governments wanted to be direct administration Burma Sangha

⁵⁹ Phra Seng Hurng, Dr. Research Report, **Trend of Sangha's Administration in the Union of Myanmar in the Next Decade**, Buddhist Research Institute, (Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, B.E. 2556), p. 49.

⁶⁰ Donald K Swearer, **The Buddhist World of Southeast Asia**, (State University of New York Press, 2010), p. 98.

all over the ethnic groups who are Buddhists.⁶¹ The government of Myanmar sponsors the state Pali examinations and confers the titles.

But they never give sponsor Ramañña Nikāya Mon Buddhism even the Ramañña Nikāya did not recognized as a member of nine Buddhist sects as the following. The nine sects are: (1) Sudhamma, (2) Shwe kying, (3) Veluvan,(4) Anout Chawing Dvara, (5) Muladvara, (6) Mahadvara, (7) Catubhummika Hnget Twin, (8) Gaoavimutti Gatot, (9) Maggari. Sudhamma, 85-90% of the sangha; Shwei-jin, 5%; and the Dwara and Hngettwin, even smaller proportions. Of these, the Sudhamma and SHwegyin remain the two major branches because Ramañña Nikāya sect include into the Sudhamma sect. From the May 1980 all Sangha sects have not permitted new Nikaya.⁶²

After periods of reunification, the Sangha Ramañña Nikāya in lower Burma declined. The sectarian structure of the sangha also affects the ethnic Buddhist order. Buddhism traditionally was a powerful link between these ethnic communities and the Burmese, although by the time of prime Minister U Nu (1947-58, 1960-62) ethnic secessionist aims had upset some of this good will. On January 7, 1980, Ramañña Nikāya demand and presented to be recognized Ramañña Nikāya including one of the nine Sangha sects possibility to the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Director General of Religious Departments general U Gyi Myunt in number of the monasteries and Sangha in total. There are seven hundreds and twenty-nine 9729) monasteries and six thousands ninety hundreds and sixteenth-five (6965) monks from all states.

To achieve Sangha unity 1229 Baho Wunsaung Sayadaw (State Working Committee member, 27) State Mahanayaka Committee and State Ovadacariya Sayadaw (State Advisors Committee) were elected from different sects to handle Sangha Affairs of the country. To accept the Ramañña Nikāya sects who are presented in Baho Wunsaung Sayadaw (State Working Committee member, 27) are not allowed to recognize as a Ramañña Nikāya sect in Mahanayaka Committee because

⁶¹ Syiwia Gil, **The Role of Monkhood in Contemporary Myanmar Society**, (Warsaw: Poland, 2008), p.6.

⁶² Bruce Matthews, **Buddhism Under a Military Regime: The Iron Heel in Burma**, (University of California Press, Vol.33, No. 4. 1993), p.412.

Ramañña Nikāya sect demand to become two members monks into State Working Committee, 27. Anyway Baho Wunsaung Sayadaw (State Working Committee member denied; similarly, At a United Nations Conference minorities in New York, in 1970, U Thant, the Burmese UN Secretary-General, Declared that “ the last Mon is dead.” However, Ambassador to the UN, the Thai Mon, Anand Panyarachun, Publicly refuted U Thant’s claim. And, Mon speakers were still to be found in lower Burma; “the last Mon had not yet disappeared.” said, by Anand Panyarachun.⁶³ Regarding to his speech, the whole of Burma must to be one nation and one blood in the future.

B. Under the Military Khin Nyut

After his appointment as Prime Minister, Khin Nyunt's role in the government gave rise to some hope and speculation that there might be some 'liberalization', as he was considered a moderate pragmatist who saw the need of a dialogue with the democratic opposition. In 1997, He reformed as the State Peace and Development Council from the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) to (SPDC).

In 1998, General Mon leader revolution, Nai Shwe gyin, Nai Pan thar and Nai Khin Maung came to discuss agreement for ceasefire and discussion about the Mon Sangha Examination with General Kyin Nyut. Although the war had damaged the nation, the period of General Kyin Nyut regime had a better chance to allow Mon Sangha Examination in Mon language with Burmese monks. General kyin Nyut struggled Buddhism to build Pagodas and road difference states around the country. But he only allowed for Mon Buddhist monks to take Examination in Mon language. But, as a Burmese Sangha State Working Committee do not recognized as a Ramañña Nikāya until now because Burmese Sangha State Working Committee considered as political Sangha organization. Anyway, Mon Buddhism at this time had more rights than they had had under the military U Nu’s rule. Both Mon Buddhism and Mon National School were allowed to open in his rule. Under the rule of the Burmese military U Nu’s regime, the teaching of the language of the ethnic Mon people to children was banned. Those who were taught an ethnic

⁶³ Mr Ashley South, **Mon Nationalism and Civil War In Burma, The Golden Sheldrake**, (Great Britain: RoutledgeCurzon, 1st Edition, 2003), p.32.

language were put in prison, a further plight in the oppression of ethnic people.⁶⁴ On the other hand, Mon National School established by The New Mon State Party (NMSP) had a chance to teach in Military Government School in his period.

The New Mon State Party (NMSP), which is the main Mon ethnic armed group in southern Burma, formed Mon national schools in 1972 with the intention of teaching local children Mon language and culture. According to statistics from the Mon National Education Department, which is under control of the NMSP, there are currently 156 national schools in Mon State, while 116 schools offer a mixed curriculum of Burmese and Mon language lessons. There are currently around 17,000 Mon students and 800 teachers. Mon national schools run a similar curriculum to government institutions. Students who progress through ten grades are able to have exams at the government schools, which provides the opportunity to carry on to higher education and university. Nowadays there are many Mon Buddhist Ramañña Nikāya Monasteries has been developing both Pariyatti and Ptippati Sasana.

C. Under the Military Reform Democracy

In April 2007, Thein Sein military government left the historical military regime operation starting to open new road from military rule towards democracy. He gave suggestion for overseas Burmese citizens to return to their country of origin and help rebuild the Burmese economy.⁶⁵

During this reign of military dictatorship, Burma was characterized by a weak civilian society and a fear for national integration and foreign intervention. Regardless, Thein Sein has become a well-known and special leader not only in the Eastern Asian countries, but also in the world. One of his first moves in office was the reshuffle almost his whole cabinet to try and consolidate the authority. He has managed to deregulate the country's censored media. With some outside pressure, he has released more than 6,300 political prisoners including Aung San Suu Kyi. During his regime,

⁶⁴ Kaowao, **Ethnic Language to be Taught in Burmese Schools**, Retrieved on 23, August 2012, <http://www.kaowao.org/2012news-August-23.html>.

⁶⁵ Voice of American, **Burmese President Invites Return of Citizens Abroad**, Retrieved on 21 August 2011.

The Saffron Revolution occurred in September 2007.⁶⁶ Sangha marched with their alms bowls turned over. Number of the Sangha got into prison including laypeople. The country had a huge disaster both laypeople and Monks. As a result, in 2012, Ramañña established and found by the venerable Silacara. He is also a Dhamma Preacher around the world where the Mon community resides. Anyway, the government never gives supporting nor giving encouragement for the opening the ceremony of the university. The university aims to teach Mon Pali language and international language as for diploma at the present time. Monthly, English language is opened every year. Over seven hundred students came to study English and Mon language in summer from difference townships. Mon Ramañña Nikāya do not recognize until the present time.

2.3 Mon Buddhism has long history

As we know the development of Buddhism in lower Burma has a long history. It is necessary to divide it into three periods of time which all greatly influenced into Mon People in Southeast Asia. According to three time periods under the Burmese civilization control, British control and traditional time regain, characteristics and practices of Ramañña Nikāya may has been challenges a little due to political situation and nationalism. Finally the period of Mon Ramañña Nikāya regain again itself in the Mon culture. The Mon were the first people of Burma to practice Theravada Buddhism, called the Southern School since it took the southern route from India, its place of origin. Around sixth century, they settled in the south of Burma now and Siam while the Khmer made northern Siam. These two people were probably the first to settle in this region. The Mon with their distinct language and culture competed for centuries with Burma, however, today their influence and language is limited to remote areas of the south of Burma. Although Mon Buddhism little is well-known about actual religious practice now, trade conMon Buddhism has long history connections through the Mon port city of Thaton can be traced to the Indian kingdom of the Buddhist King Ashoka from as early as the 3rd century B.C. legend maintains that 2,500 years

⁶⁶ Emilie Biver, **Religious nationalism: Myanmar and the role of Buddhism in anti-Muslim narratives**, An analysis of Myanmar's ethnic conflicts through the lens of Buddhist nationalism, (Lund University, Spring Press, 2015), p.49.

ago the Mon people began the original structure of the Shwedagon Pagoda that today has become the most revered Buddhist stupa in Burma, a true national monument Also Dharmacakra⁶⁷ (Wheel of Law), in Dvaravati period.⁶⁸ The Buddha footprints and seats, and the inscriptions in the Mon Language at Nakon Pathom gave strong evidence that Mon Buddhism flourished by various archaeological evidences in Thailand. Suvarnabhumi is very popular for being Mon Buddhism in Thaton, a Mon town in Eastern Burma near the Gulf of Martaban. But when the Sona and Uttara preached the Bramajala Sutta, the standza started residing Mon People in Theravāda Buddhism brought and spread around the Southeast Asia such as Thailand, Cambodia and upper Burma. In these chronicles it is also stated that Buddhist manuscripts from Sri Lanka were translated into Mon Characters around 400 AD.

From the 1420s to the 1530s, Hanthawaddy was the most powerful and prosperous kingdom of all post-pagan kngdoms. Under a string of gifted monarchs, Mi Bannya Htaw (Shin Sawbu in Burmese), Dhammaceti and Binnya Ran II, the kingdom enjoyed a long golden age, both trading foreign commerce and Buddhism. The kingdom also became a famous center of Theravada Buddhism. It established strong ties with Ceylon, and encouraged reforms that later spread throughout the country.

The practice of Mon Theravada Buddhism in a strong age declined and thousands of Mons flee to Siam by the early 19th century. During those days, they became the Mon population to a small minority and small of population under the pressure of Burma people. Realizing this fact. They regained the old traditional culture after the colonial period. But they never give up the traditional culture and language even though the country does not exist anymore. Patriotism and spirit of Buddhism is very deep in their mind as a Mon nation regard to their history of development Buddhism a long age. Guided by Thera Arahan in 1057, the Burma Empire became Buddhism under the influence of Mon monk and people who had helped to propagation Buddhism in Pegan to build pagodas. Mon Buddhism never end it up due to Mon Buddhism. Mon Sangha and Mon

⁶⁷ Emmanuel Guillon, **The Mons A Civilization of Southeast Asia**, (Bangkok: The Siam Society Under Royal Patronage, 1999), p.87.

⁶⁸ Roger Bischoff, **Buddhism in Myanmar**, (Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1995), p.8.

laypeople are incomparable to promote the great religion as best as they could. Pagodas and monasteries were built by Mon people starting by the name of the “Kyaik” which means Pagoda in Mon language.⁶⁹ The Buddhists of Burma blame the British Government for being partly responsible for the decline of Buddhism in upper and lower Burma. But for minority people such as Mon, Karnes, Kachins, the Chins gained more freedom than now.

2.4 Conclusion Remark

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the research. RamaññaNikāya, according to the history of Record, clearly undergoes three historical periods in Burma, Before Pagan occupation, During Pagan and After Pagan. Before Pagan, Mon Ramañña Nikāya presented three points the historical points of Buddhism in lower Burma. The Origin of Mon Buddhism in Rāmaññadesa is from India during the lifetime of Buddha seven week’s enlightenment. The Shwedagon Pagoda is the evidence of the Mon Buddhism, which had flourished, in ancient time. The development of Ramañña Nikāya in Lower Burma is divided into the three periods. The period of Pagan, Colonial occupation (1826) and Military rule were the periods of Burma.

1. Under the U Nu’s rule, from 1948 to 1962, Buddhist monks and monasteries received generous state funding and support from the socialist government. He wanted to control to be direct administration under the Burma Sangha all over the ethnic groups who are Buddhists.
2. Under the the military Khin NyutIn 1997, He reformed as the State Peace and Development Council from the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) to (SPDC). Mostly, all ethnic groups had agreement to stop ceasefire with hi under the name State Peace and Development Council. Mon Buddhism and Mon National School had a moment of Peace from freedom of religion in his period.
3. Under the military of Thein Sein De reform democracy from 2007, Mon Buddhism in lower Burma got an opportunity to develop in accordance with the reform democracy in the present time.

⁶⁹ Emmanuel Guillon, **The Mons A Civilization of Southeast Asia**, (Bangkok: The Siam Society Under Royal Patronage, 1999), p. 66.

Chapter III

The Characteristics and Practices of Ramañña Nikāya In Mon state

3.1 The Characteristic of Ramañña Nikāya

The characteristic of Ramañña Nikāya Organization states that all Mon monks have to observe or monastic disciplines in its purest form and reform Mon Buddhist literature and culture as long as Ramañña Nikāya exists in this present. Regarding statement, every single Mon monks believe in the tipitaka, secondly for those who are living in Mon sangha Ramañña Nikāya Organization must pass highest examination and should expound the dhamma talk to all Mon lay people society. Mon should strictly follow moral precepts in order to get respect by lay people who are supporting for four requisites to carry on the teaching of the Buddha. Every Mon monks should study Mon Buddhist literature first before he studies another language. These principles become the main characteristic of Ramañña Nikāya Organization. Ramañña Nikāya's emphasis on reading by heart created the foundation for a strong tradition of deep remembrance practice, which led to the establishment of the Mon tradition. A striking characteristic of Mon society is its acceptance and tolerance of the Buddhism. These ideas are represented architecturally in the structure of the Pagoda, which has been strongly influenced by Buddhism. For example, the pagoda in a monastery its usually conical central tower represents Mount Meru.¹ Removing the shoes before entering a monastery and in offering food to monks on their morning rounds in village. Rural people, who always go to monastery, was their feet at the bottom of the stairs to the entrance of the monastery before going up.

When seeing the monk on the way, men pay respect by sitting and when sitting on the floor, men often cross their legs. Women tuck their legs to the side. When entering a monastery, women should wear clothing that covers their arms and legs, especially bow down the head three times to the Buddha first before meeting to the head of the abbot in the

¹ Peter McKenzie-Brown, **Thai, Culture and Customs**,
<https://languageinstinct.blogspot.com/2006/10/thai-culture-and-customs.html>

monastery. Although one country live under the governor of majority of Burma with difference ethnic groups, they have difference characteristic and practice according to their traditional believe.

3.1.1 Mon is Theravada, Theravada is Mon according to Mon Buddhists

Mon people are proud to be Theravada Buddhism because so many archeological evidence pagodas give them a pride as Buddhism for their life. One of the most remarkable Mon Kings of the sixteen Hongsawadi dynasties was Tissa. During his regime, The King was persuaded by Brahmanical worship or tantric Buddhism² who came from upper Burma in Ava in order to get secular benefit for a living life. “ Dead body of image should not be respected,” Preaching that all had to convert to be all Brahmanical worship. He delivered the message to all people to throw away all Buddha’s images into the forest and stream. He did not only destroy Buddha images but also forced people to convert to Bramanical worship from Ava. The people of the country had to face crisis of worshipping to the Buddha image at that time attempting Brahmanical worship. The king did not observe and ruled by the Dasrajadhamma³ according to the principle of the teaching of the Buddha in his regime.

One-day, Mi tala Htaw, a royal of daughter Dhana Zeya merchant, went into to stream and found the Buddha image sinking into the water by mud. She announced the people collected the Buddha images that by worshipping the Buddha image could save the sasara of the suffering said that. She stated that, to be killed by not observing Dasrajadhamma nor worshipping to the Buddha image, it was not her generation to be a Brahmanical worship traditional. It failed to give impression of Brahmanical worship to the Mon Theravāda Buddhism in history.

² Kanai Lal Hazra, M.A., LL.B., Dip. Lang., Ph. D., **History of Theravada Buddhism in Southeast Asia with special reference to India and Ceylon**, (New Delhi: West Patel Nagar, 1981), p. 84.

³ Phra Maha Hangsa Dhammhaso. **Trends of Monk Roles in Thai Politics in the Next Two Decades, Buddhist Studies**. Vol.9, No. 2229-1229, (January, 2015): 14.

Therefore, it is not surprising that saying Mon is Theravada, Theravada is Mon according to Mon Buddhists.

In 1979, the minister of the interior and Religion requested a large number of abbots to prepare a general Sangha conference. The general conference of the Sangha took place from 24 to 27 May 1980 in the cave near the Kaba-Aye pagoda in Rangoon where the Sixth Buddhist Council had taken place in 1956.⁴ Delegates from all sections of the Sangha in Burma were invited to the conference; one delegate was sent for every hundred monks. All Sangha belonged to all nine groups within the Sangha from (Thudama Nikāya, Dvara Nikāya, Shwe-gyin Nikāya, Veluvan Nikāya, Maha-Yin Nikāya, Ngettwīn Nikāya, Ganavimutti Nikāya and Yun Nikāya). The purpose of the conference was to recognize the country's entire Sangha. But Ramañña Nikāya did not recognize Ramañña Nikāya as a member of the organization. From 1992 until to 1998, Nai Shwe Kyin, General Mon Leader demanded as the following of Mon Ramañña Nikāya Buddhism was decline if it lacked the support of the organization to the military of the Burma Government. There were five points to demand for Mon Ramañña Nikāya Sangha Organization as the followings:

1. Mon Ramañña Nikāya Sangha Organization was decline to propagate the teaching of the Buddha if it lacked to recognize as a member of Sangha
2. The second decline is not to allow to take Dhammacariya Examination for Mon Ramañña Nikāya Sangha into *Pathambyan* Pali Examination.⁵
3. The third decline is not to open for Mon Abbots to give for training to be a abbot as a Mon language

⁴ Heinz Bechert and Richard Gombrich, **The World of Buddhism**, (New York: 1984), p. 154.

⁵ By Sylwia Gil, **Specialist on South East Asia and Theravada Buddhism**, (Warsaw, Poland, September 2008),

⁸⁹ Naing Pan Thar, **Ramañña Nikāya and its Sāsanā**, (Burmese version), (Yangon: First Edition, 2016), p. 44.

4. The fourth decline is not to allow Mon RamaññaNikāya Sangha to take Examination Mon Language in the cave of the Kaba-Aye Pagoda in Rangoon
5. The fifth decline is not to allow Tipitaka and Pali literature to be published and translated into Mon Language from the ministry of religion Affairs.⁶

Mon Ramañña Nikāya Sangha Organization demanded all above five facts to promote and propagate the teaching of the Buddha. There was an interruption of so many years during the military rule. But the Examinations were resumed in 19 when General Nai Shwe Kyin agreed ceasefire with General Khin Nyunt to allow for Mon Sangha to take Dhammacariya Examination in Kaba Aye cave with Burmese Monk.

In order to understand clearly how Mon Buddhism is called Buddhist in ancient time. Laypeople in Mon society are too much activates for the Buddhist Mon Monk in every year. They have to entertain every month festival and ceremony in each year. Laypeople in Mon society understand and have concept that making merit has a duty of Mon Theravāda Buddhism. As a Mon Queen Mi Shaw Bu who ruled in Hongsawadi kingdom, ended off her life with making merit for next Mon generation and next existence of life. Mon Buddhist has a custom to go to monastery for two times. And three activities for service for monk. In early morning laypeople offer food on the street and second time they arrange for lunch to the monastery after cooking from the house. Finally in the afternoon they go to offer flower and water to the monastery. All these are activities of Mon Theravāda Buddhists from their society. We can say mostly a half of time for Mon laypeople spend too much time to promote and sacrifice life to the Sāsana for the benefit of better life.

