

The temporary personal attendants of the Buddha

Yin Yin Htay¹ and Kyi Zar Cho²

Abstract

This paper is about the temporary personal attendants of *Gotama Buddha*. The temporary personal attendants of the *Buddha* were *bhikkhus* who left the *Buddha* on the basic disagreements over something although they offered their service to look after him. Despite their duties, they tended to behave on their own will without taking the *Buddha's* suggestions. On the contrary, there was a permanent personal attendant who lived closely to the *Buddha* throughout his life span providing whatever service for the convenience of the *Buddha*. Among all personal attendants, some were sincere, obedient and submissive while others were disobedient and disrespectful. Some even defied the *Buddha* and they had born a grudge against the *Buddha*. It was found that these malicious or disobedient *bhikkhus* used to have good and noble intentions at first. They entered the holy order with the noble aim of paying their obeisance to the *Buddha* and striving to attain the *Ariya* Truths. However, they happened to do wrong things due to their lack of maturity to eradicate craving for the continued existence (*bhavataṇhā*). This paper is prepared by studying about both respectful and disrespectful personal attendant *bhikkhus* of the *Buddha*. The temporary personal attendants of the *Buddha* that are described in *Pāli*, *Aṭṭhakatthā* and other texts will be selected and presented in this paper.

Keywords: attendants, temporary, grudge, submissive, malicious, maturity

INTRODUCTION

This paper is about the *Buddha's* personal attendants. The *Buddha* used to be the prince of the monarch and he was endowed with royal attendants, worldly pleasures, magnificent palace and all kinds of luxury. Despite that, he renounced all of them to become a recluse at the age of 29. He had enjoyed the superb luxury of a royal prince since he was sixteen. Then, at the age of thirty five, the *Bodddhisatta* attained the enlightenment.

However, the *Buddha* was also a human being with personal five aggregates of mind and matter. All humans are victims of ageing, ailing and death. No one can escape from them, and the *Buddha* was no exception. When the *Buddha* was in the middle age, he went on towns in the *majjhima* region for the well-being of the human world and for all living beings. He had gone on missionaries for 26 years without having a personal attendant. The *Buddha* always performed the daily routines (*Buddha kicca*) to view the whole world by using his omniscience and to make efforts for the benefits of all living beings. The *Buddha* worked very hard almost all day starting from dawn to mid-night. Of all the *bhikkhu* watches of the night, the *Buddha* took a rest only in the last watch of the night "the middle." In this watch, the watch was divided into three equal parts and the *Buddha* took a rest in the last part of the *Picchimayam*.

Here, the significance to be noted was that the *Buddha* was also unable to overcome the nature of physical body; the arising and vanishing of the corporeality although he had a complete control over mental processes and mental concomitants (*cetasikas*) as he had already eradicated all mental defilements (*kilesas*). Accordingly, twenty years after the attainment of the Buddhahood, all the disciples headed by Venerable *Sāriputta* and Venerable *Ānandā* held a meeting to appoint a personal attendant for the *Buddha*. The aim of that meeting was to choose

¹ Associate Professor, Dr, Department of Oriental Studied, Hinthada University

² Assistant Lecturer, Department of Oriental Studied, Hinthada University

a suitable disciple who provided caring and offered his service to the *Buddha* to reduce his workload. According to the decision of that meeting, Venerable *Ānandā*, the *Buddha*'s younger brother, was made the permanent personal attendant (*upaṭṭaka*) of the *Buddha*.

Many senior disciples like Venerable *Moggalāna* requested the *Buddha* to make them his personal attendant but the *Buddha* did not accept their offer. Other disciples told Venerable *Ānandā* to ask for this position. However, Venerable *Ānandā* had no wish to do so without the *Buddha*'s willingness. He told the disciple that he would do the job if the *Buddha* himself gave him the permission. At last, the *Buddha* gave Venerable *Ānandā* his consent to make his permanent personal attendant. After Venerable *Ānandā* had accepted this particular duty, he requested the *Buddha* to grant him to decline the four kinds to offer and to ask for the four kinds of favour from the *Buddha*.

