

The Chain of Teachers



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“The Mighty Ocean, the Earth So Broad”:
Vipassana Lineage in Myanmar¹

*Mahāsamuddo pathavī
pabbato anilo pi ca
upamāya na yujjanti
satthu varavimuttiyā.*

The mighty ocean, the earth so broad
The mountain peak or the wind
Are not adequate similes to describe
The awesome freedom of the Teacher.²

Gotama Buddha (624 BC—544 BC)
*Namo tassa bhavagavato arahato
sammāsambuddhassa³*



Venerable Ledi Sayadaw (1846—1923)

Venerable Ledi Sayadaw⁴
(1846—1923):

majestic benefactor

Foundational figure⁵ in transmission of
Theravada⁶ teachings

- ❖ 1846 Born in Saing-pyin village, Dipeyin township in Shwebo district (currently Monywa district), Upper Burma
- ❖ First teacher in recorded lineage; taught traditional meditation technique handed down from teacher to student in Myanmar over 23 centuries⁷
- ❖ 1866 Ordination as *bhikkhu* at age 20 with name *Bhikkhu Ñāṇa-dhāja* (“Banner of Wisdom”)
- ❖ Tireless scholar, writer and meditation instructor in Pāli and Burmese; composed treatises, poems and letters in response to requests from students to elucidate points of Dhamma⁸
- ❖ Rendered Pāli teaching into Burmese, making them accessible to all levels of society; texts still taught to Myanmar schoolchildren today⁹
- ❖ 1868-71 Participant in Fifth Buddhist Council convened by King Mindon-min in Mandalay; helped to translate parts of Abhidhamma
- ❖ 1886 Age 40, founded Ledi-tawya Monastery and Ledi Organization
- ❖ 1895 Made pilgrimage to sacred sites in India (Bodhgaya, Sarnath, Rajagaha, Savatthi, Lumbini, etc.)
- ❖ 1911 First to receive title *Aggamahā-pañḍita* (“foremost great scholar”)

- ❖ 1913-17 Assisted Pāli Text Society in English translations
- ❖ Founded many meditation centers and educational associations
- ❖ C. 1915 Opened floodgates of *sāsana* to householders by designating lay disciple Saya Thetgyi to teach Vipassana
- ❖ 1919 Eyesight failed at age 73; devoted last four years to practicing and teaching meditation
- ❖ 1923 Died age 77 at Ledi Sankyaung monastery in Pyinmanar on full moon day of Waso (July)¹⁰ in 57th year of monkhood
- ❖ Left behind immense repository of commentarial scholarship in Pāli and Burmese
- ❖ Voluminous treatises carved in over 800 marble slabs at Ledi-tawya monastery in Monywa¹¹

“He who knows Pāli needs no borrowed light.
When the sun is shining we do not need the moon.”¹²

From the beginning, the great benefactor Ven. Ledi Sayadaw had wished to widely distribute his dīpanīs [treatises], at home and abroad. Moreover, at a meeting of a major Buddhist organization abroad he gave guidance that it was high time especially to propagate the Buddha’s teachings, translated into various languages, all over the world.—excerpt, 2004 memorandum from Ledi Dīpanī Propagation Society¹³ in The Manuals of Buddhism.

Sources: The Manuals of Buddhism (The Expositions of the Buddha-Dhamma) by Mahā Thera Ledi Sayadaw, Aggamahā Pandita, D. Litt, edited and published by Mother Ayeyarwaddy Publishing House (Yangon), 2004; <http://www.vri.dhamma.org/general/ledisaw.html> and Sayagyi U Ba Khin Journal; The Manuals of Dhamma, Vipassana Research Institute (Igatpuri, India); Magganga-Dipani, The Manual of the Constitutents of the Noble Path, by Mahathera Ledi Sayadaw, Aggamahapandita, D. Litt., English Editorial Board of Union Buddha Sāsana Council (Yangon, Myanmar); <http://ubakhin.com/ledi/biograph.htm>

Saya Thetgyi (1873-1945): bridge-span between two eras

Foremost lay disciple of Ven. Ledi Sayadaw and teacher of Sayagyi U Ba Khin

- ❖ 1873 Born Po Thet on June 27th (Friday) in farming village of Pyaw Bwe Gyi, eight miles south of Rangoon
- ❖ Poor family, minimal formal schooling; eldest son of four children; age 11, father died; worked as child to help support his mother
- ❖ 1889 Married Ma Hmyin from family of landowners; joined wife’s family business including rice farming (rice from Pyaw Bwe Gyi was favorite of people of Rangoon); had one son and one daughter
- ❖ 1896 Age 23, learned *Ānāpāna* meditation from Saya Nyunt
- ❖ 1903 Cholera epidemic shattered idyllic village life, killing both children and other close relatives
- ❖ Seeking relief, became a wandering pilgrim/seeker at age 30; set out on quest to “find the deathless”
- ❖ Traveled for total of 13 years with devoted companion U Nyo, taking instruction in mountains and forests all over Burma. Encountering a poisonous snake one day, U Thet said to U Nyo: “If we are destined to die from a snake bite here in the Dhamma hall, we shall die together happily.”
- ❖ c. 1907—1914 Found his teacher, Ven. Ledi Sayadaw. Practiced at his teacher’s center in Upper Burma for seven years, supported by the earnings of farmland managed in his absence by wife Ma Hmyin and sister-in-law Ma Yin
- ❖ c. 1915 Ven. Ledi Sayadaw gave his wooden staff to U Thet, declaring to the assembly of monks: *Take note: ...This layperson is my great pupil U Po Thet...He is capable of teaching meditation like me. Those of you who wish to practice meditation...learn the technique from him and practice.*
- ❖ 1915 Thereafter known as Saya Thetgyi (respected teacher Thet)



Saya Thetgyi (1873-1945)

- ❖ 1915—1945 Taught meditation at family meditation compound in Pyaw Bwe Gyi, relieved of householder's duties by family members who ran family business
- ❖ 1937 Jan 8th First instruction of civil servant U Ba Khin in Pwa Bwe Gyi
- ❖ U Nu (later Prime Minister) and other high officials periodically took instruction at Pyaw Bwe Gyi center, invited by U Ba Khin
- ❖ 1945 Age 72, in declining health moved to Rangoon; stayed with disciple U Ohn near northern slope of Shwedagon Pagoda; used bomb shelter as meditation cave
- ❖ 1945 December, passed away in presence of his students, having taught for 30 years
- ❖ Remains cremated at Azani Hillock on northern slope of Shwedagon Pagoda where the royal white elephant of Konbaung Dynasty kings was stabled during *hti* hoisting ceremony in reign of King Mindon-min
- ❖ Known in Myanmar as *Anagam Saya Thetgyi* (Non-returner Saya Thet)
- ❖ His epochal spiritual journey became an archway connecting future lay practitioners to what had been primarily a monastic tradition

The seeds that [my Dhamma grandfather] has sown will keep on giving fruits for centuries together. [I tell] my students around the world who are developing in Dhamma: "You are working on behalf of Sayagyi U Ba Khin under the protection of Saya Thetgyi." Whatever tiny work this grandchild of Saya Thetgyi has done, the entire credit goes to Saya Thetgyi and Sayagyi U Ba Khin. -SN Goenka¹⁴