3.1.2 Mon Sangha Holding Vinaya as a priority

A good Buddhist layman is one who makes every effort to keep pure the Five Precepts and to practice at least the Dhamma taught in the Exhortation to Sigala. In the same way a good bhikkhu strives to train

himself without falling into offenses, in the 227⁷ training rules as a bhikkhu. It is often said that the laymen keep five, while the bhikkhu's load is two hundred and twenty-seven precepts. Vinaya literally can be classified in to 2 terms; Vi and Naya. Vi can be translated negatively as "away" and "many or spacial" in the positive, similarly Naya negatively refers to getting rid or eradicate, another meaning is to guide or lead (root: nî), therefore it can mean the eradicating of bad behavior or leading to the higher step of practice (until the liberation). However more meanings can be depicted from the Commentary of Vinaya called Samantapasadika. Vinaya can exhibited as the highest master of Buddhism, Ven. Ananda once aksed the Buddha of the next master after his passing away, the replied ansewer is Yo vo Anandamaya dhammo ca vinayo can desito pannatto so vo mamaccayena satha.. Ananda, after my passing away, Ananda, for what I have taught and explained to you as the Dhamma and the discipline will be our teacher.⁸

Today what Mon RamaññaNikāya Sangha organizations rely and inherit from the teaching of the Buddha is to studying and practicing of meditation from many generations. To follow the Vinaya is the first duty of all Mon Buddhist monks' concept to be respected by lay people. Mon monk only have to study Mon language in Mon Parriyati monastery. Mon Parriyati Monastery never teaches and gives literature in Burmese language. They only teach in Mon Dhamma literature according to the tipitaka books. But committee of the Sangha translates the version of the Pali literature from Burmese language when they take examination in Kaba Aye cave center. According to the rules and regulation of the monastic and traditional rules as a guided by old age monk Sangha, the rule is very strict to follow how to live in a monkhood life.

It is said that there are great Theravada Buddhist countries, which are the most exalted wisdom, and knowledge, Sri Lanka is the study of the Vinaya, Thailand is the study of the Sutta and the Burma's special study is the Abhidhamma. Not only Burma' monks but many Mon

⁷ Bhikkhu Khantilalo, **The Buddhist Monk's Discipline some points Explained for Laypeople**, (Wat Bovoranives Vihara, Bangkok, Thailand, 2006), p. 195.

⁸ Maurice Walshe, tr. **Digha Nikaya**, (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995), p. 270.

Monks and layman Dr, Mim Thein Mon⁹ who was decent from Mon family take part in Abhidhamma and delivering Abhidhamma talks to the Burmese people. Nowadays many Mon Monks are preaching dhamma in Burma to large groups of people who are very interesting to listen to dhamma teaching of the Buddha as well as in Europe where the Mon people community has. The traditions of Mon Buddhist listening to Dhamma talk seem to have survived particularly well in Burma, and modern reformers have revived long-forgotten forms of listening dhamma on the basis of the study of the scriptures. For example, the abbot of the Ramañña Rattha Buddhist University, the method of preaching Dhamma talk is very famous for all of Mon laypeople.

The widespread custom in Mon whereby laymen become member of a Sangha Community for a long period feel so sad to see who are known to have left from the Order of Sangha. During the life of monk, laypeople respect and did not equal to the spiritual life. It could not be easily ordained and regain again as the same high spiritual monkhood as before. In Monk Sangha Community, it means that every layman Buddhist hardly join to the Sangha once in a life, but more than one time in his life is hard to practice meditation and study pali literature because of the age. Ordination a monk life for one time is very respectful by laypeople than two times in Mon laypeople Community. These customs have been practicing for Mon Community a long time ago. But in point of fact that so many Mon Monks are temporarily members of the Sangha means that there is a considerable amount of number between the Sangha and the lay Community, and that the religious experience of a large number of laymen are increased. Mon monks enter temporary rapidly to the Sangha at certain times of the year, especially during the so-called in Summer time. At first sight it seems as though the structure of the Sangha of Mon was less the same in all Theravada Buddhist countries since it is based on the canonical texts of the Vinaya Pitaka that is a 5th-century commentary on it by Buddhaghosa.

But, in practice, different historical conditions brought about different developments in the structure of the Sangha in the various countries. Mon Buddhism owns the most important subsequent reform to King

⁹ Dr. Mehm Tin Mon, **Buddha Abhidhamma Ultimate Science**,
<http://www.dhammadownload.com/Dr-MehmTinMon-abhidhammaInEnglish.html>

Dhammaceti of Pegu (1472-92), who had been a monk and had helped Queen Mi SawBu to escape from Burmese captivity in Ava. The validity of a Buddhist Mon Monk's ordination depends on an uninterrupted line of valid ordinations going back to the Buddha himself. This explains why the formalities of the reordination were so important as a prerequisite for the general reform of the Order.

One day King Dhammazedit reflected thus: "Being aware of the impurity, heresy and corruption that have arisen in the religion. I think that, in order to ensure the continuance of the religion to the end of the period of 5000 years¹⁰, it is essential that it should be purified by resuscitation the pure form of the upasampadā ordination. However if he did not exert himself and remain indifferent, he would be guilty of not having intense love for or faith in, the Blessed fully Enlightened One, and of being devoid of respect reverence for him. Then He invited most senior monks and consulted with them to selected 22 monks and 22 novices to dispatch to Ceylon to reordain at the monk of the Mahāvihāra monastery, on the Kalayani River, where the Lord Buddha had enjoyed a bath. The King Dhammazedi sent tow ships namely Ramadūta and Cirtardūta. The first ship was headed by Moggalaāna with ten monks and eleven novices and the second ship was headed by Mahāsivali with the same number. King Dhammazeti wrote a letter on gold plate to the Ceylonese king Bhuvanekabāhu and sent various Valuable gifts because the residents of Suvannabhumi were very rich and was also known as the golden land because of its products of gold, ivory and honey.¹¹ The ship arrived Ceylon safely and the Ceylonese king welcomed them and grand ceremonies. The Ceylonese king conferred upon them with a new title and returned numerous valuable gifts to the Mon King after the ordination. The first ship Ramadūta arrived safely and the second ship had wrecked and ten monks died and the rest came back by overland route wit great difficulty.

¹⁰ By Nai Pan Hla, **The Significant Role of The Mon Language and Culture in Southeast Asia**, Institute for the study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, (ILCAA) 1992), p. 96.

¹¹ **The Teaching of the Buddha (Higher Level) Volume II**, (Department for the Promotion and Propagation of the Sāsana, 2001), p.251.

The most remarkable and interesting parts of his long records are the king's proclamations concerning the qualifications and disciplines of the monks and his drastic actions taken against the sinful monks all over his kingdom. The king despatched the following message to all clergy throughout the country:

“ Reverend Sir, ¹² what is past, let it be done with! But in future, let all the clergy who ordain them hereafter see that the candidates for ordination are satisfactory and then ordain them. There may be men branded as criminals or notorious as thieves or robbers or offenders against the government or escaped prisoners or old and decrepit or stricken with severe illness or deficient in the parts of the body or humpbacked or dwarfs or lame or having crooked limbs or whose presence vitiates. If people see such a person, they would laugh and mock at but not revere him. Do not permit such persons to ordain! There are some monks who are practicing astrology, reading horoscope or omen or dreams and obtain their means of livelihood.

There are some monks who devote their time in manufacturing various articles and procure their material wealth. There are some monks who trade in many ways. There are some monks who visit the fields and preach the Dhamma with long and loud intonation and trade in the grains, which they receive as offerings. There are some monks who associate with gamblers, dissolute youths, drunkards, robbers or servants of the king. Such monks are sinful. Do not allow them to dwell among you. Drastic actions will be taken against them. To become a monk in his regime was too hard to strict the Vinaya rule. That is why Mon Sangha was very famous during his rule.

He laid down the structure of the principle Vinaya for the laypeople if they want to become a monk that he should learn the four Parisuddhisila, four types of Pure Precepts. Parisuddhisila are the disciplinary rules that monks need to study and observe in order to purify the morality of action and speech. This is the foundation for purifying the

¹² Roger Bischoff, **Buddhism In Myanmar A Short History**, (Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, 1995), p.87.

mind and attaining insight wisdom. It is called *pārisuddhisīla*,¹³ which consists of four restraints:

1. Restraint in accordance with the monastic disciplinary code (*pātimokkhasamvarasīla*),
2. Restraint of the senses (*indriyasamvarasīla*),
3. Pure conduct regarding livelihood (*ājīvapārisuddhisīla*),
4. Restraint regarding the necessities of life (*paccaasannissitasīla*).

It is one of the highest blessings, because it brings both sensual happiness and transcendental happiness. This leads to attaining noble disciple status.

These were his demand what he wished to be for all Bhikkhus as long as they enjoy their life in Bhikkhuhood. They had to follow above four factors of *pārisuddhisīla* Precepts before one who want to ordain. After distributed the above-mentioned four factors, King Dhammazedī informed to give up all the properties if they are really imbued with faith and observe the Vinaya all the rules of a monk. if my Lords fail to do so, then with all your properties, leave the Order according to your inclination to follow the life of laymen. They were doubtful among people. He announced the speech to the country that “ Now that the Buddhist Religion in my country has been freed from impurity and corruption and freed from doubt, may the Religion of the Exalted Buddha Gotama, be able to endure for five thousand year. In future, in this country, may all the kings who shall arise into being hereafter, on seeing the impurity and corruption of the religion that may occur, also diligently exert themselves so as to effect the purification of the Religion. may our lords of my country, all the virtuous monks who shall come into being in future to this land of gold, may they also put strenuous efforts in the purification of the Religion and in the promotion and propagation for the advancement of the Religion of the Exalted Buddha Gotama.”

Although the *vinaya* rules strictly prohibit any additional occupation in the areas of medicine, magic, alchemy, fortune telling, choosing lucky lottery numbers, exorcism etc. these additional activities are quite common for a monk in the city. But mostly they are not Mon Sangha followers. They are not really despised by the majority of lay

¹³ Phra Thepyanmongkol, **A Study Guide for Right Practice of the Three Trainings**, (Wat Luang Phor Sodh, 2012), p. 12.

supporters. On the contrary: if a monk is successful, he can become quite popular and rich. But whatever is outside of the realm of formality and religious dogma often happens to be the most expressive aspect of human nature and represents the true needs of religious followers. However, this kind of performance may not be accepted or ignored by educated monks. That is why the Buddh emphasize that Vinaya (discipline) is important than Education.

Mon Nikaya initiated by Dhammceṭi was carried out in all parts of the Mon people, and also Burmese monks trace back their ordination to the Kalyanisima tradition. In Mon Theravāda Buddhism, Monks are the most respectful by laypeople concerning the Vinaya rule. A light visible form of monk is the embodiment of the existence of Vinaya because Vinaya is the Bhikkhu's rules, which means of manifesting beautiful behavior such as a sign of respect to laypeople community. In Mon Sangha community, the Monks who enter the monastery at a young age and have a higher degree of education can be more respected by laypeople community. By having higher education and younger age can be done both teaching and practicing of meditation. This is one of the Mon Buddhist community and society of perspective. Lay devotees are especially generous in supporting monks with suitable requisites such as read-made robes; food, medicine and lodging in order to satisfy for maintain life as monkhood for carrying on duty of study and meditation.

Four kinds of requests are the duty of the laypeople to donate to the Sangha however they may have basically. Buddhism and its fellow Sangha never forget to save and uplift human society and environment, as they are interdependent and interrelated. Almost all Mon Buddhist leaders and devout Buddhists believe that unless Buddhist teachings reach to the public, there may not be peaceful society because Buddha's teachings are based on human rights¹⁴, mutual understanding and civic ethics society.

3.2 Practices of Ramañña Nikāya

3.2.1.1 Compulsory ceremony of Mon Buddhism according to Vinaya

¹⁴ Ms. Swe Swe Mon, **Theory and Practice of Buddhist Monastic Schools in Myanmar**, 2014. p.9.

Traditionally, there are many forms for ceremonies, which are believed to shower blessings on those who perform them and also on those in whose honor or on whose accounts they are performed. There are commonly called that “ Twelve secular beatitudes of blessing.” Each ceremony is performed on a specified occasion at a particular time. However, Mon Buddhists believed that the initiation ceremony is of paramount importance. It is more or less compulsory. Though, there is no prescribed rule in any of the Buddha’s teaching that the Theravada Buddhist must perform the initiation ceremony but this is a duty of voluntarily and compulsorily of every Mon Buddhist those who taken upon oneself. It is regarded to initiate his son or any other person’s son as the highest form of duty every performed towards them.

Here, we discussed that a brief account of the compulsory ceremonies of Mon and their rituals prevalent throughout the Mon State. They are described below:

The Uposatha or Sabbath ceremony is one the most sacred and significant ceremonies of the Mon Theravāda Buddhism. According to the teaching of the Buddha, Uposatha was introduced at the instance of King Bimbisara, during the Buddha’s lifetime, in such ceremonies were convened by the non-Buddhism societies like asities and heretics. Having realized the importance of such congregation, King Bimbisara recommended setting up such as forth rightly religious assembly. Mon layperson in this Uposatha day is essential and great day for their life that they can obtain eight precepts fully because they have free time in rainy season.

We can say that keeping of the Uposatha day is a concession made by the Buddha to public opinion. It is one of the numberless concessions by the brotherhood to the religious and moral activities of human beings. In Mon society, generally the Uposatha is a day of rest. It is not proper or do any business activities like hunting and fishing is forbidden¹⁵. The lay devotees must celebrate the day with clean garments and with clean minds, and it is meritorious in them to keep the eight precepts. Preaching

¹⁵Mark Inkey for BNI, **Traditional Mon Religious Festivals to Be Regulated**, Retrieved on 25 January 2018, <https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/mon-state/item/613-traditional-mon-religious-festivals-to-be-regulated.html>.

and hearing the sermon is a common feature of each Uposatha day. Uposatha had a great moral impact on the laypeople. It infused them with a religious favour and unification of the Mon Laypeople community.

A. 3.2.1.2 Vassavāsika Ceremony

Vassavāsika means rain-retreat during the monsoon time¹⁶. It is a great significant ceremony of Mon Theravāda Buddhism. According to Mon Buddhist Traditional, the full moon day of (mid-July) usually coincides with the full moon day of July. It is at the beginning retreat time, which is observed and celebrated very auspiciously in Mon State. It is not only religious day for the Mon Buddhist Monks but also lay devotees were concern with this ceremony. In Rain-retreat, Mon Buddhist devotees stop wedding ceremonies form the beginning of rain-retreat time until to the end of Vassavāsa. In this occasion, the Buddhist of Mon people used to visit monasteries to take Eight Precepts before the monks and offer nice food, follower to Buddhist monks.

They spend there time in the whole day at the monastery by listening Dhamma, reading the religious books and practicing meditation. The food from the house has to bring with them or sometimes send from their daughter or sons from house. One more important is that during the Sabbath day, they do not have to eat after lunch as they keep eight precepts in the monastery. It is customary regulation of Mon traditional.

According to Mon traditional activates, Mon Buddhist monk has to go alms-food and practice to eat for one time as many as day they can practice during the Vassavāsika time. Behind this they cannot travel to the outside the monastery. This observance was called Vassavāsika of Mon. So Far, this traditional culture still practice on as the compulsory ceremony of Mon Theravāda Buddhism. The usual period of retreat time is there months, form the first of Saravanna to the first of Kyattika. It is said that Vassavāsika ceremony, in fact, aimed to emphasize two primary duties of a member of the Sanhga during the time of rain season. (1) to avoid inconvenience of travelling in the rain, (2) to avavoid injuring

¹⁶ Mrs. Manikuntala De, **Buddhist Ceremonies and Rituals of Burma**, p.13.

sprouts and insects which grow abundantly during the rainy season accordingly the teaching of the Buddha.

B. 3.2.1.3 Paritta Ceremony

Apart from those ceremonies discussed above, there is one more important ceremony, which is necessary of Mon Society called “Paritta”, which needs mention for its wide circulation and also for a comprehensive study. Paritta means “the Sutta that protects those who chant and who listen to it against dangers, calamities, etc.¹⁷ especially Bramajāla Sutta is very famous in Mon traditional ceremony to reside when the monks go to house. More than the ancient times, this ceremony has practically gained greater importance role in Mon community. In the beginning of the year and in the end of the year, the most reside in the village for two times to take away of demon god or bad karma. The Paritta ceremony gained wide popularity among the devotees and even nowadays among the Theravāda Buddhist community, no social or religious function is considered as complete and promotes without the chanting Paritta¹⁸.

The arrival of Paritta into Mon State to Mon community is that in the well-known legend of Thera Soan and Theara Uttara who were selected by Emperor Asoka as missionaries to lower Burma in Mon State (ancient Suvannabhumi) now near belu Gyun (the island of god). There was an example of the use of Paritta. On that time there, they subjugated a demon (Yakkha) that struck terror in the Land by gobbling up all newly born babies in the King’s palace. The victory of those holy men was accomplished by pronouncing the Paritta¹⁹ But for protection and other good results, a correct way is very important. There are some conditions to be fulfilled by both the chanters and the listeners so as to get the full benefits of the Parittas.

¹⁷ Sayadaw U Silānandābhivamsa, ‘ **Paritta pali and Protective verses**’, (Myanmar: PressYangon, 200), p.1-2.

¹⁸ Bimala Churn law, M.A., B.L., Ph.D. (cal.), D.Litt.,**The History of the Buddha’s Religion**, (Sāsanavamsa,VII), London, W.C.I. England, 1952), p. 43.

Here, we found the notices those three conditions in dealing with the chanter. They are described below:

- (1) They must have learnt and chant the Paritta Sutta correctly and full without any omission.
- (2) They must understand the meaning of the Suttas beings chanted.
- (3) They must chant with the heart filled with goodwill and loving-kindness.

Similarly the three other conditions in dealing with the listeners are also described here:

- (1) They must not have committed the five most heinous crimes, namely; killing one's own father, killing one's own mother, killing an Arahant, lousing the blood to be congealed in the body of the Buddha by wounding him, and causing schism in the Sangha.
- (2) They must listen to the chanting with confidence in the efficacy of the Paritta Sutta in warding off the dangers and bring good results.

Only when their conditions are fulfilled do people get full benefits from the Parittas. Therefore, it is important that when the Parittas are being chanted, people should listen to the chanting with confidence, respect, and attentiveness. Theravāda Buddhism is an important role of in the daily life of Mon Buddhists. Mon Buddhists do not worship to Lokanātha,²⁰ a Mahāyana deity as a Burmese Buddhists. Hinduism survives among the Burmese traditional culture. Nat worship remains an important dimension of every day Burmese life. King Anawrahta tried to ban the culture of Nat worship in Bagan.²¹ But it failed because it was the strongest basing of spirit worship in Burma even he moved to nearby Mt. Popa Mountain. And he replaced Buddhism instead of Nat worship. As for Mon Buddhism, today the common people of Mon

²⁰ Roger Bischoff, **Buddhism in Myanmar A Short History**, (Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, 1995), p.46.

²¹ Patchareepan Ravangban, **Nat and Nat Kadaw: The Existence of the Local Cult in Myanmar Transition**, (Thailand: University Academic Service Center (UNISERV), Chiang Mai University, July 2015): 24-25.

believed cosmology places the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha are at the top of their life. The Mon tradition of making merit has its roots in ancient generations and it passes on to the present one. So making merit (Puñña) in Mon traditional is not only a serious matter in their mind to support the Sangha community to the monasteries, but also to build pagoda to the propagation of the Buddhasasana. Mostly the laity serves to the monk's food and finances from their husband from working even though the husband are not free to donate each other the same time. Mon Buddhist laities support Buddhism with all generosities.

From 2010 up to now at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalay University, there were over 20 monks who have been studying in that university both Thai Program and International Program. On another hand, there are also some monks who are studying in Siri Lanka too. Most of them get supporting from Mon lay devotees organization and some get from the abbot from the monastery. Many of Mon people as immigrant worker who are working in Thailand came to support them even though they earned such a few amount of money from their working in a day. Some of them are based on the desire of the mind. It depends on the mind with kind heart in generosities.

