

The Coming Buddha, Ariya Metteyya

Research Papers by Sayagyi U Chit Tin

The Duration of the Sasana of Buddha Gotama

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahatto Sammasambuddhassa



Ordination of Bhikkhuni
Pajapati Gotami

During the period, from the time of Buddha Gotama to the minimum life span, the Buddha's Dispensation (*Buddha-sasana*) will disappear. When the Buddha agreed to create the *Bhikkhuni Sangha*, he told Ven. Ananda that the *Sasana* would last only half as long because of this. Instead of lasting one thousand years, it would last five hundred years.

The commentary on the Abhidhamma text, *Dhammasangani*, says that when the *First Buddhist Council* convened by Ven. Maha-Kassapa rehearsed the Pali Canon, this *made it possible for the Sasana to endure for five thousand years.*[48]

The commentaries on the *Vinaya Pitaka*[49] and the *Anguttara-nikaya* [50] say that the eight important rules which

the Buddha gave to the *Bhikkhuni Sangha* will make his Teachings last for five thousand years rather than five hundred.

~~There~~ **There** will be one thousand years for **Arahats** who attain analytical insight,
~~one thousand years for Arahats~~ **one thousand years for Arahats** without those attainments,
~~one thousand years for Non-returners~~ **one thousand years for Non-returners**,
~~one thousand years for Once-returners~~ **one thousand years for Once-returners**, and
~~one thousand years for Stream-winners~~ **one thousand years for Stream-winners**.

After these five thousand years of penetration of the true Doctrine (*pativedha-sadhamma*), [51] the accomplishment in the texts (*pariyatti-dhamma*) will remain. After the accomplishment in the texts disappears, the signs (*linga*) will continue for a long time.

In the commentary to the *Theragatha* [52] the *Sasana* is said to consist of five periods:

- (1) the age of deliverance (*vimutti-yuga*),
- (2) the age of concentration (*samadhi-yuga*),
- (3) the age of morality (*sila-yuga*),
- (4) the age of learning [the texts] (*suta-yuga*), and
- (5) the age of generosity (*dana-yuga*).

Ven. Dhammapala says, concerning the disappearance of learning, "In a region where there is no purity of morality, accomplishment (in the texts) remains through taking up great learning, through the desire to acquire, etc. But when accomplishment in the summary [i.e., the *Patimokkha*] is completely ended, it disappears. From that time on, only the mere sign (*linga*) remains. Then, having accumulated riches in various ways, they give away gifts (*dana*); this, truly, is the last right practice.

Then, [the period starting] after the disappearance of learning is the last time (*pacchima-kala*). Others say that it is from the time of the disappearance of morality."

According to the tradition in Burma, the *Sasana* will last five thousand years. The five periods will occur twice. The first half of the *Sasana* has just passed, with each of the five periods lasting five hundred years. We are now in the second half, when these periods will be repeated, each lasting for another five hundred years.

In the Anagatavamsa commentary, the Buddha is said to preface the account of the future Buddha Ariya Metteyya by saying his own dispensation will disappear in five stages:

- (1) the disappearance of analytical insight (*patisambhida*),**
- (2) the disappearance of the Paths and Fruition States,**
- (3) the disappearance of the practice (*patipatti*),**
- (4) the disappearance of the texts (*pariyatti*), and**
- (5) the disappearance of the *Sangha*.**

Other commentaries also speak in terms of five stages of disappearance (*antaradhana*) of the *Sasana*. [53]

- (1) First, there will be the disappearance of attainment (*adhigama*), which would correspond to the age of deliverance.**
- (2) The second disappearance is of the practice (*patipatti*), which corresponds to the ages of concentration and morality.**
- (3) The disappearance of accomplishment in the texts (*pariyatti*) is third and corresponds to the age of learning.**
- (4) The fourth disappearance is of the signs (*linga*). During this period, the only good action left is making gifts to those who wear a yellow strip of cloth around their necks, so this would correspond to the age of generosity. When this disappearance occurs, five thousand years will have passed. [54] After this period there occurs**
- (5) the disappearance of the relics (*dhatu*). When the relics no longer receive honour, they will assemble at the seat where the Buddha attained Awakening under the Great Bodhi tree. There, they will make an effigy of the**

Buddha and perform a marvel similar to the Twin Marvel and will teach the Doctrine. No human being will be present, only Devas from the ten thousand world systems will listen, and many of them will attain release. After that, the relics will be burned up without remainder.[55]

FOOTNOTES:

48. As 27, see Expos. 35.
49. Sp 1291.
50. Mp IV 136f.
51. Ven. Ledi Sayadaw (MB 169) calls these five thousand years the age of Ariyas (Noble Ones).
52. Th-a III 89.
53.] See the commentary on A (Mp I 87), Moh 201-203, and the extract from the *Anag* commentary (JPTS, 1886, pp. 33-36; translated in BT 481-486).
54. The number of years are mentioned only in the *Anag* commentary.
55. Some texts speak of three disappearances. See CPD under *antaradhana* for references.

Source - <http://www.ubakhin.com/uchittin/arimet/ARIMET03.html>