
Biography of the Venerable Mahathera Ledi Sayadaw,

Aggamahapandita, D.Litt.

Known to scholars of many countries, the Venerable Ledi Sayadaw, Aggamahapandita, D. Litt., was perhaps the outstanding Buddhist figure of this age. With the increase in interest in Western lands, there is a great demand for his Buddhist Discourses and writings which are now being translated and reproduced in "The Light of the Dhamma."

Bhikkhu Nyana who was later known as Ledi Sayadaw was born on Tuesday, the 13th Waxing of Nattaw, 1208 Burmese Era (1846 C.E.) at Saing-pyin Village, Dipeyin Township, Shwebo District. His parents were U Tun Tha and Daw Kyone. Early in life he was ordained a *samanera* and at the age of 20 a Bhikkhu, under the patronage of Salin Sayadaw U Pandicca. he received his monastic education under various teachers and later was trained in Buddhist literature by the Venerable San-kyaung Sayadaw, *Sudassana Dhaja Atuladhipati Siripavara Mahadhamma Rajadhi- raja-guru* of Mandalay.

He was a bright student. It was said of him: --"About 200 students attended the lectures delivered daily by the Ven'ble Sankyaung Sayadaw. One day the Venerable Sayadaw set in Pali 20 questions on Parami (Perfections) and asked all the students to answer them. None of them except Bhikkhu Nyana could answer those question satisfactorily." He collected all these answers and when he attained 14 Vassa and while he was still in San-kyaung monastery, he published his first book, "Parami Dipani". (Manual of perfections).

During the reign of King Theebaw he became a Pali lecturer at Maha Jotikarama monastery in Mandalay. A year after the capture of King Theebaw, i.e. in 1887 C.E., he removed to a place to the north of Monywa town, where he established a monastery under the name of Ledi-tawya Monastery. He accepted many *bhikkhu*-students from various parts of Burma and imparted Buddhist education to them. In 1897 C.E. he wrote Paramattha Dipani (Manual of Ultimate Truths) in Pali.

Later, he toured in many parts of Burma for the purpose of propagating the Buddha Dhamma. In towns and villages he visited he delivered various Discourses on the Dhamma and established Abhidhamma classes and Meditation Centres. He composed Abhidhamma rhymes or Abhidhamma Sankhitta and taught them to his Abhidhamma classes. In some of the

principal towns he spent a *Vassa* imparting Abhidhamma and Vinaya education to the lay devotees. Some of the Ledi Meditation Centres are still existing and still famous. During his itinerary he wrote many essays, letters, poems and manuals in Burmese. He has written more than 70 manuals[1], of which eight have been translated into English and published in "The Light of the Dhamma". *Vipassana Dipani* (Manual of Insight) was translated by his disciple Sayadaw U Nyana, *Pathamagyaw Patthanuddesa Dipani* (A concise exposition of the Buddhist Philosophy of Relations) was originally written in Pali by the late Ledi Sayadaw and translated by Sayadaw U Nyana. *Niyama Dipani* (Manual of cosmic Order) was translated by U Nyana and Dr. Barua and edited by Mrs. Rhys Davids. *Sammaditthi Dipani* (Manual of Right Understanding) and *Catusacca Dipani* (Manual of the Four Noble Truths) were translated by the Editors of "The Light of The Dhamma." *Bodhipakkhiya Dipani* (Manual of the Factors Leading to Enlightenment) was translated by U Sein Nyo Tun, I.C.S. (Retd.), and *Magganga Dipani* (Manual of constituents of the Noble Path) was translated by U Saw Tun Teik, B.A. B.L., and revised and edited by the English Editorial Board of the Union Buddha Sasana Council.

He was awarded the title of Aggamahapandita by the Government of India in 1911 C.E. Later, the University of Rangoon conferred on him the degree of D. Litt. (*Honoris Causa*). In the later years he settled down at Pyinmana where he died in 1923 C.E. at the ripe age of 77.