As for Mon Theravāda Buddhism laities based on the history of Mon Queen Mi Shaw Bu in Hongsawaddi kingdom, She scarified her life on making merit as half of her life. Therefore some say that Mon people lost their motherland because they enjoyed their time in making merit to the Buddhasasana. Mon laities are great Sasana Supporters. This happened early time when Mon Theravāda Buddhism flourished from the beginning until to the present time. The government of the Burma neglect to support to minority of group such Mon Sangha Organization concerning financial matter because Mon Monk do not study Burmese language. In order to promote and propagate Mon Buddhist literature, In April 26 2012, The Most Venerable Silacara, a Famous Mon Dhamma-preacher, found a suitable land to establish and open Ramaññaratth Buddhist University. A rich Mon lady called Mi Yein donated the land and she also built one resident for lunch Hall and one resident for monks. In 2016, he opened for Dipaloma for two years class. Ramannyanrattha Buddhism University is already recognized by 21 Buddhist universities in the country [Burma], and the students completing the Diploma course at

the University are able to continue their bachelor studies at those 21 universities across Burma.²²

It was a golden opportunity for Mon Monks next generation in modern time who do not want to study Pali Literature in Burmese language in Burma. In 2016, Mahaculalongkornrajavidyalaya University signed agreement after passing Dhammacariya elevel Examination in Mon Sangha Committee Organization, they can study in Mahaculalongkornrajavidyalaya University. So, The Most Venerable Silacara and lay disciple Mi Yein, their reputation were recorded in the History of famous Ramaññaratth Buddhist University for Mon generation people and monks. To understand the special relationship between the two is crucial for any understanding of the monk's role in Mon society in general in particular.²³

The role of members of the Sangha is to strive for their own spiritual development, and to use their knowledge of the Buddha's teachings, the Dhamma, to guide laypeople. At the heart of Mon traditional Buddhism in Mon State stands on the village monks, whose primary role are to provide services to the village. By supporting the Sangha, laypeople acquire merit, which is crucial for a better rebirth. Merit is perceived as something substantial that can be accumulated. It can be stored up for a better rebirth for their future well-being or in return for help in worldly matter.

To promote the missionary work and to spread the Teaching of the Buddha,²⁴ Laypeople have to fulfill four requests and Abbot from monasteries have to provide eight requests for the novices and monks for those who would like to study Pali literature and who would like to spread The teaching of the Buddha for around the world. Hopefully, It is really a great success for Mon people in Buddhism to spread if the monks

²² Min Htit, Mon State's New University Offers Diploma In Buddhism, **Reported**, Retrieved on 25 January 2018, <http://monnews.org/2016/07/21/mon-new-university-offers-diploma-buddhism/html>.

²³ Iselin Frydenlund, **The Sangha And its Religion to the peace process in Srilanka**, (Oslo (PRIO), International Peace Research Institute, 2005), p.4.

²⁴ Mae Chee Huynh Kim lan, "A Study of Theravāda Buddhism In Vitenam", **M.A.Thesis**. (Bangkok: Department of Philosophy, Graduate School, Mahachulalongkornraja University, 2553/2010), p.67.

and laypeople are unity to work together as well as lay political leader. The fund working for Mon Sangha Community do not support by the Burmese government religious Affair.

They neglect to support Mon Sangha community by press various ways. This situation goes on many decades under the military government rule. Mon Sangha certainly cannot exist without the material support of the lay people in the field of basic needs such as food, habitat or clothing. This obvious material dependence on the lay society from the very beginning seems to have created a need for a religious option for the lay supporters, since the Buddha's doctrine was based on the renunciation of the material world. The monastery in a village is a center of social life. It is supported through the joint effort of the whole village community.

The development of the Buddhism is based on the economic from the Mon people who are working from aboard and homeland. On another hand, to develop and to promote Mon Buddhism Pali literature and Mon language among to the Mon People are huge challenges about seven decades since independence. Still the situation needs an explanation. Burmese, being the only official language of education, media and government, is clearly the dominant language. Mon is the prestige language only among the Mon population, and almost the whole Mon speaking population is bilingual, using Burmese in communication with outsiders. A sizeable number of Mon has also completely shifted to Burmese. The Burmese speakers, one the other hand, are rarely bilingual, with only few speaking Mon besides Burmese. What can be expected in this situation of language contact are heavy Burmese influence in Mon, but not the other way round.²⁵

C. 3.2.1.4 Kathina Ceremony

Kathina menas “hard”, “stiff”. “Difficult”, Kathina robes offering ceremony can be traced back to the Buddha's day. One an occasion, While the Buddha was dwelling at JetavanaVihar in Shravasti, a group of thirty monks from Patha town was going to Sāvatti to see the Buddha

²⁵ Jenny, Mathias, **The Mon Language: recipient and donor between Burmes and Thai**, University of Zurich, **The Journal of Language and Culture**, (Strickhofstrasse 39, CH-8057 Zurich, 2013), p.17.

after the three-month rains-retreat while he was residing at JetavanaVihar.²⁶ According to the Theravāda Buddhism laid down in the Vinaya, offering robes ceremony and receiving of the merit is the same benefit if the lay devotees consider correctly in their mind. With regard to the daily routines of Mon Buddhists in Mon State, there are only two most popular practices: merit-making and Vipassanā. Merit-making is the most common path undertaken by Mon Buddhists. This path involves the observance of the five precepts and accumulation of good merit through charity and good deeds (dana) to obtain a favourable rebirth. Before the day take places for offering robe to the monks for Kathina Ceremony, Monk invited by lay people from difference monasteries arrive in advance to celebrate for the next day. All monks have to go around the village to collect food from the donar who are waiting and standing in front of the main road to donate all the monks from invitation. After that, the lay people gather in the monastery foods and accessories before offering robe to the monks. They obtain five precepts from the monk and listen to the dhamma talk given by the elder monk and reciting metta sutta. Finally lay people donate the robe each monks and pour water for the merit of the offering robe to the monks sharing merit to all human being in this world. Kathina Ceremony is the Ceremony which Mon monks and lay people start their first free time after the rainy retreat.

Kathina robe offering ceremony takes place annually for one month by performing Vinaya activities. This is why the kathina ceremony demands more determination, finness and stablility, and the sponsors, receivers, and makers accumulate immeasurable merits. The ceremony is far more special than other offerings. It is the most important and beneficial skilful deed that cultivates all that is god within lay people. Lay people gain all the blessigs toward the highest goal known as Nibbāna.requirement of offering Kathina ceremony in Mon community cost a lot of money to offer from difference monasteries that they come from difference village invited by the lay people. At least more than 50

²⁶ Mae Chee Huynh Kim Lan, “A Study Of Theravāda Buddhism in Vietnam, **M.A. Thesis.** Bangkok: Department of Philosophy, Graduate School, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, B.E 2553/A.D 2010, p.81.

monasteries were invited from different villages during the one-month period (between mid-October to mid-November).²⁷

Mon Buddhist monks accept that Kathina Ceremony is the most happy month for all Mon Buddhist community that they can see and meet each other by invitation of Kathina Ceremony. Mon lay people do not only offer robes but they also offer some money including necessary bus fare and car service to get back their own monastery. Kathina Ceremony is celebrated by Mon Theravāda Buddhists.

3.2.1. The Process of Change

Looking at this early period as a whole after the demise of the Mon Emperor, military power and civil war conflict were the main causes to decline of the Mon Buddhist history. It seems that the Mons did have qualities that made them potentially more assimilable than most other minorities. Culturally and socially they were strikingly similar to Burmese. But on balance, in the early years, the conditions separating them from Thais outweighed those favouring assimilation. The relative physical isolation, the separate monastery, the economic self-sufficiency, and the nature of the government relations combined to keep pressures for assimilation from having much effect for a surprisingly long time. As the Buddha said in his three characteristics of teaching in Pali,

- (1) Sabbe saṅkhārā aniccā - all conditioned states are impermanent
- (2) Sabbe saṅkhārā dukkhā - all conditioned states are subject to oppression,
- (3) Sabbe dhammā anattā - all states are non-self or soulless²⁸

These three marks of conditioned arising can be summarized as

²⁷ Sunthorn Plamintr, Basic Buddhism, (Bangkok: Buddha Dhamma Foundation, 1997), p. 120.

²⁸ Hunter I. Watson, The “**Three Characteristics**” Mon Language Buddhist palm-leaf manuscript, (Bangkok: Faculty of Archaeology, Silpakorn University, Thailand), p. 28.

following. Impermanence means that all things are in a state of fluctuation and nothing is permanent; any impression of permanence is an illusion. Unsatisfactoriness arises from impermanence because all things impermanent are consequently unsatisfactory. Soullessness is the concept that we ourselves are impermanent and have no soul, but rather that humans are “no more than composite beings made up of an ever-shifting cloud of physical and mental components.” In some villages it is commonly used as a teaching tool for young novice and monks learning to read and write, as well as learning the philosophical principles of Buddhism. The word (Lakkhana) is an Indic loanword, which means “characteristics”, and the word (Pi) is Mon for the number three. The concept is derived from the Buddhist tradition, the original term being (Trilaksana) in Sanskrit and (Tilkkhan) in Pali.

The concept of the three characteristics refers to the three marks of conditioned arising, which in Pali are spelled as (1) anicca, (2) dukkha, and (3) anatta. The first of these, anicca, can be defined as impermanence. The second one, dukkha, can be defined as suffering. The third one, anatta, can be defined as egolessness or soullessness. In the past, there were numerous urban centers throughout Burma considered to have been controlled by ethnic Mons based on the evidence of Old Mon language stone inscriptions.

There is little direct evidence of the amount of assimilation that occurred in the early years. Change was apparently pretty slow. One of the few fragments of evidence that I have seen appears in the loss of Mon cultural characteristics in Mon State. By the early twentieth century most Mons were bilingual in Mon and its language had experienced strong lexical influence from Burmese language. But really rapid change, by which people began to lose the language and to lose virtually all their Mon identity, probably did not begin until World War II. It was the people born at this time who began to grow up in the Mon villages to be more Burmese than Mon. As we shall see now, the rates of changes varied greatly from place to place, depending on local circumstances.

A second set of important changes began in this century and virtually exploded after the military reform. These are the changes we call modernization, which did not so much promote assimilation. As the old subsistence economy broke down, Mons found themselves in a new

kind of relationship with the market, in which they depended upon it for a large portion of the necessities of life, which they lacked the skills to produce for themselves. As land began to be in short supply, Mons began sending increasing numbers of children to the Thailand.

3.2.2 The Practic of Mon Buddhist Ethnic Identity Today

According to 2007 US State Department statistics estimate the Mon population at being just below 1 million.²⁹ But Mon Leaders contest their numbers are much higher, at around 4 million and 8 million in Burma. Most ethnic Mon live in Mon State being in the vicinity of 2 per cent of the country's total population, just above 1 million. Due to the conflict between military and the ethnic groups in Mon State, several of Mon group from Mon State fled to Thailand and Western Europe to live as a refugee. This is one of the government policies to make decline population and to control all of them. Regarding to this matter, Mon Buddhism cannot upgrade and recognized from various problems such as social problem, political problem and economic problem being pressure under the slave of Burmese military government.

To Identitymonastic constructions, Mon Buddhist monasteries in Mon State are built in accordance with the identity of Mon arts, language and architectures, especially Hongsa bird symbol. Therefore Mon monks are always advised to preserve their own culture to the best way. If not, their culture has not continued to exist anylonger. Firstly, if Mon speaking language becomes a few in Mon societies, the second literature will be in decline. Finally, the Moncultures will contintue to decline soon as the Botadown aboot said. So that, Mon Buddhist monks is a role, which play an important role to preserve the Mon literature to teach the Mon generation in Mon people. In Buddhism, ethnic is taught in order to educate human society, to have non ill-will, compassion, harmony, tolerance, mutual trust and respect to personal duties and other in the society as the means of social governance. Buddhst ethnic in this sense is referred to the priciples of the moral conducts and the modes of

²⁹ Chizom Ekeh and Martin Smit, **Minorities in Burma**, (London: Minority Rights Group international, 2002), p.4.

behaviour of humans.³⁰ Essential Buddhist ethics is generally referred to as the early Buddha's teachings about Right Action, Right Speech and Right Livelihood of the Noble Eightfold Path. These three states are included in the aggregate of virtue, which is also called the training of (sila) morality. It includes both precepts and the proper human behaviour. The function of training of morality is to prevent misdeeds through physical and verbal actions. So, the significant Buddhist ethnics can help to prevent social problems not to arise in human society by refraining from any evil action. The benefits of refraining from committing unwholesome deeds and cultivating good behaviour can contribute to harmonious and peaceful existence among community.

Therefore Buddhist ethics and moral precepts are encouraged to be practiced in order to help human beings to improve themselves from bad to good and from imperfect to perfect. Speaking, the purpose of practicing these four states is to eliminate anger, hatred, ill-will, cruelty, envy, jealousy, partiality and discrimination which are the defilements of human mind. If every person who lives in Burma practices these four states of mind, harmony, happiness and peace is possible in oneself, in a family, in a society, in a nation and in the whole country without having religious discrimination, race discrimination and equal status. These essential Buddha's teachings have been applied to practice as the moral ethnics of the Mon society today. Morality in Buddhism is essentially practical in that it is only a means leading to the final goal of ultimate happiness. Mon Sangha always train Mon Lay devotees to be good in morality to become the most important aspect of living in society. That is why Mon society has always been peaceful whenever they live with based on the Buddhist ethical code 2,500 years ago from its timeless character.³¹ Especially Buddhism provides as simple lay people's code of morality as enshrined in the Sigālaka Sutta of Dīgha Nikāya. Buddha gave advice to lay people to respect their duties and responsibilities each other in society.

³⁰ Tran Sone Paññmuni," A Study of the Influence and Contribution of Theravada Buddhism to the Khmer Community in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam." **M.A. Thesis.** Bangkok: Department of Philosophy, Graduate School, Chulalongkorn University, 2553/ 2010: 33.

³¹ K. Sri Dhammanada, **What Buddhists Believe**, (Malaysia: Buddhist Missionary Society, Buddhist Maha Vihara, 1998), p. 146.

In addition, Mon people usually take off hats and slippers for a while when they have a talk with the monks entering to monasteries or when they see the monks on the way, also they sit down and stop for a short while. This mode of behaviour is practiced from a long time in Mon society. Mostly it is founded in the village which majority of Mon people live. This is one of the cultures, which is different from Burmese culture. They are humble mind and morality when they have conversation with the old and monks.³² But it is similar to the mode of behaviour of Khmer people in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam.

Apart from behaviour conducts, most of Mon lay people spend activities so much in their time by making merit. The central concern of religious activity is to gain as much merit and reduce as much demerit as possible. One way of gaining extra merit is by doing religious acts, like offering food to the monks, donating money to the temple, keeping the precepts and being doing (non-religious) acts of charity, like giving to the poor. They donate a lot of their income to charity as well as participate in religious events often. They believe making donations can improve their quality of life or improve their chances in the next life although the effective results of their donations might not concretely appear in this life time. As regarded the Buddhist teaching the noble Eightfold Path particularly the moral precepts, the Mon Buddhist have a strong emphasis on the mode of proper behavior in the daily life of Mon people in their society. Every Buddhist is encouraged to mould his life according to the Noble Eightfold Path as taught by the Buddha. He who adjusts his life according to this noble way of living will be free from miseries and calamities both in this life time and hereafter.³³ He will be able to develop his mind by restraining from evil and observing morality.

3.2.3 Religious role of the monks

When we analyse the Mon history of Buddhism, especially in the reign of Mon king Mahuho that was the period of Mon Buddhist monk Thera

³² Interview with The Most Venerable Bhaddanta silācāra, Aggamahāpaṇḍita, (Second level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization), Auk Pegu monastery, Mon State, November 10, 2017.

³³ K. Sri Dhammananda, **What Buddhists Believe**, (Malaysia: Buddhist Missionary Society, Buddhist Maha Vihara, sixth Edition, 1998), p. 79.

Arhan played an important role of propagation of Dhamma with the king. Since the colonial period to the present day, Mon Buddhist monks have been carrying on the duty to preserve the Mon language, literature and Mon tradition as far as the religious role of the Sangha are concerned. To promote the Mon Buddhist Monk's traditional role in propagation of Dhamma, the Mon Buddhist Ramañña Nikāya set up Mon Pali examination in order to develop and propagate the Mon Buddhist Pali literature and Mon literature by their own power.

According to the Guide to tipitaka, there are three kinds of the essential doctrines such as Pariyatti, Theoretical learning, Patipatti, Practice the teaching of the Buddha, Pativedha, and realization of the practice.³⁴ But most Mon Buddhist monk emphasizes Pariyatti, which means the study of the Buddhist teaching in monasteries. There are a few Patipatti to achieve the result from the study of the Buddhist teaching for the practitioner in Mon RamaññaNikāya Sangha Organization. If the Pariyatti (study of the teaching of the Buddha) cannot apply to the Patipatti (the practice of the teaching of the Buddha), it would not achieve Pativedha. Both Pariyatti and Patipatti cannot be parted each other to propagate the teaching of the Buddha. They both should go and practice together until to achieve realization through Pativedha, which means the supreme goal. There are a few Mon RamaññaNikāya Sangha Organization that they can open to practice the teaching of the Buddha, Patipatti for their society in the present day. As above-mentioned, a person or a monk should have knowledge on both Pariyatti and Patipatti. If one of that is lack of practice or study, there is no good fruit for the highest goal. It is said that a practice without theory is misguided and theory without practice will be useless. Therefore, the two of them are equally essential to gain the achievement of the highest goal in Buddhism laid from the Buddha. In sum, what the Buddha taught is called Sasana, which are the study of the teaching of Buddha, the practice of the teaching of the Buddha and the realization of his teaching.

On the another hand, Regarding to political pressure, Mon Sangha in Mon State always emphasize that the Mon literature is their National identity of existence too. They are serious worry literature to main and preserve their Mon literature and Buddhist literature for the next decade.

³⁴ DN. III, P.219

As they have saying, literature disappear and Mon will disappear in this world. So the Sangha is very important to lead the Mon community in society. Apart from preaching and giving suggestion, there is no way else to solve this problem for Mon generation to protect Mon literature and culture. To have harmony and prosperous in seluar and supermanendance goal, The Buddha laid down the disciplines to train the lay people. And, the monks also have to fulfil their duties and the lay people have responsibilities to fulfil their duties.³⁵

Thus, Monks and laymen are interdependent; their relationship is in effect reciprocal both religious matter and political matter, though it is not regarded as much in Buddhist theory. To keep Dhamma alive as their spiritual refuge, it is the duty of the laity to support the Mon monks according to the Sigālaka Sutta of Dīgha Nikāya.³⁶ As recipients of material benefits from the laity, the monk themselves are under a moral obligation to contribute their services for the benefit of the laymen, and not tot concern themselves only with their personal salvation. The traditional religious services rendered to the laity in Buddhist orthodoxy are expressed in various forms of ritual and ceremonial as well as spiritual activities, which in turn constitute the religious functions of the monks. At the cultural level, Language is the most important feature distinguishing Mons from Burmese because language is the foundation of existence for human being.

3.2.4 The Social Social Dimension of Mon Buddhist practice

Looking back to the history of the Buddha, it can be seen some something that the Buddha exhorted some message as the followings: Walk, monks, on tour for the blessing of the many folks, for the happiness of he many folks out of compassion for the world, for the welfare, the blessing and the happiness of devas and men. Let not two of you go on one way. Monks, teach the Dhamma, which is lovely at the

³⁵Interview with The most venerable Bhaddanta, Nandasara (Aggamahbannida), Middle Pariyyati monastery, Kayik Kami Town, Mon State, November 11, 2017.

³⁶ Mauric Walshe, **The long Discourses of the Buddha**,(Digha-Nikaya), (Trans.) (Boston: Wisdom publication, 1995), p.467.

beginning, lovely in the middle, lovely at the end. Explain the spirit and the letter the holy life completely fulfilled wholly pure.

This is the way of the social Activities for the monks to perform to the lay society since the beginning of the time of the lord Buddha. According to the mainstream of the modern life, the modern society is different from ancient time. The Mon Sangha monk has been limits their holy life to educational activities. So that The Mon Monks today have taken a heavy duty part of their educational activities in various ways because the monks are the leader of the Mon national and, the leader of the educational activities and the due to the lack of the governor of the Mon National State government or State self-determination. Monks are carrying on this duty different way and different contributions.

