

LOTUS COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE

The Joyful Traveller



**A Celebration of the life of
Aggamahapandita
Dr Rewata Dhamma
1929-2004**



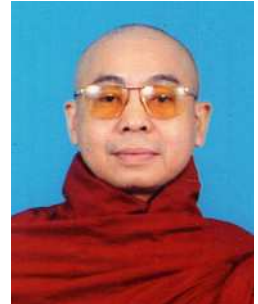
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The Lay Review and Newsletter of the
Birmingham Buddhist Vihara

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Message from the Spiritual Director



When I was studying for my doctoral thesis in London during the 1990s, Sayadaw was unfailingly helpful and kind to me. It was he who selected me from the names given to him by the State Sangha Mahanayaka Council to be his Head of Vihara in Birmingham. I came to the Vihara on 10th July 2003 during the veneration of the U.N. Buddha relics. Sayadaw arranged for me to teach, lead retreats, meditation courses and dhamma talks until he passed away on 26th May 2004. It was not just from a sense of duty, therefore, but also out of deep gratitude that I accepted the Trustees' invitation to take over as Spiritual Director and complete Dr Rewata Dhamma's outstanding tasks.

Sayadaw's disciples testify that almost from the beginning he wanted to create a Buddhist academy in Birmingham. It would indeed be wonderful if our Vihara could take such a lead. Bhante had three projects he wished to see completed in his lifetime: a Pagoda, a Vihara and an Academy. He successfully completed the first two and I am committed to completion of the third, in his memory. Coming from an academic background myself, I realise just how much work will be involved and how carefully it must be planned. It is very important first of all to push ahead with the project of creating a Dhamma Hall with all urgency. To mark it as Sayadaw's project, we plan a side-room there to display his books and robes and also a life-size seated copper statue of him which is being ordered from Myanmar.

Another of Sayadaw's project was to build a school extension in Thamangone, the village where he was

born. He was preparing an appeal for this in the weeks before his death as a 75th birthday offering of gratitude to those who supported him in the early days. It is now already finished and will be opened on his birthday, the 12th December 2005.

Finally, there is Sayadaw's scholarly work in English, *The Process of Consciousness and Matter* which has been edited by Dr Kumarabhivamsa and is yet to be printed. Yann Lovelock and I have also edited a book of Sayadaw's essays and talks, which is currently being printed by Triple Gem Publications in Malaysia. In the near future we hope to write his biography to underline Sayadaw's great diligence. In January 2005, I suggested that we should mark the first anniversary of the death of Dr Rewata Dhamma by bringing out this special commemorative issue of our magazine *Lotus Review*.

In conclusion, I would like to thank those of Dr Rewata Dhamma's friends and disciples, as well as councils, trusts and leaders of interfaith who have written tributes to Dr Rewata Dhamma and sent their condolences. I must acknowledge as well Yann Lovelock for all his hard work in gathering together and editing the contents of this issue of *Lotus Review*. Furthermore, let me mention my great thanks to Linda Tomlinson who has both designed and formatted the book of essays and this publication. My thanks also go to Dr. Mar Mar Lwin for her selection of Dr. Rewata Dhamma's photos for the photo essay.

Ven. Dr. Ottara Nyana
Birmingham Buddhist Vihara,
1st June 2005



VENERABLE Dr. REWATA DHAMMA

4 Dec. 1929 - 26 May 2004

Sayadaw Dr. Rewata Dhamma was born in Hanthada District, Myanmar, son of U Lu Khin and his wife Daw Pyant Gyi. He studied Theravada Buddhism from childhood under several eminent scholar monks. He passed the highest examination in scriptural studies at the age of 23 and was awarded the prestigious title of Sasana-dhaja-siripavara dhammacariya in 1953. Partly as a result of his attainment he was included among the young monks who helped with the arrangements for the 6th General Sangha Council held in Yangon between 1954-6.

He was then given a state scholarship to study in India and went to the Sanskrit University in Varanasi. He obtained an MA in Sanskrit in 1964 and a Ph.D in 1967 from Benares Hindu University. He was now proficient in Hindi and began to write in that language. One of his books, a translation of the *Abhidhammattha Sangaha* with his own commentary was awarded the Kalidasa prize from the Hindi Academy as one of the outstanding books of the year in 1967 and is still a standard textbook. He also edited a three-volume edition of *The Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga)* with commentary, published by the Sanskrit University. In 1969 he was appointed Chief Editor of the *Encyclopaedia of Buddhist Technical Terms* and later edited the *Paramita* magazine in Hindi and English.

In 1975 he moved to England where he estab-

lished a Buddhist Vihara in Birmingham as his base. In 1998 he accomplished the building of the Dhamma Talaka Peace Pagoda, which has been a harbour for many Buddhist followers and is visited by thousands of visitors each year.

Up to his death in May 2004 Dr. Rewata Dhamma taught Buddhism and Vipassana meditation at various centres in Europe and the United States of America.

Dr. Rewata Dhamma has written numerous articles and essays on Buddhism (a comprehensive though not yet complete bibliography, skilfully compiled by Yann Lovelock, is included in this publication (see p.40). It reflects something of the extensive range of his writing). He was one of the most recognized authors on Buddhism and amongst the most respected academic scholars in the world.

All of Dr Rewata Dhamma's activities were in the service of spreading the Dhamma. This was done not only through his teachings but through the example he set for all those who met him. As is reflected in the tributes gathered in this publication, he is remembered for not only for his gentleness, humour, compassion and wisdom but for his unflinching kindness to everyone he came into contact with. Though sadly missed his valuable example lives on in those who were privileged to have come into contact with him.

He will not be forgotten.

Ven. Aggamaha Pandita Dr. Rewata Dhamma

Ven. Dr. Medagama
Vajiragnana

Head of the London
Buddhist Vihara and Sangha
Nayake of Great Britain

My association with Dr. Rewata Dhamma was a long one and goes back to the year 1961 when we were students together at the Sanskrit University of Varanasi in India. We stayed in the same hostel, living next to each other for two years, and during this time became firm friends. Of course, neither of us had the slightest idea that we would both go to live in England. But it happened and we met again in this country in 1975.

In 1981 he founded the Birmingham Buddhist Vihara. Remaining as its head from that time onwards, he was responsible for its gaining the position of eminence which it enjoys today. The Dhamma Talaka Pagoda was established in 1998 as a serene place of worship in the Myanmar style which reflects his vision, courage, and determination. It provides a haven for those who seek an ideal place of solitude and tranquillity through mental discipline. This centre has been visited by thousands of school children as well as adults from far and wide.

Ven. Rewata Dhamma dedicated his life to disseminating the Buddha Dhamma in all parts of the world. He was a true follower of the Buddha's directive to the monks at Isipatana - "Go forth, O Bhikkhus, for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, benefit and happiness of gods and men."

Ven. Rewata Dhamma exemplified the qualities described in the scriptures as Sangha Sobhana Guna,

qualities which beautify the order of the Sangha. The text reads:

*Yo hoti vyatta ca visarado ca
Babussuto dhammadbaro ca hoti.
Dhammassa hoti anudhammacari
Sa tadiso vuccati sangha sobhano*

He who is learned, bold, erudite
and endowed with deep Dhamma
knowledge and lives according
to the Dhamma, beautifies the
Order.

Ven. Rewata Dhamma was endowed with all these illuminating qualities. His many capabilities enabled him to live the prudent and disciplined life of an ideal bhikkhu. He was an illustrious and well read scholar who knew his subject very well. His knowledge and conduct went together to gain him respect and a high reputation. He was an eminent and bold bearer of the Dhamma. The one who lives according to it beautifies the Sangha. The Buddha said,

“I have taught the Dhamma widely - *sutta, geyya, veyyakarana, gatha, udana, itivuttaka, jataka, abbhutadhamma and vedalla*. Now if a monk understands the meaning and the text of Dhamma, even if it be but a stanza of four lines, and be set on living in accordance with that, he may well be called ‘one widely learned who knows Dhamma by heart’. He illumines the Buddha Order.”

Ven. Rewata Dhamma had a sort of charisma and magnetic personality that made everyone he spoke to feel special. People loved him for it. He was kind and gentle and his generosity of heart overflowed in many ways. He was ever ready to extend his helping hand to everyone irrespective of any class or creed. He was born with leadership qualities and he easily adjusted to any environment wherever he was. He travelled widely as a missionary spreading the noble Dhamma. He was fluent in several languages and this made it easy for him to mingle with different nationalities. He was in constant demand for lecture tours in Europe, America and Asia, which led him to travel as a teacher of Buddha Dhamma and Vipassana meditation with well-attended retreats. He gave talks and lectures at such illustrious universities as Oxford, Cambridge, Manchester, Lancaster, Zurich, Harvard, Colombia, Berkeley, Macomb and Champagne. Yet such popularity and honour hardly touched him inwardly; at heart he always remained a simple monk.