Sources: Sayagyi U Ba Khin Journal, Vipassana Research Institute (Igatpuri, India), 1991; unpublished English translation of Saya Thetgyi by Dhammacariya U Htay Hlaing; <http://www.vri.dhamma.org/general/thetgyi.html>
"Anāgam Sa Ya Thet Gyi," (English and Burmese), brief biographical sketch from Anagam Saya Thetgyi Retreat Center in Pyaw Bwe Gyi (2004); anecdot2.zip at <http://www.buddhanet.net/ftp07.htm>



Ven. Webu Sayadaw
(17 Feb 1896—26 June 1977)

Ven. Webu Sayadaw (17 Feb 1896—26
June 1977):

he who has practiced well¹⁵

Exemplary bhikkhu teacher; close friend &
advisor
of Sayagyi U Ba Khin

- ❖ One of most cherished and respected monks of 20th century Myanmar¹⁶
- ❖ 1896 Born 17th February in Ingyinbin (near Madaung Hia Station), small village near Shwebo in Upper Burma
- ❖ 1916 Age 20 Ordained as *bhikkhu* with name Shin Kumāra
- ❖ 1923 Age 27 Left monastery and Pāli studies to practice solitary meditation; lived as recluse in jungle for four years
- ❖ Taught and practiced, establishing monasteries in three main places among which he generally divided his time: Kyaukse Webu Yeiktha (July to Dec); Shwebo Aung Mye Yeiktha (Jan to March); birthplace Khin Oo, Ingyinpin Kammathan Yeiktha (April to June)
- ❖ Taught fundamentals of Buddhist practice, giving discourses up to ten times a day, always emphasizing same fundamentals: “If Ven. Webu Sayadaw gave ten thousand discourses in his life, then these points were expounded by him ten thousand times...He always explained the teaching in simple terms so that the ordinary person could understand.”¹⁷
- ❖ Said to have followed ascetic practice of never lying down; taught that sleeping is a waste of time¹⁸

- ❖ Undertook pilgrimages to sacred sites in India and Ceylon
- ❖ 1941 Chance meeting with Sayagyi U Ba Khin in Kyaukse, initiating a pivotal friendship lasting the rest of Sayagyi's life, 30 years¹⁹
- ❖ 1953 Visited I.M.C., newly opened center of Sayagyi U Ba Khin, on unusual first journey to Lower Myanmar; thereafter visited Lower Myanmar yearly
- ❖ 1954 Former President Sao Shwe Taik formed association to organize Sayadaw's yearly visits to Rangoon
- ❖ Visited I.M.C. in 1955, 1957, 1958, 1960 where he meditated and gave Dhamma talks
- ❖ Gave his blessing to Sayagyi's mission, advised him on teaching, and encouraged him to teach more foreigners²⁰
- ❖ 1977 26th June Age 81 Passed away at meditation center in Ingyinbin, birthplace, seven years after U Ba Khin
- ❖ Treasure-trove of discourses available in English translation²¹
- ❖ 1976 Addressed gathering of Vipassana students on fifth year anniversary of U Ba Khin's demise, Jan 19th²²
- ❖ Considered to be *arahant* (freed from the wheel of suffering)

In June 1953, the Venerable Sayadaw came to the meditation center in Inya Myaing Road and resided there for exactly seven days. During that time, the Sayadaw gave the cooling medicine of the Deathless. The Sayadaw will also remember that, having sown very special seeds for the Sāsana, he began to actively spread the Teachings. Since that time...the Venerable Sayadaw has traveled to many places all over Myanmar and has benefited beings beyond measure.

—from U Ba Khin, letter to Ven. Webu Sayadaw, 14 Dec 1959²³

Sources: The Way to Ultimate Calm, Selected Discourses of Webu Sayadaw, translated by Roger Bischoff, Buddhist Publication Society (Kandy), 2001; <http://www.ubakhin.com/Webu/WEBU00.html>
Sayagyi U Ba Khin Journal; <http://www.vri.dhamma.org/general/webusaw.html>

Sayagyi U Ba Khin (6 March 1899 to 19 Jan 1971): striker of the gong²⁴ Impeccable government servant, householder saint

- ❖ 1899 Born 6th March (Monday) in Rangoon to family of modest means
- ❖ Excelled in school, became proficient in English
- ❖ Unable to attend university due to mother's death and father's ill health
- ❖ 1917 left studies to start work
- ❖ Became accounts clerk in Accountant General's office
- ❖ 1937 Jan 8th Took leave to practice Vipassana instruction from Saya Thetgyi, risking job and possibly career
- ❖ Upon return from seven days at Pyaw Bwe Gyi center, received promotion²⁵ and continued advancing to posts of greater responsibility²⁶
- ❖ 1941 Historic meeting with Ven. Webu Sayadaw near Kyaukse in Upper Burma; the Sayadaw exhorted Sayagyi: *You must start teaching now. You have acquired good paramī and you must teach the Dhamma to others. Do not let people who meet you miss the benefits of receiving this teaching. You must not wait. You must teach: teach now!*
- ❖ Saya Thetgyi gave blessing for U Ba Khin to teach: *I am like the doctor who can only see you at certain times. But U Ba Khin is like the nurse who will see you any time.*
- ❖ 1945 December: death of his teacher Saya Thetgyi
- ❖ 1948 Jan 4th Appointed Account General in newly independent Union of Burma
- ❖ 1951 Founded Accountant General Vipassana Association²⁷



Sayagyi U Ba Khin
(6 March 1899 to 19 Jan 1971)

- ❖ Early 1950s Chairman of Buddha Sāsana Council subcommittee for *Paṭipatti* (practical application of Buddha’s teaching; meditation)
- ❖ 1952 Opened International Meditation Centre (I.M.C.); his innovation to construct pagoda with meditation cells instead of solid center²⁸
- ❖ 1953 I.M.C. sanctified by visit of Ven. Webu Sayadaw
- ❖ 1954-56 Served at Sixth Buddhist Council in Rangoon
- ❖ 1955 September First meditation course taught to SN Goenka²⁹
- ❖ 1965 June 18th Took the robes of *dullabha bhikkhu* for ten days under Ven. Webu Sayadaw at Ingyinbin forest retreat under the name U Kusala³⁰
- ❖ One of few meditation teachers instructing in English; taught Vipassana to foreigners and answered inquiries from foreign visitors and delegations curious about Burmese Buddhist practice
- ❖ Human dynamo: held up to four government directorships simultaneously³¹ at same time as actively guiding meditation center
- ❖ Known for his integrity and efficiency³²
- ❖ Delivered lectures later distributed to Burmese embassies around the world (including “What Buddhism Is” and others)
- ❖ 1971 Jan 19th Died of sudden illness in same month he received Dhamma from his teacher 34 years earlier
- ❖ Progenitor of over one hundred international centers “in the tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin” established since his death
- ❖ His immense contribution to the betterment of humanity sprang from his ardent conviction that “the clock of Vipassana has struck for the revival of Buddha-Dhamma Vipassana in practice”³³