Now, The Ramañña Nikaya Monks in lower Burma are not particular. They have a very large role in the educational activates of their nation. In Mon Society, the monks are considered as the leader of the nation. Mon in lower Burma underwent serious crisis and difficulties to maintain their culture and literature because the Government oppressed them several ways since independence, and in particular over the past twenty years, a significant proportion of the Burmese Mon population has been forced to seek shelter in the mountains and jungle of the border regions. Those living in the small NMSP – controlled ‘liberated zones’ survive largely on swidden rice cultivation.³⁷ Therefore, Mon Monks became a refuge for the Mon people compatriots. The monks are the educational teachers. They teach and train both Mon language and patriot regarding to the history of Mon Buddhism.

The Mon monks have authority only with the Mon laypeople not to the Burmese people anyway. The monks are considered as a religious leader and spiritual life of Buddhist followers. Almost all Mon monks must have to preach Mon Dhamma anyway being a long life as a monkhood and also they have to teach the children as well as culture, literature, and the principle of the history of Mon Buddhism. The problem is most Mon people cannot read and write if the Mon Buddhism monks cannot teach. Although there are many Burmese government

³⁷Mr Ashley South, **Mon Nationalism and Civil War in Burma: The Golden Sheldrake**, (Great Britain: RoutledgeCurzon Publisher, 2003), p. 58.

schools in every village and province and Mon children have not rule to learn their mother tongue language Teaching at Burmese School. The case is Burmese government are not allowed ethnic minority language to influence in society. So that during summer, Mon monks in Monastery have to open summer Mon Language School with limit period as a month. To preserve the Mon culture for next decade even the present time, the monks are essential of their life and their generations. Without Mon monks, Mon laypeople are not able to survive and preserve the Mon culture. That's why for many of Mon younger generation, involvement in social life is unavoidable because of their importance in their community and numerous duties that they are in charge of.

There are some proverbs hearing that the monks are giving suggestion firmly to the Mon youth new generation when they teach to the children in summer School. "If the Mon language disappear right now so as the Mon people will disappear." The whole Mon people in National day is allowed to show culture and preaching about the ancient of the Mon History as well as Mon Summer. Mon Summer School is the foundation of Mon existence of people. Mon Summer School run by Mon monks in Monastery in lower Burma because lay people are busy for social life and earning a low salary to support their child to go to government school. Regarding to the time and limit period. Mon people can develop their native language and culture slowly in modern life. The Mon children can understand how to communicate to the monks and how to pay homage to the Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha and teacher taught by Mon monks. If so, Mon children can maintain for next generation to preserve Mon culture and language. For that reason, the teaching of the Buddha and the respect of the Monks has strongly influenced in their society and mind. The monks teach only Mon language and Mon history of Buddhism according to the old traditional culture. Nowadays, in Modern time, Majority Mon monasteries extend English Subject one to persuade more and more Mon children to come to learn in Monasteries. For being a noble Mon Monk-hood teaching Mon literature and preaching Dhamma talk are very respectful and very important for their cultural identity.³⁸ The monks could use different languages and methods

³⁸ Interview with The Most Venerable Bhadanta silācāra, (Aggamahāpaṇḍita), (Second level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization), Auk Pegu monastery, Mon State, November 10, 2017.

in dealing with non-religious affairs. They attain high quality education from the Buddha's teaching for years. They serve for the best interest of the nation, the people and peace to end the suffering of all human being.

The monks understood the concept of social and political conflicts in the country. Mon monks have been maintaining the Buddhist institution for over two thousand years in Mon kingdom despite the plight of past and present political crisis. The role of the monks in social, political and religious affairs cannot be separated for a Mon nation building purpose. The monks guide the people for community harmony and social cohesion.

Historically, the Burmese troop killed countless number of Mon civilian and royal families during the invasion of Pegu, the last Mon capital in 1757. The Mon people never forgot to this plight. However, after over two hundred years of struggling, the Mon leaders wish to live in peace under a new model of political system. The Mon monk leaders call for formation of a "Federal Union" with a guarantee on the constitution for bill of rights and the rights of ethnic people and their states. But, the most visible in modern politics than a long terms conflicts between Burmese and non-Burmese ethnicity in half the 19th century. The conflict between the Burmese' people and Mon are still not disappearing in the heart and mind of the victims.

Democracy in the parliamentary system does not make a democratic government or Federation.³⁹ For this reason and matter there were people who have suffered for different types of problems in societies from entire country for over seven decades. The main parts of my philosophy are freedom and equality, but unrestrained freedom destroys equality while freedom cannot grow in pure equality. Because Minorities was not given rights rather they have been treated unfairly in the country. Social equality and democracy, these two words are very close and have good connection. Here, democracy is the first important thing to achieve or establish for social equality. There must be democracy

³⁹ Chitkara M.G., **Dr. Ambedkar & Social Justice**, (New Delhi: Efficient Offset Printers, 2002), p.75-76.

in the political system. If not, “democratization process remains meaningless in case Minorities are not empowered equally⁴⁰.”

3.3 Concluding Remark

In chapter three, we analyze the characteristic and practice of Mon Rammanya nikaya. To see them in details, the following five factors will be summarized.

King Activietis: From the 1420s to the 1530s, Hanthawaddy was the most powerful and prosperous kingdom of all post-pagan kingdoms. Under a string of gifted monarchs, Mi Bannya Htaw (Shin Sawbu in Burmese), Dhammaceti and Binnya Ran II, the kingdom enjoyed a long golden age, both trading foreign commerce and Buddhism. The kingdom also became a famous center of Theravada Buddhism in his regime. It established strong ties with Ceylon, and encouraged reforms that later spread throughout the country. The Buddhism was very strong and purified by the king. The monk also followed the Vinaya very strictly after reforming the purification of the Mon Sangha Ramanayadesa. In 1979, the minister of the interior and Religion requested a large number of abbots to prepare a general Sangha conference. The general conference of the Sangha took place from 24 to 27 May 1980 in the cave near the Kaba-Aye pagoda in Rangoon where the Sixth Buddhist Council had taken place in 1956. the following decades Mon Buddhism in Mon State decline under the pressure of the ministry religious Affairs and political policy.

Due to lack of economic and conflict of civil war, Mon Buddhism monk could not develop and propagate for the teaching of the Buddha in many decades. Meanwhile, the Mon monks play a great role in preaching dhamma to aboard for the Mon immigration and building monastery in various countries around the world where the Mon immigration work and live. Mon laypeople carry on a big duty to support for the Mon Buddhism wherever they are to aim the charity for the better of life in next existences.

⁴⁰ Swapan Kumar Biswas, **Gods, False-Gods And the Untouchables**, (Delhi: Nav Prabhat Printing Press, 1998-1999), p. 316.

Chapter IV

The Trend of the Roles Rāmañña Nikāya in The Next Decade in Mon State

Buddhism is indeed flourished into the hand of Mon People since the time of the lord Buddha. When we analyze the influence of Buddhism in Mon society, we can see that Mon monks and the laypeople have enjoyed mutually good relationships for over century. But Mon, as a strongest Buddhism respect have to face three periods under the colonial period, under the Burmese kingdom and under the military rule regime. So Mon Buddhism has to struggle and promote Buddhism various ways. Monks have played an important role as a leader to the Mon community for Mon literature.

The first monks arrived to the lower lands of Burma (as known as Remonyadeca) in early 500 BC, or after the eight years of the Buddha's enlightenment to Suvanabhumi, the golden land of the people in the lower lands of current Burma. The Mon kings and royal families offered alms food to the Buddha and his follower monks. Nine hundred years after the Buddha's passing, the first Mon and Pali text was translated for the students of the Buddha's dhamma or monks. According to Rev. Palita, a Mon monk scholar and historian, Mahathera Buddhagosa was the first student monk whom learned the Pariyatti text from Sri Lanka. he returned to Remonyadeca, the capital city of the Mon people when he wrote the text from Pali (Magadha text) to Mon language. The teachings of the Buddha was formally offered to the monks and laypeople in early 7th A.D¹

4.1 Role of Rāmañña Nikāya Buddhism in Mon State

The Monasteries under the operation of Rāmañña Nikāya Sangha committee has already established over (729) monasteries and 6965 monks and novices according to the census, 99. % Of the Mon Population

¹ Nai Banya Hongsar, **Buddhist Monks' Role in Burma's National Reconciliation**, (2010): Retrieved on 18 December 2017, <http://monnews.org/2010/11/01/buddhist-monks.html>.

defined themselves as Buddhist, all belonging to the Mon laypeople community. 9% of the Mon population was Christian belonging to the Christian community. Rāmañña Nikāya Buddhist monasteries were established by Mon laypeople. All Rāmañña Nikāya monasteries give the name of the Mon language at the top of gate entrance of the Monastery, which are written into two languages Mon, and Burmese with symbol of the Hongsā bird.

The all Rāmañña Nikāya Sangha has operated the Pariyatti monasteries and Dhammacariya Examination for those who have passed the highest degree examination in Rāmañña Nikāya and wish to qualify for teachership in the Dhamma. Such Examination centers runs and leads only by Mon Sangha Committee and Mon laypeople. There was an interruption of years (1984) during the last war. Mon Sangha committee established Mon Examination hall in near Kyaik Samlam Pagoda. But Mon Dhammacariya Examination was resumed and got permission from the military government of Burma to take Examination in Kaba Aye cave with the agreement of ceasefire (MNSP) Mon New State Party in (1998).

New Rāmañña Rattha Buddhist University is proposed to open in the future soon where is situated in Mon State lower Burma established by venerable Silasara April 26 in 2012.² Present Roles of Rāmañña Nikāya Buddhism has been providing Buddhist education for Mon Young Novices and Monks since 1915. Until now, In Mon Rāmañña Nikāya lower Burma, Some of monasteries can be established three kinds of monasteries according to the Role of Mon Sangha Committee rule and regulation. The highest monastery praised by laypeople is Pariyatti monastery, which is struggling to develop and promote the teaching of the Buddha. In spite of limited manpower and resources, the Mon monk has played a role of immense significance to spread Buddhism throughout the Mon State and upper Burma especially in Rangoon. After National League Democratic Party (NLD) reform from 2010, until the present day, Myanmar authorities follow the same as the past regarding to control over the order Sangha. Mon Sangha still has being oppressed under the Democratic Party (NLD) such as promotion of Buddhist

² Min Htit, **Mon State's new University offers Diploma in Buddhism**, (2016): Retrieved on 22 December 2017, <http://monnews.org/2016/06/11/ramonnyarattha.html>.

Teaching Summer School in the Monastery. The present role in Rāmañña Nikāya Buddhism is struggled to teach to the Mon laypeople and to live harmony with Mon monk community with humble mental and psychical. Looking back on the history of Mon based on the teaching of the Buddha, one can see clearly the role of the Mon monk in Mon society. To preserve Mon language and culture to be alive generation to generation, this is essential and important the role from the monk to carry on duty and turn. To promote the Mon Buddhist monk's traditional role in the propagation of Buddhism and social welfare, the Mon Buddhist Rāmañña Nikāya Organization has set up the rule and order for the Mon laypeople. According to the custom of Mon traditional giving five precepts, Mon traditional customs give the sample of the followings start from the meaning of the Yodoso, not to mix with Burmese language based on the Dhamma such as:

1) The pañca-sīla (five Precepts):

- (1) To abstain from killing
- (2) To abstain from stealing
- (3) To abstain from sexual misconduct
- (4) To abstain from false speech
- (5) To abstain from intoxicants causing heedlessness.

Apart from the precepts, the following three factors are important to teach for being a monk: (1) Mon must to learn Mon language (2) Mon must to wear Mon traditional wearing uniform when perform some festival or ceremony, (3) Mon must follow mon culture and traditional.³ One of the most important things in Mon community is to understand and to write Mon language in society taught by Monk. Apart from this one is not too serious matter. Mon ethnic people cannot survive without Mon literature. So Mon village must to have Mon monastery in order to teach and promote Mon literature for Mon community in each village. Also Mon community is strict five precepts for one day in a week when they come to the monastery apart from their activities at home and social work. The five precepts, which every one knows by rote, are of course

³Interview with The most venerable Bhadanta, silācāra, Aggamahāpaṇḍita, (Second leader of Ramañña Nikāya Organization), November 10, 2017.

linked to the ideas of kusalar (good deed) and akakusalar (bad deed). Mon and laypeople obtain side by side each other to have harmony in society.

4.2 Trend of Role in Next Decade

The Mons is facing many over seven decades what many consider ‘cultural’ genocide as well. The objective is to dilute their ethnicity and convert them to Burmese. Mon language is forbidden in schools, and the number of Burma Army troops are actively encouraged to marry local Mon women and young generation more and more because Schools are all in Burmese and we are not even allowed to teach Mon language literature and Buddhist literature as a subject. Only in some areas control zone from Mon New State Party (MNSP) area can open for local children. The regime is trying to kill the Mon language and cultural. the majority and minority populations are separated from each other, and Mon feel weak and unsafe because Mon Rāmañña Nikāya Sangha is not recognized.

4.2.1 Trends of Role in Government

After the fall of the socialist government and the takeover by the military junta in 1990s⁴, Monks continued to play a critical role in protesting against social injustices. The Buddhist monks are called for human life to be best enhanced, the ruler must understand his role in instituting peace and stability in the country. The Burmese military junta was involved contemporary Burmese politics from 1962 onwards. After enjoying fourteen years of democratic governance upon independence from the British in 1948, the military–run government supported the official policy of the Burmese Way to Socialism. The country becomes civil war until now without compassion and all inclusiveness in governance. In the past, the government target Mon Buddhist monk not to teach and open Mon literature. But, in the present, the government target to the Mon young children generation to limit time not to learn and study

⁴ Kyaw Yin Hlaing, **The State of the Pro-Democracy Movement in Authoritarian Burma**, East-West Center Washington Working Papers (2007); p. 19.

Mon literature and Mon Buddhist literature from the summer school in the monastery.⁵

The monks are a powerful categorization their esteemed position and provides another dimension of respect. The tight political control of the military regime towards the monastic order also provided another cause of dissatisfaction towards the government. Recognizing only nine Sanghas that has existed since pre-colonial days and banning the others, established monks who had contributed to the development of Buddhism in Burma become more distant from the ruling elite. Burmese Buddhist monks and monasteries received generous state funding from 1948 to 1962. Mon Buddhist monks and monasteries are dependent on the Mon people for alms and support without receiving from the government fund. Mon Buddhism therefore has been associated with nation building, nationalist movements.

Mon Buddhist in Mon State depends on Mon Buddhist monks for legitimacy. Mon Buddhism in Mon State symbolizes the moral and social order. As the guardian of sacred learning and literature as well as educators of the youth garner great respect from the Mon Buddhist society. Though the monastic experience, monks have a disciples originate from various backgrounds. ⁶Even though the new constitution alone gave the military a guaranteed place at the center of government, the regime was determined not to allow any loopholes through which freedom could inadvertently emerge.⁷ The Mon is facing what many consider 'cultural' genocide as well. The Mon language is forbidden in schools, and the numbers of Burmese teachers and people have increased significantly. 'The regime is trying to assimilate Mon State,' Schools are all in Burmese and Mon are not even allowed to teach Mon language as a subject. The constitution does not benefit to the ethnic Mon people because Mon State is currently run by an elected non-Mon Government.

⁵ Interview with the most venerable Sila Vanta, (Hongsa Htaw monastery), Zabu Township, Mon State, November 13, 2017.

⁶ Phra Seng Hurng, Dr. **Trend of Sangha's Administration in the Union of Myanmar in the Next Decade**, Research Report, Research Project Funded by Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, B.E. 2556), p.61.

⁷ Benedict Rogers, **Burma A Nation at the Crossroads**, (London: Sydney, Auckland, Johannesburg, 2012), p.211

The Mon State Government should be representing the interests of the entire population regardless of race, religion and ethnicity.

The Mon Revolution Party and Sangha has appealed to Mon Buddhist people to contribute actively to review the spirit of patriotic unity, to encourage the population to active Mon cultural and literature growth, to help the people in their education in order to raise their cultural level and contribute to persuading, educating and correcting those who take the wrong path who do not behave properly so that they may become a good Mon nationality with great dignity, Mon Buddhist monks have been invited to attend Mon National Day and Mon Youth Day since 1948. Especially in the countryside in Mon State, the effect of the Mon Buddhist monks is very great and powerful. In order to gain for a genuine federal democratic union, it is essential the Mon people have to listen to the concerns of the local Mon monks, regardless of how powerful it is. Unity and prosperity are the foundation of Mon goal to reach the peace and freedom of fear from suffering, the attainment of true happiness. a person who uses Dhamma to develop his character through good speech and action can be achieved real freedom. Propagation Mon Buddhism and Mon literature are based on the Mon party and Mon Sangha unity of the their society.⁸Any problem can face and take over from any danger.

4.2.2 Trends of Role Activity of Dharma Talk Mon People

Five monks, his first disciple, in the Deer Park near Bārānasī, in intended to sketch the special features of the Buddha's teaching, and by implication, the attitude with which a prospective student should approach the teaching. The texts tell us that the Dhamma is not a secret or esoteric teaching but one, which shines when taught openly. It does not demand blind faith in authoritarian scriptures, in divine revelations, or infallible dogmas, but invites investigation and appeals to personal experience as the ultimate criterion for determining its validity. The

⁸ Interview with The Most Venerable zawdi (First level of Ramañña Nikāya Sangha Organization), Middle Monastery, Zabu Township, Mon State, November 9, 2017.

teaching is concerned in one's own experience. "Sabbha danam Dhamma danam Chinati"" The Gift of the Dhamma (Truth) excels all other gifts. "⁹

By performing Dhamma dissemination for social welfare and for the benefits of others, lay-people will be happy, pleased, thankful and grateful because they receive social and religious benefits from Dhamma disseminator. Moreover, Dhamma disseminators must have intellectual vision and clever to plan their missionary works to society in order to make lay-people more interested in their propagation of the Dhamma. Especially, they should have wisdom and compassion in their dissemination of the Buddhist doctrine. When planning their missionary of Dhamma to society. It is the ability to design, estimate, construct, and run the project, evaluate the results and make corrects when it is ineffective. When the Dhamma disseminators have these good feel in the heart, one will be able to actually feel others sufferings, difficult and needed in their own hearts. So, the Dhamma disseminators have to intellectual wisdom to judge in giving a Dhamma talk according to their need with compassion, loving-kindness. By having Dhamma wisdom and compassion on an equal level, we as Dhamma disseminators will be able to intellectually and compassionately look at all difficulties and sufferings. After the Buddha passed away, Buddhist monks play important roles as Dhamma disseminators to preserve and spread the Buddha's teaching to maintain peace and harmony among the Mon Society.

At the modern time, since the lack of industrial development and social change in Mon State, such Mon younger people have no prejudice against the study of Dhamma but they consider that other aspects of economic development are more important. Those things effect so many problems in Mon Society for dissemination the Dhamma talk. The number of the younger people has immigrated to such as Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea, Japan and Thailand in order to fulfill their life for their family because of the lack of economic opportunities had led them away from Dhamm listening. Majority of Mon people migrate to work

⁹Somdej Phra Yanasangvorn Somdej Phra Sangharaja, **The method of gaining the merit from Dana, Sila, and Bhavana**, <http://thanhsiang.org/en/way-buddhist-practice-dana-sila-and-bhavana.html>, retrieved on January 25, 2018.

aboard.¹⁰ A least one household member is working overseas. There is therefore sadly say one of the most important of facing obstacle of Dhamma talk. And one more thing is that they are away from Buddhist home and lead to lack of hearing Dhamma talk from the Monks as they are in foreign country. Such thing to deliver Dhamma talk to them is more difficult than they used to live in their native hometown. But the monk received more much funds from oversea workers such as Thailand.

Thai temples are also influence fund from the oversea Mon worker such as building Pagodas decoration and preparation intending to get merit from the monks. The role of the Dhamma talk at temples in Mahachai are always the most successful for Mon missionary monk and for those who study in Thailand in Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University receive supporting from Mon oversea workers. According to preaching way of Dhamma talk to the laypeople, the Mon monks preach normally the topic that they recite from heart and memorizing. And also they do not have discussion with the lay Dhamma listener to give a clear for those who came from local place do not understand the literature. They have no discussion with and they have some doubtful meaning in their mind. So discussion is also very important to solve the doubtful mind from delusion.