The seven personal attendants of the *Buddha* who offered occasional service before Venerable *Ānandā*

It was common knowledge that the main personal attendant of the *Buddha* was the Venerable *Ānandā*. He became the life-long personal attendant of the *Buddha* both through his own volition and through the approval of the Holy Order of *Samgha*. Venerable *Ānandā* had served the *Buddha* for over twenty years. Venerable *Ānandā* offered his service to the *Buddha* with great diligence and perseverance. He never took his own decline in physical strength into account in performing this duty. He never lost any effort or enthusiasm in looking after the *Buddha*. Later, venerable *Ānandā* lived over one hundred and twenty years. This was due to his meritorious action of providing care for the *Buddha*. Before Venerable *Ānandā* took this noble responsibility, the *Buddha* had no regular personal attendant until he was 55 years old or 20 years after the attainment of the *Buddhahood*. There were seven personal attendants who occasionally offered their service to facilitate the *Buddha*'s daily routines. These disciples were listed below.

- (i) *Bhikkhu Nāgasamala*
- (ii) *Bhikkhu Nāgita*
- (iii) *Bhikkhu Upavāṇa*
- (iv) *Bhikkhu Sunakkhṭta*
- (v) *Bhikkhu Sāgata*
- (vi) *Bhikkhu Meghiya*
- (vii) *Bhikkhu Cunda*

The *Buddha*'s personal attendants included both the *puthujjana* disciples or common monks who had not entered the *ariya* path or who were not qualified with the minimum requirement or who were not stream winner and *ariyā* disciples or arahats or *sotapanas*. The mind of the *puthujjanas* are very likely to be mingled with the three kinds of *vitakka* or initiation of thoughts: *kāma vitakka*, *byāpāda vitakka* and *vihimsa vitakka*. The mind of *puthujjana* is always directed to three kinds of evil thoughts; sensual thoughts or *kāma vitakka*; thoughts of destroying others or *byāpāda vitakka*; thoughts of tormenting others or *vihimsa vitakka*. In fact, such kinds of thoughts are *Micchā vitakka* or wrong thoughts. On the contrary, *Sammā vitakka* are the right and moral thoughts. If one of the three *micchā vitakkas* develops in one's mind, it will lead him to bad manners. In such a case, one will behave others impolitely or in obediently. To prove this fact, this paper will present about the following three *Bhikkhus* who used to be the personal attendants of the *Buddha*.

Bhikkhu Meghiya

During the thirteen years after the attainment of omniscience, the *Buddha* resided at the *Cāliya* hill for the rains retreat period with the assistance of *Bhikkhu Meghiya*, the personal

attendant. *Bhikkhu Meghiya* was a *Sakyan* prince of the *Khattiya* social class from *Kapilavatthu*. One day, *Bhikkhu Meghiya* asked the *Buddha*'s permission to go on an alms round to *Jentu* village near the hill. The *Buddha* said “*Meghiya*, you know the right time to go but not to go depends on your own desire”. When *Bhikkhu Meghiya* went on his alms round to the village early in the morning, he saw a large mango orchard on the bank of the *Kimisāla* River. Being attracted by the cool shade of the orchard, he became eager to stay in the mango grove to do meditation. This particular area used to be the royal garden in his consecutive 500 former rebirths as a powerful king. He had enjoyed his kingly pleasures in this place for 500 past lives. For this reason, the *Bhikkhu* felt a craving for living in this place as soon as he saw it. Then he asked the *Buddha*'s permission to live in the mango orchard. The *Buddha* told him to wait until another *Bhikkhu* came to the *Buddha* to accompany. The *Buddha* said so because he knew through his omniscience that *Bhikkhu Meghiya* had not acquired the insight mature enough to enter the *ariya* path. The *Buddha* knew that he would be disturbed by the *kilesa vitakka* if he practised *kamaṭṭhāna* meditation in the mango orchard. He would come back to the *Buddha* with no improvement in his practice. But *Bhikkhu Meghiya* went there and practical meditation. Unexpectedly, he could not find the way to *ariyamagga* caused by *akusala vitakka*. He began to realize why the *Buddha* prohibited him to come there. So he came back to the *Buddha* who admonished him to control the mind which was too difficult to subdue and keep it under control. The *Buddha* gave him the example of the fletcher straightened the arrow shaft. Just as a fletcher made the arrow strength, a wise person should straighten his fickle and unsteady mind, so it was difficult to guard and control. Having followed His guideline in his *vipassanā* meditation practice, he finally attained the arahatship.

