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ARRIVAL OF BUDDHISM IN BURMA (MYANMAR)

Janeyya

**Ph.D.-Research Scholar, Department of History,
Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, Lucknow(U.P.) India.**

ABSTRACT

To better understand how the Buddha's dispensation arrives, we write this research paper. Theravada Buddhism flourishes in Myanmar. But when and how Buddhism arrived in Myanmar, and who brought this Sasana there, are questions that history attempts to answer. These issues have a wide range of solutions provided by several legends, oral histories, and written records including stone inscriptions, palm leaf inscriptions, folding paper ink writings, and court chronicles. They all affirm that Buddhism was introduced to Myanmar on numerous occasions. After the first and second arrivals, Buddha Sasana did not immediately flourish and extremely swiftly. It intermittently grew. Buddha Sasana's progress wasn't constant until Myanmar obtained the Tipitaka (the three relics of Buddhist Scriptures). However, the purpose of the study is to emphasise how early Buddhism and South East Asian Buddhism were recognized as having remarkable universal importance when they were listed as World Heritage Sites.



KEYWORD- Arrival of Buddhism, History of Buddhism.

The First arrival of Buddha Sāsana

The myth of the *Shwedagon* Pagoda was connected to Buddha Sasana's initial arrival. In accordance with this myth, the Buddha brought Buddhism to Myanmar during his lifetime. The Buddha acquired Supreme Enlightenment on the full moon day of Kason (May) in the *Maha Sakarit* year 103. Two businessmen from the *Ramañadesa* hamlet of *Ukkalāpa*, *Taphussa* and *Bhallika*, came to worship the Buddha as he was engaged in phalasammappatti meditation at the base of the *Rajāyatana* Lin Lun Tree in the *Uruvela* Forest close to the Nerajara River. The brothers presented the Buddha with honey cakes while he also shared his Dhamma teachings with them. The Buddha granted them eight sacred hairs from His head to worship at their request. When they got home, they erected a ceti atop the hill that was then known as *Tampaguta* and placed the holy hairs inside. We now refer to the caitya as the *Shwedagon* Pagoda. This tradition is mentioned in the *Shwedagon* stone inscription, which was built by King *Dhammazedi* of the *Hanthawaddy* Kingdom (A.D. 1472-1492). The inscribed stones in the *Shwedagon* Pagoda's enclosure are still visible and readable. Buddhists in Myanmar hold that the *Shwedagon* Pagoda and King *Dhammazedi*'s stone inscriptions serve as historical proof of Buddha Sāsana initial arrival in Myanmar during the Buddha's lifetime.

The Second arrival of the Buddha Sasana

The proof of the Buddha Sāsana's second visit in Myanmar is taken from King "The *Shwedagon* Caitya Inscription, the Kelasa Taung Inscription at Taung Zun in the Thahton District, the Mon Inscription of *Dhammazedi*, the Sasana Lankara Sadan (Treatise), and Vamsadipani (Treatise). The following account is provided by these inscriptions and treatises: "Arahat Maha Thera Shin *Gavampati* begged the Buddha to travel to Thaton (Sudhammapura) in the Kingdom of *Ramaññadesa* in the Era year 111, during the 8th Vasa of the Buddha. The locals gave the Buddha and his followers a warm welcome when they arrived there with their disciples, and after hearing the Dhamma, the locals converted to Buddhism. Each of the six hermits was given a hair from the Buddha's head to serve as their relic. The Buddha entered Mahaparinibbāna (Death) 37 years after the aforementioned date, and after his remains were cremated, Maha Thera Shin *Gavampati* took 33 of his unburned tooth relics to Thaton and gave them to King Thin *Nathawka*. Each tooth artefact was housed in one of the thirty-three cetis the king constructed.

The Third arrival of the Buddha Sāsana

A MahaThera by the name of Maha Puñña came and asked the Buddha to go to *Suaparanta Vaniccagama* in the Maha Sakarit year 123, during the 20th Vasa of the Buddha, while the Buddha was living in the Jetavana Vihara in the Kingdom of Savatthi. The Buddha travelled there with 500 of his students. The Buddha was given a monastery made of sandalwood to live in. Namanta Naga and his companion Hermit came to worship the Buddha, and they begged him to send down a representative of some sort for them to worship. Consequently, the Buddha left two imprints—one near the base of the Minbu Hill Range and the other a little higher up the hill. For centuries, the Buddhists have revered these two footprints as sacred relics. They are renowned as *Shwe Set Taw* across the world. A memorial Caitya was erected on the site of the sandalwood monastery where the Buddha had lived throughout His trip. The name Kyaung Taw Ya ceti is well-known. Maha Thera Maha Punna stayed at Sunaparanta Vaniccagama after the Buddha and his disciples had left to spread the Buddha Dhamma.