To ensure perfect safety each Dharma talker should be fully discussion and explanation regarding to laypeople that has little knowledge and experience. The Mon monks gave Dhamma talks sitting on a Dhamma seat. The audience sits under the ground. As result of that, it makes it respectful to the monks and to the audience. But it started from many generation to generation until to present day. To be perfected in Dhamma talk, it should be added one of the three principles of Buddhist activities which means “Dhammasākacchā”¹¹ having doctrinal discussions. They need to discuss and clarify the doubts with the monks who give the Dhamma Talks. On the other hand, Mon Buddhist people

¹⁰ p. Soe Nandar Linn, **A Pilot Study on the Characteristics of Migrant-Sending Households in Southern Mon State of Myanmar**, (Research Associate, October, 2011), p. 15.

¹¹ Ven. Husen Dhammahuto. M.A. **The Buddhist Monks' Roles in Propagating Buddhism in Indonesia**, Thesis Master of Arts (Buddhist Studies), Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Bangkok, Thailand, 2013.p.90

have less time and less economic their daily life in order to practice of Dhamma and meditation in modern time. Therefore most Monk gave the Dhamma talk without having discussion and lay people have some doubt. Generally speaking, Delivering Dhamma aims at training human beings to liberate from suffering hearted and delusion.

4.2.3 Trends of Role Sangha Administration of Mon Buddhism

In Mon history the ruler was always the main supporter and propagator of religion, responsible for its maintenance and purity. Sangha enjoyed the king's protection and served him with religious instructions. One case is well known where a monk became king in Mon history (Dhamazedi 1453-1472), chosen for his wisdom by queen Shin Saw Pu (1453-1472) as her successor to the throne. Kings and Sangha were dependent on each other balancing each other with mutual respect.¹² Under the British colonial, Sanga Administration of Mon Buddhism did not grant the traditional protection. But it was free from pressure and worked it own according to human colonial policy because British provided much assistance in securing a job and favour with colonizers.¹³ Under the military reform to step forward democracy, Mon Buddhist were oppressed and banned Mon literature to study in monasteries in almost every village and town throughout the Mon State and Rangoon.

In (B.E.1954), the Burmese government in cooperation with the Burmese Sangha invited representatives of all neighboring Buddhist countries and Buddhist groups in various places to participate in the Sixth Great Council.¹⁴ In order to hold the Multi-Sects Sangha, Mon Buddhist Sangha Association became under the Burmese Sangha Mahā Nāyaka Committee in 1980. So that Mon Buddhism Sangha Association in Rāmañña Nikāya does not grant for financial Aids for Religions. Due to

¹² Nai Pan Hla, **Myanmar Encyclopedia** Vol.11 p. 352-358.

¹³ Phra Seng Hurng, Dr. **Trend of Sangha's Administration in the Union of Myanmar in the Next Decade**, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, International Relations Division, Rector Office, 2556. p.40.

¹⁴ Phra Brahmaganabhorn, (P.A. Payutto), **Thai Buddhism in the Buddhist World, A survey of the Buddhist Situation Against a Historical Background**, (Bangkok: Mahachulalongkorn Alumni Association, 205), p.41.

supporting from Mon Buddhist laypeople and overseas worker throughout the country, Rāmañña Nikāya continue to exist until now. There are 47 Sangha Mahanayakas in Burmese sangha society. Most of them have to follow by the rule of Sangha Mahanayaka too. Adherents are most found among the dominant ethnic Shan, Rakhine, and Mon.

According to Mon Sangha statement there are 99% present Buddhist in Burma. Mon Sangha community has the largest population among Mon State. The education offered by the monks in all levels was free of charge. Classes were held when it suited the teacher-monk and pupil. Monks taught Priyyatti schools following the Mon version tipitak as Burmese texts, which provided only to take Examination from the government. Nowadays Mon Sangha established themselves for Mon Sangha examination Hell in Mon State. The objective of the Sangha is to keep Mon Buddhist people kindly to over Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha, Parents and teacher. The Buddha laid down principle of the teaching to deliver the laypeople to guide them for their society.

4.2.4 Trend of Role Ramañña Nikāya with Thailand, Siri Lanka, Cambodia and Lao

When we look at the history of King Mongkut his trend of study in Buddhism, he lay down the modern trend of the study of Buddhism as follows: one should not attach to the traditional beliefs but should hold true doctrines as disciplines (dhamma-vinaya) instead. One should always keep reviewing one's belief all the time. He also laid down for the monks that they should not limit their study to their religion alone, but expand it to encompass other religions as well. Based on his trend of study, most Mon monks came to study in Thailand because he further compared Thai practice with they way Mon and Burmese monks practiced those same disciplines. Once he was convinced that the practices of Mon monks were the most accurate in comparison to the principles in the scripture of discipline, he then followed the practices of these Mon monks.¹⁵ Later when King Mongkut became familiar with Sri

¹⁵ Phra Dr. Anil Dhammasakiyo (Sakya) **A Modern Trend of Study of Buddhism in Thailand: King Mongkut and Dhammayutikanikāya**, p. 34.

Lankan monks he studied and compared their practices with those of the Mon monks. He found that some of the practices of the Mon monks were erroneous e.g. the Pāli pronunciation. Similarly, some of the practices of the Sri Lankan monks were incorrect relative to the discipline of the scriptures. King Mongkut's study did not stop there. He further studied many other languages namely Latin, English, Khmer, Malayu, Mon, Burmese, Vitenamese, and Hindi as well as modern sciences. And then King Mongkut viewed Buddhists differently. He became more open and receptive than other contemporary scholars.

Similarly, when Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalay University open for international faculty of Buddhism in English Major, we all have a chance to exchange traditional and study each other in this university. We all can view what are difference and what are wrong according to traditionally. We could review when we see and discuss each other. But if one finds that it is inaccurate and against the principle of true doctrines and disciplines of the Buddha then one should give it up. He also laid down the trend of study of Dhammayut monks that they should not limit their study of their religion alone, but expand it to encompass other religions as well. So as Mon monks who came to study in Thailand, Cambodia, Lao, Vietnam and Nepal, They all communicate international language. This trend is similar to King Mongkut as he laid down the trend of study for his monks.

4.3 The Impact of the Trend of Roles in Rāmañña Nikāya In Mon State

Buddhism is introduction to the two Mon merchants from Ukkala¹⁶ since the time of the Buddha come out of seven weeks of meditation after his awakening. Shwedagon Pagoda is the significant symbol for Mon generation. After the independent from the British rule in lower Burma in Mon State, Mon Buddhism was not developed so much at that time even though the constitution (2008) of military of government Burmese was

¹⁶ Roger Bischoff, **Buddhism in Myanmar A Short History**, (Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, 1996), p. 18.

¹⁴³ Mr Ashley South, **Mon Nationalism and civil War in Burma: The Golden Sheldrake**, (U.S.A., Routledge, 2013). p. 37.

affected as a present time. Mon Buddhist Monk teach to the Mon people to have gentle mind and respectful to the Sangha in order to preserve culture and literature with dignity not to have religious discrimination nor have Literature and culture are impacts to have better life and in society based on federal system reform from the military junta.

Language and cultural considerations were particularly important for Mon ethnic communities. The impact of the literacy campaign has in part been due to its association with the prestigious Mon Sangha. “no matter how strong the external forces pushing for the decline of the Mon language are, it is the internal forces within the community- its spirit and determination that is crucial for stemming the decline.” Unless local people are involved with the preservation and propagation of their language and culture, Since 1995, groups such as the Mon Literature and Culture Committee (MLCC) and the Association for Summer Mon Literature and Buddhist Teaching Training have been at the forefront of a drive to expand and consolidate the Mon language skills, and thereby the cultural and historical awareness, of the Mon community in Burma. Since the mid-90s: by 2001, the NMSP Education Department was running 148 National Schools and teaching some 51,000 children by 917 teachers.¹⁷

Mon National Day has been celebrated since 1990s by exiles in North American and Australia. Mon National Day is still an occasion for the display of Mon strength and unity, and a stimulus to linguistic and cultural revival. Traditionally Mon have celebrated the founding of Mon Nation on the first Waning of Mide, a Mon lunar date, which happens to fall this year on 12th February. Mon National day commemorates the inception of the Mon kingdom, Hongsawadie, founded in 825 AD by two brothers, Samala and Vimala, in what is now called Pegu, in Lower Burma. On this auspicious day, may all Mon people be blessed with physical and mental health. Mon Buddhism is still severely oppressed under the ruling of dictatorship, SPDC and had been deprived of our fundamental rights, the rights of self-determination. On another hand, now Mon people have limited land and small population. In 1974, general Ne win shared a small land to recognize Mon State as for

majority of Mon people residence in Mon State. They are trying to completely using up Mon resources.¹⁸

4.4 Conclusion Remarks

Ramañña Nikāya is known as development of Buddhism in Mon State for Mon people. Their objective is not only the study of the teaching of the Buddha but also promoting Mon culture and Mon literature for Mon Buddhist People so long ago. It is very famous among the Siri Lanka Sangha Organization which mean that they also came to do re-ordination in Semi boundary built by Mon King Dhammazedī in Pegu (Hongsawadie). Ramañña Nikāya has a great role in the Mon Society both young generation and young Monk generation to spread Mon Buddhist literature and Mon history of tipitak translation. In Mon State, Mon young generation have only three month holidays in summer to allow teaching Mon language and Mon history of Buddhism in the monastery.

At present, Mon Ramañña Nikāya Sangha Organization has been running both Pariyatti literature and patipatti meditation to develop the teaching of the Buddha Mon language even though they the military religious affair do not recognize until the present time. Ramañña Nikāya Sangha Organization has been opening over (729) monasteries and 8000 monks around the country. Especially most of the monastery build in Mon state and Yangon. It has been more than seventy years since the colonial period and Burmese Sangha does not recognize Ramañña Nikāya Sangha Organization. Thousands of Buddhist monks come to the Mon State capital of Moulmein every year to take the annual Ramonnya Nikarya exam, which is held at the Sarsana 2500 monastery. According to Mon historical records, the Rehmonnya Nikarya [Association] was founded in the year 2406 of the Sarsana/Buddhist Calendar (1863 in the Gregorian Calendar) in Pegu City in what was then known as Rehmonnya Land.

¹⁸Interview with The Most Venerable Bhadanta, silācāra, (Aggamahāpaṇḍita), (Second level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization), Auk Pegu monastery, Mon State, November 10, 2017.

In 2012, Mon Ramañña Nikāya Sangha Organization also established and offering post-dipiloma for 2 years course in RamaññaRattha Buddhist University in Mon State. It is benefit for Monks who has finished University from India, Siri Lanka and Thailand in order to promote Buddhist teaching in Mon Land. In my opinion, Burma as a strong Buddhist country, they should help and support to Ramañña Nikāya Organization as a member of them to develop true Theravada

1. It should be recognized by the government as a member of the nine Nikāyas.

2. Should not be prohibited to open more Mon National School in public for Mon ethnic group.

3. Should provide funds to Mon ethnic teaching language

4. Should have equal statue with all ethnic groups without discrimination to develop their own religious affairs.

For that reason, Ramañña Nikāya Organization must be demanded to the government these obstacles to overcome however it happens any period. If the government understand and solve these problems of discrimination and neglect from Mon Sangha, Mon Nation in Buddhism in Lower Burma can spread more than present time in the next decade.

Chapter V

Conclusion and Suggestions

5.1 Conclusion

As we have seen objective of Research in the chapters II, in this research is found the history of Mon Theravā Buddhism three Period Before Pagan Buddhism, during Pagan Buddhism and after Pagan Buddhism. The first historical events of Mon Buddhism in Burma has helped us to recognize that there is strong evidence Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon according to stone in scripture. Later on Ramañña Nikāya was introduced and appeared in Mon Buddhism history since the third century BC When Sona and Uttara Theras preached Phramajala Sutta in Thaton. Symbol created by Sona and Uttara Theras are the Manussiha, the man-lion mythical creature. Its name is a blend of two Pali words. The first manussa, means a human being. And the second siha is a lion. The Burmese Theravā came into power Pagan period influenced by Mon both cultures and architecture such as Pagoda styles.

Of Pagoda and stone scriptures give clear evidence that Mon Buddhist flourished well how long it has been. All this evidence leads Mon Buddhist to believe from generation to generation, as well as western scholar countries have claimed that Mon influence of Buddhism flourished and developed neighbor countries such as Thailand and Burma before they lost their kingdom and country. A great Mon kingdom, Dhammazedī reformed Sangha and became very famous in Buddhism who sent 20 monks to Siri Lanka. And also that he built many semas (boundary ordination) Both Ramaññadesa and Siri Lanka countries had a strong Buddhism a close relationship in ancient time. As a result Mon Buddhism directly received the hair of relic from the Buddha. This has made Mon Buddhism follower in a deep root in the Mon Community. This Research Chapter II gave different periods, which are the before Pagan, during the pagan and after the pagan. Mon Buddhism almost were killed and taken to Pagan with Burmese king. Such this story is almost destroyed Mon Buddhism and Mon Nation's culture.

According to my research in chapter III, I found that the role and Ramañña Nikāya have changed some different periods of history. In the beginning, the Sangha had prominent roles Education and culture under the

control of British colonial period. Ramañña Nikāya Sangha Organization had not influenced with Burmese Sangha Organization. Due to this situations and problem, Burmese Organization do not claim that Ramañña Nikāya Organization to be officially into to nine Nikāyas. Therefore, Ramañña Nikāya Sangha caused to develop Buddhism and have a bad relationship with the central Sangha committee. Ramañña Nikāya Sangha Organization proposed to the central religious Affairs several decades to be a member of the Sangha central committee. However, they refused to accept Nikāya anymore apart from nine groups.

Over seven decades of internal conflict under the military regime, Mon Buddhist Monks could not produce so many scholars. Mon monks and novices hardly studied in the monastery and aboard. Buddhism survives living with fear of freedom and without development under the military government through the country to reform in 2011. New Mon State Party (NMSP), monks and lay people recovered the Buddhism its origin again from all Mon societies. But the government military still holds authority and limit to propagate Buddhist literature Mon culture. Ramañña Nikāya Organization still cooperates and rely fund with the Mon Buddhist organization until the present day. Ramañña Nikāya Organization was re-established new building and new Ramañña Rattha Buddhist University.

Mon Buddhism education system is similar to Burmese apart from difference language and culture. Mon Buddhist education is very prominent comparing with another sub-group minority. Ramañña Nikāya Organization runs its own private Dhammacariya Examination since the government does not recognize over 40 years now. The levels of Mon Buddhist education system for Mon monks are five levels, primary level, secondary level, middle level, high level and Dhammācariya levels which are taught by Mon monks and Mon language in Pariyatti (Buddhist scriptures) Monasteries as well as nuns. The operation and finance rely heavily on donations and collaboration from Mon public society. There were almost eight hundred (800) monasteries including oversea monasteries. Each year take place Mon Examination run by Ramañña Nikāya Organization.

Ramañña Nikāya Organization is practiced in accordance with the Vinaya and Dhamma from the origin of the teaching of the Buddha based on the culture and literature. The propagation of Buddhism was slowly developed due to civil war and lack of jobless people to practice and give

supporting to the Sangha to train them in charity, morality and meditation. The lay people hardly donate to the monastery in the case of poor condition economic system. Civil war never end and constitution has been changed every president without freedom of religious propagation from the military.

Mon Buddhist monk face several decades to do missionary work around the Mon Society. Mon Buddhism has played difficult role in Buddhist literature and culture from former times until to present period. Due to its opportunity, the Mon monks who have finished studying aboard could not teach and work missionary with the central of the religious Affairs from Burma. Therefore, Most Buddhist texts were designed and translated into to Mon version from the Tipitaka to hold Examination by its self. Buddhism has been a major of the country in Mon State since the time of the Buddha introduce to Mon people for many centuries, and Buddhism has played a great role in Buddhist literature and social Mon ethnic group. Mon Buddhism and Burmese Buddhism are incomparable each other from the many centuries until to the present time which is related evidence. But Mon society for the future seems overshadowed by stress at many levels.

5.2 Suggestions for Further Researches

This research work is a The Trend of the Role of Rāmañña Nikāya in the Next Decade in Mon State. Rāmañña Nikāya still exists and practiced with a small community from the Mon ethnic minority group. There are over eight hundreds and seven thousands Mon Buddhist monks in Mon State as well as aboard. Therefore, it is necessary to research on this topic for next step. Apart from Ramañña Nikāya, there is another Nikāya, which recognize by the government and respected by Mon people too. They form as a dhammyu Nikaya in Thailand without accepting financial matter. However, the coverage of the Role of Rāmañña Nikāya Buddhism presented withis this research work quite enough information for studying about this research. Whenever Rāmañña Nikāya exist, Mon Buddhist civilization exists too. In Sum, after studying about Rāmañña Nikāya in Mon State, it is evidence that Buddhism in Mon State is present the Mon community since the Mon Empire demise from the hand of Burmese civilization up to present day.

I have seen a new more Nikāya for further research. So, I would like to suggest for further research Nikāya Organization in Mon State lower Burma as follows:

- 1) A Historical study of Dhammnyut Nikaya Buddhism its origin and development in Mon State.
- 2) A comparative study of Dhammanyut Nikaya and Rāmañña Nikāya in Mon Buddhism
- 3) An analytical study of Mon Buddhism and politics under the military reform period.

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Interview

1. The Most Venerable Zawdi, (First level of Rāmañña Nikāya Sangha Organization), Middle Monastery, Zabu Township, Mon State. Interview. November 9, 2017.
2. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta Uttara, (Second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization) Krena Village, Krena Monastery, Mon State. Interview. November 9, 2017.
3. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta silācāra, Aggamahāpaṇḍita, (Second level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization), Auk Pegu monastery, Mon State. Interview. November 10, 2017.
4. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta phubbha Maha Thera, (Second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization), Kaban Htaw monastery, Mon State, Mon State. Interview. November 10, 2017.
5. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta Candobhāsa, (second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization), Pown Township, Mon State, Bhan neik Pagoda Monastery. Interview. November 11, 2017.
6. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta, Nandasara, (Aggamabannida), Middle Pariyyati Monastery, Kyaik kami Town, Mon State. Interview. November 11, 2017.
7. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta Kesara, (Aggamahāganthavācakapaṇḍita) Bowtawon Township, Yangon. Interview. November 12, 2017.
8. The most venerable Bhuppha Rama (pariyyiti wedi Monastery, Mon State. Interview. November 12, 2017.
9. The most venerable Ketumala (Kawpaline Village, Mon State. Interview. November 13, 2017.
10. The most venerable SilaVanta, Hongsa Htaw Monastery, Zabu Township, Mon State. Interview. November 13, 2017.

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Appendix I

Name list of interviewees

Intend to understand clearly about my research topic the trend of the role of Rāmañña Nikāya in the Next Decade in Mon State, I set up a program in order to interview Mon Ramañña Nikāya Sangha Organization with different chronicle experience and obstrical goal as their point of views from my questions. These interviews were collected specific answers clearly from the persons who could be answered crucial to the trend of this work. The various answers collected and analyzed to deal with questions that occurred during the research work. The following pages are the person's names that would answer as the research person recorded.

1. The Most Venerable zawdi (First level of Ramañña Nikāya Sangha Organization), 85 years old, Middle Monastery, Zabu Township, Mon State. On November 9, 2017.
2. Bhaddanta, Uttara, (Second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization) Krena Village, Mon State, On Novernmber 9, 2017.
3. Bhadanta, silācāra, Aggamahāpaṇḍita, (Second level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization) Auk Pegu monastery, Mon State, on November 10, 2017.
4. Bhaddanta, phubbha Maha Thera, (Second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization), Kaban Htaw monastery, Mon State. On November 10, 2017.
5. Bhaddanta, Candobhāsa (second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization), Pown Township, Mon State, Bhan neik Pagoda Monastery, On November 11, 2017.
6. Bhaddanta, Nandasara (Middle Pariyyati Monastery, Kyaik kami Town, Mon State, On November 11, 2017.
7. Bhaddanta, Kesara (Aggamahāganthavācakapaṇḍita) Bowtatown Monastery, Bowtatow Township, Yangoon. On November 12, 2017.

8. The most venerable Bhaddanta, Bhuppha Rama (pariyyti wedi Monastery), Mon State.

On November 12, 2017.