Bhikkhu Nāgasamala

This *Bhikkhu* was one of the occasional attendants of the *Buddha* during the first twenty years after the enlightenment. *Bhikkhu Nāgasamala* was also one of the *mahāsāvaka* who accompanied the *Buddha* from the left side.

Once, the *Buddha* went on a long journey accompanied by *Bhikkhu Nāgasamala* while he was residing in *Kosala* province. During his term of service to the *Buddha*, there arose a slight argument between the *Buddha* and *Bhikkhu Nāgasamala*. At a crossroad, he suggested taking the straightway while the *Buddha* told him to choose the winding one because the shortcut was dangerous. The *Buddha* suggested taking the winding way for three times. However, *Bhikkhu Nāgasamala* did not agree to do so. Putting the *Buddha*'s alms bowl and robes on the ground, he angrily said, “My Lord, here are your alms bowl and your robes”. After saying, he left the *Buddha* and went along the straightway. The *Buddha* picked up his alms bowl and robes himself and continued his journey alone. At some distance, the *Buddha* took a rest under a tree. Meanwhile *Bhikkhu Nāgasamala*, who took the shortcut, came back to the *Buddha* with torn robes and cracked alms bowl as he was robbed and persecuted by the thieves and dacoits in the halfway. When he recounted to the *Buddha* what had happened to him, the *Buddha* told him that he prohibited *Bhikkhu Nāgasamala* as he foresaw these dangers. Then, the *Buddha* made a joyful solemn utterance. “Just as a crane drinks the pure milk only when it has to drink the mixture of the water and milk and it gets rid of the water, a wise person gets rid of the evil actions although he has to get on with a foolish person in eating, travelling and doing daily activities together.”

Soon, the *Bhikkhu* attained the arahatship when he realized the truth about the element unexpectedly. Once, the villagers were performing a dance on the main road when he went on an alms round to their village. At that instant, he came to know that they were moving and shaking their bodies caused by very noble motion of the mind. No sooner did he realize this truth than he attained the truth of the *Ariya* Path. The would-be *Bhikkhu Nāgasamala* offered a

cetiya in the time of *Sikhī Buddha* with some trumpet flowers thrown away on the main road of a city. He offered the *cetiya* with the trumpet flowers with full veneration. As a result, he had never been reborn at the four lower worlds for 31 *kappas*. He was reborn as a Universal Monarch in 15 *kappas* beyond this “*Buddha kappa*”.

Both *Bhikkhu Meghiya* and *Bhikkhu Nāgasamala* were disobedient attendants (*dubbaca*) but they did nothing to insult the *Buddha*.

Bhikkhu Sunakkhatta

Bhikkhu Sunakkhatta was worse than the former two attendants. He behaved badly in dealing with the *Buddha*. *Bhikkhu Sunakkhatta* was a *Licchavī* prince before he joined the Holy Order of *Saṃgha*.

The prince joined the Holy Order after he had heard about the integrity and prestige of the *Buddha*'s *Sāsanā*. Having admired the *Buddha*'s *Sāsanā* and the profound significance of the *Buddha Dhamma*, he became a *Bhikkhu* in the Holy Order. So, he could be categorized as a *saddhā pabbajjita*. The *Buddha* preached a discourse in which he distinguished between a person who would be able to have an *adhimāna* and a non-*adhimāna* as well as suitable and unsuitable qualities of a person considering *Nibbāna* by giving similes such as the sore, the arrow smeared with person, the palm tree without the top part of the stem and a jar with fermented drink. The prince rejoiced at the merit gained from the *Buddha*'s preaching. When he became a *Bhikkhu*, he even received the position of the personal attendant that everyone wanted to have. After three years in his monkhood, *Bhikkhu Sunakkhatta* attained divine eye, a kind of *Lokiya Abhiññā*. Due to this higher psychic power, he was able to see the amazing beauty of the celestial maidens. But he did not know the fact that the *Abhiññā* he attained was only the power of absorption and it would disappear any time. As he also wanted to hear the pleasant sweet voice of the celestial maidens, he asked the *Buddha* to preach the ways to attain Divine ear. He often asked the *Buddha* to preach him how to possess the Divine ear.