In the course of his exemplary life, this outstanding Maha Thera won the utmost respect and honour not only from the Myanmar community but also from all nationalities for his scholarship and skill in communication of the Dhamma. He was deeply committed to developing interfaith harmony and worked

tirelessly to establish good relations between all the different communities which make up our society.

He was a pious monk who followed the monastic discipline to the letter and who led an accomplished life. That life has left an indelible impression on the Buddhist world, especially in the West Midlands where he was universally loved and respected. His demise leaves a vacuum which it will be hardly possible to fill. He will live long in the hearts of many.

Venerable Dr. Rewata Dhamma passed away peacefully in his sleep; he did not have to undergo any long period of suffering and he did not become a burden to others. This is the best way to go. We may meet again in our long journey in samsara. I miss him not only as a good friend of the London Buddhist Vihara and of myself personally, but also as an inspiring example of a bhikkhu who dedicated his life to living and practising the Buddha Dhamma to the highest degree. He was a noble follower of the Buddha. It was an honour to call him a friend. Although he is missed badly by so many, he is securely on the path which will bring him deliverance from all ill, from all suffering. ♦

Ven. Dr.Vajira Nyana



CLASSES		autumn term	
❖ BUDDHIST STUDIES <i>led by Bhikkhu Nagasena</i> These highly popular classes are accessible to all. Come on any date and join in. Held in conjunction with City College, this course entitles you to a Diploma on completion. Second Saturday of most months, obligatory meditation module for both classes.		❖ SCRIPTURE STUDIES <i>led by Ven.Dr. Ottara Nyana</i> Students will study a selection from the Middle Length Scriptures (<i>Majjhima Nikaya</i>), which are especially about Buddhist philosophy and Insight Meditation. Scholars have prized them for their emphasis on human experience. Simple methodological explanations are given with reference to the commentaries, sub-commentaries and more recent scholarship.	
<small>Saturdays: 1.30-3.30pm Sundays 3-5pm</small>		<small>Tuesdays: 2.30-4pm</small>	
SEPTEMBER	17, 24	18, 25	
OCTOBER	1, 15, 22	2, 16, 23	
NOVEMBER	5, 19, 26	6, 20, 27	
DECEMBER	3	4	
SEPTEMBER	12,28	NOVEMBER	1, 8, 15, 22
OCTOBER	4, 11, 18, 25	DECEMBER	6

Our Golden Bridge

John Maxwell QC describes how Sayadaw came to Birmingham

In 1973 an English-born Kagyu nun, Sis. Palmo, visited Birmingham. A disciple of H. H. the 16th Gyalwa Karmapa, she gave teachings and several people took refuge with her. There was then no Buddhist centre in Birmingham and her visit provided the inspiration to set one up. The main energy for this project came from a handful of students of Tibetan lamas in the Kagyu school but they recognised that they were greatly outnumbered by Theravadin Buddhists and that a centre in Birmingham would need to cater for them. We therefore needed a Theravadin monk who understood and was sympathetic to the Kagyu teachings.

We asked Sis. Palmo to recommend such a person and she proposed Dr Rewata Dhamma. He had studied and taught in India and held an M.A. in Mahayana philosophy. In the summer of 1974 I wrote to Dr Rewata Dhamma and invited him to come to Birmingham and set up a centre.

In the meantime it had become obvious that support for the foundation of a Buddhist centre here was quite fragile and there were signs of jealousy and rivalry for control of the project. I was the sponsor for Dr Rewata Dhamma and I had no authority or powers of leadership. The only way forward was to do as little as possible in preparation for his coming and to leave it to him to establish the centre. I arranged with Vajira Bailey to hire a room where he could stay until he was in a position to start the centre. Later on I sought the help of U Myat Saw and Mrs Saw, who kindly agreed to provide temporary accommodation at their Buddhist

centre near Oxford so as to give Dr Rewata Dhamma the chance of assessing the situation in Birmingham.

By the winter of 1974 Dr Rewata Dhamma's visa had not yet been granted. At that time His Holiness the Karmapa made a visit to Birmingham and gave his blessing to the project. As he walked to the car to drive to Vajira's house a beautiful rainbow appeared in the sky. He gave detailed instructions about the formation of a charitable trust under which the centre should be founded. This caused me some embarrassment because I had already agreed with Dr Rewata Dhamma that he should found the centre with no strings attached. I felt inhibited in changing the arrangement and asking him to work within a framework and under conditions that had not previously been mentioned. His Holiness told me to leave the problem with him.

Early in the new year I received a letter from Dr Rewata Dhamma saying that he had met His Holiness in Delhi and that he had requested the Karmapa to accept him as a disciple, that he had agreed to come to Birmingham as the Karmapa's representative and to establish the centre within the framework of the Kagyu school of Buddhism.

In the summer of 1975 Dr Rewata Dhamma arrived and quickly commanded the respect and affection of all the Buddhists in Birmingham. Two years later we were in a position to set up a vihara at 41 Carlyle Road under the name of the West Midlands Buddhist Centre. Though activities there were mainly Theravada, Dr Rewata Dhamma also gave teachings on Mahayana Buddhism, encouraged

Kagyu practice and had Tibetan lamas to teach too. In 1979 he invited Lama Thubten and Lama Lodro to take up residence in the centre.

These were very exciting times. Living at the centre also was the Theravadin monk Ven. Nyanaponika from Nepal and a Nepali nun, Sis. Uppalavanna. Now there were two lamas and the Tibetan translator Tsering Chöden as well as a number of lay assistants. There was a serious overcrowding problem. The shrine was always being changed. One evening it was set for a Theravada meditation. The next day it was rearranged for a Tibetan puja.

It was very difficult when we invited visiting teachers. Dr Rewata Dhamma invited Mahasi Sayadaw and our two lamas had to move out. We were fortunate in having a number of high lamas to visit and then the Theravadin monks had to move out. This was the situation when His Eminence the Tai Situpa came and he expressed the view that the situation had become impossible and the time had come to split the centre. We therefore purchased a second house at 47 Carlyle Road for the Theravada and established a separate charity, the Birmingham Buddhist Vihara Trust. Number 47 was now named The Vihara and number 41 was renamed Karma Ling. The two centres now developed separately but in proximity and in friendship.

The separation was a matter of personal regret. I had worked very closely with Dr Rewata Dhamma. We had planned and executed the establishment of the first Buddhist centre in Birmingham together. The relationship was a very special one for me. I had taken teachings from him. I had watched him develop into an internationally renowned figure. I travelled with him to Los Angeles to visit a vihara he had established there. We went together to Woodstock to see the Karmapa. We stayed together at the Kagyu centre in New York. He helped me through difficulties in my personal life. He was a teacher and a friend. It was a great privilege to have been his sponsor and to have arranged for him to

come to Birmingham. It was much more than a privilege; it was a great blessing and provided the opportunity to receive his wisdom and compassion. After the separation I was aligned with Karma Ling and I much regretted that our paths diverged.

But the paths did not diverge completely. I watched how he developed the Theravada activities with skill and political shrewdness. He not only applied his own energy but had the ability to harness the energy of others and particularly people of influence and power. We see a result of that skill in the pagoda and monastery that developed on the Osler Street site. It is a great joy to me that Dr Rewata Dhamma installed a plaque dedicating the pagoda to His Holiness the Karmapa. But if we lift up our eyes we see that he promoted the Dhamma on an international scale. It is impossible to evaluate his achievements because the field of his activity was so vast.