9. The most venerable Ketumala, (kyawpaline monastery), Kyawpaline Village, Mon State. On November 13, 2017.

10. The most venerable SilaVanta, 55 years old, Hongsa Htaw monastery, zabu Township, Mon State. On November 13, 2017.

Interviewed Questions

Q1. What do you know Fundamental Raman Nikaya in Mon State?

Q2. Please, tell the history of Mon as you understand?

Q3. What is the role of Buddhist monk and lay people in modern Mon State?

Q4. Do you think Mon Raman Nikaya have contribution to another country or around the world?

Q5. Any globalization cultures, ideas gives impact the Mon people and people around the world?

Q6. What do you think in the age of globalization?

Q7. What is the Buddhism for next decade in Mon state?

Q8. How the Mon Buddhism would be about in the next decade?

Q9. Do you think that Mon Buddhist is traditional or conservative Modernist?

Q10. What do you wish Mon Raman Nikaya in the next decade?

Q1. What do you know Fundamental Raman Nikaya in Mon State?

Interviewed 1. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta Zawdi (First level of Rāmañña Nikāya Sangha Organization), 85 years old, Middle Monastery, Zabu Township, Mon State. On November 9, 2017.

As the most Mon monks accept in the history, Mon Ramañña Nikāya appeared and known from the beginning of the sona thera and utara thera when both of them came to Sudham (now Mon State called Thaton in Burmese) from that time many of Mon monks and laypeople Became to stream winner. It is proper to start and write Rāmañña Nikāya Sangha Organization from the King Dhammaceti reform because at that time Rāmañña Nikāya Sangha Organization famous Rāmañña Nikāya related to Siri Lanka. Most Mon Buddhist scholar did not write or published from the books.

Interviewed 2. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta, Uttara, (Second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization) Krena Village, Mon State, On November 9, 2017.

Once in a time, when the war conflict in Siri lanka, The Buddhism was destroyed by army, and Siri Lanka Monk came to Siam to ordain first at that time. Unsatisfyingly, Mon from Siri Lanka came to Bago (Hongsawadoi) to ordain in the Dhammazedī semā boundary owing to the danger in the island of Sihala of the false views that had arisen since there was no Order of monks. Start from Dhammazedī regime, he built many sema boundary for the name of the Ramañña Nikāya to be one Sangha. Also many upper Burmese Sangha gyaine had split into to two gyines, shwegyine and Thudhamma gyine during that time. But for Mon only Ramañña Nikāya existed.

Interviewed 3. Bhadanta, silācāra, Aggamahāpaṇḍita, (Second level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization) Auk Pegu monastery, Mon State, on November 10, 2017.

Mon Buddhist Rāmañña Nikāya Organization introduced from the king of the Hongsawadie Dhammaceti reform and found in the year 2406 of the Sarsana. In 1018, The Burmese king Aung zae ya destroyed the Mon Buddhist and Mon monks all when he conquered the Rangoon. From that time, Mon Monk did not claim that they were Rāmañña Nikāya Sangha Organization as if the military government regime would kill them.

Interviewed 4. Bhaddanta, phubbha Maha Thera, (Second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization), Kaban Htaw monastery, Mon State, on November 10, 2017.

In 1339, after 3 years established Rāmañña Nikāya Sangha Organization again, Mon Rāmañña Nikāya Sangha Organization opened Mon Language Examination on the Kyaik Salam Pagoda in order to exam Mon literature for all Mon Buddhist Monks.

Interviewed 5. Bhaddanta, Candobhāsa (second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization), Pown Township, Mon State, Bhan neik Pagoda Monastery, On November 11, 2017

Mostly, as we all know from Mon Buddhism Ramañña Nikāya started from Sona Thera and Uttara Thera who came to our land called Ramaññadesa, (Suvanabhumi) appeared from our history many years ago. Mon Buddhism flourished and developed so much both from Upper Burama and Siri Lanka. Siri lanka monks also came to join and ordain at the sema of Dhammzedi boundary at Pegu.

Interviewed 6. Bhaddanta, Nandasara (Aggamabannida) Middle Pariyyati Monastery, Kyaik kami Town, Mon State, On November 11, 2017.

To develop the teaching of the Buddha for our Mon Buddhism Ramañña Nikāya, It is our duty to develop Buddhist Mon University and to encourage all laypeople to preserve and learn their Mother-tongue language every summer school from the monastery.

Interviewed 7. Bhaddanta, Kesara (Aggamahāganthavācakapaṇḍita) Bowtawon Township, Yangoon, On November 12, 2017.

There is a Mon there is Mon monastery, so there is not only Mon Ramañña Nikāya in Mon State but also upper Burma in Mandalay and lower Burma until to Ye Township. There are many Mon Monasteries under the name of the Ramañña Nikāya Organization except of Shwegyin and Maha yine Nikāya. But we recognize our self as an official Nikāya for our Mon Buddhist people and Sangha whatever the Government military religious affair recognize it or not.

Interviewed 8. The most venerable BhaddantaBhuppha Rama (pariyyti wedi Monastery), Mon State, On November 12, 2017.

Ramañña Nikay are related to Siri Lanka with us. When they purified Sasana in Burma. They do not put our Ramañña Nikay into to nine Nikayas. But they refused us not to recognize us when we demanded them. So we discussed and agreed all to use our Ramañña Nikaya in our society whatever they recognize us or not. We must recognize ourself from our society. Now we have been recognizing Mon examination for ourself 30 years already. We also established Mon examination to take our self in our society.

Interviewed 9. The most venerable Ketumala, (Kawpaline Village), Mon State, On November 13, 2017.

When the U Nu organized nine Nikāyas, we demanded to the government our Ramañña Nikāya Organization. But they refused and do not agree until now. We almost arrested by them because we demanded them to recognize us as a member of the Sangha in ancient time.

Interviewed 10. The most venerable SilaVanta (Hongsa Htaw Monastery), Zabu Township, Mon State, On November 13, 2017.

Fundamental Ramañña Nikāya is to look after and develop the teaching of the Buddha as long as we can from now until to next generation. It is essential to unity and have harmony both laypeople and Sangha. So that we established this Ramañña Nikāya in order to preserve the teaching of the Buddha and Mon laypeople Buddhism. That is all that I can say from my views.

Interviewer's Conclusion-Question 1

Most of the interviewees gave different views from the origin and development of Ramañña Nikāya. We can summarize the interview answers that most of them agreed that Ramañña Nikāya established and developed when the Sona Thera and Uttara came to Monland (Suvanabhumi) Sadum. The Mon Buddhism Ramañña Nikāya Organization only one Nikaya during the Mon king Dhammzedi in his regime. Siri Lanka also came to re-ordained in (Hongawadie) Pegu. He

also built many semā boundaries around the country in his regime. Many abbots gave the answers that Ramañña Nikāya do not recognize by the ministry religious affairs even though Ramañña Nikāya established along time ago before the Mon kingdom collapsed from the Burmese kingdom.

Q2. Please, tell the history of Mon as you understand?

Interviewed 1. The Most Venerable Zawdi (First level of Rāmañña Nikāya Sangha Organization), Middle Monastery, Zabu Township, Mon State. On November 9, 2017.

The history of the Mon Buddhism started from the Sona Thera and Uttara Thera. This is the first the history of Mon Ramañña Nikāya that appeared into Mon land. When the king Dhammzedi purified the Sangha into our Mon land. The Buddhism was very famous Buddhist literature to Siri Lanka because they also came to re-ordained in our Homeland to Hongsawadie. At that time we were free to develop our Buddhism. It is not like in this present time during the military and under the military of Burmese government.

Interviewed 2. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta, Uttara, (Second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization) Krena Village, Mon State, On November 9, 2017.

When there was conflict war in Siri Lanka. That reason, the Monk from Siri lanka came to Siam to re-ordained and then came to Mandalay. But they are not satisfied of re-ordination with the Burmese monk. So they moved to lower Burma in Mon State to ordain there. We have evidence in sema boundary around our Mon State. There is very high ranking in Ramañña Nikāya Organization in Siri Lanka. There were only tow Nikaya in aceint time Mon Nikāya and BurmeseNikāya. Later on, they had split into to nice Nikayas. Mon Nikaya became one of the member of the Thudhamma Nikāya.

Interviewed 3. The Most Venerable Bhadanta, silācāra, Aggamahāpaṇḍita, (Second level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization) Auk Pegu monastery, Mon State, on November 10, 2017.

Even though our king Dhammzedi established Mon Ramañña Nikāya Organization, we dare not to recover to state that we were

Ramañña Nikāya Organization from ancient time since the Burmese occupied our homeland. Most monks were afraid to die. So that they did not to claim that they are from Rammnaya Nikaya Organization.

Interviewed 4. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta, phubbha Maha Thera, (Second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization), (Kaban Htaw monastery), Mon State, on November 10, 2017.

In 1339 we started to establish our own Examination Hell in our history because the government did not allow to exam as Mon language literature with them. Now it has been almost 40 years ago.

Interviewed 5. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta, Candobhāsa (second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization), Pown Township, Mon State, Bhan neik Pagoda Monastery, On November 11, 2017.

Before Sona thera and Uttra Thera spread Buddhism, we were not sure that we had bhikkhu or bhikkhuni or Our Ramañña Nikāya So our Mon generation started Sona Thera and Uttara Thera as all we accepted from our history. From that time we did not understand much about the three tipitak yet because the three tipitak has not arrived yet. After 900 years later, Our Mon Native monk named Budhaghosa went to Siri lanka to translate magada language to Pali and Pali to our language from there. From that time the tipitaka arrived and flourished the teaching of the Buddha in our homeland. Our Ramañña Nikāya Sangha Organization became ups and down because the war conflict in our homeland with Burmese for forty years during the Yazedirit in his regime. Our Mon king Dhammazedī also studied in Ava. In Basein region, sometimes-Burmese monks came to study there because that area was conflict with war. After we lost our kingdom of Hongsawadie, the Buddhism of Mon declined without leader, without kingdom and so many Mon monks fled to Siam. From that time we re-established again until our present time. We tried to translate Mon tipitaka translation again now because Burmese took our origin.

Interviewed 6. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta, Nandasara, (Aggamabannida), (Middle Pariyyati Monastery), Kyaik kami Town, Mon State, On November 11, 2017.

As I know Mon Ramañña Nikāya Organization, We have been working for 40 years since the government rejected to organize Ramañña

Nikāya Organization until now. Before this period, our Ramañña Nikāya Organization appeared during the Mon king Dhammazedī regime in Hongsawadee (pegu) now. Some of us said that Ramañña Nikāya appeared during the time of the Sona Thera and Uttara Thera missionary to our Ramaññadesa region. But I accepted that Ramañña Nikāya also was well known from Sri Lanka during the Mon King Dhammacedi regime in Hongsawadee.

Interviewed 7. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta, Kesara (Aggamahāganthavācakapaṇḍita), Bowta Dwon Monastery, Bow ta Dwon Township, Yangon, On November 12, 2017.

Officially, we are member of Sudhamma. Unofficially we are not a member of Ramañña Nikaya because the government does not recognize our Organization even though the history of Mon Buddhism flourished to them a long time ago. But they do not recognize us as a member Buddhism. According to history, Most Mon Monks fled to Thailand and joined Mahanikaya Organization. At that time Mon Buddhism have only Mahanikaya Organization in Mon State. Before the Mon monk fled to Thailand they are Ramañña Nikaya. After they came back from Thailand. They are called Ramañña Nikaya later. In the regime of the colonial period, Mon Buddhism do not agree to live under the authority of Burmese monks requested to the British colonial Administration. In 1340, the government of ministry religious affair purified Sasana. Ramañña Nikaya Organization refused to maintain as a member Sangha officially. Mon Ramañña Nikaya Organization proposed to the ministry religious affair but they reject as a member until the present day. But we recognize and struggle for ourselves until the government accept us a member.

Interviewed 8. The most venerable Bhuppha Rama, (pariyyti wedi Monastery), Mon State. On November 12, 2017.

Sometime, when we have poor condition from the teaching of the Buddha, we went to Sri Lanka to ordain there. Sometime, they came to us to ordain from our Mon land. We had contribution with Sri Lanka many centuries ago with each other.

Interviewed 9. The most venerable Ketumala, (Kawpaline Village, Mon State, On November 13, 2017.

Our Ramnayan Nikaya already existed along time ago since the Sona Thera and Uttara Thera. But we dared not to recover the name under the military regime.

Interviewed 10. The most venerable SilaVanta, (Hongsa Htaw Monastery), Zabu Township, Mon State, On November 13, 2017.

We want to translate our own language to our native language. We also established Mon Buddhism Examination Hell for Mon Buddhism Monk even though government ministry religious affairs do not recognize to our Sangha Ramnaya Nikaya Organization. Now we have been doing for over 34 years already for ourselves. As I can see what we are doing like this, our Buddhism is getting stronger not getting weak. For our own Examination is getting development for our own language and literature as we are intending to be. In 1333 year, we established Mon Examination Hell. In 1342 year, The Mon Ramanya Nikay was banned to take examination with Burmese ministry religious Affairs. In that case we established Dhammacariya Mon Examination hell for all Mon Buddhism Monks in Mon State in 1343.

Conclusion of the Interviewer's Ideas in Question 2

According to the interviewed question (2), the answers given by all ten abbots are similar the date of the Ramañña Nikāya Sangha Organization based on the history of the Sona Thera and Uttara Thera came to Ramaññadesa. But most abbots considered that period the teaching of the Buddha started to introduce to Mon Ramaññadesa and Ramañña Nikāya Sangha Organization appeared at that time. A few of them accepted this idea to receive the teaching of the Buddha. Most of them believed the teaching of the Buddha flourished and developed when the Buddhaghosa from our native country went to translate Tipitaka literature according to our Mon tradition history.

Q3. What is the role of Buddhist monk and lay people in modern Mon State?

Interviewed 1. The Most Venerable Zawdi (First level of Rāmañña Nikāya Sangha Organization), 85 years old, Middle Monastery, Zabu Township, Mon State, On November 9, 2017.

The Mon monk has the role to teach Mon Buddhist literature and culture according to the duties taught by the Buddha. But most of our Mon Monk emphasize only in Vinaya too much. They do not work hard or train hard to the laypeople for education.

Interviewed 2. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta, Uttara, (Second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization) Krena Village, Mon State, On November 9, 2017.

In modern time, we have to be skillful to teach the laypeople. If we have harmony with laypeople, we can keep developing and promoting our Mon Buddhism because we can only receive from our devotee four requests from them.

Interviewed 3. The Most Venerable Bhadanta, silācāra, Aggamahāpaṇḍita, (Second level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization) Auk Pegu monastery, Mon State, on November 10, 2017.

The role of Mon laypeople and Burmese are not the same as I can say because Mon people are more humble and generosity than Burmese laypeople to the Sangha. Mon laypeople to be humble and steady in Buddhism. That is the role of the monk to carry on for Mon society. Otherwise, Mon laypeople will be lack of respect of religion and Monk. Monk has to take duty to train laypeople how to pay respect to the Sangha and sharing metta to all beings. The monk has to preach to be difference from Burmese according to our culture and traditional. We have to guide them to follow as our own traditional way. We have our own custom to follow as our own way. Mon laypeople are different one when we see them they sit down on the way to pay respect to the Sangha.

Interviewed 4. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta, phubbha Maha Thera, (Second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization, Kaban Htaw monastery, Mon State, on November 10, 2017.

The role of the laypeople has to take duty for food offering to the Sangha examination every year. There was difficult for financial supporting for our communittee when I was selected as a leader because the situation of the country was too bad and aware of military to come to our Monastery. We had a big obstrical to develop our Buddhist literature. They considered and targeted us as a political party.

Interviewed 5. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta, Candobhāsa (second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization), Pown Township, Mon State, Bhan neik Pagoda Monastery, On November 11, 2017

A part from political issue, we have three Mon National high schools now and many middle schools as well. Even though we do not have kingdom and authority. But we try to open Mon high school supported by Mon laypeople. Mon monks have to rely on the lay people and lay people also have to rely on the Mon Monks as well. Frankly and openly we use budget for three hundreds lakhs kyats to publish one set of tipitaka for every year.

Interviewed 6. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta, Nandasara (Aggamabannida) 66 Years 46 vassas, Middle Pariyyati Monastery, Kyaik kami Town, Mon State, on November 11, 2017.

I would like to say we should understand what we are wearing our uniform. As a real Monk, we have to learn the teaching of the Buddha whatever problem we have with the government. As a lay people, they have to support us food and fund as much as they can afford. Mon lay people are not so poor mind in donation. They are satisfy to offer Sangha in Pariyyati Monastery because the Monks are reading and studying the teaching of the Buddha as they can see when they come to our monastery.

Interviewed 7. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta, Kesara (Aggamahāganthavācakapaṇḍita) Bowtawon Township, Bowtawon monastery, Yangoon, on November 12, 2017.

As we are member of Ramañña Nikāya Organization, we have been struggling so hard until now as much as we can. We use and named all Mon monasteries Ramañña Nikāya Organization. In Social system our country, So that we change the name of the Ramañña Nikāya Dhammaceriya to translate Mon three tipitaka translation in order to promote our Mon Buddhist literature. It has been doing for almost 40 years now. Later on, we did not take exam with government Sangha Organization. We select the monks who have finished Dhammaceriya Examination. We transfer them to translate Mon language three-tipitaka version. Finally we established Mon Buddhism University and Social work from all Mon Monks. In conclusion, (1) to translation Pali to Mon

language (2) to build Examination hall (3) Dhammceriya Exam (4) Rammanyayika Social work (5) Rammanikay Sanhga Niggaha for social insurance. For the Mon Sangha Organization as follows the role of the laypeople they participate their activities.

Interviewed 9. The most venerable Ketumala (Kawpaline Village, Mon State, on November 12, 2017.

We have to struggle to propose how to recognize our Nikaya to the Government anyway.

Interviewed 10. The most venerable SilaVanta, (Hongsa Htaw Monastery), Zabu Township, Mo State, on November 13, 2017.

We have central committee Organization in Ramañña Nikaya Organization. We have to carry on our duty each other whatever we do. Lay people have to take duty to support the monks. Otherwise the Monk cannot learn and study any longer.

Conclusion of the Interviewer's Ideas in Question 3

On summarizing the answers no. (3), I found that they gave the similar answers each other. Most of them answer that they have to struggle until the government recognize Ramañña Nikaya Organization. The monk has to take duty to promote and propagate the Buddhism literature Mon literature based on the four duties taught from the teaching of the Buddha. According the federalism path opening, they have to struggle more than before because they could not have a chance to do as before when the military regime the country. The government did not allow them to open free education Mon language before in summer. Mon monks are the leader who open the education Mon literature, Mon National high School and finally open Mon Buddhist RamaññaRatthya Buddhist University. Some of Mon young generation still has a limit time to study Mon language in summer because the government target to Mon young generation not to allow and influence their literature and culture.

4. Do you think Mon Raman Nikaya have contribution to another country or around the world?

Interviewed 1. The Most Venerable Zawdi (First level of Rāmañña Nikāya Sangha Organization), 85 years old, Middle Monastery, Zabu Township, Mon State. On November 9, 2017.

I am not sure that Rāmañña Nikāya Sangha Organization has contribution to another country or around the world. You can ask the monk who are leading to this Organization now. Mon is not unity now. So that we donnot have scholar person because we are against each other. There is only one Mon scholar who recognized around the world is Nai Pan Hla. No more Mon scholar person appear any more right now in our society even in our country. Nobody recognize scholar from our country. What I mean is we are lack of scholar person. In my conclusion, we are not unity and we are against each other. As a result, we do not have scholar person who can lead to our unity because we are lack of scholar person.

Interviewed 2. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta, Uttara, (Second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization) Krena Village, Mon State, on November 9, 2017.

In our Ramañña Nikāya Organization, at least, we receive donation from Mon oversea workers and some Mon Monks who live in Thailand. Finally, we have more donations from Singapore, Malaysia as well as Western Europe. We received from western country about 400 laks kyats to support our education.

Interviewed 3. The Most Venerable Bhadanta, silācāra, Aggamahāpaṇḍita, (Second level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization) Auk Pegu monastery, Mon State, on November 10, 2017.