Your Sayagyi never died. A person like your Sayagyi will not die. You may not see him now, but his teaching lives on. Not like some persons who, even though they are alive, are as if dead—who serve no purpose and who benefit none. —Ven. Webu Sayadaw to students of U Ba Khin shortly after his demise in 1971

Sources: <http://www.vri.dhamma.org/general/subk.html>; <http://www.ubakhin.com>
<http://www.vri.dhamma.org/general/webusaw.html>

“The Essentials of Buddha-Dhamma in Meditative Practice”;

Maha Bodhi U Ba Khin Memorial Number (April 1972); Sayagyi U Ba Khin Journal; The Way to Ultimate Calm; The Anecdotes of Sayagyi U Ba Khin, <http://www.skepticfiles.org/mys1/anecdote.htm>

SN Goenka (born Jan 1924): a teacher for the world

Munificent messenger³⁴, friend in welfare³⁵,
son of Myanmar³⁶

- ❖ 1924 January Born Satya Narayan Goenka in Mandalay
- ❖ 1940 Joined family business; became leading industrialist
- ❖ Accompanied Burmese trade delegations as advisor on international tours; leader of Hindu community; head of literary society and charitable organizations
- ❖ 1942 Married Ilachi Devi. Japanese occupied Burma, endangering Indian residents. Walked to safety with family members to border of India. Lived in India for the duration of the war, afterwards returning to Burma
- ❖ 1954-56 Organized catering for vegetarian delegates of Sixth Buddhist Council in Rangoon
- ❖ 1955 September: In first year of the Second *Sāsana*³⁷ took first Vipassana course under Sayagyi U Ba Khin³⁸
- ❖ 1964 Government nationalized private industry, taking over his extensive financial holdings
- ❖ 1964-1969 “Golden years” of daily study and meditation at his teacher’s center³⁹
- ❖ 1969 Authorized as teacher by Sayagyi U Ba Khin⁴⁰; granted special visa to travel to India to teach Vipassana to his parents
- ❖ 1969 July: First Vipassana course (Bombay), initiating fulfillment of Sayagyi’s volition to pay back debt of gratitude to India⁴¹
- ❖ 1969-1979 Stayed in India, teaching 161 ten-day courses before teaching abroad
- ❖ 1974 Founded main center in Igatpuri, India (Vipassana International Academy, Dhamma Giri)
- ❖ 1979 Granted Indian passport, allowing international travel; thereby lost Burmese citizenship
- ❖ 1979 First Vipassana course outside of India (Gaillon, France)



S. N. Goenka (born Jan 1924)

- ❖ 1981 Founded Vipassana Research Institute (Igatpuri, India)
- ❖ 1990 November: Received in Myanmar as guest of state after absence of 21 years
- ❖ 1990 to present (2005): Periodic stays in Myanmar to pay respect, study and teach Dhamma
- ❖ 1994 Tihar Jail, New Delhi: Conducted course for 1100 prisoners (fulfilling Sayagyi's prediction that Goenka would one day teach over one thousand people⁴²); inaugurated permanent Vipassana center inside Tihar Jail
- ❖ Master of *pariyatti* and *paṭipatti*, prolific writer and poet (like his Dhamma great grandfather, Ven. Ledi Sayadaw); composes in Hindi, Rajasthani, Pāli and English
- ❖ Free worldwide distribution of *Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana Tipiṭaka*, "biggest collection of Pāli literature in the world"⁴³
- ❖ 1997 Inauguration of Global Pagoda, Mumbai: crowning project of a life of accomplishments⁴⁴
- ❖ 1999 Centenary year of birth of U Ba Khin: launched several ambitious projects⁴⁵
- ❖ Founder of over permanent practice 130 centers; over 800 assistant instructors; teachings translated into 30 languages, taught in over 65 countries to people from over 100 countries;
- ❖ Married for 63 years; six sons; devoted head of large family; Mrs Goenka accompanies him when traveling and teaching
- ❖ Recorded works add monumental storehouse to the world's sacred literature⁴⁶; honorary doctorate degree of D. Litt. from Nav Nalanda Maha Vihar (India)
- ❖ Granted the title *Mahā Saddhamma Jotika Dhāja*⁴⁷ by government of Myanmar, highest honor accorded to lay teacher
- ❖ 2006 Granted the title of *Jina Sāsana Sobhaṇa Pa ipatti Dhāja* (the banner of the practice of Dhamma that adorns the Sāsana of the Buddha) by the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka
- ❖ His wellspring is gratitude: *It is all Sayagyi's Dhamma strength*⁴⁸

I get more and more convinced that it is [Sayagyi's] mettā (loving-kindness) force which is giving me all the inspiration and strength

to serve so many people. Obviously the force of Dhamma is immeasurable.⁴⁹—SN Goenka



Mr Satya Narayan Goenka,
Mrs Ilachi Devi Goenka

(Endnotes)

¹ The Mighty Ocean, the Earth so Broad: Vipassana Lineage in Myanmar
Our gratitude to all the teachers of Dhamma from Sakyamuni Gotama the Buddha to Sayagyi U Ba Khin is boundless. Without the dissemination of the Dhamma by them and without their safeguarding it in its pristine purity for so many centuries, how could we have got this invaluable gem of Dhamma in our present life?

—SN Goenka, p. 2, Vipassana Pagoda Souvenir, Global Pagoda Foundation (Mumbai), 1997

Practitioners of Vipassana as taught by Sayagyi U Ba Khin (1899-1971) are inheritors of a living tradition which traces its origins to a line of *bhikkhu* teachers in Myanmar. In a 1991 interview SN Goenka outlined the known lineage:

Sayagyi [U Ba Khin] was the appointed teacher of a tradition. His teacher was Saya Thetgyi, a farmer who lived on the opposite side of the Rangoon River. Saya Thetgyi's teacher was Ledi Sayadaw, a very learned monk and very renowned master teacher of Vipassana... The tradition stretches back before that, but we no longer know the teachers' names.... We use the name U Ba Khin [to describe the tradition] because he was the most recent teacher.

—p. 170, "In the Tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin," Sayagyi U Ba Khin Journal

The worldwide Vipassana network (www.dhamma.org) centered at the Vipassana International Academy (in Igatpuri, India) offers courses "in the tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin as taught by SN Goenka." The Ṅāḍḍa Dhāḍḍa Vipassana center (Monywa, Myanmar), a sister center, describes its courses as "in the tradition of Ven. Ledi Sayadaw as taught by SN Goenka."

For further explanation of the lineage see "Chain of Teachers" in Sayagyi U Ba Khin Journal and at Global Pagoda website (<http://www.globalpagoda.org>); biographical sketches at VRI website (<http://www.vri.dhamma.org/general/subk.html>) and "The Anecdotes of Sayagyi U Ba Khin, II" at <http://www.buddhanet.net/ftp07.htm>

² The awesome freedom of the Teacher

—p. 74, Gemstones of the Good Dhamma by Ven. S. Dhammika, The Wheel Publication No. 342-344, Buddhist Publication Society (Kandy), 1987

³ Namo tassa bhavagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa

"Homage to the liberated, the all-conquering, the fully self-enlightened." —p. 99, The Discourse Summaries by SN Goenka

This traditional invocation has a long history. It occurs a number of times in the Tipiṭaka and so derives from the time of the Buddha. It is used as an invocation

(such as at the beginning of every book of the Pāli Canon) as well as an expression of homage to the Buddha. There are thirty or forty instances in the *Sutta Piṭaka* where Brahmins, kings, and householders make this exclamation in gratitude for a teaching the Buddha has given. For example, in the *Dīgha-nikāya* it is chanted three times by Sakka, king of the gods after the Buddha answered six questions that Sakka did not understand (*Sakkapañha Sutta*, D. II.213.) The Pāli words used to describe this are *udāna* and *udāesi* (“he exclaims a joyous utterance”).

