

The Life Story
of
Shwe Oo Min Sayadaw
Bhaddanta Kawthala Maha Thera



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Shwe Oo Min Dhamma Sukkha Yeiktha
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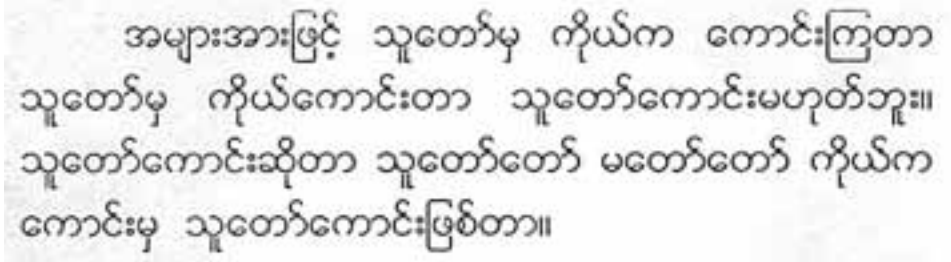


Shwe Oo Min Sayadaw Bhaddanta Kawthala Maha Thera
1913 – 2002

PREFACE

This book is a translation of the original book Titled “ **The Life Story of Shwe Oo Min Sayadaw Bhaddanta Kawtala Maha Thera**” published in Burmese and distributed by **Shwe Oo Min Tawya Dhamma Sukkha Yeiktha**, and **Shwe Oo Min Tawya Dhamma Yeiktha**.

The book is published and distributed through the Internet as Dhamma Dana in grateful respect and honor to the great **Dhamma Teacher Shwe Oo Min Sayadaw** who has finally attained the deathless, the path to the deathless, what he taught us – “ **To be mindful all the time. and lead a Noble and Righteous Life** ”



This book is distributed to honor the, the great Dhamma Teacher who leads us the way to the deathless – Nibbana

Verse 21. Mindfulness is the way to the Deathless (Nibbana); unmindfulness is the way to Death. Those who are mindful do not die; those who are not mindful are as if already dead.

Verse 22. Fully comprehending this, the wise, who are mindful, rejoice in being mindful and find delight in the domain of the Noble Ones (Ariyas).

Verse 23. The wise, constantly cultivating Tranquility and Insight Development Practice, being ever mindful and steadfastly striving, realize Nibbana: Nibbana, which is free from the bonds of yoga*; Nibbana, the Incomparable!

Dhammapada Verses No. 21, 22, 23

Let the Wise pick the Jewel from the dirt
While others step over it.

Burmese Old Saying

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1. The Birth of a Sage

In the Myanmar calendar year 1275, (1913 AD) at 7:48 am on the first full moon of Tawtalin, Monday, the baby who soon to become the eminent Shwe Oo Min Sayadaw, was born in **Mokekhamu Village** of KyaikHto township of Mon Region in Myanmar to the parents, father **U Than** and mother **Daw Taing Chone**.

He was named as **Maung Chit Nyunt** and was the first born among the five siblings including him in the family.

2. Novice Initiation - Samanera

As was the village tradition in villages all across Myanmar, the young **Maung Chit Nyunt**, at the age of 9, in the Myanmar Calendar year 1284 (1922 AD) was initiated as **Samanera** (Novice Monk) at **Mokekhamu Village**, KyaikHto Township of Myanmar – Hman Kyaung - East Monastery under sponsorship of **Sayadaw Bhaddanta Nandiya Thera** and was named – **Shin Kawthala**.

Samanera Shin Kawthala,, in Myanmar Calendar year 1292 (1930 AD) he was sent to **Nyaunglebin Ywama Dhamma Kyaung**, Nyaunglebin Township of **Baggo Taing** to learn the Tipitaka Dhamma and Monastic Discipline (Vinaya).

3. Bhikkhu Ordination

In the Myanmar Calendar year 1294 (1933 AD) in the month of Hnaung Tagu on the 11 day, Shin Kawthala at the age of 20 was initiated to a fully ordained Monk with the same name **Shin Kawthala**, under the sponsorship of **Sayadaw Bhaddanta Ariya Thera – Aggamahapanditta** ,

The parents, father **U Than** and mother **Daw Taing Chone** and **U Tha Nyunt** and **Daw Shwe Chain** of Ywama Yat Village, Nyaunglebin township, together provided the four monastic requisites at the ordination.