When we have 100 years ceremony celebration in Mon State. We invited Siri Lanka Ramanaya Nikaya Organizaton to give a speech to our Ramañña Nikāya Organization because we used to live relationship each other in ancient time. On the other hand, we have relationship with Mahcuhularlongkorn Univerisity for those who have finished Dhammariya can join to Machachularlongkorn University in Thailand. That is our great contribution to our Raman Nikaya Organization.

Interviewed 4. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta, phubbha Maha Thera, (Second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization) 87 Year old, 67 vassa, Kaban Htaw monastery, Mon State, on November 10, 2017.

To support our Mon contribution, there is some from aboard who work overseas as a immigration worker. We do not have contribution to support our Buddhism from the Myanmar religious affiars.

Interviewed 5. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta, Candobhāsa (second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization), Pown Township, Mon State, Bhan neik Pagoda Monastery, On November 11, 2017

We received some budget from our Mon oversea workers aboard such as Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand in order to translate Mon tipitaka Books for Dhammacariya Examination. A part from that, they also donate for our Mon National School.

Interviewed 6. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta, Nandasara (Aggamabannida), Middle Pariyyati Monastery, Kyaik kami Town, Mon State, on November 11, 2017.

We do not have contribution to another country and around the world. We have contribution from our society. We do not have supporting from the government of religious Affairs apart from our own Mon Society.

Interviewed 7. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta, Kesara (Aggamahāganthavācakapaṇḍita), Bowtawon Township, Yangon, on November 12, 2017.

As I work with the ministry religious Affairs until the present time, I do not see that they support our Ramanaya Nikaya Organization. The major of contribution from our Rammnaya Nikaya Organization support by our own society such as the people who work as oversea worker in Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia.

Interviewed 8. The most venerable Bhuppha Rama (pariyyti wedi Monastery), Mon State, on November 12, 2017.

We do not have contribution to our Mon Raman Nikaya. we discuss and had meeting every year in Kyaik amaraw town to collect some finical supporting from all of our Mon Raman Nikaya Organization. This fund uses for four requests when the monks take examination each year.

Interviewed 9. The most venerable Ketumala (Kawpaline Village, Mon State, on November 13, 2017.

We have contribution to Ramañña Nikāya Organization Nikaya aboard. In Thailand, we have contribution to develop Buddhism and have higher Education from Mahachularlongkorn University. As our Ramañña Nikāya Organization, we are still being built Ramaññaraththa Buddhist University in Mon State to accept as a teacher who has had degree for higher degree in aboard.

Interviewed 10. The most venerable Sila Vanta, Hongsa Htaw Monastery, Zabu Township, Mon State, on November 13, 2017.

I do not see another religion and another Nation to support our Mon Buddhism even the government does not recognize yet. But we see and get from Mon oversea Workers from difference countries in Europe as a refugees and mostly in Thailand workers. Once in a year, they support us to our Examination hell.

Conclusion of the Interviewer's Ideas in Question 4

In this conclusion, It is still in lack of the support from the government finical supporting from Mon Ramañña Nikāya Organization since the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The country still used the ruling system of socialism as before. Economic systems in Mon State is very rare job after the Burmese regime, without economic system, many Mon people go to aboard as a labor worker. Most of them are very poor because the government neglects to create the job for them. It seems that Mon Ramañña Nikāya Organization is not safe and freedom of development officially.

Q5. Any globalization cultures, ideas gives impact the Mon people and people around the world?

Interviewed 1. The Most Venerable Zawdi (First level of Rāmañña Nikāya Sangha Organization), 85 years old, Middle Monastery, Zabu Township, Mon State. On November 9, 2017.

In young Mon community, we have different culture and several ways. Mon young generation is not deep in respect of Buddhism and comparing in the ancient time. As a young Mon monk generation, we have a discussion and to send a mission to Siri Lanka to keep study B.A. or M.A for higher Buddhist Education. But that is not successful our discussion with them because we are not unity in our Sanhga Organization. In that case, we cannot support each other because we are unity.

Interviewed 2. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta, Uttara, (Second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization) Krena Village, Mon State, on November 9, 2017.

There is only one who give impact to our Mon Society that is Burmese because they press to our Mon National so many ways, such as literature, culture and traditional to our society. Another nation do not give us impact to our Sangha Organization. Even though they are not the same with us they donot press us but only Burmese give impact to our lay community and Sangha Community.

Interviewed 3. The Most Venerable Bhadanta, silācāra, Aggamahāpaṇḍita, (Second leader of Ramañña Nikāya Organization) Auk Pegu monastery, Mon State, on November 10, 2017.

There is only one who gives impact to Mon Sangha Society and laypeople society from the time that they conquered to our kingdom until the present period. Nation, land, authority and freedom give impact to our Mon society. For example, Burmese civilization give impact to Mon Nationality. Land also gives impact to our nationality because we have wide land in ancient time such as Basein 32 towns, Bago 32 towns and Muttama 32 towns. Now we have very limited land and population. In 1334, 1974, general Ne win shared a small land to recognize as a Mon people and Mon land and we did not have authority to organize our own people and land. Now they are trying completely using up our resources.

Nowadays we can see all of Mon people do not want to speak Mon any more for those who live in town down.

Interviewed 4. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta, phubbha Maha Thera, (Second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization) 87 Year old, 67 vassa, Kaban Htaw monastery, Mon State, on November 10, 2017.

Burmese are allowed to open our language literature for freedom. That is why we established the Ramañña Nikaya Organization. Burmese education affair always make oppression on our Mon culture and Mon Buddhist literature.

Interviewed 5. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta, Candobhāsa (second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization), Pown Township, Mon State, Bhan neik Pagoda Monastery, On November 11, 2017

As we can see in our Mon State right now, many of Burmese give impact to our Mon people in the present time because they always try to communicate Burmese language with us even though they live in our Mon State. Mon people only speak their language in their home and monastery when they go and see the Monk. Some of Mon cultures remain in the past such as paying homage to the Buddha and offering flower in the monastery in the evening. Foreign culture also gives impact to Mon society such as wearing short uniform. But they still keep going to the monastery with long traditional way. It depends on the parents so much to guide their children.

Interviewed 6. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta Nandasara, (Aggamabannida), Middle Pariyyati Monastery, Kyaik kami Town, Mon State, on November 11, 2017.

Burmese community give impact a big challenge from Mon teenager worker who work oversea such as Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore. Mon literature does not have contribution for them as they are far from preserving principal Mon Buddhist literature to study. Most of them do not have higher education to understand Mon language because of the military do not support high education and work basically. This is a big challenge to be a Mon Buddhism in Mon society.

Interviewed 7. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta Kesara, (Aggamahāganthavācakapaṇḍita), Bowtawon, Township, Yangoon, on November 12, 2017.

As far as Burmese Monk, military and Burmese people oppress us various way as much as they can from the ancient time until to the present day as a political way, religious way and cultural way in order not to develop for Mon society and Sangha Organization direct and indirect. the best way is that we always have to be careful and patient.

Interviewed 8. The most venerable Bhuppha Rama, (pariyyti wedi Monastery), Mon State, on November 12, 2017.

Whatever we do we have challenge for our society. So that we have to be patient every time forward what we do or what we could not do regarding to our Ramañña Nikāya Organization.

Interviewed 9. The most venerable Ketumala, (Kawpaline Village), Mon State, on November 13, 2017.

We have difference obstrical freedom. They all ban us not to do many things.as we look back our history, only Burmese community give impact to our Mon young generation for the next decade because they force to learn their language and they oppress us not to teach Mon language and Mon Buddhist literature School in Summer from the monastery.

Interviewed 10. The most venerable SilaVanta, (Hongsa Htaw Monastery), Zabu Township, Mon State, on November 13, 2017.

Apart from Burmese authority, there is no one that we have to be afraid to destroy our Buddhism because they are worry to take over on them. In our land we have Muslim but they are not harm us. Our Buddhism is not intending to destroy to another according to the teaching of the Buddha. The biggest problem is Burmese who give impact to our Buddhism because they are banning to us various ways not to develop our Buddhism and literature such as Building Mon National School for children and encouraging the people to participate Mon National Day. Why they have to oppress on us is because they want to control all of our Mon Nationality and they want us to be slave under the authority of them.

So that we have limitation to develop Buddhism and Society. We have no reason to harm another religion even though they descend as to be Buddhism from us.

Conclusion of the Interviewer's Ideas in Question 5

According to question 5, those interviewees have answered about the impact in young generation. Many Mon young generation copy and observe western traditional and Burmese traditional. Most of them who live in Yangon and Mon State in the city do not want to speak and preserve Mon language anymore. The parents neglect the children to send the children to study Mon language summer school in monastery. All of the interviewees pay particular attention to allow and recognize freedom of religious teaching and Mon Buddhist literature. Without having freedom of religious study and language literature cannot upgrade and keep making processing the development of the Mon Buddhism. Although military proposed a road to democracy the civil, the constitution does not benefit to the civil because the military still seize the power 2008 constitution and religious study do not open freely.

Q6. What do you think in the age of globalization?

Interviewed 1. The Most Venerable Zawdi, (First level of Rāmañña Nikāya Sangha Organization), 85 years old, Middle Monastery, Zabu Township, Mon State, On November 9, 2017.

In our Mon Society, four directions give impact to our society which are not unity, such as discussion about something to do Mon Monk to Mon Monk, laypeople to laypeople. We will have to face all of these kinds of directions in the next decade also right now. Without unity give impact obstrical block of our harmony and development for our Mon Buddhism. "Samagi tapo sukkho". Unity gives strength us harmony and power to development of our Mon Buddhism.

Interviewed 2. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta Uttara, (Second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization) Krena Village, Mon State, On November 9, 2017.

Especially, Mon teenagers who get married with Burmese give impact to us because globalization culture influences to our society and

mixed with them in modern teenagers. Mostly Mon teenagers easily became to Burmese civilization and forget to their mother-tongue.

Interviewed 3. The Most Venerable Bhadanta silācāra, Aggamahāpaṇḍita, (Second level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization) Auk Pegu monastery, Mon State, on November 10, 2017.

In young generation Mon Youth would prefer to wear or copy western style. 3 in one Mon people population speak Mon language even though they are participating Mon political. In young generation, I do not see Mon youth generation change to another religion such as Christian, and Islam. But they observe Burmese civilization as majority of them that live in the city. By speaking, we people will fade away soon as I see. Actually Mon decline wearing traditional and speaking in public. Apart from converting another religion and speaking Burmese, Majority of Mon people fail to pay attention to study Mon language in young generation.

Interviewed 4. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta phubbha Maha Thera, (Second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization) Kaban Htaw monastery, Mon State, on November 10, 2017.

It depends on our leader from Mon Sangha Organization. If we are unity, we will be successful. If we are not unite we will face obstacle in the future.

Interviewed 5. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta Candobhāsa, (second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization), Pown Township, Mon State, Bhan neik Pagoda Monastery, On November 11, 2017

In Globalization, our Mon new generation neglect and learn their mother-tongue language as they dedicated foreign movies and foreign language to learn and study. So I am worry to them for next our generation impact from globalization, especially culture and mother-tongue.

Interviewed 6. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta Nandasara, (Aggamabannida) 66 Years 46 vassas, Middle Pariyyati Monastery, Kyaik kami Town, Mon State, On November 11, 2017.

As I see from our new generation in Globalization, I am not satisfy to see that our new Mon young generation perform activities such ordination to the monk and using modern digital device all the time. They do not emphasize to study the teaching of the Buddha. If they emphasize o the study instead of using digital device, it get more benefit and more improvement their life.

Interviewed 7. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta Kesara, (Aggamahāganthavācakapaṇḍita), Bowtawon, Township, Yangoon, On November 12, 2017.

In education affairs, we always have challenge with the government for education of Mon language. The government should open free to develop for Mon Buddhist Education in our society. Otherwise Mon young generation have limit time to study Mon language in summer.

Interviewed 8. The most venerable Bhuppha Rama (pariyyti wedi Monastery, Mon State, On November 12, 2017.

By wisdom person, educated person never tries to destroy a good community to another. For example, a big community oppress to a small community. Educated person can live peacefully to another community. They do not harm to another community. Every nation has challenge in their society. But, we have to face this challenge whatever we do because we are a small society and small community among with them. We can struggle and take over on obstacle whatever they oppress on us.

Interviewed 9. The most venerable Ketumala (Kawpaline Village), Mon State, On November 13, 2017.

Mon in our society, we have more traditional way. We do not have educated wisdom. Most of young generation cannot answer when someone asks them because they are traditional. So that we have to teach them by wisdom how to understands the teaching of the Buddha in their heart. Most of them are followers as a traditional way from their parents.

Interviewed 10. The most venerable SilaVanta Hongsa Htaw Monastery, Zabu Township, On November 13, 2017.

In our young generation, we will have to face more than before concerning Buddhism literatures and culture because they always think

about and try to decline in our youth Monk life and Mon youth young generation various ways. Especially, persuade us how to forget Mon literature and Mon culture.

Conclusion of the Interviewer's Ideas in Question 6

According to question 6, the parents in Mon family do not persuade most young teenager to study summer school in monastery rather than they persuade to study Burmese Language in summer time. so that as the most venerable Mon Monk Committee Organization can not give impact Mon language to the Mon children to teach them culture and literature. Mon Sangha and laypeople always have challenge with the Burmese society for Education affair and culture affair without opening freedom of teaching and study. This is a big obstrical for many decades even in the future.

Q7. What is the Buddhism for next decade in Mon state?

Interviewed 1. The Most Venerable Zawdi (First level of Rāmañña Nikāya Sangha Organization), 85 years old, Middle Monastery, Zabu Township, Mon State, On November 9, 2017.

We will face crisis for the next decades if we are unity. Come to discuss each other not to be against each other. Our development of the Buddhist teaching is based on the government policy. If they open freely we can have a good chance to develop our Buddhism until they recognize our Ramañña Nikaya Organization.

Interviewed 2. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta Uttara, (Second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization) Krena Village, Mon State, On November 9, 2017.

I think that we will have development of Mon Buddhism and Mon laypeople in our society if two Mon Party would unite one party Mon people in the next decade. The main problem is to be unity in our Organization. We always face this both Sangha and laypeople party when we discuss something each other. We do not agree a good leader. I want to have a new good leader in the next decade to develop our Sangha Organization.

Interviewed 3. The Most Venerable Bhadanta silācāra, Aggamahāpaṇḍita, (Second level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization) Auk Pegu monastery, Mon State, on November 10, 2017.

By point of my view from political, it depends on Burmese political. Concerning about humanity and education, as I lived and studied when I was young, educated person are very rare to see at that time because education condition was very bad. In the next decade, I will see it will get better about education and development of economic every year.

Interviewed 4. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta phubbha Maha Thera, (Second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization) 87 Year old, 67 vassa, Kaban Htaw monastery, Mon State, On November 10, 2017.

We just follow old traditional according to our own traditional and culture. Now more and more new Mon young generation have higher education from oversea country such as Thailand, and Siri Lanka. I think we have developed Buddhism for the next decade. it will get better than the past decade.

Interviewed 5. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta Candobhāsa (second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization), Pown Township, Mon State, Bhan neik Pagoda Monastery, On November 11, 2017

I am worry about our race because we are not unity whenever we see and look that we have problem Mon political and Mon Sangha Organization right now. without unity we can develop both Buddhism and political party as I can see from the present until the future.

Interviewed 6. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta Nandasara (Aggamabannida), Middle Pariyyati Monastery, Kyaik kami Town, Mon State, On November 11, 2017.

We have built more and more monasteries educated person. I think that we will improve in Buddhism but, we will face obstrical with our new generation will be decline for next decade even though we have more monasteries.

Interviewed 7. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta Kesara, (Aggamahāganthavācakapaṇḍita), Bowtawon, Township, Yangoon, On November 12, 2017.

Based on the military constitution, we have to face and we can develop our Buddhism as we could because they often was given by oppression from them whenever we do both in Buddhism and in political party. They donot want us to develop with them.

Interviewed 8. The most venerable Bhuppha Rama, (pariyyti wedi Monastery, Mon State, On November 12, 2017.

For the next decade in Mon State is to develop as I think from my point of view, some scholar say that Mon Buddhism will decline. As for me, I would like to say because when I was young that we dared not to speak Mon language in the public place. We are afraid of Burmese to catch up us. Now it was not like before because we can speak loudly in public everywhere. The situation is leading to us better than before. Right now, there are over 40 monasteries in Mon State. Before the Mon ladies cannot learn Mon language in the monastery. Now we can open Mon summer school for both Mon young girls and Mon young boys for all villages. And then we also build more Mon National high School to develop our Mon language.

Interviewed 9. The most venerable Ketumala (Kawpaline Village, Mon State, On November 13, 2017.

Year by year as I see from my mind, Mon's mind decline to be a mon because their mind declined not to dare and use the name of the Mon language.

Interviewed 10. The most venerable SilaVanta, (Hongsa Htaw Monastery), Zabu Township, Mon State, On November 13, 2017.

As I can see in near future for our generation, we could see both sides a good side and bad side. A good side is development into our state. A bad side is decline of respect to the monks because many religious will come and influence into our Mon land, difference religious and difference culture based on our youth generation lack of wisdom and knowledge. We will face this problems a big obstrical for next decade.

The main problem is lack of job in our state for youth generation. So that many another religious will support them with financial and they will convert to another religion easily.

Conclusion of the Interviewer's Ideas in Question 7

In the next decade, Mon young generation paying attention to the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha will decline as I summarized from all of interviewer's answers. Based on their secular education, they look down to the Sangha. On another hand, they are not unity so many decades even the present time. Unity and harmony never give them a dream from their society both laypeople and Sangha Committee.

Q8. How the Mon Buddhism would be about in the next decade?

Interviewed 1. The Most Venerable Zawdi (First level of Rāmañña Nikāya Sangha Organization), Middle Monastery, Zabu Township, Mon State. On November 9, 2017.

I would like to be unity for all our Mon Buddhist Monks and laypeople each other for next decade. If we are not unity for our society both Sangha and laypeople, we will face crisis even now we are still being press under the military reform. We must unite and listen each other whatever we develop or propagate for our Buddhism.

Interviewed 2. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta Uttara, (Second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization) Krena Village, Mon State, Mon State. On November 9, 2017.

We will face problem and obstrical in our Mon society from Burmese if we are unity each other. They will do until they will satisfy to end of our Mon people to become one Burmese civilization as well as another ethnic groups. In reality, they will try to be one Burmese civilization as much as they can. This is their strategy in the future.

Interviewed 3. The Most Venerable Bhadantasilācāra, Aggamahāpaṇḍita, (Second level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization), Auk Pegu monastery, Mon State, on November 10, 2017.

I have been doing my duty for 43 years as we are struggling from second generation after the old generation passed away. Our Mon Buddhism has developed every four years. Now we developed a new robes uniform color which are to be difference and to recognize as a Mon uniform Monk. But the Buddha said that after passing away 500 years of my Sasana, will decline. As we are struggling the teaching of the Buddha now it is developing as I can see from my eyes because there are many pariyatti monasteries from our branches that train the teaching of the Buddha to the Bhikkhus. Now we have thousand monks and over hundreds teacher who give the literature to our Mon Bhikkhus in the present time. In the past, we just had a hundreds Mon monks who study the teaching of the Buddha in our Mon Sangha Society and also we did not have the Mon monks who are studying aboard.

Interviewed 4. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta phubbha Maha Thera, (Second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization) Kaban Htaw monastery, Mon State, on November 10, 2017.

We are not so strong organization. Mon Party are not strong as strong as Mon Monk Organization. They are worry that we are unity. Their idea is to be destroyed our development. They target our monastery as a political group. They tried to get into trouble because we grew many students in our monastery.

Interviewed 5. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta Candobhāsa, (second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization), Pown Township, Mon State, Bhan neik Pagoda Monastery, On November 11, 2017.

From my point of view, Mon speaking will be disappeared by Burmese civilization around our society because they emphasized their speaking with our society. We will face this problem even now young Mon generation do not want to communicate their Mother-tongue anymore. To cover this decline, we all Mon Monk should open more private Mon National School in every village.