The Buddha allegedly visited Rakhine on the twentieth day of His vasa, according to the Old Rakhine Chronicles. In Dannyawaddi, the Buddha travelled with 500 disciples. After hearing the Buddha's teachings, Dannyawaddi's Chandasuriya the King converted to Buddhism, and his entire kingdom adopted the Buddha Dhamma. The Buddha was begged by the King to let people worship His replica. Casting an alloy statue in the shape of the Buddha. Maha Muni is the name of this image. King Bodawpaya's Crown Prince transported the Maha Muni Image to Amarapura, the country's capital, during his reign (1782–1819). The artwork is being kept in a lavish temple in Mandalay. For Buddhists, it is a sacred thing to be revered. It is revered as a sacred object by Buddhists all around the world. Both *Uparipannsa Athakatha* and *Punnavada Sutta* make mention of the Buddha's travel to *Sunanparanta Vaniccagama*.

It is important to note that the three occasions the Buddha Sasana visited Myanmar were all during the Buddha's lifetime. The first immigrant arrived in the same year that the Buddha attained Supreme Enlightenment. Possibly the first Buddhist missionaries were the two merchant brothers who carried eight sacred hairs of the Buddha to Myanmar. The Sangha Order had not yet been established at the period, hence there were no monk missionaries at that time. The Buddha Himself led the Dhammaduta (the religious mission) to Myanmar during Buddha Sāsana's second and third visits, and he himself preached the Dhamma, converting the monarchs and populace. He left His representatives with holy hairs, footprints, and likenesses of Himself to be worshipped. The Buddha Sasana visited Myanmar three times, as attested by the inscriptional, literary, and canonical evidence. They welcome scholarly inquiry and historical research.

The Fourth arrival of the Buddha Sasana

In the Buddhist Era of 235, Emperor Asoka of Pataliputtara sponsored and helped organise the Third Buddhist Synod. The Third Buddhist Synod was attended by the Arahats, led by Ashin Moggaliputta Tissa. Buddhist missionaries were dispatched to nine nations and nine regions in the

hopes that the Buddha Sasana would expand and flourish there. To spread the Buddha Dhamma, Emperor Asoka despatched Ashin Maha Thera Mahinda, his monk son, to Sri Lanka. The Maha Theras Sona and Uttara travelled to Suvannabhumi (Thaton) in Ramannadesa in the Buddhist Era 235 with the help of the Maha Theras Anuruddha, Tissagupta, and Soneyya to carry out missionary work there. Siri Ma reigned as Suvannabhumi's king during the time. The three Buddha Sasana who arrived there during the Buddha's lifetime, the Buddha Sasana who arrived there after the Buddha's Mahaparinibanna, and the Buddha Sasana who arrived there after the Buddha's thirty-three sacred Tooth Relics were housed in thirty-three Dhatu Cetis had all disintegrated. After hearing the Dhamma from Maha Theras Sona, Uttara, and the accompanying Maha Theras, the people of Suvannabhumi realised they were Buddha's disciples. The people were given moral guidelines by their Maha Theras to follow and put into practise. Sixty thousand people became Arahats after hearing the Dhamma from the MahaTheras; three thousand and five hundred men and one thousand and five hundred women became monks.

The Fifth arrival of the Buddha Sasana

Maha Thera Buddhaghosa, who was a native of Ghosa village in the Kingdom of Rajagaha and was born in the Buddhist Era of 930 or A.D. 386 (approximately), visited Sri Lanka at the invitation of his teacher, Maha Thera Revata, during the reign of King Mahanama of Sri Lanka, who reigned contemporaneously with King Thilygyaung of Bagan of Myanmar. Maha Thera Buddhaghosa lived in Maha Vihara and translated the Tipitaka, written in Sri Lankan, into the Magadha language. His translated work was delivered to King Dhammapala of Thaton in Ramaññadesa. That is the seventh time the Tipitaka in written form has arrived in Myanmar with the Buddha Sāsana.

Arrival of written Tipitaka in Tampadipa (Bagan)

In the Pyu Sriksetra dynasties, Buddha Sāsana flourished. Archaeological finds from places like SriKestra, Beithano, and Hanlin demonstrate that Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism coexisted at the time. The artefacts that were uncovered include figures and statues of the Mahayana Buddhist type, including three-headed and four-headed Brahma, Lokanatha deva (Bodhisata), Avalokestra, and Taya Devi. These figures and statues were also carved with images of Vishnu and Lashmi Devi. Rakhine Vesali and Ramaññadesa were two further locations where Buddha Sasana flourished. The Mahayana school of Buddhism brought Buddha Sasana to Bagan for the first time; it travelled there by land from the north. It has a touch of Hindu Brahminism. Additionally, there were Aries, or woodland monks, who led a carefree or sloppy existence. They practised and spread a corrupted version of Buddhism. When Anawrahta assumed the throne in A.D. 1044, he was determined to cleanse the Buddhism that predominated in Bagan. A Maha Thera from Thaton named Shin Arahan travelled to Bagan in A.D. 1053 with the noble goal of bringing the purest form of Buddhism. King Anawrahta transported the written Tipitakas, Buddha's relics, and missionary monks from Suvannabhumi to his capital in A.D. 1057 on the counsel of Shin Arahan. The significant occasions that indicate turning points in the religious and cultural history of Myanmar are the arrival of Shin Arahan in Bagan in A.D. 1053 and the arrival of Tipitakas and missionary monks in 1057. Buddhism in its purest form, Theravada Buddhism, or Buddhism as taught by knowledgeable monks and Elders using written Tiptakas as a guide, has been firmly established in Myanmar since these dates and is still thriving.