The *Buddha* did not preach him to attain the Divine ear because *Bhikkhu Sunakkhatta* had to pay upon recompose. In one of his former rebirths, he hit a monk. For this reason, he was unable to attain Divine ear in this life. But King *Mahāli*, one of the royal relatives said to the *Buddha*, “Venerable Sir, *Sunakkhatta* had become a *bhikkhu* under your supervision and guidance. Although he could see the amazing beauty of the celestial maiden, he was unable to hear their voice. He told me that the *Bhagavā* did not teach him how to attain the Divine ear”. The *Buddha* replied that if he did not practice concentration for the sense of hearing, he would be unable to hear the voice from the celestial abode and that *Sunakkhatta* could manage to contemplate the *Samādhi* only for attaining the Divine eye.

The disobedient disciple who defied the *Buddha*

Bhikkhu Sunakkhatta returned to lay hood as he was unsatisfied with the *Buddha*'s words. Even after he became a layman, he kept on talking ill of the *Buddha*. He spread rumors about the *Buddha* to damage the reputation, “Recluse *Gotama* has no real wisdom but he practises what he thinks right through his exploration and consideration. And what he preaches is not the real truth that can lead to the cessation of all troubles”.

On hearing such slander while going on alms rounds, the Venerable *Sāriputta* recounted it to the *Buddha*. With reference to the information provided by the Venerable *Sāriputta*, the *Buddha* preached him *Mahā Sīhanāda Sutta*. The *pāli* word “*Mahā Sīhanāda Sutta*” means that the discourse “the roar of the lion king”. So, this discourse was a comprehensive account of the attributes of the *Buddha* and the *Dhamma* or his teaching. *Mahā Sīhanāda Sutta* described unique qualities the *Buddha* possesses, which benefit people can enjoy by following the *Buddha*'s teaching. This *Sutta* was very informative about the *Buddha*

and the *Dhamma*. It depicted the attributes of the *Buddha* and the *Dhamma* clearly and assertively like the roar of a lion.

This *Sutta* mentions about the systems of moral duties related to the Buddhism ranging from the basic rule of conduct to the highest or ultimate one. It also includes the supreme power of the *Buddha*, the cause of the *paṭisandhe* or rebirth of living beings etc.

In fact, the principles of Buddhism are not based on the theoretical knowledge alone. In Buddhism, theory serves as guidance that needs to be combined with practice so that the practitioner will achieve the goal of finding the right way to gain insight with the four *Ariya* Truths. It is neither an idealism nor an empiricism but a pragmatism which highlights the importance of combining theory and practice. *Mahā Sīhanāda Sutta* highlights this.

It was noted that the *Buddha* preached this *Sutta* while Venerable *Nāgasamala*, one of his personal attendants, was fanning and serving an alms meal to *the Buddha*.

Bhikkhu Nāgita

Bhikkhu Nāgita was also one of the personal attendants of the *Buddha*. He was also a *Mahāsāvaka* who accompanied the *Buddha* on the left. Before he entered the Order, he was a Sakyan prince. Having heard the *Madhupiṇḍa Sutta* preached by the *Buddha*, he developed a strong confidence in the *Buddha*'s teaching and entered the holy Order of *Saṃgha*. Once, the *Buddha* resided in *Icehānamāṅgala* wood near *Kosala* province. The *Buddha* said, "Oh *Nāgita*, I don't want to be famous nor I want to have many attendants. I want to enjoy the spiritual well-being such as emancipation from the sensual pleasures, tranquility, peace and solitude, and delightful satisfaction resulting from *Ariya* knowledge.

One who cannot enjoy such kinds of spiritual well-being will definitely enjoy sensual pleasures which won like faeces, dozing pleasure, gifts and fame. *Nāgita*, whatever you eat and drink will result in faeces and urine and no valuable thing". The *Buddha* said so because he did not like the way the monk who resided in the village monastery behaved. That monk did not attain the *Samādhi* as he enjoyed having attendant *Sāmaneyas* and other lay devotees who served the meals and offered their service despite that the monk lacked the practice he should do. So, the *Buddha* did not like the way he did. But the *Buddha* praised another monk who followed austere practice and dwelled the forest in solitude. The *Buddha* preached *Bhikkhu Nāgita* about this. *Bhikkhu Nāgita* uttered, "Our great teacher, the *Bhagavā* whose mind is always directed towards the *Nibbāna* admonished all the *Bhikkhus* showing the *Dhamma* that He knew through his *Sayambhū nāṇa* as if He showed the *Shitshar* fruit on his palm".