Interviewed6. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta Nandasara, (Aggamabannida) 66 Years 46 vassas, Middle Pariyyati Monastery, Kyaik kami Town, Mon State, On November 11, 2017.

For the next decade, most laypeople will look down to the Mon Sangha because of having higher education. And look up to another Sangha. Most in the village Mon Sangha have no competition to another such as preaching Dhamma. Mostly Mon laypeople that live in the city change to another society because of competition. Mon Sangha leading with pride, we lost our way of right path and getting worse to the wrong path because of pride, so that I would like to suggest new young generation to discuss something with old abbot and leader before doing.

Interviewed 7. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta Kesara, (Aggamahāganthavācakapaṇḍita) Bowtawon Township, Yangon, On November 12, 2017.

Right now, we all can see that we racial and religious conflicts have been deepening in our country for over 70 years, even after the country gained independence. Our development of Mon Buddhism depends on the freedom of Burmese constitution and military control. We would have to pay attention every movement what we could do or not to do.

Interviewed 8. The most venerable Bhuppha Rama (pariyyti wedi Monastery, Mon State, On November 12, 2017.

Based on the number of the Mon Monks who has passed Mon Dhammacariya Examination, there were just a few before, now we have more than over hundreds monks who have passed higher Dhammacariya examination. they have not only passed Dhammacariya Examination but they also have finished B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. from abroad.

Interviewed 9. The most venerable Ketumala (Kawpaline Village, Mon State, Mon State, On November 13, 2017.

Year by year as I see from my mind, Mon's mind decline to be a mon because their mind declined not to dare and use the name of the Mon language in public. The spirit of Mon young generation fails to pay attention their mother tongue to speak and write in public.

Interviewed 10. The most venerable SilaVanta Hongsa Htaw Monastery, Zabu Township, Mon State, Mon State, On November 13, 2017.

Since we established our country and Buddhism, we still followed and preserved the same as before traditional way based on the history of the teaching of the Buddha with two brothers who came to India for trade and met the Buddha to receive the basic teaching of the Buddha. From that time Buddhism for Mon people were related each other until the present time because the Buddha, he himself introduced for Mon people Buddhism.

Conclusion of the Interviewer's Ideas in Question 8

As I compared the answer given by interviewers, the two main difference ideas received from different abbots. The number of the Mon Monk decrease and the quality of the monk will get higher education as they can be viewed from their young ages because many Mon Buddhist young Monk can have more a chance to study abroad comparing their generation that they did not see too many Mon monks who had finished B.A., M.A. and P.H.D. As before. The government's educational policy has changed a little bit as reform to federalism or Democracy. The first case why the number of the monks decline is that there is no activities or lack of duty to teach for Mon Monks who has finished higher education apart from teaching and preaching Dhamma to the monks and laypeople.

The Second case why the laypeople look down to the Sangha for next decade is that the system of the Buddhist teaching from the monastery is lack of the secular education. More subject should be added and to upgrade according to mainstream education. Most of them are worry about the new Mon generation to decline regard to the constitution of the country. Some of them are worry about population of the Mon monks. On another hand, constitution is very strict to develop Mon Buddhist literature until now facing many crises.

Q9. Do you think that Mon Buddhist is traditional or conservative Modernist?

Interviewed 1. The Most Venerable Zawdi, (First level of Rāmañña Nikāya Sangha Organization), Middle Monastery, Zabu Township, Mon State. On November 9, 2017.

There is some who follow the old traditional and there is some who follow conservative Modernist. It depends on the Acariya who lead and

guide to the laypeople in their society. In the village society we can still see Mon people follow traditional offering flowers afternoon and taking precepts after that. Right now in the city none of them come to the monastery to offer flowers and take precepts to the Buddha anymore. it depends on the monk so much to guide the lay people. Otherwise the lay people do not understand anymore to go to the monastery in the evening to offer flowers and water to the Buddha and Sangha for water. But in the village there is still some activates.

Interviewed 2. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta Uttara, (Second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization) Krena Village, Mon State, On November 9, 2017.

Up to 40 years old, Mon people follow old traditional. As we are the present Mon, we follow both our traditional as before. But in new generation they mixed and follow some conservative Modernist according to mainstream. But we should not forget wherever we are. if so, our Mon traditional will exist for so long.

Interviewed 3. The Most Venerable Bhadantasilācāra, Aggamahāpaṇḍita, (Second level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization) Auk Pegu monastery, Mon State, on November 10, 2017.

As we are Mon nationality, we follow Mon old traditional way to respect to the old people as before. To be polite both Monks and laypeople, we follow old traditional way until now.

Interviewed 4. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta phubbha Maha Thera, (Second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization), Kaban Htaw monastery, Mon State, On November 10, 2017.

I would like to develop our Mon Sangha Organization for the future even now. I would like to see as much as we can if I still keep being strong in health. But I could not do work activities as a young age.

Interviewed 5. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta Candobhāsa (second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization), Pown Township, Mon State, Bhan neik Pagoda Monastery, On November 11, 2017

As I can see in the present our new generation for young boys and girls, our traditional decline to follow as we had seen in the past. They are dedicated in western style and western culture. We have to guide them and explain to pay in attention our traditional and culture. as we are monk, we tries our best to follow vinaya and lay people also have to tries and preserve traditional.

Interviewed 6. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta Nandasara (Aggamabannida), Middle Pariyyati Monastery, Kyaik kami Town, Mon State, On November 11, 2017.

We both follow traditional and conservative Modernist. But our traditional remain just a few things. For example, when we donate Katina ceremony robe offering, we used to request and asked to the laypeople according to our traditional way. But now it has disappeared from our Sangha Society. We have less traditional and observe conservative Modernist more than traditional. Below to 40 years young generation follow new Modernist. Most young generation follow and do so much social work.

Interviewed 7. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta Kesara, (Aggamahāganthavācakapaṇḍita), Bow ta won Township, Yangoon, On November 12, 2017.

We cannot accept only traditional according to mainstream. We have to follow as mainstream based on the development of the country. For example, one family who live in the city and village are difference based on environment. But we have to follow both traditional and mainstream. Finally we should not forget to preserve our traditional wherever we are.

Interviewed 8. The most venerable Bhuppha Rama, (pariyyti wedi Monastery, Mon State, On November 12, 2017.

According to mainstream life, we have a little change religious and cultures, for Example, Mon Stone inscription, we changed to new world how to read and write easily for the new generations. We have to follow a little bit in modern time according to mainstream life. Only one cannot decide something and matter in Mon Sangha Organization because Mon do not have own country and governor. In this case, we lost some culture

and traditional. As a Mon Mon monk in rainy retreat, we pay homage to the Buddha in the morning and evening two-time a day. Now we have only one time in the evening night.

Interviewed 9. The most venerable Ketumala, (Kawpaline Village, Mon State, On November 13, 2017.

If you are Mon, you are Buddhist. Most Mon people do not convert to another religion based on the Buddhism. But we have some Mon who follow another religion and convert to them because of lack of economic and bad condition of their family in life. We follow both traditional and modern life. But we do not follow only new but also follow old traditional according to mainstream.

Interviewed 10. The most venerable SilaVanta, Hongsa Htaw Monastery, Zabu Township, Mon State, On November 13, 2017.

As we established this Ramanyana Nikaya Organization, we follow and preserve our traditional according to the teaching of the Buddha. Our Buddhism is origin and development from the time of the Buddha. It has been changed a little bit from the time of the Buddha until now.

Conclusion of the Interviewer's Ideas in Question 9

According to the interviewed question 9, for the next decade what would happen according to the constitution policy, most of them gave answers that they preserve and follow traditional according to mainstream and development of the country. But they suggested all Mon people to preserve the traditional way wherever we are as they receive the traditional from the teaching of the Buddha in origin.

Q10. What do you wish Mon Raman Nikaya in the next decade?

Interviewed 1. The Most Venerable Zawdi, (First level of Rāmañña Nikāya Sangha Organization), Middle Monastery, Zabu Township, Mon State, On November 9, 2017.

I wish to all of them to be unity and harmony in our society as many as generation in the next decade in Mon Ramayana Nikaya. To be unity in our society, we need a good leader to be active in Buddhism. We

should select every four-year to be chosen in our Ramayana Nikaya Organization and committee. We should have limitation by four years a time. We should promote a good leader who has a high morality and mindfulness for our society.

Interviewed 2. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta Uttara, (Second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization), Krena Village, Krena Monastery, Mon State, On November 9, 2017.

In near future, I wish all Mon Sangha and lay people to be unity and harmony for next generation even now. We demand and suggest them all to unite because we have three parties in politics. Otherwise we will lose our development and unity if we do not have the same idea to do something in our society. We have only one Mon nationality but we are not unity that caused to develop our society.

Interviewed 3. The Most Venerable Bhadantasilācāra, Aggamahāpaṇḍita, (Second level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization), Auk Pegu monastery, Mon State, on November 10, 2017.

I would like to develop Mon archeticer building and also I would like to suggest to collect Mon Stone inscriptions from all to keep in our Examination to recognize for next generation to generation.

Interviewed 4. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta phubbha Maha Thera, (Second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization), Kaban Htaw monastery, Mon State, on November 10, 2017.

Our Ramañña Nikāya Organization is based on the unity of our community and harmony. It depends on our Sangha and lay people to work together. In my youth's time, I grew up many students and Sangha to study in my monastery. As I can see now, the number of the Mon Monasteries is increasing in the city. I think that we as a Ramañña Nikāya Organization will develop based on the constitution and unity from our community.

Interviewed 5. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta Candobhāsa, (second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization), Pown Township, Mon State, Bhan neik Pagoda Monastery, On November 11, 2017.

I wish all Mon sanghas to improve and propagate the teaching of the Buddha as long as we can from right now regarding a new RammanayaRattha Buddhist University. In order to have a developed Mon education, I think we can open eyes to our Mon laypeople with higher education.

Interviewed 6. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta Nandasara, (Aggamabannida) 66 Years 46 vassas, Middle Pariyyati Monastery, Kyaik kami Town, Mon State, On November 11, 2017.

I would like to say and suggest as I think if we have higher education. We will have less prides of our mind. So that only wisdom can solve this prides. There is no good mind or bad mind if we have mindfulness to control our pride. If we lose our mind we cannot control our pride and then our mind occur pride.

Interviewed 7. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta Kesara, (Aggamahāganthavācakapaṇḍita) Bowtawon Township, Yangoon, On November 12, 2017.

I would like to say as long as our Ramañña Nikāya Organization exist that we will keep doing according to our goal and plan to promote and develop the teaching of the Buddha for our Mon Organization. One thing I wish to be all Mon Sangha Organization pay respect to the Acariya Nikaya Organization each year. (2) To discuss in meeting each other. (3) Collect the number of the Ramañña Nikāya Organization monasteries each year (4) to recognize officially from the government (5) to have Fundamental Rules and regulation.

Interviewed 8. The most venerable Bhuppha Rama, (Pariyyti wedi Monastery, Mon State, On November 12, 2017.

I wish all Mon Sangha Organization to be developed and be successful in our society. But anyhow we will have to face obstrical from another society. And we will try to take over on that crisis and be successful as well as both laypeople and Sangha.

Interviewed 9. The most venerable Ketumala (Kawpaline Village, Kawpaline Monastery, Mon State, On November 13, 2017.

From right now on, I wish to be recognized our Nikaya first to the government. All Mon Sanghas wish to be one group if they are all Mon because we have some sub-group in Mon monks.

Interviewed 10. The most venerable SilaVanta, (Hongsa Htaw Monastery), Zabu Township, Mon State, On November 13, 2017.

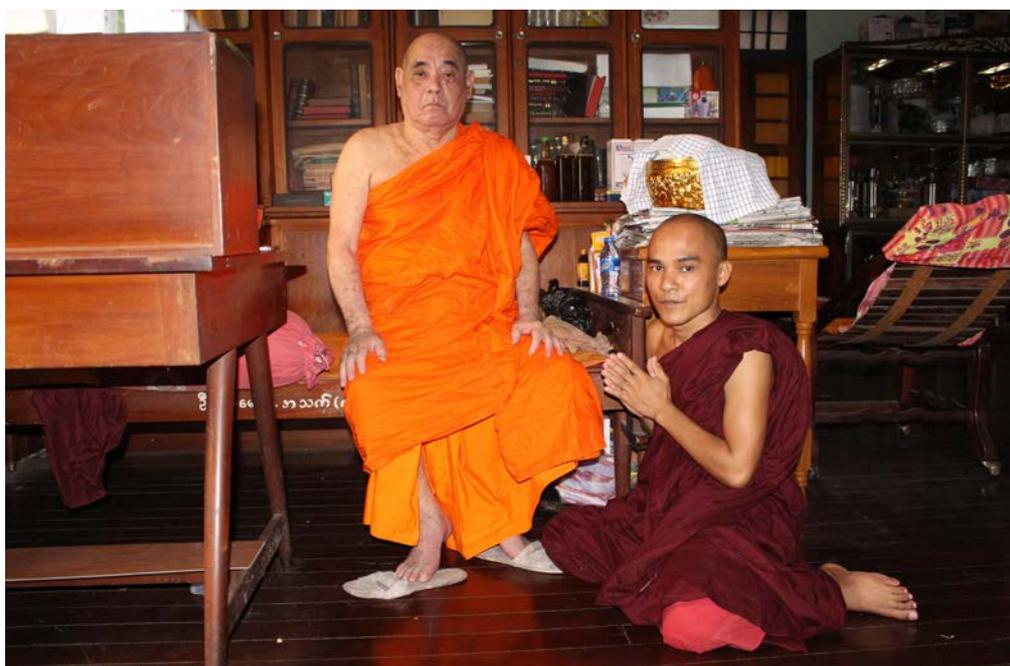
To improve and develop for Mon Buddhism from now, we have to replace new younger monk for generation to upgrade for next generation because they have modern education from various countries and gain much more knowledge than us from ancient time.

Conclusion of the Interviewer's Ideas in Question 10

To conclude my interview from all abbots on final question 10, they wish all answers are the similar as they have experienced from the past and the present as well as the future. There is one of the most important to be unity for the Mon people in order to develop and propagate the teaching of the Buddha as well as reorganization of Ramañña Nikāya. In the past, the government target for the Monk not to teach and open Mon literature. In the present, the government policy target to the Mon young generation to limit the time not to learn and study Mon language culture from the summer school in Monastery. Therefore all Mon Monks should be unity to work and to take over on this obstrical from various ways. So unity gives the fruit from the hope for all Sangha and laypeople. On other hand, the Ramañña Nikāya Buddhist University have found by the most venerable Sila Cara, Dhamma supported all from Mon communities. He developed this university in order to get opportunity for all Mon Monks who has finished from aboard without having activities to do for their aims. Most of them gave two point's answers unity and development education until the government recognizes Ramañña Nikāya Organization.

Appendix II

Abbots Data's Photos



1. The Most Venerable Zawdi, (First level of Rāmañña Nikāya Sangha Organization), 85 years old, Middle Monastery, Zabu Township, Mon State. On November 9, 2017.



2. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta Uttara, (Second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization) Krena Village, Krena Monastery, Mon State, On November 9, 2017.



3. The Most Venerable Bhadantasīlācāra, Aggamahāpaṇḍita, (Second level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization), Auk Pegu monastery, Mon State, on November 10, 2017.



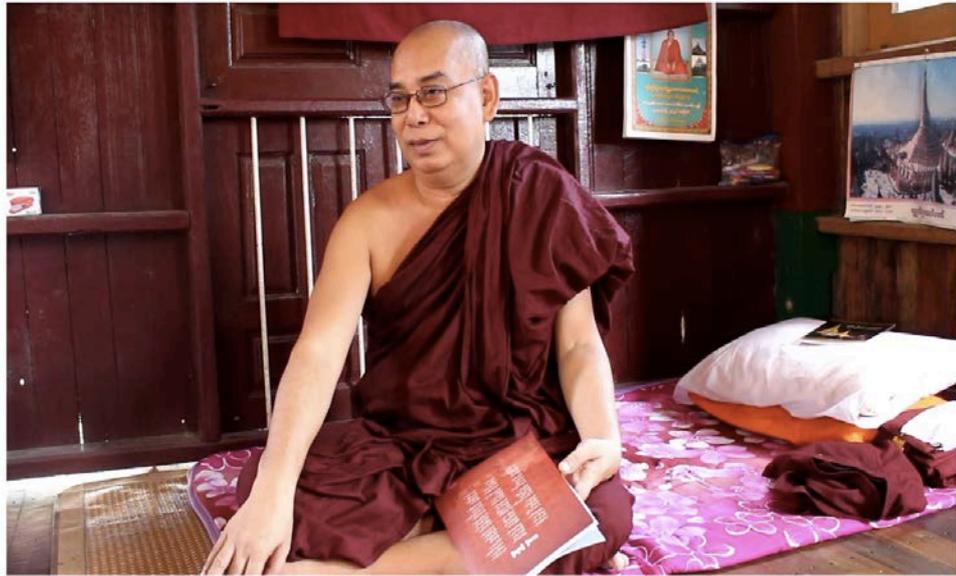
4. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta phubbha Maha Thera, (Second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization), Kaban Htaw monastery, Mon State, on November 10, 2017.



1. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta Candobhāsa, (second Level of Ramañña Nikāya Organization), Pown Township, Mon State, Bhan neik Pagoda Monastery, On November 11, 2017.



6. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta Nandasara, (Aggamabannida), (Middle Pariyyati Monastery), Kyaik kami Town, Mon State, On November 11, 2017.



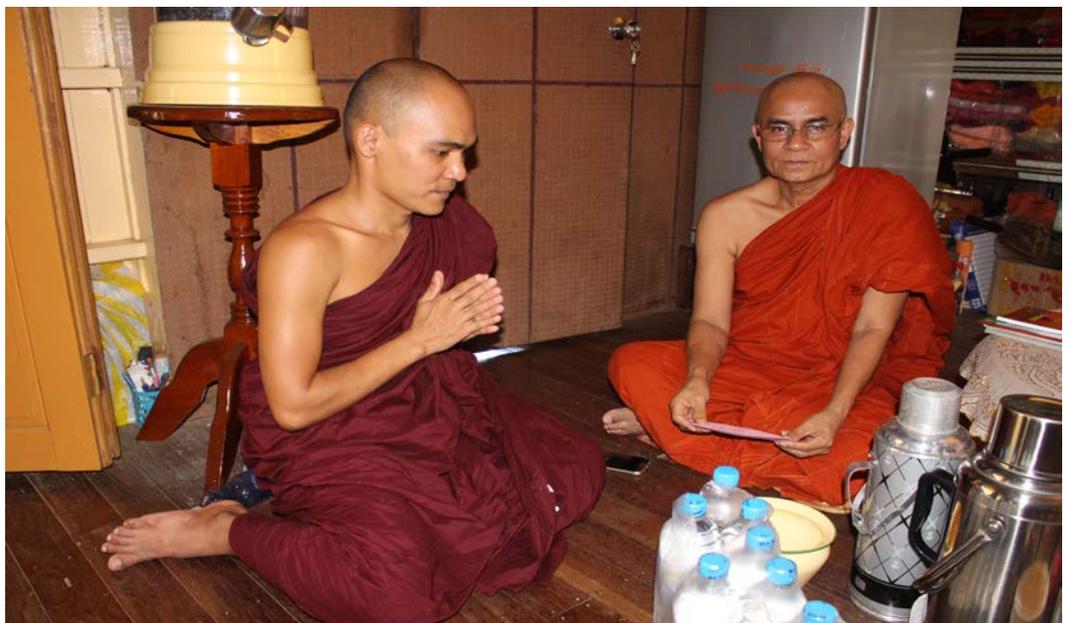
7. The Most Venerable Bhaddanta Kesara, (Aggamahāganthavācakapaṇḍita), Bowtawon Township, Yangon, On November 12, 2017.



8. The most venerable Bhuppha Rama (pariyyi wedi Monastery), Mon State, On November 12, 2017.



9. The most venerable Ketumala (Kawpaline Village, Mon State, On November 13, 2017.



10. The most venerable SilaVanta, Hongsa Htaw Monastery, Zabu Township, Mon State, On November 13, 2017.

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