4. In Search of the Truth – Dhamma

In his search for the truth – Dhamma, he first learning experience, he started on the basic monastic education as **Novice Shin Kawthala** under the first Dhamma teacher, **Sayadaw Bhaddanta Nandiya Thera.**, at **Hman Kyaung - East Monastery** , **Mokekhamu Village**, **Kyaikhto Township**, **Mon Pyi Ne**, in **Myanmar** .

As a young Monk, Shin Kawthala, learnt the Vinaya, Tipitaka and Pali under **Nyaunglebin Tawya Sayadaw Bhaddanta Ariya Thera** – (**Aggamahapandita**) **Nyaunglebin Ywama Dhamma School**, **Nyaunglebin Town of Baggo Taing**

Shin Kawthala then went through intensive monastic training in **Maydeni Dhamma Kyaung School**, **Yankin township**, **Yangon Taing of Myanmar** under the sponsorship of **Maydami Sayadaw Bhaddanta Alaya**

Again, Shin Kawthala, went to **IndaingTawya Sayadaw Bhaddanta Ketaya** (**Naingganawwasariya**) of **Nyaunglebin Township**.

He next went to **Sayadaw Bhaddanta Panyansataw** **Nyaunglebin Taikkwe Padanna** of **Thaton township** to learn advanced Pali, Pitaka,

5. Establishment of Shwe Oo Min Tawya Dhamma Center

Shin U Kawthala started his ministry at **PyitsamaYon Monastery** also popularly known as **YarKyaw Sayadaw Monastery** of **Kyaiklat Township**, **Ayyawaddy Taing**. under the sponsorship of **Sayadaw Bhaddanta Tawbitha Maha Thera**. Working together with **YarKyaw Sayadaw**, in the Myanmar calendar year 1310 (1939 AD) arrived in **KhaweTaung village**, **PadanikaryonTawya Monastery**– **Shwekyin Township** of **Baggo Taing** and went through intensive meditation practices.

In the Myanmar year 1311 (1949 AD) in cooperation with **Sayadaw Bhaddanta Ketaya** of **ShweOoMin Sar Thin Thike** – Dhamma School at North Okkalapa – Yangon Taing.- established Kathitwine Yeiltha situated near Ahbyar Village of Wow Township – Baggo Taing. He resides at this Meditation center practicing meditation and teaching Vipassana meditation to laity at this center. In the same year he was the chief instructor training at **Mahasi Sasana Yeiktha, Bahan Yangon** practicing the Mahasi Meditation tradition.

He was at Mahasi Sasana Yeiktha, Bahan Township at Yangon Taing from the year 1313 ((1951 AD) the 1st. day of the month of Nayone to the year 1323 (1961 AD). He was at the Mahasi Sasana Yeiktha practicing and teaching meditation to devotees and laity Yogi as **Chief Ovacariya Sayadaw, Mahasi Yeiktha** in Mahasi Meditation Tradition. At the same time, learning the intrinsic Mahasi Meditation tradition from Mahasi Sayadaw **Bhaddanata Tawbana** (Aggamahapanditta).



Chief Ovacariya Sayadaw

at

Mahasi Sasana Yeiktha, Bahan - Yangon

In the Myanmar Calendar year 1322 (1960 AD) he established his own meditation Monastery – **ShweOoMin Kyaung Thike** near Shwe Oo Min Pagoda at **PayawSakekone, North Okkalapa**. In the following year 1323 (1961 AD) full moon day of Waso moved from Mahasi Yeiktha to his new

Monastery – **ShweOoMin Tawya Dhamma Yeiktha** and began his own Ministry.

6. His Ministry

Shwe Oo Min Dhamma Sukha Tawya 'International Forest Centre'

In the year 1359 (1997 AD) on the 4th Tuesday day of the month of Tabaung at Konetalapa Village, Padamya Township, Yangon Taing established a Dhamma Meditation Center specially custom designed to accommodate foreign meditation Yogi's. The Dhamma YeikTha was named "**ShweOoMin Dhamma Sukkha Tawya** " **International Forest Center**. Here, he put all his energy to teach Yogi's the fundamental and advanced meditation practices and the teaching of Buddha Dhamma.

This center accepts Yogi's from both domestic and foreign to learn the true Theravada's Vipassana Meditation Practices and was soon famous as world wide meditation center.