He inspired me with the teaching that the merit of a good action is finite unless it is dedicated to the benefit of all beings. The sharing and dedication of merit transforms it into something that is not only vast but infinite. How fortunate we all are that Dr Rewata Dhamma shared his merit with us. The only gratitude that he would now expect of us is that we follow his example by deepening our compassion and wisdom so that we may attain enlightenment and help all beings to that state. ♦



FULL MOON/MEDITATION/DEVOTEES DAYS

❖ FULL MOON

Chanting in the Pagoda at 7.30pm except on festival days.
Aug. 17, Sept. 17, Oct. 17, Nov. 15, Dec. 15

❖ MEDITATION CLASSES

BEGINNERS

Thursday, 7pm

ADVANCED

Mondays, 7.30pm

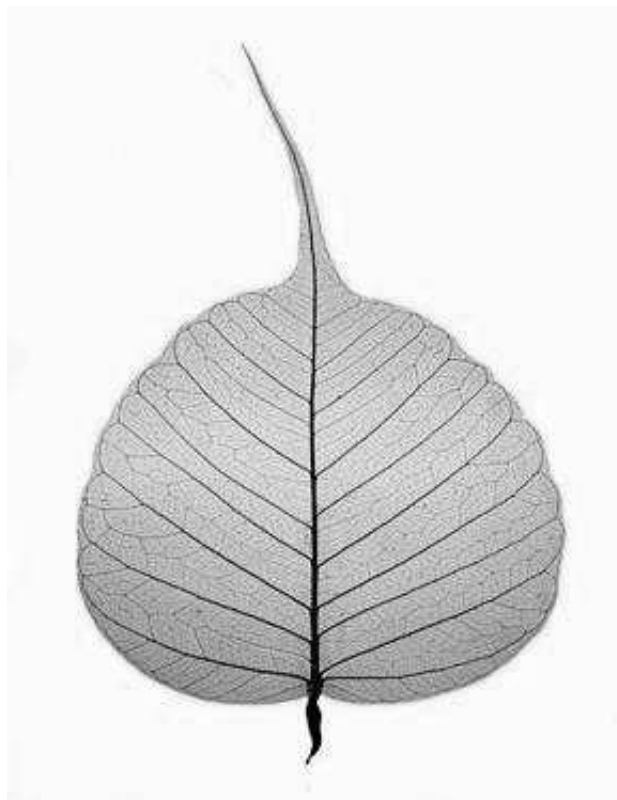
❖ DEVOTEES DAYS

First Sunday in the month at 11 o'clock.

A chance to offer food to the monks and share a communal meal. This will be followed by chanting, meditation, teaching and discussion.

Tribute to Venerable Rewatadhamma

Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi



I spent the rains retreat of 1975 at the Mahabodhi Society in Bangalore under the Indian monk, Ven. Acharya Buddharakkhita. After the rains retreat I set out on pilgrimage with a pupil of Ven. Buddharakkhita to visit the holy places of Buddhism in northern India. Our first stop was Bodhgaya, the site of the Buddha's Enlightenment. In the bookshop of the Mahabodhi Society, not far from the Bodhi Tree, I caught sight of a Devanagari-script edition of the *Abhidhammattha-sangaha*, with explanatory notes in Pali by the editor, and I decided to purchase this book. I noticed that the editor of the volume was named Rewatadhamma, but I did not pay any attention to the name, which I had never previously encountered.

My friend and I continued our pilgrimage from Bodhgaya to Sarnath. Our train took us first to Benares. We arrived very late at night, together with a group of Bengali pilgrims, and we were led to a Buddhist temple in the city. We slept on mats on the floor in the large shrine room. The next morning, as we left the temple I noticed a signboard in front of the temple with the name 'Ven. U Rewatadhamma'. I connected this name with the author of my edition of the *Abhidhammattha-sangaha*, but I did not hear anything about the chief incumbent and it seemed he was no longer in residence. Much later I learned that some months earlier he had left for Great Britain.

In this way, twice in quick succession, I had come across the name "Rewatadhamma", but in both cases without any information about the man behind the name. Some years later, I don't recall exactly how, I came to learn that this same Rewatadhamma was a Burmese monk and that he had started a Buddhist vihara in Birmingham. I read that the H.H. the Sixteenth Karmapa had nominated Ven. Rewatadhamma as Spiritual Director of a joint Karma-Kagyü/Theravada centre. It struck me as unusual for a high-ranking Tibetan lama to confer such a favor upon a Theravada bhikkhu. I thus inferred that the recipient of the grant must be a person of exceptional qualities. But this was merely one item of information I had gathered about U Rewatadhamma, and I still knew very little about him. Further, as I was living in Sri Lanka, and he was now in Britain, there seemed little likelihood that we would ever meet.

However, several years later we came close to meeting, but again we just missed each other by a few months. In the late 1970s I was living in the U.S. and in May 1979 I came to reside at the Washington Buddhist Vihara. When I arrived there, I heard that the illustrious Burmese meditation master, Ven. Mahasi Sayadaw, had passed through the vihara only a couple of months earlier. He was accompanied by a retinue of Burmese monks, and one of the monks in

his retinue, I learned, was Ven. U Rewatadhamma. Another was Ven. U Silananda, who stayed behind in the U.S. and has since become a much loved and respected Dhamma teacher in the San Francisco Bay area.

In the 1980s I returned to Sri Lanka and in 1984 became the editor for the Buddhist Publication Society. I lived at the Forest Hermitage along with the elder German monk, Ven. Nyanaponika Mahathera, the founder of the BPS. Many visitors from abroad would come to pay respects to Ven. Nyanaponika, and one day in 1989, a group came that included a Burmese monk - none other than Ven. U Rewatadhamma. It was a happy occasion for both Ven. Nyanaponika and I to meet this very distinguished Sayadaw, whose reputation as an Abhidhamma scholar and meditation teacher had continued to grow in the West. At this first meeting, I was particularly struck by the Sayadaw's humility, friendliness, and lack of any pretension. He gave off no message at all of self-importance. He had come to Sri Lanka as part of a foreign committee working to establish reconciliation between conflicting parties within Sri Lanka, and this also made me aware that the Sayadaw had a strong feeling of social responsibility and a desire to work for human harmony and cooperation.

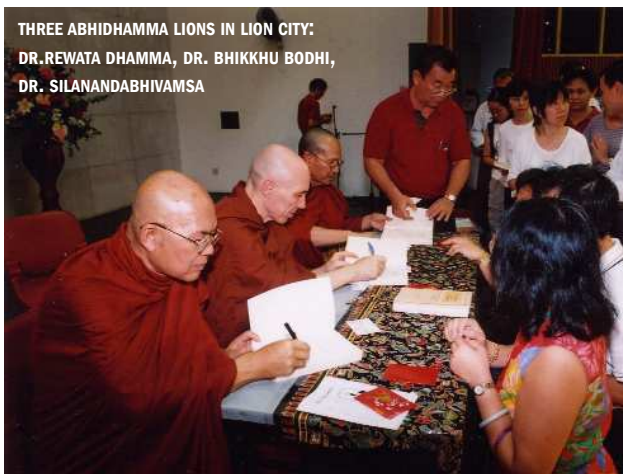
Shortly after this meeting with U Rewatadhamma, as editor for the BPS I had to prepare Ven. Narada Thera's *Manual of Abhidhamma* for a reprint. This was a translation of the *Abhidhammattha-sangaha* along with the Pali text and explanatory notes. I had long known that the Manual needed correction, and I had thought that numerous points dealt with in the notes needed amplification and further explanation. Though I had studied the *Abhidhammattha-sangaha* under my own teacher, Ven. Balangoda Ananda Maitreya, years earlier, I did not fully trust my own judgment in such matters but wanted the views of an established authority on the work. At the time, Ven. Nyanaponika, a formidable Abhidhamma scholar, was now in his late eighties and his vision had

deteriorated to the point that he could barely focus on print. The idea then occurred to me to draw in Ven. U Rewatadhamma as a collaborator in composing an explanatory guide to the Manual. When I wrote to him to inquire whether he would be willing to take on this task, he replied positively, to my great satisfaction, and thus this work of collaboration between us was initiated. The Sayadaw composed extensive portions of the explanatory guide to Chapter One (in which he was aided by the Czech psychologist, Dr. Mirko Fryba, now Bhikkhu Kusalananda) and provided me with much of the technical information that entered into the introduction and the remaining chapters. The Sayadaw was always reliable, and despite his other pressing duties, consistently managed to provide the material I needed at the right time.

In preparing this work, we also included many detailed charts and tables that had been devised by Ven. U Silananda for his American students of Abhidhamma. The final book was so different from the original that I had to rename it, calling it *A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma*. The book was published in 1993 and it has since gone through several reprintings. It has become the standard reference work for all fundamental Abhidhamma studies in English.

Fate sometimes works in strange ways, and one such way concerned my last meeting with Ven. U Rewatadhamma. In 2001-2002 I was in Singapore for medical treatment. My chief lay supporter in Singapore, Mr. G.T. Gan, was also a supporter of Ven. U Silananda. Mr. Gan had invited Ven. Silananda to Singapore to give lectures on the Abhidhamma, and Ven. Silananda had used the *Comprehensive Manual* as the basis for these lectures. He gave the lectures in three series, spread out over a year and a half, and in December 2001 he arrived to give what was to be his third and last series of lectures. The lectures were held in the large auditorium of the Manjushri Buddhist School and drew a large audience. Towards the very end of December, the Burmese Buddhist Monastery in

Singapore was to celebrate its tenth anniversary, and many eminent Burmese monks from around the world were invited. One of the guests of honour was Ven. U Rewatadhamma. I went to visit him at the Burmese vihara and we spent several hours together. Ven. Silananda's last lecture on the Manual was scheduled for December 31st, 2001, and was to be followed by a Buddhist New Year's celebration in the upstairs assembly hall of the Manjushri School. I had attended all of Ven. Silananda's lectures in that series. Ven. U Rewatadhamma came to attend his last lecture on New Year eve. Thus, at that last lecture, all three contributors to the Comprehensive Manual were present. This occurred entirely through coincidence. There had been no planning, no communications between us, and no prior agreement to meet in Singapore at that time. Yet strangely we were all there together on the final night of Ven. U Silananda's Abhidhamma lectures, and all joined the Singapore Abhidhamma students to welcome the arrival of 2002. As Buddhists, we might say this coincidence was a karmic response to the earnestness and sincerity of the Singaporeans who were so enthusiastic about studying the Abhidhamma.



