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Abbreviations
 DN Dīgha Nikāya
 MN Majjhima Nikāya
 SN Saṃyutta Nikāya
 AN Aṅguttara Nikāya
 KN Khuddaka Nikāya

Introduction

I have tried in this book to give an account of the life of the Buddha and his doctrine as far as possible on the basis of the Pāli or Theravāda piṭaka. But as I show in the first two chapters, my approach to the ancient Buddhist literature is selective and much of the documentary material for my book have their sources in the *suttas* (Skt. *sūtras*) of the first two divisions, viz., the *Suttanta* and the *Vinaya* which most Western Pāli scholars believe to be the main storehouse of the original, authentic teachings of Lord Buddha. Owing to exigency of space, I have not named all the sources except for some little-known suttas in support of some unorthodox statements that are likely to be considered dubious or questionable by some readers.

One of my main objects in writing this book is to draw the attention of readers to some little-known but highly significant sayings of the Buddha (pp. 36, 120, 173 etc.). I do not find any reference to them either in the works of learned Burmese Buddhist monks or in those of the Western scholars that I have read. Perhaps I have not yet come across some English books on Buddhism that do mention them or it may be that the suttas in question have not escaped the notice of some writers who, however, do not believe them to have much to do with the Buddhādhamma. In any case I consider them rel-

evant to the central teachings of the Buddha and essential to right understanding. Many of these sayings of the Buddha fly in the face of the traditional, popular Buddhist beliefs and will certainly give the mainstream Buddhists much food for thought.

Another object that I have in mind is to help the reader understand Buddhism not so much from the standpoint of someone living in India of 6th century B.C., as from that of modern man in 20th century A.D. True, the message of the Buddha might possibly be more in tune with the mentality of his Indian contemporary than with the temperament of the modern civilized man. Nevertheless, given the immense expansion of knowledge the modern student of Buddhism is unquestionably in a better position to understand and appreciate the Buddha's essential teachings deeply and thoroughly. Hence I make no apology for relying on the writings of some Western intellectuals and have quoted their sayings on science, philosophy, psychology, etc. that echo the basic Buddhist teachings.

Another feature of the book that will, I hope, help the reader deepen the understanding of Buddhism is the brief account of the early Buddhist Sangha as portrayed in the *Vinaya piṭaka*. By and large the students of the Buddhādhamma take little interest in the *Vinaya* under the impression that it is meant exclusively for the monks. But Buddhism makes no distinction between the monk and the layman who are totally committed to a holy life. Indeed such a dedicated lay follower is labeled a *bhikkhu* (Skt. *bhikṣu*) or a *samaṇa* (Skt. *śramaṇa*) in the *Dhammapada*. Moreover, the Buddha emphasized man's social life as the major key to moral progress and his *Vinaya* teachings shed much light on the nature of the model society emblematic of Buddhist ideals and values.

I have added a few other little-known but important sayings of the Buddha in this English version of the Burmese book published in 1962. The book is the outcome of the long-time conflict between my intellectual and popular Burmese

Buddhist beliefs. As such, I hope it will provide my fellow-Buddhists with second thoughts about their orthodox views. But I do not think most of them will welcome the general drift of my writings that underscore the Buddha's pragmatic and realistic approach to the problems of life. Many will even shrug it off as an attempt to make the Buddhist teaching worldly and devoid of all the trappings of religion in the conventional sense of the term.

In any event I am not a scholar nor do I claim absolute certainty or infallibility in all my writings. I will consider it, however, well worth the time and energy I have spent on writing the book if it helps create in some readers the desire for further knowledge and understanding of Lord Buddha's teaching.

Aye Maung

Given the immense expansion of knowledge the modern student of Buddhism is unquestionably in a better position to understand and appreciate the Buddha's essential teachings deeply and thoroughly.

U Aye Maung (1914-2002)

was a writer whose writings are diverse from as psychology and philosophy to as science, religion and spirituality. This book is an abridged English version of his magnum opus *Buddha and Buddhavada* (Buddha and Buddhism) which, upon its first publication in 1965, excited quite a bit of controversy among Burmese Buddhist readers over its unorthodox views on Buddhism.