**Shwe Oo Min Dhamma Sukha Tawya
'International Forest Centre'**
Aung Myay Tharyar Road
Koun Tala Paung Village
Mingaladon, Yangon, Myanmar
Tel: 636402 (English spoken)
Tradition: Vipassana Meditation

**Shwe Oo Min Dhamma Sukkha YeikTha
The 'Burmese Centre'**
North Okkalapa, Yangon
Tel: 664807
Tradition: Vipassana Meditation

Monastery Renovation Work

Most of his collection from Yogi's donation was used in renovation of depreciated Monasteries in and around **Kyaikthan Village** of Baggo Township; and in locations where there is a need for new Monasteries, he built new Monasteries. These works were added to his daily task of teaching

the practicing Yogi's in the two Dhamma Centers and on his own meditation practices.

Among many places where he seeks out serene and tranquil time for his own meditation practices, he will frequent places like :

- a. **Inbhone Tawya Forest Area** – near Wonbe In Village – in Baggo Taing
- b. **MonSein Tawya Forest Area** – near Ah Sin Village - Ye Township in Mon PyiNe
- c. **Kyauk Aine Dhamma Sukkha Tawya** – near BankBweGone Village forest area Paung Township in Mon PyiNe
- d. **NyaungGoke Thine Tawya**- Kawhmu Township in Yangon Taing
- e. **NaraNi Tawya** – near Phaya Thonzu Village, Baggo Township

He also established as his remote Dhamma establishment in **Kyauk Tine Dhamma Sukkha Tawya** – near BankBwegone Village forest area Paung Township in Mon Pyi-ne.

7. His Ministry Accomplishment



Shwe Oo Min Dhamma Sukha Tawya

To mention among the many major accomplishments are that all donations given to him for personal use and to his Ministry were spent for the good of all villagers young and old on the followings:

1. As Chief Ovadacariya Sayadaw at Mahasi Sasana Yeiktha.
2. As the elder of ShweKyin Gaing Lone Sineya YattaNyu Mahanayaka , until his parinibbana.
3. He provides all the four monastic requisites and expenses to support novices, Monks and laity alike to study Pitaka Dhamma at his Dhamma Yeiktha and in far away places of learning.
4. He provides the four Monastic requisites for Monks and Novices annually to:
 - ? [Kya Kyat Wine Sar Tin Thike](#) –and Pokepar Yone Sar Tin Thike in Baggo Township
 - ? [Tawya Gyi Sar Tin Thike](#) - Nyaunglebin Township
 - ? [Pan Ngwe Yone Sar Tin Thike](#) – Padauk Township
5. He accepts the responsibility to provide all the four Monastic requisites to Monks and Novices alike who are working in his charge as trainees and instructors at all his meditation centers.
6. Among his various tasks of teaching and practicing meditation, he will frequently brings with him medical supplies to Hospitals administering cares to Monks and Novices.
7. Providing food supplies to Old Aged peoples living in Old Aged Homes was one of his regular compassionate mission outside of his missionary tasks.
8. His missionary task also includes training the basic Buddha Dhamma to neighborhood teens, young and old on the Buddhist culture by convening regular classes. Pitching in his personal time in most cases to teach the teens the basic Buddhist culture and planted in them the seed of the Buddha Dhamma for their future existences.
9. Starting in the year 2000 AD, he convenes a regular Dhamma discourses to the public at large at [Kan Myint Kyaung Thike](#) at Thirimingala Street, San Chaung Township. Among his audience were young and old, at times as much as over a thousand. He also delivered Dhamma discourses at Mr. Goenga Dhamma Giri Center.. In the same frequency, he went out of his way to deliver discourses at [WinSein Kyaung](#) – Mokekhamu Village Kyaikhto Township.
10. In the year 1362 (2000 AD) in the month of Tabaung he headed the group of 100 novices initiation, providing four complete monastic requisites at the celebration held at Bogadaw Kye Ywa Village, Wow Township Baggo Taing.. In the following year at the same village in 1363 (2001 AD) he again

headed the ordination of 100 novices to Monks. He provided the major expenses for all the Monk's four requisites at the ordination.

In the same measure, in 1363 (2001 AD) in the month of Tagu – he headed the group initiation of 100 novices at [OkPho Tawya Dhamma Yeiktha Kyaung](#) – Mokekamu Village, Kyaukhto Township. He has brought into the order of Sangha so many of the fellow citizens to carry out the Sasana task for the future generation.

11. Like the true Bhikkhu of the old, he is very humble and seeks no fame and fortune except treading on the path of a holy Bhikkhu.