Goenkaji chants it at the beginning of every teaching of Dhamma. The lovely film “Pilgrimage to the Sacred Land” (Karuna Films, Ltd., 2002) opens with Goenkaji, the Bhikkhu Sangha and laypeople in Myanmar chanting this traditional *udāna*.

⁴ Venerable Ledi Sayadaw

The title *Sayadaw* means “venerable teacher.” It was originally given to important elder monks (*Theras*) who instructed the king in Dhamma. Later it became the title of highly respected monks in general. Ledi Sayadaw means “noble teacher from Ledi.”

⁵ Venerable Ledi Sayadaw (1846–1923), foundational figure

For Burmese Buddhists, Venerable Ledi Sayādaw needs no introduction, since his fame is legendary....[he] is deservedly famous for his expositions, of which he wrote more than seventy....The Venerable Ledi Sayādaw was the “father” of the insight meditation tradition in Burma. Before he became famous, only a few monks practiced insight meditation, and even fewer lay people.

--Bhikkhu Pesala (editor), p.v, *The Manual of the Excellent Man (Uttamapurisa Dīpani)* by Venerable Ledi Sayadaw, Buddhist Publication Society (Kandy), 2000
The Manuals of Buddhism (Mother Ayeyarwaddy Publishing House, 2004) opens with this list of epithets for Ven. Ledi Sayadaw:

- The most eminent and highly respected teacher of Tipiṭaka
- The most gifted and summit scholar
- The bravest and boldest author
- The great pioneer meditation master
- The most excellent preacher of Dhamma
- The most admired and brightest eye of the West

When the Buddha gained enlightenment, he gave discourses after discourses to beings for up to 45 vassa (or years) before passing away and entering parinibbāna. He left his teachings, the Dhamma, to represent him after his demise; so the Buddha can be deemed still alive, so to speak. The Great Benefactor Ven. Ledi Sayadaw making selections from the corpus of the Buddha’s teachings and expounding on them, had authored 100-plus treatises called dīpanīs in line with what the Buddha taught, disseminating the true knowledge of the Dhamma in the process.

From the beginning, the great benefactor Ven. Ledi Sayadaw had wished to widely distribute his dīpanīs, at home and abroad. Moreover, at a meeting of a major Buddhist organization abroad he gave guidance that it was high time especially to propagate the Buddha’s teachings, translated into various languages, all over the world.

— Ledi Dīpanī Propagation Society, in introduction to *The Manuals of Buddhism*

(*The Expositions of the Buddha-Dhamma*) by Mahā Thera Ledi Sayadaw, Aggamahā Pandita, D. Litt.; edited and published by Mother Ayeyarwaddy Publishing House (Yangon), 2004

⁶ Transmission of teachings of the Theravada

The tradition deriving from the original Pāli teachings of the Buddha is called the Theravada, or “Teachings of the Elders.” The only one of the early schools to have survived into the present, it is currently the dominant form of Buddhism in Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia and Laos.

Myanmar is Burma is one of the few countries in the world where Theravada Buddhism still survives in its original form. The bhikkhus (monks) of Burma make every effort to preserve the Theravada Buddhist teachings. —from Roger Bischoff’s introduction to his translations of discourses of Ven. Webu Sayadaw: <http://www.ubakhin.com/Webu/WEBU00.html>

⁷ Traditional meditation technique handed down from teacher to student in Burma over 23 centuries

According to the Pāli scriptures, the Venerable Gavampati established the Buddha-sāsana (teachings) in Suvannabhūmi in the eighth year after the parinibbāna of the Buddha. However, the pure teaching of the Buddha was really established in Suvannabhūmi after the Third Dhamma Council under the patronage of Emperor Asoka, when the Venerable Mossaliputta Tissa sent Dhamma dūtas (Dhamma messengers) to different countries...The arahants Soṇa and Uttara were sent to Suvannabhūmi....It was then that the Ganges of Dhamma flowed affluently here, and the land of Myanmar was sanctified....This landmark historical event not only benefited Myanmar, but was a boon to India as well. As a result of the authentic words of the Buddha and the liberating technique of Vipassana being preserved in its pristine purity for about twenty-three centuries, India and the entire world were benefited.

—p. 137, “Benevolent Baba” by SN Goenka in *125 Years in Dhamma Land 1877-2002*

⁸ Composed treatises, poems and letters in response to requests from students to elucidate points of Dhamma

A Manual of the Excellent Man (Uttamapurisa Dīpanī)* is a good example. This treatise stemmed from a written petition in March 1900 from Maung Thaw (Office Clerk of the Inspector of Schools, Mandalay) requesting clarification of doctrinal aspects and advice on how “one may advance from being a blind worldlyling to become a wise and virtuous person.” It is fortunate that Sayadaw’s stirring response made its way to English language publication a century later.

*by Ven. Ledi Sayādaw, Buddhist Publication Society (Kandy), 2000

⁹ Rendered Pāli teaching into Burmese, making them accessible to all levels of society; texts still taught to Myanmar schoolchildren today

In answering questions sent him by Mrs. Rhys Davids of the Pali Text Society, Ven. Ledi Sayadaw said, “I have written a book called Paramattha-sankhepa (a Burmese translation of the Abhidhammattha-sangaha in verse form) that even young girls can learn easily in four

or five months. Another book, *Sadda-sankhepa*, also in verse, helps a beginner to learn Pali in five or six months. My *Vinayasankhepa*, again in verse, helps the bhikkhus to learn the rules and duties of a bhikkhu in two-months' time."

—from Anecdotes of Sayagyi U Ba Khin II, <http://www.buddhanet.net/ftp07.htm>

¹⁰ The full moon day of Waso

The full moon of Waso (July) is a sacred day. On this day *Bodhisatta* Siddhattha (the future Buddha) is said to have been conceived and to have made his Great Renunciation. On this day he set the wheel of Dhamma in motion by teaching the first discourse, the *Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta*. It is also the start of the traditional rainy season or "Lent." In Myanmar, householders honor this day with the donation of Waso robes to the *bhikkhus* in a nation-wide celebration where offerings are made on a grand scale, including gifts of the four requisites: robes, medicines, food and residential buildings. Monasteries all over the country are filled with lay people paying their respects and making offerings. See description in "Dhammacakka Day, The Full Moon of Waso" <http://www.ubakhin.com/nletter/DHAMMACA.html>

¹¹ Voluminous treatises carved in over 800 marble slabs at Ledi-tawya monastery ("monastery for the gladdening of good people") in Monywa

Throughout the world it is well known that at Mandalay in Burma in 1868-71, during the reign of King Min-don-min (1852-1877), the Fifth Great Buddhist Council was held and as a result the whole of the Pāli Tipiṭaka and its Commentaries was carved on 729 marble slabs in order that the Teaching might be preserved. It is not, however, so well known, outside Burma, that a similar mark of respect for the works of Venerable Ledi Sayadaw was made, by his supporters, at Monywa in Upper Burma, after his death. This recognition and treatment of a Buddhist monk's works must be unique and gives some indication of the immense importance attached to his writings.