The event was too great a book-signing opportunity to be missed, and thus after the lecture and New Year's speeches were over, the three of us sat at a table signing the copies of the Comprehensive Manual that had been purchased by all the students at

I said farewell to Ven.
 U Rewatadhamma,
 not knowing when and where
 I would meet him again.
 That opportunity was
 never to take place, for before
 destiny could bring us together
 once more, death took him
 from our midst.

With his death we have lost a
 great master of the Buddha
 Dhamma, an accomplished scholar
 of Abhidhamma,
 a humble and dedicated monk,
 and a compassionate man
 selflessly devoted to
 the service of humanity.

the lectures, and by many others who had heard about the book. We must have all signed about three or four hundred copies of the book that night! After the function was over, with aching hands, we took leave of one another. I said farewell to Ven. U Rewata dhamma, not knowing when and where I would meet him again. That opportunity was never to take place, for before destiny could bring us together once more, death took him from our midst. With his death we have lost a great master of the Buddha Dhamma, an accomplished scholar of Abhidhamma, a humble and dedicated monk, and a compassionate man selflessly devoted to the service of humanity. ♦

Encounters with the Venerable Rewatadhamma

Thera Ayukusala (Dr. Mirko Frýba)

On first meeting Venerable Rewatadhamma, I was touched by his non-spectacular yet obviously powerful way of communicating. I could not pigeonhole him in any spiritual category that I had experienced thus far during my stay in India.

It must have been in March or April 1967. The weather was already pretty hot but the shadow of the greenery in the Shantiniketan compounds was still cooling. I was a monk of the Saraswati tradition and my guru Swami Satyananda allowed me to leave our Monghyr Ashram to meet the Czech boss of the shoe-making empire in Bata-Nagar near Calcutta. Shantiniketan University was just a two-day stop on the way. There were some workshops there on the Heritage of Rabindranath Tagore that interested me. The Burmese monk Rewatadhamma and his Thai companion said they came just as tourists and did not belong to the Shantiniketan programme. They happened to sit down for meditation not far from the huge tree under which I was meditating after breakfast. We ended our meditation at almost same time and the Buddhist monks started walking towards me, so I felt it proper to get up and encounter them half way.

Sitting down on some stones, we inquired about each other's nationality. Then Ven. Rewatadhamma came straight to the point: "There is this nama-rupa you can notice in meditation on the body;" and "Whatever is real, that is subject to destruction." These two statements came out of the blue, though I have heard him repeat them many, many times since. They popped into my mind quite often later

on whenever I got down to reflecting after a meditation sitting. We did not talk about Buddhism and Hinduism, nor about theories of the mind. But I did mention that I was a student of psychology before becoming a monk and he mentioned that he had written a book on Buddhist psychology - alas, in Hindi. We did not get so far as to exchange addresses and each then went his own way. I was thinking that this Buddhist monk did not fit anything I knew of Buddhist monks. He was not a yogi like myself, yet our talk about meditation was one of the best I'd had so far with any English-speaking person.

My training with Paramhansa Satyananda was completed some six months later. Then I went on an intensive meditation retreat with my new Buddhist teacher Sri Anagarika Munindra, who placed me in the Sinhalese monastery in Bodh-Gaya. Many visitors came to see Sri Munindra in the Sarvodaya Ashram nearby and they usually stayed for the evening meditation. Among those who came was a Burmese Indian businessman, Satya Narayan Goenka, who became a meditation teacher himself later on; and Dr. Rajneesh, a university lecturer who became well known in the West as Bhagawan and Osho. These people were getting instruction on insight meditation from Sri Munindra and discussed with him their personal problems too. I was observing attentively how my teacher dealt with these visitors and thus learning much for my own future vocation. Then came a very different visitor who was treated by Sri Munindra as an old companion. I recognized him as the Burmese monk I'd met earlier in Shantiniketan. Of course, by now I knew more

about this monk's achievements but we talked very little this time.

More than seven years later, in 1975, when I visited Sri Munindra again, he persuaded me to go and meet Ven. Rewatadhamma in Benares. I had just returned from Burma, where I'd meditated under the guidance of the Most Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw, and now I was eager to discuss it with both Sri Munindra and Ven. Rewata dhamma as both of them had also been former pupils of his. This 1975 meeting had a very important impact upon my life for the coming thirty years.

That same year Dr. Rewatadhamma settled in England and regularly visited Switzerland, where I was now established. He helped me set up Dhamma Group Switzerland and the Swiss Buddhist Union in the following two years. These were social events having many other consequences such as repeated meetings with Ven. Rewatadhamma's Tibetan friends Geshe Rabten and His Holiness the Dalai Lama in the Swiss monasteries Rikon and Mont Pélerin. Another group of projects I was engaged in with Ven. Rewatadhamma consisted of seminars and writing articles about the Buddhist psychology of Abhidhamma. However, the most important of our projects was the European visit of the Mahasi Sayadaw in Summer 1979 and his teaching the sole European Course of Satipatthana-Vipassana at Mont Soleil in Switzerland, when he was accompanied by Ven. Rewatadhamma.

Bhante's first big European Abhidhamma project was realized in summer 1982 at Oakenholt near Oxford. At that time I was visiting Oxford University and, thanks to Professor Richard Gombrich, had the use of his department's excellent Buddhist library and of the university library. There I completed for Ven. Rewatadhamma a survey of all Abhidhamma literature in Western languages. Then in mid-August there was an International Conference of Buddhist Studies which was attended also by the Sinhalese Abhidhamma scholars Ven's Walpola Rahula and Hammalawa Saddhatissa, whom I persuaded to participate at our Abhidhamma Seminar in Oakenholt. Ven. Rewatadhamma had invited the Burmese scholar U Thittila Sayadaw, the famed translator of the Vibhanga (the second book of the Abhidhamma canon) to be the chief guest. Also attending was his old friend U Nyanissara, known as the Sitagu

Sayadaw. The chief guest from the Sinhalese Sangha was the Most Venerable Balangoda Ananda Maitreya.

These celebrities participated in the panel discussions held twice a day. Our Abhidhamma Seminar continued for five half-days. Each was devoted to a particular theme introduced by Ven. Rewatadhamma, followed by a panel discussion and questions from participants. After the first general lecture by U Thittila, I gave a report on teaching the Abhidhamma to Western Psychologists, which opened a sort of East-West encounter obviously enjoyed by all the Western academicians attending. Ven. Rewatadhamma gave a talk on "The Fundamental Forces of the Mind", which I understand is soon to appear in a selection of his work published to mark the anniversary of his death. Other lectures followed, after which the discussion centred upon the psychotherapeutic use of mind-process analysis and training in interpersonal skills. Years later I boiled down the materials from this seminar to the strategies of life mastery described in my book *The Art of Happiness*.

Sayadaw and I used to visit each other often. Buddhist ways of cultivating interpersonal relationships, the social implications of dhammaduta in the West and cultural comparisons always had their place in our discussions. It gave me a good feeling to play the role of my teacher's European apprentice as an adept in Buddhist psychotherapy and social work. Ven. Rewatadhamma repeatedly stressed the point that we ought not to import Burmese or Tibetan or Japanese Buddhism to Europe. Although we should be open and tolerant to any nationally particular development of Buddhism, we should always try to extract those basic paradigms and skills that are transculturally valid and applicable.