Bhikkhu Sāgata

Bhikkhu Sāgata was one of *Mahāsāvaka* who accompanied the *Buddha* on the left.

The past aspiration of would-be *Bhikkhu Sāgata*

The would-be *Bhikkhu Sāgata* was born in a noble caste in *Haṃsāvātī* royal capital during the time of *Padumuttara Buddha*. In the past life, he was called *Sobhita*. He was listening to a discourse when *Padumuttara Buddha* awarded a *bhikkhu* who was pre-eminent in contemplating the "*Tejo kasiṇa Jhāna*". As he emulated this *bhikkhu* for his outstanding status in *Tejo kasiṇa Jhāna*, he performed a major meritorious action and made an aspiration at *Padumuttara Buddha* to become the most outstanding *bhikkhu* in practising "*Tejo kasiṇa Jhāna*". *Padumuttara Buddha* also made a prophecy that he would become so. Accordingly, he was awarded the *Etadagga* title i.e. most outstanding *bhikkhu* in prastory "*Tejo kasiṇa Jhāna*" by *Gotama Buddha*.

Ordination in the last rebirth

The would-be *Bhikkhu Sākata* was a young man of the priestly social class in *Sāvatti*. Having heard the *Buddha's desanā*, he entered the holy order of the *Samgha*. As he had strong confidence in the *Buddha's* teaching, he was very diligent and Zealous in his practice. Having focused on *Kammaṭṭhāna* meditation, he got the eight mystic attainments and the five kinds of *Lokiya abhiññā*. He was famous for his powerful concentration. He was so smart in his higher psychic power that he was able to tame a mythical serpent on behalf of the *Buddha*.

Chabbaggī monks became jealous of *Bhikkhu Sāgasa* as he was famous for putting down the dangerous mythical serpent. Those *bhikkhus* were so notorious that the *Buddha* had to promulgate several minor precepts (*Sekkiya*) to be followed by all the members of *Samgha*. At that time, the minor precept prohibited the monks from taking the liquors drinks which had not been promulgated yet. *Chabbaggī* monks persuaded the lay devotees into offering liquors to *Bhikkhu Sāgata*. Being urged by those monks, the lay devotees of *Kosambhī* city who were too sincere to doubt their ulterior motive offered the best quality liquor to *Bhikkhu Sāgata*.

Being innocent, *Bhikkhu Sāgata* happened to taste the liquor little by little while going on his alms round at one house after another. Due to the gradually increase in the degree of intoxicant power, *Bhikkhu Sāgata* collapsed at the entrance of the city gate. Other monks brought the drunkard *Bhikkhu Sāgata* to the monastery in the city. Being unconscious and unaware of what had happened to him, *Bhikkhu Sāgata* fell fast asleep all night with his feet towards the direction of the *Bhagavā*.

He came round the next day. Having realized the incident, he got totally shocked at his shameful behavior on the previous day and felt regretful. He came to know the disadvantages of taking intoxicants that would cause the indecent behavior with references to his incidence, the *Buddha* promulgated the minor precept that prohibited the monks from taking liquors drinks.

Since *Bhikkhu Sāgata* had already understood the impermanence of the power of *Lokiya Jhāna*, he strove very hard to practise *vipassanā* meditation until he attained the *Ariya* Truths. Soon, he attained the Arahantship and he became the outstanding *Bhikkhu* who was awarded the pre-eminent status in contemplating "*Tejo kasīna Jhāna*".

So, it can be learnt that the power of concentration is not permanent; it can decline and disappear in the face of opposite sex or other destructive things that disturb the practitioner's tranquility.

Bhikkhu Upavāṇa

Unlike other present attendants of the *Buddha*, *Bhikkhu Upavāṇa* and *Bhikkhu Cunda* were obedient and dutiful. They were sincere and submissive enough to provide necessities to the *Buddha* until his attainment of *Mahāparinibbāna* although the Venerable *Ānandā* was the permanent personal attendant to the *Buddha*.