—S.S. Davidon, p.xi of *Maggaṅga Dīpanī*, The Manual of the Constitutents of the Noble Path by Mahāthera Ledi Sayadaw (revised and edited by English Editorial Board of Union Buddha Sāsana Council, 1961); republished as *Dhamma-dāna*, 1984

¹² "He who knows Pāli needs no borrowed light.

When the sun is shining we do not need the moon."

—from the great German scholar K.E Neumann in his *Introduction to Majjhima Nikaya*; quoted in

"The Myanmar Contribution to the Spread of Theravada Buddhism throughout the World" by Professor U Ko Lay, Vipassana Department, Faculty of Pattipatti, Yangon, 1998 (article in full at <http://www.buddhismtoday.com/english/world/country/007-burma3.htm>)

¹³ 2004 memorandum from Ledi Dīpanī Propagation Society

—from Introduction to The Manuals of Buddhism (The Expositions of the Buddha-Dhamma) by Mahā Thera Ledi Sayadaw, Aggamahā Pandita, D. Litt.; edited and published by Mother Ayeyarwaddy Publishing House (Yangon), 2004

¹⁴ Whatever tiny work this grandchild of Saya Thetgyi has done, the entire credit goes to Saya Thetgyi and Sayagyi U Ba Khin. —SN Goenka —from an informal talk given by SN Goenka at the meditation center of Saya Thetgyi in Pyaw-Bwe Gyi, Myanmar (in English, translated into Burmese) on 13 January 2000

¹⁵ He who has practiced well

In the *Saṅgha-vandanā* (homage to the Sangha which describes the characteristics of the Order), the Enlightened One declares: *Supaṭipanno Bhavagato sāvaka-saṅgho.* (Those who have practiced well form the order of disciples of the exalted one.) —Dhajagga Sutta, *Samyutta Nikāya*, XI (I).3

¹⁶ One of the most cherished and respected monks of the twentieth century in Myanmar

The Burmese veneration of monks may be observed in bold relief in the case of those especially pious monks who, it is believed, have achieved special spiritual power and/or those sates characteristic of the ar.ya [sic], the saint destined for nirvana. The fame of such monks is nationwide, people coming to pay them homage from all parts of the country, as well as from foreign countries. Perhaps the most famous of such monks is the Weibu Hsaya: do, abbot of the Weibu monastery. Periodically, he travels to the larger towns and cities in Burma, where for a few days or a week he holds special devotional meetings at which he delivers sermons, leads the faithful in prayer, and offers them the precepts. For the period when he is resident in the town, he himself collects his daily alms on foot. It is on these daily alms-rounds that the veneration of monks is expressed in its most dramatic, even ecstatic, form.

In Rangoon—Burma's capital and largest city—his rounds take place each day in a different section of the city. His announced itinerary draws such large crowds that—as with an American presidential cavalcade—motor traffic through that part of the city comes to a halt: streets are cordoned off by traffic police as the monk and his entourage walk through them between rows of the faithful who are lined up for one or two miles to do homage to the holy man.

Leaving his temporary residence in the early morning, he is driven to the place where he is to commence his alms-collections. Following behind is a motorcade of cars, buses, and trucks, all of which are required to hold the food and other gifts with which he is inundated. Prior to his arrival, the faithful spread mats strewn with flowers over the entire stretch of streets on which he will walk. One layman holds a white (royal) umbrella over the abbot's head as he walks; another fans him; others carry large baskets for collecting the dana offered to him, for although he carried his begging bowl, it obviously could not begin to hold the tons of gifts he receives. When the baskets are filled, they are emptied into the trucks that follow the procession; as one basket-carrier moves to the truck, another takes his place beside the abbot. The alms are later distributed among the poor.

—pp. 402-403 *Buddhism and Society: A Great Tradition and Its Burmese Vicissitudes* by Melford E. Spiro, University of California Press (Berkeley and Los Angeles), 1982

¹⁷ He always explained the teaching in simple terms so that the ordinary person could understand

—p. 3 *The Way to Ultimate Calm: Selected Discourses of Webu Sayadaw* by Roger Bischoff, Buddhist Publication Society (Kandy), 2001

¹⁸ Said to have followed ascetic practice of never lying down; taught that sleeping is a waste of time

There is a set of thirteen ascetic practices called the dhutaṅga that are often taken up by monks living in solitude. They are designed to combat laziness and indulgence.... Ven. Webu Sayadaw is said to have followed this practice of never lying down all his life. He taught that effort was the key to success, not only in worldly undertakings but also in meditation, and that sleeping was a waste of time.

—p. 5, *The Way to Ultimate Calm*

¹⁹ Initiating a pivotal friendship lasting the rest of Sayagyi's life, 30 years

This radiant friendship, full of reward for future generations, brings to mind the Buddha's comments:

"It is the whole of this holy life—this friendship, companionship and association with the good. Of a meditator, Ānanda, who is a friend, companion and associate of the good it is to be expected that he will cultivate and seriously practice the Noble Eightfold Path."

²⁰ Gave his blessing to Sayagyi's mission, advised him on teaching, and encouraged him to teach more foreigners

Sayagyi used to consult Webu Sayadaw on matters connected with his teaching, and when he wrote a treatise in Burmese entitled The Basic Study of the Buddha's Teachings and Their Correct Application, he submitted it to Webu Sayadaw for approval in 1953.... Webu Sayadaw approved the text... saying... "I believe that this booklet will spread the fragrance and the light of the Sāsana as it is agreement with the aims of true Buddhists." (pp.9-10)

In Dec 1959, U Ba Khin extended an invitation to Ven. Webu Sayadaw to honour I.M.C. with a visit:

"...The Venerable Sayadaw has seen for himself...the success of our work at our meditation centre. He has seen the many foreigners from all over the world who have been given the Dhamma by his disciple....[We request] that you honour the International Meditation Centre with your presence together with your Saṅgha for the benefit and development of the Sāsana, for the benefit and development of beings, and in order to bring inspiration." Webu Sayadaw stayed at I.M.C. for five days, at which time he gave the Triple Refuge to an American student who was meditating for a month.

"Ven. Webu Sayadaw was very happy about this and urged Sayagyi to teach more foreigners." (pp.22-23)

—from *The Way to Ultimate Calm*

²¹ Treasure-trove of discourses available in English translation

His refreshing simplicity, his patience, his lovely sense of humour, and his humility—all of which are revealed in the dialogues with his audience—illuminate a side of Buddhism that cannot be perceived by reading treatises and texts.