Our themes did not stay on the level of words; what we discussed we practically applied. Sayadaw was very much interested in the ways I used Dhamma in group psychotherapy training for psychiatrists and psychologists and in group dynamics training for school teachers. He suggested that we try to develop some communication training for Buddhist monks of various denominations. "We just meet in a friendly way, treat each visitor kindly, but our talk is limited to inquiring about the other's health. Buddhist conferences and official meetings are no better" he said. Out of our discussions with the Dalai Lama, who was very open to the idea of such train-

ing, ensued a workshop in the Tibetan Monastic Institute at Rikon to which we invited monks of various denominations from different European countries. We also organized a sequel in the Theravada Haus der Besinnung in East Switzerland but it was not a success. The best way proved to be contact between just two parties. I regularly invited Venerable Geshe Rabten and his chief pupil Venerable Gonsar Tulku to the special meetings of the Dhamma Group in Berne. When we brought our dear friend Sri Munindra to the Mont Pélerin Tibetan Centre, the residing monks and nuns were encouraged to participate in a seminar with him. Thanks to Ven. Rewatadhamma's contacts across the different Buddhist denominations, many such mutual invitations became possible in Switzerland.

Here I cannot resist telling a story that illustrates Sayadaw's simple manner. It was again in Mont Pélerin where, according to what I deemed oriental politeness, I started to introduce the Most Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw. The more I said, the more uneasy the Tibetan monks appeared. Then Ven. Rewatadhamma interrupted me with a sort of apologizing smile and, having concentrated for a few seconds in that familiar way of his, just said "Venerable Mahasi is my teacher." I'm proud to say I learned to apply this same principle too. Once Ven. Rewatadhamma telephoned me from Basel Railway Station that the border guards would not allow him to enter the country. I drove from Berne to Basel, parked, walked to the border guard, stood quietly, concentrated and lovingly smiled, saying in Swiss dialect "He is my teacher". It worked like magic!

Once we lost our way driving from the Tibetan Temple in Rikon through some remote villages. I stopped to ask a road worker the way but he did not seem able to communicate in any of the Swiss languages. I got more and more frustrated but then Sayadaw spoke to him in Hindi - and we got a satisfactory answer. It was a Tibetan villager we were speaking to, not yet quite domesticated after arriving from a longer sojourn in an Indian refugee camp. Years later something similar happened in a Czech village when we others were trying to find a shortcut to the place where we had a meditation retreat. Ven. Rewatadhamma remembered the name of the nearby hill while we were trying to get to the mill beneath it. He was directed to spacious buildings

attached to the mill, the only ones around there "proper to entertain a man of such an impressive appearance" - this must have been what the old Czech village woman thought.

During the years 1983-89 I lived in Sri Lanka and saw Ven. Rewatadhamma only rarely. Then during the 1990s Sayadaw expanded his field of dhammaduta all over the world and it was no more that easy to find him in Birmingham. Also shortly after I returned to Europe in 1989, there were big political changes due to the decline of the Soviet Empire, and I was asked by Venerable Nyanaponika to consider promoting the Dhamma in my native country, the newly liberated Czechoslovakia. Missionary work there became one of the most important projects of my life - and it was started in 1990 under the patronage of Ven. Rewatadhamma. There were in fact three of those projects: first was to introduce intensive meditation retreats; second to start teaching Abhidhamma at university level; third to train psychotherapists and counsellors in Abhidhamma-based Satithery. In fact we devoted several days just to evaluating these projects when I last visited Birmingham in 2003. That time we also charted a program of future cooperation that included his book *Process of Consciousness and Matter* and my book on *Abhidhamma for Life Mastering*.

My beloved teacher Venerable Rewatadhamma passed away in May 2004. He used to prepare me for this unavoidable thing, showing me with good humour how to transcend the coming sad event and how to use its motivational force to carry on with the good work of Dhammaduta. Sayadaw's writings are left with us as memorials, yet other important monuments remain as well. To enumerate them all is impossible, but I want to name two with which I shared the work with him especially. One is the Ayukusala Central European Sangha that he helped found and then, as Preceptor, enabled to ordain five monks in the Mahasi Monastery in Yangon. The other is the International Buddhist Donation Fund, to which he gave his patronage when it was established in Czechia, Germany and Switzerland. From these three countries located in the very heart of Central Europe we are determined, as was our late teacher, to radiate the Dhamma as a skilful means of living for the good and happiness of all beings. ♦



Benares ~ Bearwood

~ Birmingham



Vajira Bailey, OBC

I met my teacher, Jiyu Kennett Roshi in 1970 when she came back to England after years in Japan and was touring groups in UK doing short sesshins (retreats). She was now based in California. As a member of the FWBO (Ven. Mahastavira Sangharakshita gave me my Buddhist name) I had already held retreats in my house, but, after a weekend with Roshi, it was Soto Zen for me. I had meditators as lodgers and when the current one left to move on, the house was free to become totally devoted to the Zen practice.

I was busy decorating, bringing the house into my idea of a Zen environment when, suddenly, there was John Maxwell, a Tibetan practitioner, in my front room telling me a sad tale and quite worried about what to do. Apparently other groups in Birmingham had been enthused by the visit of Sister Palmo, a Tibetan nun, to start a centre for Buddhism in Birmingham. A meeting was held at John Maxwell's house, of the different interested groups, including the Indian, where it was decided that that was what they would do and the support was promised. I knew nothing about this.

Sister Palmo recommended the Ven. Dr. Rewatadhamma, a Burmese Theravadin monk. She consulted Situ Rinpoche who said it was a good choice and also the Karmapa, head of the Kagyu sect, who also favoured that choice. Ven. Dr. Rewatadhamma agreed to come and was almost on his way when an important supporter withdrew from the venture; the accommodation was no longer available. John immediately informed Ven. Rewatadhamma of the difficulties and asked him not to set

off yet. Bhante replied that he knew that difficulties often arise, that he was coming anyway and that it would work out.

So, of course I agreed to have him, little realising what was to happen next. I had been around Buddhism since 1962 or 3, had some experience of monks and had lived for three years in the Far East so it was not too unnerving a prospect. My first full week of meditation was Vipassana under Sivali, a Singhalese monk.

The Karmapa himself came to John Maxwell's with a large entourage of lamas. He performed the Black Hat ceremony at a convent school in Edgbaston. Then, on the Sunday afternoon, he came to my house and blessed it. A couple of young lamas walked up and down outside the house, guarding, I thought. The Karmapa came into the front room with an interpreter. The white scarf I offered in welcome he placed around my neck and later I draped it over the shrine in the zendo where it remained for 20 years or more. Then he went round the house into every room blessing as he went. After the blessing he and his retinue took tea. This should have been done before but he came without early warning and it took ages to heat the water. This was my first close encounter with Tibetans.

John Maxwell was the prime mover of all this. He was somewhat concerned as to the long term support but I knew that when the monk arrived the Indian Buddhists would respond readily. This turned out to be true.

We now looked forward to Ven. Dr. Rewatadhamma's arrival. Helped by Ani Shenpen the shrine

room took on a Tibetan slant and when the Sayadaw arrived we now also had the sound of Pali chanting and the presence of this quiet, modest, kindly monk.

I knew nothing about him save, besides being a monk, he had graduated with a PhD in the Vissudhimagga at Benares, his MA thesis being in Mahayana studies and written in Hindi and Sanskrit. It gradually dawned on me what a wonderful choice he was. There was a large reservoir of new Indian Buddhists in the area for which his knowledge of India and Hindi language would be very useful and confidence making.

The house became very busy with many people, Indian and European. The Tibetan Lama, Akong Rinpoche, conducted initiations with 30 to 40 people attending. Another time Ato Rinpoche came and other Tibetan lamas, also Bhante conducted pujas and gave talks. A couple of devotees, Nicky and her partner, cooked meals for him and looked after him generally and I was paid a small rent. Quite soon it became clear that the house was too small and a new house was rented in Handsworth. This is where the Indians came forward and I met Mr Lal and his family and others. This house again became too small and the house in Carlyle Road was purchased by the newly formed Karmapa Trust. The Tibetan and the Theravada traditions shared this house, which, again became too small and no. 47 Carlyle Road was bought, about three doors away, to which Bhante and the Theravadins moved. So now we had a Theravadin, a Tibetan and a Zen place in the Midlands, I continued with the zendo where we held weekly meetings for group zazen and had weekend retreats (Friday evening to Sunday evening) sometimes with monks from the then Throssel Hole Priory in Northumberland, now the Abbey.

Things were 'buzzing' everywhere; growth in all fields of Buddhism; great energy; the winds of change. The Sayadaw was becoming known. Once he was in the new house he started planning the Pagoda, which we all know took many years to come to fruition. The City Council approved it, releasing land on the edge of the Edgbaston reservoir. Burmese architects came and the Burmese contributed in every way to the project, Bhante being held in high regard. Over months we saw the Pagoda gradually rise from the ground and at the century's end, lo and behold, we have this very beautiful and indeed exquisite building right next door

to the Sea - Cadet ship where I learned my boat - handling and seamanship as a Sea Ranger way back in the early 1940's.