The name of *Upavāṇa* was found to be belonged to the two *Bhikkhus* mentioned in *pāli* scriptures. One of the *Bhikkhus* by the name of *Upavāṇa* was a service provider to the *Buddha*. He was not only included in the list of the personal attendant of the *Buddha* but also a famous *Bhikkhu* in the *Buddha sāsanā*. In fact, he was one of the *Mahāsāvaka* who accompanied the *Buddha* on his left.

By the time *Bhikkhu Upavāṇa* looked after the *Buddha*, later He often suffered from flatulence as he had been contented with a handful of boiled green grams for many days when he practised the austerities during his attempt to attain the enlightenment, the *Bodhisatta* had to

sleep in uncomfortable places. So, the *Buddha* got a severe colic. *Bhikkhu Upavāṇa* asked for some slightly warm water from a Brahmin friend and prepared a tepid for the *Buddha*. He made a beverage by steaming the solid molasses. When the *Buddha* consumed the steamed molasses, the severe colic was cured.

Bhikkhu Upavāṇa was quite heavily built with a very large physical body. He was as big as a young elephant when he wore a discarded robe, he looked bigger than he really was, when the *Buddha* was on his death bed, celestial beings including *devas* and Brahmins all over ten thousand universe came to the *Buddha* to pay the last homage. Those celestial beings crowded around the *Buddha*: they occupied not only the vicinity of *Kusinārā* sal wood but also the whole area within a distance of about 12 *yojanas*. *Bhikkhu Upavāṇa* was standing in front of the *Buddha* and fanning the face when the celestial beings came to worship the *Buddha* on his death bed.

The *devas* (celestial beings) could see things penetrating the physical bodies of *puthujjanas* but they could not do so to those of the Arahats. Their divine eyes could not penetrate an Arahats' physical body. Therefore, *Bhikkhu Upavāṇa* was blocking their views due to his big physical body. For knowing this, the *Buddha* told him to stay aside. Being obedient, *Bhikkhu Upavāṇa* dropped the palm fan and stood at a distance at once. The Venerable *Ānanda* asked the *Buddha* the reason for doing so, the *Buddha* replied that he did so not because *Bhikkhu Upavāṇa* was doing wrong but because he was blocking the view of the celestial beings, who were eager to worship the *Buddha*'s face clearly. And then the *Buddha* explained to Venerable *Ānanda* why *Bhikkhu Upavāṇa* was powerful enough to disturb the Divine eyes. The *Buddha* said, "Dear *Ānanda*, all celestial beings from all the abodes of *devas* and from these Brahmins existing in ten thousand universes assembled here to pay their homage to me. They densely crowded in the *Kusināra* sal wood with no space between one another. The *Buddha* who was endowed with "Arahant" attributed wisdom to attain their enlightenment in the human world. Such a rare *Buddha* was going to realize *Parinibbāna* at the last watch of tonight so we went to worship the *Buddha*'s face for the last time but the powerful *Bhikkhu Upavāṇa* was standing in front of the *Buddha* obscuring our view. How can we worship the *Buddha*'s face? The god disappointed and censured the elder. So, I had to ask him to move aside.

That *Bhikkhu Upavāṇa* was more powerful than others because he offered a cylindrical pennant by using his golden clock at the *stupa* with a height of one *yojana*. It was built of pure gold bricks, each of which measuring one cubit in length, nine inches in width and two inches in depth. That *Stupa* was erected to enshrine the entire relic of *Vipassī Buddha* when he realized *Mahāparinibbāna*. Then, other guardian spirits of trees, the earth and the space etc. stocked a terrace on the original *Stupa* with a height of one *yojana*. Each of them stacked a terrace measuring one *yojana* each from the original one. At that time, the would-be *Bhikkhu Upavāṇa* was a rich man. He made a cylindrical pennant by using his cloak in golden colour. He was also reborn as the guardian spirit of a *Cetiya* in the time of *Kassapa Buddha*. As a result, he became a very powerful *Bhikkhu* in the time of *Gotama Buddha*.

Therefore, it is learnt that we will be able to enjoy the same advantage of offering if we offer the living *Buddha* or these kinds of *Cetiyas* as a substitute for the living *Buddha*. We should have full veneration and confidence either to the living *Buddha* or to these kinds of *Cetiyas*. If so, we will be able to enjoy the same advantages and able to gain the same merit of our good deeds.