—from Introduction to *The Way to Ultimate Calm: Selected Discourses of Webu Sayadaw* by Roger Bischoff, Buddhist Publication Society (Kandy), 2001

All English-speaking students of the Buddha are indebted to Roger Bischoff for his

translations of discourses of Ven. Webu Sayadaw. They give a rare and unendingly engaging glimpse into the relationship between the *bhikkhus* and laity of a Dhamma country. More importantly, they are an invaluable repository of practical wisdom from a modern-day saint. See also <http://www.ubakhin.com/Webu/WEBU00.html>

²² 1976 Addressed gathering of Vipassana students on fifth year anniversary of U Ba Khin's demise, Jan 19th

This remarkable event is documented in an article published in two books:

"Vipassana Students Meet with the Venerable Webu Sayadaw," Sayagyi U Ba Khin Journal and "Discourse to a Group of Western Students," *The Way to Ultimate Calm*. It also appears at the website: <http://www.ubakhin.com/Webu/WEBU00.html>

²³ The Venerable Sayadaw has traveled to many places all over Myanmar and has benefited beings beyond measure

—p.23, *The Way to Ultimate Calm*

²⁴ Striker of the gong

Sayagyi had a strong conviction "the time-clock of Vipassana has now struck—that is, for the revival of Buddha-Dhamma Vipassana in practice" and directed his colossal energy towards its fulfillment.

Sayagyi U Ba Khin was very aware that he lived at a crucial moment in history. For the first time ever, human beings had the power to destroy the world and all who lived in it; that was the dark side of his time. But there was also a bright side: two and a half millennia had passed since Gotama Buddha had started the Wheel of Dhamma rotating, and (according to the old prophecy) now was the time for the pure technique of Vipassana...to return from Myanmar to its motherland of India, and from there to go to countries around the world.

—U Htin Toon, in R.I.T. (Rangoon Institute of Technology) Alumnus website: <http://www.ex-rit.org/rit.asp?i=6&f=An%20article%20from%20U%20Tin%20Htoon.htm>

What a strong Dhamma volition he had! "I have to pay back the debt of gratitude to the country of origin from where we get this invaluable jewel. Today, what is happening in this country?" When he used to read newspapers...we saw how much compassion he had: "Oh, this country where Buddha arises, this country where pure Dhamma arises, what is happening there? People are quarrelling, fighting in the name of Dhamma: 'My religion, your religion.'What is happening to this country? It is my duty to pay back the debt of gratitude... If they get this wonderful Dhamma, the whole country will come out of the misery. There is no other way."

—from "Gratitude to Sayagyi U Ba Khin" by SN Goenka, <http://www.vri.dhamma.org/newsletters/nl9905.html>

²⁵ Upon return from Pyaw Bwe Gyi center, received promotion

When U Ba Khin returned to his office, he was worried that he might find an order of dismissal. He found an envelope on his desk, but when he opened it, he was surprised to find he had been promoted. Up to that time, Burma had been a province of India in the British

Empire, but the two countries were separated administratively in 1937....a search was made for find qualified Burmese to take positions of responsibility. So U Ba Khin was chosen for the post of Special Office Superintendent.

—from “Sayagyi U Ba Khin,” The Anecdotes of Sayagyi U Ba Khin, II at <http://www.buddhanet.net/ftp07.htm>

²⁶ Continued advancing to posts of greater responsibility

Between 1937 and 1948 when Burma gained independence, U Ba Khin held several different posts: Accounts Office, Burma Railways, 1941; Director of Accounts and Audit, 1942-1945; Assistant Account General, 1945; Deputy Account General, 1947; Chief Accounts Office, Civil Supplies Management Board, 1947.

—from “Sayagyi U Ba Khin,” The Anecdotes of Sayagyi U Ba Khin, II at <http://www.buddhanet.net/ftp07.htm>

²⁷ 1950 Founded Accountant General Vipassana Association

Sayagyi initially taught Vipassana in a designated room in the Accountant General’s office. In 1952, the activities were moved to the new center. The aims of the Vipassana Association were:

1. To carry out to the extent possible respectful acts towards the Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha in accordance with Buddhist tradition;
2. To permit the office staff, their relatives and friends to meditate on suitable occasions with the permission of the Meditation-Teacher;
3. To teach in a practical way Samatha and Vipassana Meditation to foreign students who are interested in the practice of meditation. For this purpose this Meditation Center shall be known as the International Meditation Center.

—from “How the IMC Rangoon was Founded and Developed,” The Anecdotes of Sayagyi U Ba Khin, <http://www.skepticfiles.org/mys1/anecdote.htm>

²⁸ His innovation to construct pagoda with meditation cells instead of solid center Sayagyi was perhaps the first person in modern times to build a hollow pagoda with meditation cells in it instead of the usual solid pagoda. The pagoda at I.M.C. is the forerunner of many pagods that are being built on the same principle...All these unique pagodas are Sayagyi’s ingenious innovation. –p. 66, Fifty Years of Dhamma Service by SN Goenka

²⁹ 1955 September: First meditation course taught to SN Goenka

See “Forty Years of a New Life” by SN Goenka (<http://www.vri.dhamma.org/newsletters/nl9711.html>)

³⁰ 1965 June 18th: Took the robes of dullabha bhikkhu for ten days under Ven. Webu Sayadaw at Ingyinbin forest retreat under the name U Kusala
Dullabha bhikkhu means “the difficult-to-attain state of being a monk.”
—pp. 24-26, The Way to Ultimate Calm
Kusala means “skilful.”

³¹ Human dynamo: at times held up to four government directorships simultaneously

...between June 1956 to August 1959 he held three or four separate sanctioned posts all at the same time. These posts were of the status of Head of a Department, including the Chairmanship of the State Agricultural Marketing Board and the O.S.D., Ministry of Trade Development. Sayagyi, in explaining how he could discharge his multifarious duties, stated thus: “My own case may be cited as an example. If I have to say something here about myself, it is with no other motive whatsoever but to illustrate just what practical benefits can accrue to a person practising Buddhist Meditation. The events are factual and, of course, one cannot deny the facts.” —from The Anecdotes of Sayagyi U Ba Khin, <http://www.skepticfiles.org/mys1/anecdote.htm>

³² Known for his integrity and efficiency

The official machinery of the country then...had been corroded and impaired by the rust of greed, and the right man was appointed to repair it. U Ba Khin organised the Departments so well that they began to function with great efficiency, neatness, fruitfulness and harmony. It appeared as if the spirit of Dhamma had pervaded them.

—U Dhammaratana, “Editorial,” Maha Bodhi U Ba Khin Memorial Number, p. 75

³³ His immense contribution to the betterment of humanity sprang from his ardent conviction that “the clock of Vipassana has struck for the revival of Buddha-Dhamma Vipassana in practice”

Sayagyi had an extremely strong Dhamma volition to go to India and teach...Vipassana to the suffering people there....He often said the 2500 years have passed. The clock of Vipassana has struck. Vipassana will soon return to India. Innumerable people endowed with great merits have taken birth there at this time who will gladly accept Vipassana. If Vipassana is reestablished in that ancient country, it will spread throughout the world and benefit the whole world. The time has come for beginning this great historical undertaking.

—p. 142 “Benevolent Baba” by SN Goenka, quoted in 125 Years in Dhamma Land 1877-2002, (Burmese and English), 2002

³⁴ SN Goenka, Dhamma Dūta

SN Goenka describes his mission as that of a *Dhammadūta* (“Messenger of Dhamma” or more freely: “One who bears the message of Buddha’s teaching,” “Ambassador of Truth”).