The Sayadaw was a Prime mover. What a privilege to have him in the UK and to have had the opportunity to help in a little way his transfer to the west. It takes courage to come to a strange land, thousands of miles away, to a totally different culture where few people at that time even knew what a Buddhist was, let alone a Buddhist monk, and to be dependant on them for food and shelter.

The BBC television showed a film about Buddhism in the Theravadin countries one evening, which bridged the gap in general awareness. At Bhante's request, I drove him to London to visit Ven. Dr. Saddhatissa, whom he already knew. Dr. Saddhatissa was the most senior Theravadin monk in the UK at that time. I am truly grateful for the wealth of fond memories, which will stay with me for life.

I found in Bhante a universal approach. No sign of exclusiveness but an embracing of all, not only those who follow the Buddha's teachings. As Great Master Dogen, the great Zen Patriarch who took Soto Zen from China to Japan, said:

"the means of training are thousandfold
but pure zazen (meditation) must be done"

Dogen's Zazen Rules.

Currently in the Vihara of the Dhamma Talaka Pagoda this openness is still apparent. The Zen group still meets at the Pagoda's Vihara having moved there some years ago. Rev. Master Daishin, the Abbot of Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey values the connection and we, the group are grateful.

All these developments are due to the Birmingham Sayadaw. His abilities and loving kindness founded something in Birmingham; a solid foundation for all who wish to train in Buddhism and a future University for Buddhist Studies. Things have indeed changed!

I am amazed and so glad to have been a tiny part of it.

His spirit lives on. ✦

Vajira OBC,
Hon. Patron of the
Dhamma Talaka Pagoda
May 2005

Rewata Dhamma Sayadaw in Switzerland

by Matthias Barth

The connection and friendship between Venerable Rewata Dhamma Sayadaw and Switzerland dates back to the 1970s. In the course of time, there evolved an increasingly large network of people, who stayed in contact with Sayadaw in a variety of contexts. This short account doesn't attempt to do justice to such diversity, which includes Sayadaw's meetings with the Burmese community living in this country and his activities in the French speaking part of Switzerland, of which the writer has little knowledge. I therefore limit my retrospective to a few events that took place over the twenty five years I had the opportunity to accompany Sayadaw on his visits to Switzerland.

It must have been in 1978 or the beginning of 1979 that we had the opportunity to receive Sayadaw for a lecture at the recently founded Dhamma Group in Bern. He was responding to an invitation by Dr. Mirko Fryba, the founder of this group and organizer of various other Dhamma activities in Switzerland. He and his wife Annette had met Sayadaw a few years earlier in Benares.

In summer 1979 two events took place that were of major significance for the Swiss Buddhist community, both of them with Sayadaw's active support. The first was the visit of the most Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw, which included a meditation course on Mt. Soleil and other teaching activities. Familiar with western culture, Sayadaw could offer valuable support to his former teacher. The second event was on the occasion of the visit of HH the Dalai Lama to the Tibetan monastery in Rikon, where there was a meeting of Theravada monks residing in Europe with delegates of the Tibetan tradition. While Dr. Rewata Dhamma spoke for the

Theravadin tradition, the Tibetans were represented by the late Geshe Rabten, at that time the abbot of the monastery and a good friend of Sayadaw. The conference was led by HH the Dalai Lama and important issues regarding a constructive cooperation between the traditions were discussed.

Since that time, a close contact between Sayadaw and the Dhamma Group was established. Most of us were still young then. It was a time of new beginnings and inspiration. Some of us visited Bhante in Birmingham. Contacts existed also through others, like for instance the Indian meditation teacher Anagarika Munindra, who was also a friend of Sayadaw. In 1983 Sayadaw accepted our invitation to lead a meditation retreat in Dicken, a tiny village in the eastern part of Switzerland. This was the first of what were eventually nearly twenty retreats with Bhante at the "Haus der Besinnung", a small Buddhist center founded by Kurt Onken and other supporters of the late German monk Nyanaponika Mahathera. The annual meditation week soon became a tradition. The days started with Sayadaw's morning recitations, continued with dedication to meditation practice and ended with one of his inspiring talks. The organisation and the cooking at these retreats were undertaken by volunteers and the atmosphere was always friendly and lighthearted.

Besides the meditation practice, there was an increasing interest in the theoretical study of the Dhamma. One of the Sayadaw's qualities was his outstanding ability to combine Buddhist theory with the meditative practice. At the beginning of 1986 the first Abhidhamma seminar took place in Dicken, followed by various Sutta seminars. Among the numerous participants attending over the years,

let me mention the late professor Carlo Henking, who had invited Sayadaw to lecture on various occasions at the Anthropological Insitute of the University of Zürich, and who expressed throughout his life the highest respect for Sayadaw's work.

The retreats in Dicken were quiet affairs and took place rather outside the mainstream of the increasing number of meditation courses on offer. It was characteristic of Sayadaw that he emphasised the quality of the seminars rather than the quantity. He was always looking for ways to connect the Buddhist teachings in a supportive and straightforward manner with the life of his students. With regard to Vipassana meditation, he developed over time his own teaching style, which combines elements of various Burmese meditation schools and is easily accessible for western practitioners. Sayadaw was a highly independent Buddhist thinker with little concern for commonly held interpretations and with a preference for basing his judgements directly on the Pali texts.

It was obvious that Sayadaw enjoyed his visits to Switzerland. The retreats in rural Dicken offered a break from city life and seemed to be of benefit for his health. The numerous walks with Bhante in the surrounding hills were also for me, initially involved in organisation and later becoming his assistant teacher, of immeasurable value. In Bhante's presence all the seasons came to life and were full of meaning. I will never forget how, in the midst of a snow storm, he spoke about Anicca, the complete impermanence of all things.

The last years of Sayadaw's activities in Switzerland were, in a positive sense, quite busy. Following an invitation by Fred von Allmen and his associates, alternating with Dicken, two retreats were organized at the Meditation Center Beatenberg, in the Bernese mountains. There was more room there and also an excellent infrastructure. Daily study sessions were integrated into the retreat, where Bhante spoke about the *Satipatthana Sutta* or the *Paticcasamuppada*. Besides the courses, Bhante gave talks to various Buddhist groups and was also invited to visit the recently founded Thai Temple in Grezenbach. Nor should we forget his participation in the festivities for the presentation of the U.N. Buddha Relics in Geneva in 2003. Apart



DR REWATA
DHAMMA
AT DHAMMA
HOUSE,
DICKEN,
ZURICH

from that, Sayadaw was particularly happy with the growing interest in Abhidhamma among his students. In particular, Marlies Betschart, Elisabet Eppler and Barbara Ryf (who had, among others, helped with management of retreats over many years) made particular efforts to enable certain Abhidhamma seminars to happen. It was in the midst of these activities that the unexpected news of Sayadaw's death reached us.

Remembering Bhante, we do not think only of his formal teachings. Those who knew him better remember well to what extent he was capable of connecting with the lives of others and responding to their individual needs. In spite of all his titles, in meeting him there was always a feeling of friendship and closeness. The transmission of his knowledge was accompanied by humour, tolerance and a warm friendliness. His modesty and compassion found a particular expression in a small episode, when Bhante, regardless of a very tight schedule, got up earlier in order to meet, on his way to the airport, a student in need. A great monk and human being has left us. ♦

Matthias Barth (*Sayadaw gave him the Buddhist name of Kammatthanacarija Dhamma Ranzi*) is a psychotherapist who lives in Bern. He works both for the Red Cross and in private practice.



NOVEMBER 2003 WE INVITE DR. REWATA TO OUR NEW CENTRE IN RIVIÈRE, NEAR NAMUR. BHANTE IS VISIBLY HAPPY. THE LITTLE DHAMMA GROUP OF BEGINNERS WILL HAVE, FROM NOW ON, A GOOD INFRASTRUCTURE. HE GAVE IT IT'S NAME 'DHAMMARAMSI', SO THAT 'THE LIGHT OF DHAMMA' WILL SHINE.



1994 RETREAT HELD IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC. DR MIRKO FRYBA TO THE RIGHT OF DR REWATA DHAMMA

Hommage to Bhante

Marie-Cecile FORGET
(Kammatthanacariya
Dhammadinna)

It's 1985. The Centre for Tibetan Studies in Brussels invites Dr Rewata Dhamma to come and lead a Vipassana meditation session. I have been meditating for a few months and the subject interests me so I sign up.

The week-end is rich in discoveries; the master radiates peace and serenity while maintaining rigour. He seems to have a deep knowledge of Dhamma without making a great show of it. It's my first serious experience with meditation under the direction of an authentic representative of the tradition. Convinced, I decide to participate in the 10-day retreat he organises each year in Birmingham.