The Fifth and the Sixth Buddhist Synods

There have been six Buddhist Synods since the Buddha's Mahaparinibbāna (Death) up till the present. The Fifth and Sixth Synods, the last two, were held in Myanmar. The Fifth Buddhist Synod was conducted at Mandalay in A.D. 1871 by King Mindon (A.D. 1853–1878), the second-to-last monarch of Myanmar and a patron, supporter, and promoter of Theravada Buddhism. The Sixth Synod was held in Yangon in 1954 at the artificial colossus cave known as Maha Pasana Grotto, 83 years after the Fifth Synod. The Sixth Synod was attended by prominent monks from all over the world as well as Theravada Buddhist heads of state and administration. Thiri Mingala Kaba Aye Pagoda, Maha Pasana Grotto, and

all pertaining religious structures and buildings in Yangon remain as historic monuments of Myanmar's last two Buddhist Synods. Seven hundred and twenty-nine large marble slabs with Tipitaka inscriptions on both faces were installed in the spacious precincts of Mandalay's Maha Marasein Pagoda during the reign of King Mindon. In the Pyu City Kingdoms, Buddha Sasana flourished. Archaeological finds from places like Sri Kestra, Beithano, and Hanlin demonstrate that Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism coexisted at the time. On terra cotta votive tablets and stone plaques with carvings of Vishnu and Lashmi Devi, as well as three-headed and four-armed statues of Lokanatha deva (Bodhisata), Avalokestra, and Taya Devi, there are figures and statues of Mahayana Buddhist type. Archaeological finds from places like Sri Kestra, Beikthano, and Hanlin demonstrate that Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism coexisted at the time. The artefacts that were uncovered include figures and statues of the Mahayana Buddhist type, including three-headed and four-headed Brahma, Lokanatha deva (Bodhisata), Avalokestra, and Taya Devi. These figures and statues were also carved with images of Vishnu and Lashmi Devi. Rakhine Vesali and Ramannadesa were two further locations where Buddha Sasana flourished. The Mahayana school of Buddhism brought Buddha Sasana to Bagan for the first time; it travelled there by land from the north. It has a touch of Hindu Brahminism. Additionally, there were Aries, or woodland monks, who led a carefree or sloppy existence. They practised and spread a corrupted version of Buddhism. When Anawrahta assumed the throne in A.D. 1044, he was determined to cleanse the Buddhism that predominated in Bagan. A Maha Thera from Thaton named Shin Arahan travelled to Bagan in A.D. 1053 with the noble goal of bringing the purest form of Buddhism. King Anawrahta transported the written Tipitakas, Buddha's relics, and missionary monks from Suvannabhumi to his capital in A.D. 1057 on the counsel of Shin Arahan. The significant occasions that indicate turning points in the religious and cultural history of Myanmar are the arrival of Shin Arahan in Bagan in A.D. 1053 and the arrival of Tipitakas and missionary monks in 1057. Since these times, Theravada Buddhism, or Buddhism in its purest form as taught by erudite monks and elders and supported by recorded Tiptakas, has been firmly established in Myanmar and is still thriving today.

CONCLUSION

On the Dhamma Rakkhita Hill next to the Shwedagon Pagoda, a stupa known as Maha Vijaya Ceti was erected as a memorial to this outstanding accomplishment. The construction of the two identically shaped pagodas, one in Yangon and the other in Mandalay, known as the Buddha's sacred Tooth Relic Pagoda, may be listed among the many religious projects that the current government has undertaken. When the Buddha's precious Tooth Relic made two trips from the People's Republic of China to Myanmar in the years 1994 and 1996 for public worship and devotion, these two religious monuments were built to commemorate the auspicious occasions. The government and people of Myanmar are driven by the Theravada Buddhist religion's global expansion to establish a higher education institution that will train missionaries to preach the religion both domestically and globally. the outcome of the Sangha's coordinated efforts.

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Janeyya

**Ph.D.-Research Scholar, Department of History,
Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, Lucknow (U.P.) India.**