

**The Most Venerable
Mūla Mingun Jetavan Sayādawgyi
(1869-1955)**

The Most Venerable Mūla Mingun Jetavan Sayādawgyi was the teacher of the Taungpulu Sayādaw and the Mahāsi Sayādaw.

The systematic practice of Vipassanā as we do now began with Sayādawgyi. From his biography we learn that Sayādawgyi, while fulfilling his various duties such as teaching the monastics, managing daily chores in the monastery and so on, his aspiration for practice grew stronger day by day with sense of urgency. He vividly realized that the academic work alone couldn't help reach the goal of monkhood; only with practice could one reach the ultimate goal, nibbāna. In pursuit of the correct method to reach the goal, he approached to Venerable Mañjūsā with the humble request to teach him how to practice correctly for the realization of nibbāna. In response to his request, Venerable Mañjūsā said:

"No practice other than the development of mindfulness (*sati-paṭhāna*) can lead you to the attainment of *magga-phala-nibbāna* and can help you liberate from the torturous cycle of suffering."

Mingun Jetavan Sayādawgyi continued to study the discourses along with its Commentaries and Sub-commentaries. It is said that he came to know how to practice just from reading these texts. That happened in about 1908. He then taught his method to thousands of disciples including our great teacher Mahāsi Sayādaw. Nowadays, this method gained its worldwide repute.

So, the biography of Mingun Jetavan Sayādawgyi is the history of not only Mahāsi lineage but also the vipassanā practice itself. More importantly, it will also bring us the better understanding of vipassanā and its value.

Contents

Introduction by *Vaṇṇa Kyaw-htin U Ba Than*
Preface by *Taung-dwin Bhikkhu*
Biography of Translator *U Hla Myint*
Foreword by *U Hla Myint*
The Reason for Reprinting by *U Aung Mon (Myat Su Mon)*
The Reason for Translation in English by *Mūla Mingun Jetavan Paṭipatti Sāsanaḥita Association*

PART-I

Birthplace and Parents	1
Auspicious Region	3
Saintly Generation	3
In Great Favor	3
Enrolled in School	3
Burmese Buddhist Tradition	4
Different from Many Others	4
A Distinctive Student	5
Testing His Talent	6
To Novice-hood	6
Learning the <i>Dve-mātikā</i>	7
Five Volumes of Monastic Code	7
His Father, <i>U Nyo</i>	7
A Difficult Time	8
Leaving the Monastery	8
Conditioned by Past Kamma	8
Unexpected Condition	9
Family Commitment	9
<i>Pāramīs</i> Supportive of Renunciation	10
Approaching to Sayādaw U Lakkhaṇa	10

Full Ordination	10
Towards the Goal with No Difficulty	11
Moving to the Taung-paw-gyi-kyaung	11
Thorough Study	12
Handing over the Taung-paw-gyi-kyaung	12
To Mandalay in Pursuit of Higher Education	12
Moving to Different Institutes	13
Moving again to Mya-taung	13
Going down to Lower Burma	14
Entrusted with Vejuvan Monastery	14
Returning to Taung-paw-gyi-kyaung	14
Brave like a Lion	15
Returning to a Lay Life	16
A Lay Life to Live as Any Others	16
Heroic Personality	17
Vicissitudes of Life	17
Lay dress never fits him	17
Presumption	18
Teaching in Lep-pa-dan	18
Going back to Upper Burma	19
Habit of Reading	19
Alive Charcoal Covered by Ash	20
In Face of Various Commitments	20
An Insightful Hint	21
Practicing in Solitude	23
Moving to Tha-mone-chap Hermitage	24
A Son Born to One Mother in a Thousand	24

PART-II

A Historic Figure	27
Having Fulfilled His Purpose	28
Emergence and Submergence	28
Regret and Remorse	29
Born with Persistence	29
Thought of Teaching to His Relatives	29