1986 - My first retreat! An amazing experience, the biggest thing in my life! Dr Rewata Dhamma is assisted by the Venerable Bodhidhamma; there are a dozen participants. Like every beginner I have to draw upon all of my strength but I'll never regret it. It is the beginning of a long and surprising adventure. 'This is dynamite!' I say to myself. 'But we're lucky to have such a guide.'

For a long time I'll keep going back to the Vihara in Birmingham to benefit from the spiritual guidance of Dr. Rewata and each time, the same effort, the same enthusiasm, and even more conviction.

At the start of 1986, Bhante proposes coming regularly to Brussels...between two and three times a year! He creates the Dhamma Group and for more than ten years he'll direct Vipassana meditation sessions in Belgium: at the Centre for Tibetan Studies, at our chalet in the Ardennes, at the Trappist Abbey of Scourmont, at the Sri Lankan embassy...he never refuses an invitation.

I'm fortunate in serving as his interpreter right from the start. What a strain! His English is so difficult to understand...not to mention the Dhamma, which needs to be 'translated' into a language accessible to Westerners! Thank you Bhante for offering

me this marvellous opportunity to discover and study the doctrine!

Clarity, simplicity, rigour: the lessons were extraordinary, always carefully measured to allow the listener to assimilate the foundations of Buddhism progressively. For years, the Dhamma Group will derive nourishment from them! After our weekly evening meditation sittings, we listen to his lessons on cassette: "Why vipassana?"; "Sila, samadhi, pañña"; "Desire; the cause of suffering", "The five hindrances", etc. Dr Rewata? Yes, in Brussels we know him very well!

November 2003 - We invite him to our new centre in Rivière, near Namur. Bhante is visibly happy: now the group of beginners that started so small has a good base at last. He named it Dhammaramsi, so that 'the light of Dhamma' will shine out...and, just below it on the name-plate, to demonstrate the non-sectarian character of the place - a detail he holds dear - Traditional Burmese Vipassana.

There's a beautiful meditation room but... no Buddha! Bhante promises to remedy this.

Just before his death, during the Wesak ceremony in Birmingham, he makes an official presentation to the Dhamma Group: a superb statue of Buddha on a sculpted wooden pedestal in the purest Burmese style. Our meditation room thus became a temple!

We were happy to see in a recent *Lotus* that the Venerable Ottara Nyana is continuing Dr. Rewata Dhamma's project to help the inhabitants of his native village of Thamangone. If only we could have the pleasure of seeing him at the Dhammaramsi Centre with us, continuing the work of our dear teacher there!

Innumerable visits from Bhante to our country will not have been made in vain: a furrow has been cut, the Dhamma will grow. We owe it to Bhante.

Merci Bhante, de tout cœur ! ♦



Mike Regan

A Personal Tribute to Dr Rewata Dhamma

I knew Dr Rewata Dhamma for nearly twenty years. During the early years of my practice I used to very regularly attend the monthly weekend retreats that he led at the old vihara in Carlyle Road. I was very 'into' the practice at that time, but I can see now that the way I was doing it was somewhat unbalanced. I owe it to Bhante for pointing this out to me. One of the things he said to me was that I should get more exercise. I will never forget his demonstration of this. He was sitting on the Teaching Chair interviewing me, when he suddenly broke into very rapid arm movements: 'Swimming, swimming !!! - that's what you need' he said somewhat excitedly.

Over the years I was fortunate to develop quite regular contact with him, by virtue of the computer work I did for him, typing up the Newsletter, helping to edit his papers and so on. I remember how mindful, concentrated and unhurried he was in simple things like using the computer. His hands seemed to glide over the keyboard like a master craftsman. I also remember an occasion when he wrote my contact details in his address book. This time he was using a fountain pen, not a computer. I distinctly remember how he wrote each letter carefully and with full attention, almost in copperplate script. I myself used to write fairly neatly when I was at school, but I have found that over the years all the rushing around I have done in my work and in my personal life has taken its toll - and now I write in a hardly legible scrawl. So it was a great teaching for me to see someone, a fellow adult, still retaining the composure to write neatly - even amid all the pressures of life, and certainly Bhante's

programme was a very full one indeed.

He had tremendous energy. I feel that some of those around (like myself) who maybe did not have his determination and focus, could find it at one and the same time inspiring and also somewhat scaring. I remember that during his address at the Pagoda Opening Ceremony he said of himself that he very often 'wanted things done yesterday'.

In my dealings with him he was sometimes perhaps a little demanding, but he was never unfair, and always stopped short of pushing too hard beyond what he felt I could reasonably achieve. In fact he taught me a great lesson, for which I am sincerely grateful: he taught me how to work hard and to stretch myself, but to recognise when I needed to rest, and then to take that rest and enjoy it.

I also remember how he retained a lovely innocent sense of humour. Again from my time working with him around a computer screen, I remember the way he used to chuckle without fail each time the 'Office Assistant' (a frail looking creature shaped out of a paper clip) appeared on screen. Such things tend to irritate me, and I switch them off and get rid of them as soon as possible. But Bhante seemed to be much more tolerant of it, and even somehow developed a friendly relationship with it. I think that was one of his gifts, to be able to make peace with the world and everything in it, even trivial things. As he said in one of his books: 'I would like to encourage all of you to keep practising until the path becomes your way of life and your way in life. Then you can live happily and remain in harmony with yourself and others'. ♦



In Memory of My 'Home Teacher'

Bhikkhu Bodhidhamma

It was in 1976 that I began practice as a Zen Buddhist under the guidance of Vajira Bailey. And it was she who took me one day to the Vihara in Carlyle Road to meet the Ven. Dr Rewata Dhamma. After the usual pleasantries, I asked him my key question at that time, "What is your understanding of neuroses?" "I don't know what that means," he replied. There and then I decided this monk was of no use to me.

Three years later, out of interest, I went on my first Theravadin vipassana retreat, led by Ajahn Sumedho. I was converted and soon found myself bowing to Bhante. From that time on he was to be my 'home teacher'. I returned to him as I would return home to see my parents. Although I practised with many others, it was always Bhante who was the constant in my spiritual life. Living as he did in Birmingham, where I worked, I always had easy access to him. I do not remember a time when he was not helpful. I consider this to have been one of the great blessings in my life.

Ten years later, the desire to spend three years as a bhikkhu dominated my thoughts. It meant giving up my career and so on and I was in two minds. Finally I approached Bhante and asked to ordain under him. He told me I was too old! I was all but 40. Frankly, I was relieved. But the desire gnawed at my heart. Again I asked and he finally relented. He named me Bodhidhamma as an allusion to my Zen past! He had a gentle sense of humour. I was to spend my first year and half with him. It was a time of deepening practice and understanding.

Since teaching had been my profession, he set me to teach as well. It was one of his beliefs that those with the privilege of having a greater opportunity to practise also had a duty to share what they gained by it in this way. So through his encouragement I now find myself 'a teaching monk'. It is a source of great joy for me. How grateful I am to him for offering me that opportunity.

Eighteen years on, I was still in robes and often visited the Vihara. Occasionally I would phone. It was always heart-warming to hear his whispering voice and see his ready smile.

His death was sudden and unexpected. Regret rose in me that I had not taken even greater opportunity to learn from him. Sadness rose in me for I had lost my 'home teacher', the spiritual father who had so nurtured my early years and whom I returned to for advice. Such was the equality of our friendship over many years - for he never played the superior - that I think he would be surprised to hear me talk of him this way.

I shall miss him. ♦

Bhante Bodhidhamma is at present Resident Teacher at Gaia House in Devon and the Spiritual Director of Satipanya Buddhist Trust (www.satipanya.org.uk) established in 2002 to found a Mahasi Meditation Centre in the United Kingdom.

May All Beings Realise the Nibbanic Peace Within



by Ricardo Sasaki

Once Ananda approached the Buddha and remarked that spiritual friendship represented half of the spiritual path. The Blessed One corrected Ananda. Spiritual friendship was not to be considered as the half but the whole of it.

On May 26th, 2004, I announced to the students, friends and dayakas of Nalanda Buddhist Center that our dear teacher, the Venerable Rewata Dhamma, who had been guiding us over the last few years, had passed away early in the morning. It was sad news. After the death of my teacher, Tan Ajahn Buddhadasa in 1993, Sayadaw was the one who had fitted perfectly into the framework of seriousness and commitment to the Dhamma, combined with constant investigation of principles: the model that Nalanda Buddhist Center has always tried to follow since it was founded in 1989.

Sayadaw took a special interest in our community, personally taking care of many important details regarding the center. Having trained in the same Burmese lineage as Sayadaw for a number of years under various teachers, it was an honour to have him as teacher, mentor and friend. Sayadaw also had a deep regard for Tan Ajahn Buddhadasa and, like him, combined within himself a rare erudition, great meditative practice and a special attention to the application of Dhamma in social issues, keeping as well an ecumenical and open regard towards the variety of Buddhist schools.