12. In his native Mokekhamu Village, he has donated 21 million Kyats of seed money to build a new monastery at the [Okpho Dhamma Yeik Tha Kyaung](#). This also includes the expenses for providing school uniforms for the school children and their stationary books and pens. In cooperation with the Marina Biscuit Industry owner an electric generating station was built and operated for electrification of the entire [Mokekhamu Village](#).

In the same vicinity of Mokekhamu village, old monasteries were renovated and some new monasteries were built at Ywale Kyaung, Winsein Kyaung, of Mokekhamu village and East Kyaung, of Malawchaung village. Water wells constructed and built to provide portable water for the villagers were donated.

He even went beyond his missionary work to provide 21 million kyats of seed money in building a middle school building at Kyaikkatha Village. He also donated his own money to build the stretch of road linking the Mokekhamu village with the main highway. In addition he also donated some 15 million kyats in building road and bridges in the same stretch of road.

13. Building Town and Village Library. A library was built at Ywale Kyaung – Bobwa Kye Village of Kyaukhto Township; four libraries at Mokekhamu Village; a library at East Kyaung at Malawchaung Village; three libraries at Kyaikkatha village; for a total of nine libraries were built in Kyaukhto Township.

At Wow Township, with [Tukhita Ywama Sar Thin Thike](#) as center, villages in the surrounding areas – MyintKyo Village, Thura Tamein Village, Sin Village, Aekayit Village, in the Wow Township Peace and Development Council compound day and night schools and libraries were built and donated to villagers. At each library, full and complete stationary and furniture were donated for their use.

At Saskayanti Kyaung Thike, Bogadaw Village, Wow Township, a Dhamma Convention Hall and a Monk Dining Hall buildings at a cost of 200 millions kyats, were built and donated. In the year 1363 (2001 AD) he donated some

600 audio and video tapes including Dhamma books to the village cooperative of 100 villages sponsoring the teaching and the Buddhist cultures to villagers at Wow Township Village Cooperative.

14. In the year 1359 (1990 AD) at the time of flood devastation in Wow Township, he provided full Monastic requisites including foods and medicine to all the Monasteries in the Wow township. At various times, in villages throughout the regions like Baggo Taing, Yangon Taing, and Mon Pyi Ne (Region), he had donated goods and services and supplies in support of Dhamma Teaching, Community Welfare Centers and Cultural promotion Centers.

8. His Last Day - Parinibbana

In the year 1364 (November 20, 2002) on the first full moon day of Tasaunghmone – **Shwe Oo Min Sayadaw – Bhaddanta KawTaLa Maha Thera** – on completion of 70 years as Bhikkhu, at the age of 90 years departed and took his Parinibbana for his final release from Samsara as an Ariya – The True Arahant.

Sadhu ! Sadhu ! Sadhu !

To the Sage in Grateful Respect

I submitted this Dhammapada Verse No 25

The Story of Culapanthaka

While residing at the Veluvana monastery, the Buddha uttered Verse (25), with reference to Cillapanthaka, a grandson of a banker of Rajagaha.

The banker had two grandsons, named **Mahapanthaka** and **Culapanthaka**. **Mahapanthaka**, being the elder, used to accompany his grandfather to listen to religious discourses. Later, Mahapanthaka joined the Buddhist religious Order and in course of time became an **arahant**. Culapanthaka followed his brother and became a bhikkhu. But, because in a previous existence in the time of Kassapa Buddha Culapanthaka had made fun of a bhikkhu who was very dull, he was born a dullard in the present existence. He could not even memorize one verse in four months. Mahapanthaka was very disappointed with his younger brother and even told him that he was not worthy of the Order.

About that time, **Jivaka** came to the monastery to invite the Buddha and the resident bhikkhus to his house for a meal. Mahapanthaka, who was then in charge of assigning the bhikkhus to meal invitations, left out Culapanthaka from the list. When Culapanthaka learnt about this he felt very much frustrated and decided that he would return to the life of a householder. Knowing his intention, the Buddha took him along and made him sit in front of the Gandhakuti hall. He then gave a clean piece of cloth to Culapanthaka and told him to sit there facing east and rub the piece of cloth. At the same time he was to repeat the word "Rajoharanam", which means "taking on impurity." The Buddha then went to the residence of Jivaka, accompanied by the bhikkhus.