Bhikkhu Cunda

Bhikkhu Cunda was the son of Brahmin *Vaṅkanta* and *Rūpasārī* and the youngest brother of the Venerable *Sāriputtara*. *Bhikkhu Cunda* was one of the *Mahāsāvakas* who accompanied the *Buddha* on the right. He had become an Arahāt since he was seven years old.

When he came of age, he was ordained in the Holy Order of *Samgha* having Venerable *Sāriputta* as the preceptor. He became an Arahāt who attained higher psychic power by doing *vipassanā* meditation. *Bhikkhu Cunda* reported the *Buddha* about the *Parinibbāna* of his brother, the Venerable *Sariputta*. Then he put the relics of his brother into an alms bowl and offered it to the *Buddha*.

The past life of the would be *Bhikkhu Cunda*

The would-be *Bhikkhu Cunda* offered jasmine flowers in the shape of a *Cetiya* to *Sidhattha Buddha* in one of his former rebirths. Due to this meritorious action, *Sidhattha Buddha* uttered a prophecy for him. After death, he was reborn in the celestial abode full of jasmine flowers. He had many attendants and his golden edifice was decorated with rubies. The would-be *Bhikkhu Cunda* was reborn as a deva king for 74 times. He had enjoyed the celestial pleasures for 74 times. He was reborn as an emperor in the human abode for 100 times and he became the universal monarch for 75 times.

Asking permission from the *Buddha* to display his high psychic power

During the sixth year after the *Buddha*'s enlightenment, that *Buddha* stayed at *Makula* hill for the rain retreat. He lived in *Veḷuvana* monastery in *Rājagaha*. A rich man in *Rājagaha* hang an alms bowl made of sandal wood at the top of bamboo poles joined together to a height of 60 cubits. Then he announced, "May a true Arahāt come along the heavenly journey and take this alms bowl." The six heretics tried their best to take this alms bowl but they could not do so. The one who could take this alms bowl was *Bhikkhu Pindolabhāradvāja* who displayed the super normal power. But the heretics censured this action. So, the *Buddha* prevented the *Bhikkhus* from displaying their power. Again, the heretics were sceptics about this. They said that the *Buddha*'s disciples were not smart enough to be able to display their higher psychic power. As a response to their attack, the *Buddha* encouraged the disciples to display their super normal power. So, *Samaneya Cunda*, a seven year old genius endowed with the four kinds of analytical insight asked for the *Buddha*'s permission to display the super normal power. He said to the *Buddha*, "My lord, I'll shake the stem of the *Eugenia* tree and bring the fruit to feed the audience. I'll bring dusters of very large and long bright red flowers from *Tāvātimsā* abode and give them to the audience. Please let me do these actions using my higher psychic power." However, the *Buddha* did not give him his consent to do so.

Once, the *Buddha* felt sick while staying in the *Veḷuvana* monastery. So, *Bhikkhu Cunda* recited the enlightenment factors "*maggaññāna* (path knowledge)" and the *Buddha* listened to them attentively. Soon the *Buddha* recovered from sickness.

On the day when the *Buddha* was going to realize *Mahāparinibbāna*, *Bhikkhu Cunda* came along with the *Buddha* to look after him. After having a bath in the *Kakutā* River, the *Buddha* took a short rest in the nearby mango orchard. The *Buddha* called *Bhikkhu Cunda*, "*Cunda*, I insist you folding to use a *Samghāṭi* of two layers into four folds to use as a bed sheet. I'm very tired. I want to lie down".

As He was told, *Bhikkhu Cunda* prepared the bed for the *Buddha* all the time to offer whatever service for the *Buddha*. Therefore, both *bhikkhu Upavāṇa* and *Bhikkhu Cunda* were said to have mentioned near the *Buddha* until the time of *Mahāparinibbāna*.

CONCLUSION

A recluse's life is a kind of situation in which a man seeks the way of emancipation from the complicated trouble of a householder. Having renounced the sensual pleasures, a recluse or a *bhikkhu* stays away from the five senses such as sense of sight, sense of taste and of contact, etc. It is common knowledge that well-bred gentlemen in the time of *Gotama Buddha* including those from the ruling class and priestly class renounced their wealthy lives. They had to try very hard to get permission to become a recluse from their parents; some of them insisted doing so by starving themselves.