The following “message of felicitation” from the Rector of the Pariyatti Sāsana University in Yangon uses this term:

I am always delighted to hear the good news of Dhammadūta works by the great Vipassanā Teacher U Goenka. In my public lectures, I never fail to mention the spread of Vipassana practice through out the world thanks to the great endeavour of Mahasi Sayadaw, Saya Gyi U Ba Khin and Saya Gyi U Goenka.

—Bhaddanta Paṇḍitābhivaṃsa, Agga Mahā Paṇḍita, Rector of the State Pariyatti Sāsana University, Kaba Aye, Yangon, (1997): quoted in Vipassana Pagoda Souvenir by Global Vipassana Foundation (Mumbai), 1997

³⁵ Friend in welfare

SN Goenka sometimes refers to himself as *kalyanamitta* (Pāli word meaning “friend in the highest good”), preferring this term to “guru.” The boon of such a friend is expressed in these two letters:

The fact that Mr. Satya Narayan Goenka, a Burmese Buddhist, has seriously joined various countries all over the world, including Thailand, to seriously propogate Buddhism, should be considered a good news for the world....The power of Buddhism will become true only when the practice is truly done.

—Venerable Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara, Supreme Patriarch of Thailand, Wat Bovoranives Vihara

...since Shri SN Goenkaji brought back the Vipassana technique to India from Myanmar... one sees every section of society reaping benefits through the practice of Vipassana... Vipassana is a much needed balancing factor and a proven coping mechanism to give one the happiness that money alone cannot give.

—Babanrao Gholap, Minister for Social Welfare, State of Maharashtra, India

*published in the Vipassana Pagoda Souvenir

³⁶ Son of Myanmar

From “A Tribute to a Worthy Son of Myanmar”:

I have been longing to see and hear the author of “The Art of Living,” Vipassana Meditation, which is one of the best books I have read on meditation....Fortunately, I had an opportunity to...listen to his talk Aug 2000. I was one of the...Myanmar Buddhist Delegation sent to the Millennium World Peace Summit at the United Nation....Like myself the audience must have been affected by SN Goenka’s inner calm and outer tranquility....[SN Goenka said] peace in the world cannot be achieved unless there is peace within individuals. One way to achieve inner peace is Vipassana...I greatly admire SN Goenka’s sincerity, honesty and his contribution to happiness of mankind.*

—Dr Myo Myint (Director General, Department of Religious Affairs, Yangon), pp. 129-130 of 125 Years in Dhamma Land, (Burmese and English), 2002?

* This address, called “Inner Peace for World Peace,” is available as a video recording.

From “Mind without Peace: World without Peace”:

... I got some impressions of [SN Goenka]:“This man is a great Upāsaka, one who accepts the...Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha as one’s life-guide or refuge”....

The Triple Gem of morality, concentration and education is called Ti-Sikkhā...Sayagyi SN Goenka puts it in the uppermost place...And you see, he has given his whole life for propogating this message.

—Ven. Ashin Nāñissara, Sitagu Sayadaw (pp.124—128 of 125 Years in Dhamma Land)

³⁷ 1955 September In first year of the Second Sāsana

In Myanmar, there is a widespread belief in the ancient prophesy that the Buddha’s teaching will arise again 2500 years after the demise of the Buddha. The *sāsana* (dispensation of the Buddha’s teaching) is the epoch in which the liberating practice of *paññā* emerges in the world again.

³⁸ First Vipassana course under Sayagyi U Ba Khin

I could never have dreamed that these sacred moments would happen...My first birth had taken place thirty-two years earlier. Now I was truly twice-born.

—from “Forty Years of a New Life” by SN Goenka, <http://www.vri.dhamma.org/newsletters/nl9711.html>

³⁹ 1964-1969 “Golden years” of daily study and meditation at his teacher’s center I was overnight parted from my wealth, bank accounts, property, businesses and industries. It was only because of the influence of Dhamma that the mind was not shaken at all and did not wallow in sorrow or self-pity. Instead, I was full of happiness at the nationalization of my assets....When Sayagyi saw a smile of contentment on my face instead of sadness, he...said: “Your Vipassana has become successful. It is evidence of the beneficial ability of Vipassana that you are smiling in this unpleasant situation.”....

Completely released from all [professional] responsibilities, I utilized all my time in drinking this invaluable nectar of Dhamma....I was living a life of great happiness. These four-five golden years of my life were truly invaluable.

—“Benevolent Baba,” pp. 140-142

⁴⁰ 1969 Authorized as teacher by Sayagyi U Ba Khin

Text of authorization reads:

This is to certify that Mr Satanarayan Goenka of No. 77 Shwebowtha Street, Rangoon has been practicing Buddhist Meditation under my guidance from September 1955 and that the has made a good study of the fundamentals of the theory of Buddhism. He has also assisted me in the teaching of Buddha Dhamma in theory and practice to nearly two hundred persons of Indian Nationality at Rangoon, Mandalay and Maymyo. I consider him to be well established to teach Buddhist Meditation on my behalf in accordance with the principles followed by me at the International Meditation Center at Rangoon, Burma.

(signed) Ba Khin (Thray Sithu U Ba Khin, President, International Meditation Center, Rangoon, Burma; 20th? June 1969

—from inside front cover, Fifty Years of Dhamma Service by SN Goenka, English and Burmese, 2004

⁴¹ 1969 July First Vipassana course (Bombay)*, initiating fulfillment of Sayagyi’s volition to pay back debt of gratitude to India
After the reign of King Ashoka, Buddha dhamma was on the wane in Majjhima Desa [modern day India]. When we come to realize that YOU are the first [to] revive Vipassana meditation in India after a lapse of over 2000 years to give practical and concrete results, we cannot help feeling that we are doing a very great work to pay the debt of gratitude to Buddha.

—from letter to SN Goenka from Sayagyi U Ba Khin, 28 Aug 1970

* The Sayagyi U Ba Khin Journal (1994) includes a section of dates, locations and student numbers for 396 courses conducted by SN Goenka through July 1st, 1994. Most of this information was compiled from notes in his handwritten diaries.

⁴² fulfilling Sayagyi's prediction that Goenka would one day teach over one thousand people

The course just completed in Tihar Prison has given me the confidence that there can be courses for a thousand people, or more. It was indeed a successful course! And its completion brings to mind a prediction made over twenty years ago by my revered teacher, Sayagyi U Ba Khin. In 1969, when I first came from Myanmar...to teach Vipassana, the numbers at courses were very small. They started with 12, 15 or 20 and quickly grew to fifty. After about a year, I conducted a course for one hundred. This was a surprisingly large number in those days and people back in Myanmar were very happy when they heard the news...when my teacher heard this, he laughed and said: "One day he will teach a course for one thousand students!"

—SN Goenka, *Vipassana: Its Relevance to the Present World* (VRI, 1994), p.6

⁴³ Free worldwide distribution of *Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana Tipiṭaka*, "biggest collection of Pāli literature in the world"

VRI took on the monumental task of publishing the entire Pāli *Tipiṭaka* and related literature, a publishing effort comprising more than 140 volumes including canonical as well as commentarial texts. This eight-year effort [resulted in] the first successful publication of this comprehensive literature since the Sixth Synod (*Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana*)...in 1956. VRI capped this achievement by production of the *Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana* CD that has the biggest collection of Pāli literature in the world... Furthermore, this priceless heritage has been made freely available to scholars around the world without any charges...giving renewed impetus to the study and research of the Buddha's words. Now by making the entire Pāli literature available on the Internet, VRI has gifted it to the whole world.