In His Native Place	30
Making Fun of Him	30
Direct Response	31
Withdrawal without Success	31
Teaching Tirelessly	32
Throughout Burmese History	33
Pāramī Fulfilled Together	34
Not to Deviate from the Right Path	35
Constant Mindfulness	35
When They Were Back Home	36
One Pearl Beat after Another	37
Well Established in Dhamma	37
<i>U Khin</i> (Ka-nyut-kwin Township)	38
To Monkhood	39
To Practice Mindfulness (<i>Appamāda</i>)	39
<i>U San Dun's</i> Arrival at Mingun	40
How to Develop Mindfulness	40
Irreversible Stage	41
Propagating Dhamma	42
Propagation of Mindfulness	43
Method of Practice	43
Vipassanā in a Blaze of Glory	43
Ceaseless Cycle	44
Fascist Critics	45
Strong Faith Through Own Experience	45
Invitation from Myo-Hla	46
Going to Myo-Hla	47
Tireless Effort	47
Beating the Vipassanā Drum	48
Venerable Paññājota in Let-ba-dan	48
With Great Patience	49
In the Face of Wrong View	49
Going to Tha-ton	50
Stubborn Kelāsa!	51
The Way They Met Was a Miracle	52
Personality of Venerable Kelāsa	53

PART-III

The Commentary on <i>Peṭakopadesa Pāḷi</i>	75
Having Memorized <i>Peṭakopadesa Pāḷi</i>	75
The Commentary on <i>Peṭakopadesa</i> Published	77
<i>Peṭakopadesa</i> Inscribed on Marble Slabs	78

Knowing Nothing about Sayādawgyi	53
Moving to Sāsanaḥitajotika	54
To Establish a New Meditation Center	55
Discussion about Establishing a New Center	55
With Help of Commissioner <i>U Phoe Sa</i>	56
A Cottage Sponsored by Various Devotees	56
Named as Jetavan	57
King Manūhā	58
A Mission Accomplished	58
Ven. Kelāsa's Reluctant Departure	59
Mahāsi Sayādaw	60
Meeting with Sayādawgyi	60
Own Experience	61
Vipassanā Is All about Mindfulness	62
Even Divine Beings	62
Healing Power of Awakening Factors	63
Own Interpretation may deviate from the Path	63
A Question Posed by Ven. Sobhana	64
A Member of Shwe-kyin Order	65
To Be Excluded from Shwe-kyin Order	65
Another Condition	66
Again, Problem with <i>Sīmā</i> and <i>Kathina</i>	67
Even Fisherwomen Mimicking	67
Following the Steps of Noble Disciples	69
Like the Buddha and King Kosala	69
Mingun Sayādawgyi's Sāsana Principle	71
Return to Mingun	71
Further Contribution to the Pāḷi Scripture	72
Request for Translation of the Commentary	78
Some More Books	79
From Paṭisambhidā-magga Pāḷi Text	79
Forty Perspectives	80
Approaching to a Secluded Place	80
Back to Tha-ton Again	82
Three Volumes of Translation	82
Guide to Nibbāna	83
Compilation of <i>Vinicchaya</i>	83
The Commentary on <i>MilindaPañhā</i>	84
Progressive Vipassanā Insight	85
An Article on Phala Absorption	86
People from Everywhere Came to See Him	88
Points Made as to Bhikkhunī	91
Explanation of <i>Kathina</i>	92
Five Kinds of Cloth for Seven Preparatory Works	93
Three Kinds of Cloth Eligible for Kathina	93
Three Kinds of Cloth Ineligible for Kathina	94
Why Ineligible	94
Why Eligible	95
How Many Phenomena Come Along With Kathina?	95
Further Questions as to Bhikkhunī Order	96
A Commentary Passage Translated	97
On His Last Days	98
A Miracle of His Body	101
Contribution Made by <i>U Nu</i> and <i>U Ohn Khin</i>	102
Snake's Salute to Sayādawgyi	103
A Weird Snake	104
People Pled Aloud	105
Rightful Cremation	108
Relics Left	108
Sāsana Duties He Discharged	109
Setting an Example	110