APPENDIX

Below are some of the Tikas, Manuals, essays and letters written by the Venerable Ledi Sayadaw:--

In Pali:

1. Paramattha Dipani (Manual of Ultimate Truths) or Abhidhammattha Sangaha Maha Tika.
2. Nirutti Dipani or Vuttimoggallana Tika.
3. Anu-dipani.
4. Vibhatyattha Tika.
5. Vaccavacaka Tika.
6. Sasanasampatti Dipani.
7. Sasanavipatti Dipani.
8. Patthanuddesa Dipani.
9. Sammaditthi Dipani.
10. London Pali Devi Questions and answers.
11. Exposition of Buddhism for the West.
12. Padhana Sutta (Pali and word for word meanings).
13. Anattavibhavana.
14. Yamaka Puccha Visajjana.
15. Niyama Dipani.
16. Vipassana Dipani.

In Burmese:

17. Rupa Dipani (Manual of Material Qualities).
18. Lakkhana Dipani (Manual of Characteristics of existence).
19. Parami Dipani (Manual of Perfections).
20. Vijjamagga Dipani (Manual of the Way to the Holy-Path- Knowledge).
21. Nibbana Dipani (Manual of Nibbana).
22. Mahasayana Dipani (Manual of Great Lying Down).
23. Uttama Purisa Dipani (Manual of the Real Superman).
24. Paticcasamuppada Dipani (Manual of Dependent Origination).
25. Ahara Dipani (Manual of Nutritive Essence).
26. Anatta Dipani (Manual of Impersonality).
27. Anatta Dipani (new).
28. Kammatthana Dipani (Manual of Meditation subjects).
29. Anapana Dipani (Manual of Exhaling and Inhaling).
30. Catusacca Dipani (Manual of the Four Noble Truths).
31. Bodhipakkhiya Dipani (Manual of the Factors Leading to Enlightenment).
32. Somanassaupekkha Dipani (Manual of Joy and Equanimity).
33. Bhavana Dipani (Manual of Mental Concentration).
34. Sukumara Dipani.
35. Saccattha Dipani.
36. Sasanadayajja Dipani.
37. Rogantara Dipani.
38. Dhamma Dipani.
39. Danadi Dipani.
40. Magganga Dipani (Manual of the Constituents of the Noble Path).
41. Gonasura Dipani.
42. Niyama Dipani (Manual of Cosmic Order).
43. Silavinicchaya Dipani.
44. Virati-silavinicchaya Dipani.
45. Inaparibhoga-vinicchaya Dipani.
46. Dighasana-vinicchaya Dipani.
47. Asankhara-Sasankhara-vinicchaya Dipani.
48. Sikkha-gahana-vinicchaya Dipani.
49. Cetiyangana-vinicchaya Dipani.
50. Upasampada-vinicchaya Dipani.
51. Decision on Ajivatthamaka Sila.
52. Decision on Vikalabhajana-sikkhapada.
53. Sarana-gamana-vinicchaya Dipani.
54. Paramattha Sankhitta.
55. Vinaya Sankhitta.
56. Satta Sankhitta.
57. "Alphabets" Sankhitta.
58. Prosody Sankhitta.
59. Alanka Sankhitta.
60. Spelling Sankhitta.
61. Paramattha Sankhitta.
62. Chapter on Material Qualities (in brief).
63. Nibbana-visajjana Manual.

64. Ledi Questions and Answers.
65. Questions on Sotapanna.
66. Sasanavisodhani. Vols. I,II & III.
67. Gambhira-kabya-kyan (Manual of Profound Verses).
68. Open letter for abstention from taking beef.
69. Letter of reply to U Ba Bwa, Township Officer of Dedaye, saying that he could not go on a pilgrimage to Ceylon that year.
70. Admonitory letter to U Saing, Headman of Saingpyin Village for abstention from taking intoxicants.
71. Admonitory letter to the inhabitants of Dipevin Twonship for abstention from taking intoxicants.
72. Admonitory letter prohibiting Lotteries and Gambling
73. AN Advice to hold a Lighting Festival at the Bo Tree within the precincts of Ledi Monastery, Monywa.
74. Letter to U Hmat, a Ruby Merchant of Mogok.
75. Inscription at Sihataw Pagoda written by the Ven'ble Mahathera Ledi Sayadaw at the request of U Hmat.
76. Epic on Samvega.

<http://elibrary.ibc.ac.th/files/manualofinsight/biograph.htm>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ledi_Sayadaw

<http://www.vridhamma.org/node/25>

<https://www.tw.dhamma.org/en/introduction/ven-ledi-sayadaw/>