Despite that, their great ambition sometimes got lost when they could not achieve what they hoped. Naturally, the *puthujjana* tended to change their mind quite often and so we should not blame on their behavior, but we should learn lessons from their experiences. The mind which is full of mental defilements cannot bring about eternal peace. The nature of mind is very fickle and unsteady: it is like a fish pulled out of water and cast on land throbbing and quivering. The temporary or occasional attendants of the *Buddha* mentioned above were no exceptions. Being *puthujjanas* mostly with the development of *Kāma vitakka*, *byāpāda vitakka* and *vihimsa vitakka*, some of the *Buddha*'s personal attendants could not control their mind and even deserted the *Buddha* although the chance of becoming a personal attendant was very rare for most of the *bhikkhus*. By studying their wrong actions to the *Buddha*, we should be careful to avoid such rebellious and unfaithful behaviour towards our superiors or elders alike.

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our gratitude to Dr Theingi Shwe (Rector, Hinthada University), Dr Yee Yee Than (Pro-Rector, Hinthada University) and Dr Cho Kyi Than (Pro-Rector, Hinthada University), for their kind permission to carry out this research. We are greatly indebted to Dr Soe Mya Hla Thu Zar, Professor and Head, and Dr Myint Myint Than, Professor, Department of Oriental Studies, Hinthada University, for helping us in our research work.

References

Pāli Texts

- Apadāna* Vol.I, (1960), Department of religious Affairs, Yangon, Myanmar.
Apadāna Vol.II, (1956), Department of religious Affairs, Yangon, Myanmar.
Mahāvagga Pāli, Dīghanikāye, (2000), Department of religious Affairs, Yangon, Myanmar.
Mūlapaṇṇāsa Pā li, (1997), Department of religious Affairs, Yangon, Myanmar.
Sīlakkhandavagga Pāli, (1958), Department of religious Affairs, Yangon, Myanmar.
Theragāthā, (1997), Department of religious Affairs, Yangon, Myanmar.
Udāna Pāli, (1974), Department of religious Affairs, Yangon, Myanmar.
Uparipaṇṇāsa Pāli, (1956), Department of religious Affairs, Yangon, Myanmar.

Aṭṭhakathā (Commentaries)

- Buddhaghosa Mahathera, Bhaddanta*, (1959), *Dīghanikāya mahāvagga Aṭṭhakathā*, Department of religious Affairs, Yangon, Myanmar.

Buddhaghosa Mahathera, Bhaddanta, (1959), Dīghanikāya sīlakhandaṅga Aṭṭhakathā, Department of religious Affairs, Yangon, Myanmar.

Buddhaghosa Mahathera, Bhaddanta, (1959), Jātaka Aṭṭhakathā Vol.IV, Department of religious Affairs, Yangon, Myanmar.

Dhammapāla thera, Bhaddanta, (1974), Theragāthā Aṭṭhakathā Vol.I, Department of religious Affairs, Yangon, Myanmar.

Kenaci thera, porāṇikena, (1959), Apadāna Aṭṭhakathā Vol.I, Icchaya Press, Yangon, Myanmar.

Kenaci thera, porāṇikena, (1959), Apadāna Aṭṭhakathā Vol.II, Department of religious Affairs, Yangon, Myanmar.

Ṭīkā (Sub-commentaries)

Sāriputta, Bhaddanta, (1961), Aṅguttara Ṭīkā Vol.III, Department of religious Affairs, Yangon, Myanmar.

Other Texts

မဟာဗုဒ္ဓဝင်တတိယတွဲ ဝိစိတ္တသာရာဘိဝံသ၊ အရှင်၊ သာသနာရေးဦးစီးဌာနပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ရန်ကုန်။

မဟာဗုဒ္ဓစတုတ္ထတွဲ ဝိစိတ္တသာရာဘိဝံသ၊ အရှင်၊ သာသနာရေးဦးစီးဌာနပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ရန်ကုန်။

သီလခန္ဓဝဂ္ဂပါဠိတော်မြန်မာပြန် ပိဋကတ်တော်မြန်မာပြန်အဖွဲ့၊ သာသနာရေးဦးစီးဌာနပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ရန်ကုန်။