PART-IV

The List of Sayādawgyi's Books	113
His Scriptural Teachers	114
His Vipassanā Teachers	115
Venerable Khemā of Kinn Taw-ya Kyaung	115
Life Lived with Vigilance (Mindfulness)	116
Keeping in Touch with His Best Friend	116
Getting into the Ultimate Peacefulness	117
Gazing Admiringly at Kinn Forest Sayādaw	118
Flying in Sky	119
A Royal Teacher	119
Not to Tell to Anyone	120
Up to Anāgāmi-phala (the 3 rd Fruition)	120
Thin-ga-zar Sayādaw's Request	121
Ale-taw-ya-Kyaung Sayādaw	121
Both Scripture and Practice	122
His Disciples	123
Sister Kusala	124
The Last Disciple	124
Many More Disciples	125
Half of Sāsana, a Turn of Good King	128
Totally Undeniable	129
Poem Composed by Old Sages	130
Below are Pāḷi Verses and their Translations Composed to arouse a sense of urgency with reference to the demise of Mingun Sayādawgyi	132

Introduction

When I read through the biography of Mūla Mingun Jetavan Sayādawgyi, I found how dynamically Sayādawgyi had carried out sāsana duties, how persistent and brave he had been and how much priority he had given to the propagation of true teachings without any religious prejudice.

Although the venerable author has got little experience of writing, the style of his writing well proves that the author has thoroughly collected the information about Sayādawgyi's life, done comprehensive research on it, and fully focused on the topic. So, this biography can be found very satisfyingly.

There are increasing numbers of people who have gained a breakthrough in the mindfulness meditation by following clear guidance given by Mūla Mingun Jetavan Sayādawgyi according to Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta. Subsequently, the meditation centers where the mindfulness meditation is taught are also increasing in number. Thus, the method of mindfulness has been known as 'the method of Mūla Mingun Jetavan Sayādawgyi'.

So, in the Union of Burma a kind of new Buddhist order has arisen by the name of Mingun Jetavan Order or Mingun Jetavan Tradition after Mūla Mingun Jetavan Sayādawgyi, in the same way as some other prominent Buddhist orders did, such as Shwe-kyin Order named after the most venerable Shwe-kyin Sayādawgyi, Pa-khuk-ku Order after the most venerable Pa-khuk-ku Sayādawgyi, and Oat-pho Dvāra-vādī Order after the most venerable Oat-pho Sayādawgyi.

Given this fact, it is reasonable to say that Mūla Mingun Jetavan Sayādawgyi is one of the greatest founders of historical Buddhist Orders (*gaya-samuṭṭhāpaka*). So, the name "Mingun Jetavan" will never fade away in the history of the Holy Order (*sāsana*). Undoubtedly, it will last forever like the sun and the moon. When writing a biography like this for new generations to learn about Sayādawgyi, the attempt made to describe the immeasurable qualities of Sayādawgyi who had accomplished both scripture and practice would be like an attempt made to take all the water out of the mighty ocean by using a blade of grass. Yet, this biography is really satisfying indeed because it has been written based on deep reverence to Sayādawgyi and with noble purpose of making "Mingun Jetavan" last forever like the rabbit's image impressed on the surface of the moon.

Nowadays, there are many devotees and disciples of Mūla Mingun Jetavan Sayādawgyi all over Burma. We will greatly appreciate if they kindly help revise this biography by adding more information to it in case it fails to meet their expectations so that this biography would be shined even brighter "Like the moon that fully shines in the cloudless sky (*vivaṭā'va virocanti*)."

14th day after the full moon of Tabaung, 1319 (18-Mar-1958)

U Ba Than (Maw-la-myaing)
Vaṇṇa Kyaw-htin
The 2nd Chief Editor
Kabar-aye, Rangon