—SN Goenka, *Fifty Years of Dhamma Service*, p. 68

This majestic achievement—the result of innumerable hours of work in Myanmar and India—bestows to the world an authentic version of the Pāli Canon "so the Buddha can be deemed still alive":

*Suttantesu asantesu, pamuṭṭhe vinayamhi ca,
Tamo bhavassati loke, sūriye atthaṅgate yathā.
Suttante rakkhite sante, paṭipatti hoti rakkhitā,
Paṭipattiyam ṭhito dhīro, yogakkhemā na dhamsati.*

When the scriptures become extinct, and treading the path of Dhamma is forgotten,

The whole world is enveloped in ignorance,

Like the darkness caused by the setting sun.

When the scriptures are protected, and the practice of Dhamma is preserved,

For the wise man established in the practice,

Welfare is never assailed.

(Ana 1.1.130, *Dutiyamādādivaggavaṇṇā*)

⁴⁴ Crowning project of a life of accomplishments

This magnificent monument will not only be a fitting resting place for the relics of the

Buddha but will also attract millions in the coming centuries to the pure, universal teachings of the Buddha.

—Ven. Ching Hsin, President, The Buddhist Association of the Republic of China (*Vipassana Pagoda Souvenir*)

⁴⁵ 1999 Centenary year of birth of U Ba Khin: launched several ambitious projects
It is an inspiring coincidence that the Vipassana millennium will start with the commemoration of the birth centenary year of Sayagyi. This Dhamma festival will be celebrated on the sacred land of Myanmar at Dhamma Joti Vipassana Centre in Yangon from 9 to 11 January. We will salute the Dhamma land of Myanmar and will pay a grateful tribute to the sacred memory of our great teacher Sayagyi U Ba Khin. Hundreds of meditators, from all over the world, are showing eager enthusiasm to take part in this historic pilgrimage. We will return from this commemoration soaked in the infinite metta of our revered teacher Sayagyi. We will return with the firm resolve to complete the benevolent tasks we have undertaken to mark the centenary year of Sayagyi and will certainly complete these tasks.*

1. *Establishment of Sayagyi U Ba Khin Village near Dhamma Giri, Igatpuri to provide an ideal peaceful atmosphere for serious meditators to live in*

2. *Establishment of Dhamma Tapovana, near Dhamma Giri, to provide facility for serious long courses of 20, 30, 45, 60 and 90 days' duration*

3. *Establishment of an international university near Dhamma Giri to give a worldwide impetus to the work of research in ancient literature related to Vipassana. In this university Pali, Prakrit, Sanskrit, Hindi and other Indian languages as well as foreign languages such as Myanmar, Sinhalese, Thai, Cambodian, Mandarin, Korean, Japanese, Tibetan and Mongolian will be studied.*

4. *And much more important than the above is the construction of the Grand Vipassana Pagoda at Gorai island in Bombay. This memorial will, while respectfully treasuring the authentic relics of the Buddha, declare our gratitude to Sayagyi U Ba Khin and the sacred land of Myanmar for centuries to come.*

—SN Goenka, "Grateful Centenary Celebration," Nov. 1999

<http://www.vri.dhamma.org/newsletters/nl9911.html>

*This historic event is documented in the film "Pilgrimage to the Sacred Land" (Karuna Films, Ltd.)

⁴⁶ Recorded works add monumental storehouse of inspiration to the world's sacred literature

One thinks of the 2,000 preserved sermons of Buddha's chief disciples when considering the thousands of discourses, lectures, public talks, books, articles, poems, and works of Pāli scholarship contributed by this master teacher. It is a great boon that so many of his written and spoken Dhamma teachings have been recorded, preserved and published. These include his own commentarial introduction to the Pāli *Tipiṭaka* as well as hundreds of articles and discourses in Hindi and English explaining points of Dhamma. This topic is worthy of its own dissertation. See the website of the Vipassana Research Institute: <http://www.vri.dhamma.org/>

⁴⁷ Granted the title Mahā Saddhamma Jotika Dhāja

In April 1992, during a visit to Myanmar (Burma), Goenkaji was awarded the title of Maha-Saddhamma-Joti-Dhaja—“great emblem of radiant Dhamma.” This is the highest honor that a lay teacher can achieve and Goenkaji was the first non-resident of Burma to receive it. During the same visit Goenkaji spoke to two public meetings attended by thousands of people. At these meetings a large sum of money was presented to him, all of which Goenkaji donated toward starting a Vipassana center in Yangon (Rangoon), the capital. In reply to the honors bestowed on him, Goenkaji recited a verse of the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore:

In a religious procession, the road thinks that it is being honored.

The chariot on the road feels that it is being worshipped.

The religious statue in the chariot takes all the honor to itself.

Seeing all this, the Lord laughs!

Goenkaji explained, “All these salutations, offerings and honors are to the Dhamma. Without the Dhamma, the person has no value.”

—from Vipassana International Newsletter, Shelburne Falls, Mass. USA, Spring 1992 issue

⁴⁸ It is all Sayagyi’s Dhamma strength

When the time came for my departure, Sayagyi gave me a warm send-off, with all his strong *mettā*: “You are not the one going,” he told me as we parted, “I am going—Dhamma is going. We must pay back the debt of Myanmar to India.” When I arrived in India in 1969, I knew very few people in India. I felt humble and unequal to the task of teaching Dhamma. Who will organize residential courses here? Who will come to the courses? I believe that it was Sayagyi’s Dhamma strength that made it happen...

Since my first course, I always start the course with a chant:

Guruvar teri aur se devun dharama ka dana...

(O my great teacher, I give the gift of Dhamma on your behalf)....

Today in about 70 countries round the world, when my assistant teachers start their course, the same words are repeated on tape. I have always felt very humble in this respect. I feel that I am a mere instrument in the hands of Sayagyi. It is his Dhamma strength that inspires me at every step....At the achievement of each milestone in the spread of Dhamma, these words spontaneously spring from my heart:

Guruvar tera punya hai, tera hi pratap;

Logo men jage dharma, dur karan bhavatap.

(O my great teacher, it is only your merit and prowess that has made this possible; Dhamma is spreading among people to remove the misery of life and death).

—SN Goenka, pp. 60-61, Fifty Years of Dhamma Service

⁴⁹ Obviously the force of Dhamma is immeasurable

See “Sayagyi U Ba Khin,” <http://www.vri.dhamma.org/general/subk.html>

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Pariyatti is dedicated to providing affordable access to authentic teachings of the Buddha about the Dhamma theory (*pariyatti*) and practice (*paṭipatti*) of Vipassana meditation. A 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable organization since 2002, Pariyatti is sustained by contributions from individuals who appreciate and want to share the incalculable value of the Dhamma teachings. We invite you to visit www.pariyatti.org to learn about our programs, services, and ways to support publishing and other undertakings.

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