Meanwhile, Culapanthaka went on rubbing the piece of cloth, all the time muttering the word "Rajoharanam". Very soon, the cloth became soiled. Seeing this change in the condition of the cloth, Culapanthaka came to realize the impermanent nature of all conditioned things. From the house of Jivaka, the Buddha through super normal power learnt about the progress of Culapanthaka. He sent forth his radiance to the Culapanthaka. The Buddha appeared to be sitting in front of him, saying:

"It is not the piece of cloth alone that is made dirty by the dust; within oneself also there exist the dust of **passion (raga)**, the **dust of ill will (dosa)**, and the **dust of ignorance (moha)**, i.e., the ignorance of the Four Noble Truths. Only by removing these could one achieve one's goal and attain arahantship". **Culapanthaka got the message and kept on meditating and in a short while attained arahantship**, together with Analytical Insight. Thus, Culapanthaka ceased to be a dullard.

At the house of Jivaka, they were about to pour libation water as a mark of donation; but the Buddha covered the bowl with his hand and asked if there were

any bhikkhus left at the monastery. On being answered that there were none, the Buddha replied that there was one and directed them to fetch Culapanthaka from the monastery. When the messenger from the house of Jivaka arrived at the monastery he found not only one bhikkhu, but a thousand identical bhikkhus. They all have been created by Culapanthaka, who by now possessed supernormal powers. The messenger was baffled and he turned back and reported the matter to Jivaka. The messenger was sent to the monastery for the second time and was instructed to say that the Buddha summoned the bhikkhu by the name of Culapanthaka. But when he delivered the message, a thousand voices responded, "I am Culapanthaka." Again baffled, he turned back for the second time. Then he was sent to the monastery, for the third time. This time, he was instructed to get hold of the bhikkhu who first said that he was Culapanthaka. As soon as he got hold of that bhikkhu all the rest disappeared, and Culapanthaka accompanied the messenger to the house of Jivaka. After the meal, as directed by the Buddha, Culapanthaka delivered a religious discourse confidently and bravely, roaring like a young lion.

Later, when the subject of Culapanthaka cropped up among the bhikkhus, the Buddha said that one who was diligent and steadfast in his striving would certainly attain arahantship.

Then the Buddha spoke in verse as follows:

Verse 25. Through diligence, mindfulness, discipline (with regard to moral precepts), and control of his senses, let the man of wisdom make of himself an island which no flood can overwhelm.

9. Acknowledgement

- 1. The Life Story of Shwe Oo Min Sayadaw – Bhaddanat KawTaLa Maha Thera – (Burmese) published by Shwe Oo Min TawYa Dhamma Center and Shwe Oo Min Dhamma Sukkha YeikTha**
- 2. Dhammapada – translation by Daw Mya Tin – Pitiaka Association – Myanmar**
- 3. Shwe Oo Min Sayadaw Teaching – by his devotees**

Appendix – A

**The ‘International forest centre’
Shwe Oo Min Dhamma Sukha Tawya
Aung Myay Tharyar Road
Koun Tala Paung Village
Mingaladon, Yangon, Myanmar
Tel: 636402 (They speak English)**

**The ‘Burmese Centre’
Shwe Oo Min Dhamma Thukha Yeikta
Norht Okkalapa, Yangon
Tel: 664807**

The International centre is only 3 years old and very modern in design. There are buildings with rooms, separate for monks and male meditators and nuns and female practitioners. The rooms are very clean and large enough with floors tiled with quality tiles.

At times when the place gets very crowded, rooms have to be shared temporarily. Western monks are rarely subject to sharing. The food is the usual Burmese Monastery menu and there is no vegetarian food.

The water is filtered, so never drink from the last couple of remaining litres in the container. Nobody uses shoes as there is a roofed boardwalk that takes you everywhere you need to go. Originally it was built for Sayadaw U Jotika to come and teach but he found the responsibility a little too tying down for his life style.

Vipassana and Cittanupassana (without noting) is taught. It’s not a problem if you are used to watching the ‘rising and falling’ or the ‘in and out’ as long as you can learn to not note.

The teacher is U Tejaniya who has been trained by Shwe Oo Min Sayadaw personally for this job and there is a very good interpreter although U Tejaniya speaks some English.

Sayadaw U Jotika is very close to the centre as well as Shwe Oo Min Sayadaw and U Tejaniya. Often his daughters are there retreating and his Dhamma talks are played all the time in the Hall. He visits and gives live talks too. The place is rather small compared to Hmawbi or Hse Main Gon and is very popular. It is full most of the time and there is a three month limit of staying there unless you are a very good meditator. (However all is negotiable).