Our shock was great as Sayadaw was to visit Brazil again within a month. Future plans for our

Forest Center were many and, without a doubt, Buddhism in Brazil has lost a great deal with his early demise.

Little incidents make us to remember him with fondness. A friend whom he stayed with one night remembers his soft and serene chanting of the suttas early in the morning, while he and his wife were waking up in the room next door. Another always remembers a talk he had with Sayadaw about children and the teaching, of offering little gifts to the young but letting them pick them up by themselves. The gifts were the Dhamma, which should always be left available but never forced upon others. Still another friend remembers his daily walking at our Forest Center, his sandals gently touching its red soil.

Besides the skillful teaching in the Dhamma Hall, it was inspiring for me to have long conversations on a number of subjects while Sayadaw stayed at my home. It was a blessing to spend whole days with him, from the early breakfast to the late 'good night', during his visits to Brazil. His teachings were spread here and there, precious as rain drops in a deserted land. His serenity and wisdom will be always remembered among all of us who were in contact with him, making us renew our determination to keep spreading the Dhamma in its pristine form. Let his often-spoken words reverberate: "May All Beings Realise the Nibbanic Peace Within".

Ricardo Sasaki

(Dhammacariya Dhanapala
Nalanda Buddhist Center of Brazil



Et in Arcadia Ego

reactions to the news of Bhante's death



The Myanmar State Sangha Mahanayaka Council (*in translation*)

The sad news of the sudden demise of the Most. Ven Rewata Dhamma at the age of 75 and after 56 years in the robe was received with great sadness. This has also led us to realize that a truly gifted son of the Sasana in terms of the propagation, promotion and preservation of the Buddha's teachings in their pure and pristine form is lost.

His passing away also reminded us of the law of impermanence that governs all forms of life, as well as the unpredictable nature and ungovernable swiftness with which death can arrive to all of us.

It is in this spirit of the Dhamma that we respectfully convey our message of deepest condolence.



On behalf of the Vipassana Trust.

We were saddened to hear of Bhante's passing. His smiling Dhamma presence full of metta will be missed by all who had the good fortune to know him.

As individuals and as a group we remember Bhante with deep respect, gratitude and affection.

Bhante was directly instrumental in helping the Trust become established, firstly in Handsworth Wood in Birmingham and later with the purchase of a bigger centre - Dhamma Dipa near Hereford.

We remember with pleasure and deep gratitude his visits with Goenkaji and his most inspirational Dhamma talks.

May all Bhante's Dhamma wishes be fulfilled.



Tribute from the Britain Burma Trust

We are greatly indebted to our Sayadaw. Way back in 1979, when the late Mahasi Sayadaw came to London, he urged his disciples to establish a monastery in London, taking guidance from Dr Rewata Dhamma. In those days the Burmese community was very small and it seemed an impossible task. However, Sayadaw guided us to our success and in 1985 we managed to establish the London Vihara. Following that we went through a difficult period. Again Sayadaw guided us to overcome the obstacles we were facing.

In our community Sayadaw was not only a beacon of the Dhamma but also a true friend who never said no to anyone when his help was needed. He was unique among traditional Myanmar monks, successfully managing to bridge the gap between different faiths to understand and respect the views of others in order to live with tolerance and in harmony - which is even more needed in the present chaotic and dangerous world we live in.

Sayadaw's death is a great loss to all of us. He has given us a reminder that death can be with us at any time but that we should not sit down in fear but make the best effort to do good before our final day comes.

We will always have a fond memory of our gentle, smiling, softly spoken Sayadaw. May he attain Nibbana!



Birmingham Karma Ling

Bhante played a vital role in the founding and nurturing of our centre. He held a unique position as a Theravadin monk appointed to take responsibility for a Tibetan Buddhist centre, leading it in a spirit of openness, tolerance and respect for all traditions.

All who had the good fortune to come into contact with Dr Rewata Dhamma will have their own treasured memories. Moments of insight, laughter and, above all, encouragement to practice diligently their chosen path. He was a true spiritual friend.

Although this is a time of great sadness, we can also marvel and feel great joy at what Bhante achieved in this life time as he worked ceaselessly for the benefit of all beings. The presence of the Dhamma Talaka Pagoda will remain a constant reminder to us all of how fortunate we have been to have encountered Bhante in our own lives.



Under the seal of the XII Tai Situpa

I write to express my heartfelt sorrow on learning the news of the death of your mentor and my honourable friend, Dr Rewata Dhamma.

I know your community will feel his loss profoundly. His contribution towards the Buddha Dharma and the education, development and welfare of each and every member of your community was significant and truly beneficial.

In honor of Ven. Dr Rewata Dhamma I will personally perform prayers, along with my Rinpoches and monks here at my seat, Palpung Sherabling monastery in India.



Rt Revd John Austin (Anglican Bishop of Aston)

I have just heard your very sad news and wanted to tell you what a great contribution Dr Rewata Dhamma has made both to the Faith Leaders' meetings here in the city and also to the inter-faith work as a whole in this part of the West Midlands. His quiet presence at our various meetings made a real contribution to the quality of our relationships as well as the wisdom to which he contributed much in our discussions. I sense that he leaves a real hole in our group.

I know at a more personal level that he was a great friend and fellow scholar of Roger Hooker, who was our Inter-Faith Adviser previous to Chris Hewer. Roger had an immense regard for Dr Rewata Dhamma born of their years as fellow students in India studying Sanskrit together.

Be assured that my prayers are with you at this time when you will be grieving the loss of a very profound spiritual teacher.



Dr Chris Hewer (Interfaith Advisor to the Bishop of Birmingham)

I feel sure that Dr Rewata Dhamma would have preferred to die without ostentation and that he lived constantly in a state in which release from this world would be a welcome journey. He has made a signal contribution to the development of Buddhism in Birmingham, as well as his huge circle of friends internationally through teaching and guiding retreats. I inherited the high esteem in which he was held by Roger Hooker and heard from them both of their delight in discovering old classmates in Birmingham. All our lives will be the poorer for his passing in terms of his teaching but may we be worthy of the legacy of wisdom that he left us.



Dr Elizabeth Harris (Secretary for Inter Faith Relations to the Methodist Church, UK)

I remember Ven. Rewata Dhamma as an inspirational and visionary leader. He was a man of great loving kindness and compassion. Through his vision, Birmingham has become a city holy to Buddhism and the world. The Pagoda will remain as a symbol of his compassion and his concern for peace. It has been a privilege to know him.

So although I grieve for his loss to us in Britain, I am thankful for his life. I am thankful for all he did to spread the Dhamma here and in other countries. I am thankful for his work in Myanmar and his concern for its people. I am thankful for the times I have gained strength from him. I am also thankful that he died peacefully. I pray that he will gain the liberation that is nibbana.



Handwritten by Lung Por Ajahn Sumedho (Abbot of the UK Forest Sangha)

Dr Rewata Dhamma was a very good friend to me. I first met him at the Burmese Vihara in Benares in 1974. When I came to live in the UK in 1977, I was very very pleased to find him again. He was a very gentle, very kind and very wise bhikkhu.



Letter from Sis. Vajira (Ayukusula Central European Sangha)

I met Ven. Rewata Dhamma at my first intensive vipassana retreat in 1992 in Cabuze (Czech Republic). At that time I was too scared even to speak to a Buddhist monk so I did not ask him any question.

I remember that we travelled in the same car back to Prague. He was sitting in the front seat next to the driver and I was in the back. I was not feeling well, so Bhante very kindly changed his seat with me. I was very grateful to him at that moment.

It is a great loss to us, as he was very dear to many.



Ricardo Sasaki (Dhammacariya Dhanapala at Centro Buddhista Nalanda, Brazil)

Here there was general and overspread sadness in our small community. Students were sorry, some cried. I still cannot believe and sometimes I read the email and think it must be a mistake. Truly everything is impermanent and we have to savour every bit of Dhamma in this life. To have had Bhante Rewata with us was a blessing and everyone knows this here.

Right now I feel quite disheartened, with no will to do anything. Bhante seemed quite fond of our place, of the work we're doing, and he even suggested many things we could do together in the future. He suggested that he could help us build a pagoda in Burmese style and that in the future we may have one monk living here at least for one or two months in a year. I was equally very happy that he invited me to give meditation instructions as a helping hand in the next retreat, so I was honoured and excited. I had so many things I'd like to share and discuss with him too in his next trip.... You can imagine my sadness, not less than anyone in Birmingham Vihara, I guess.



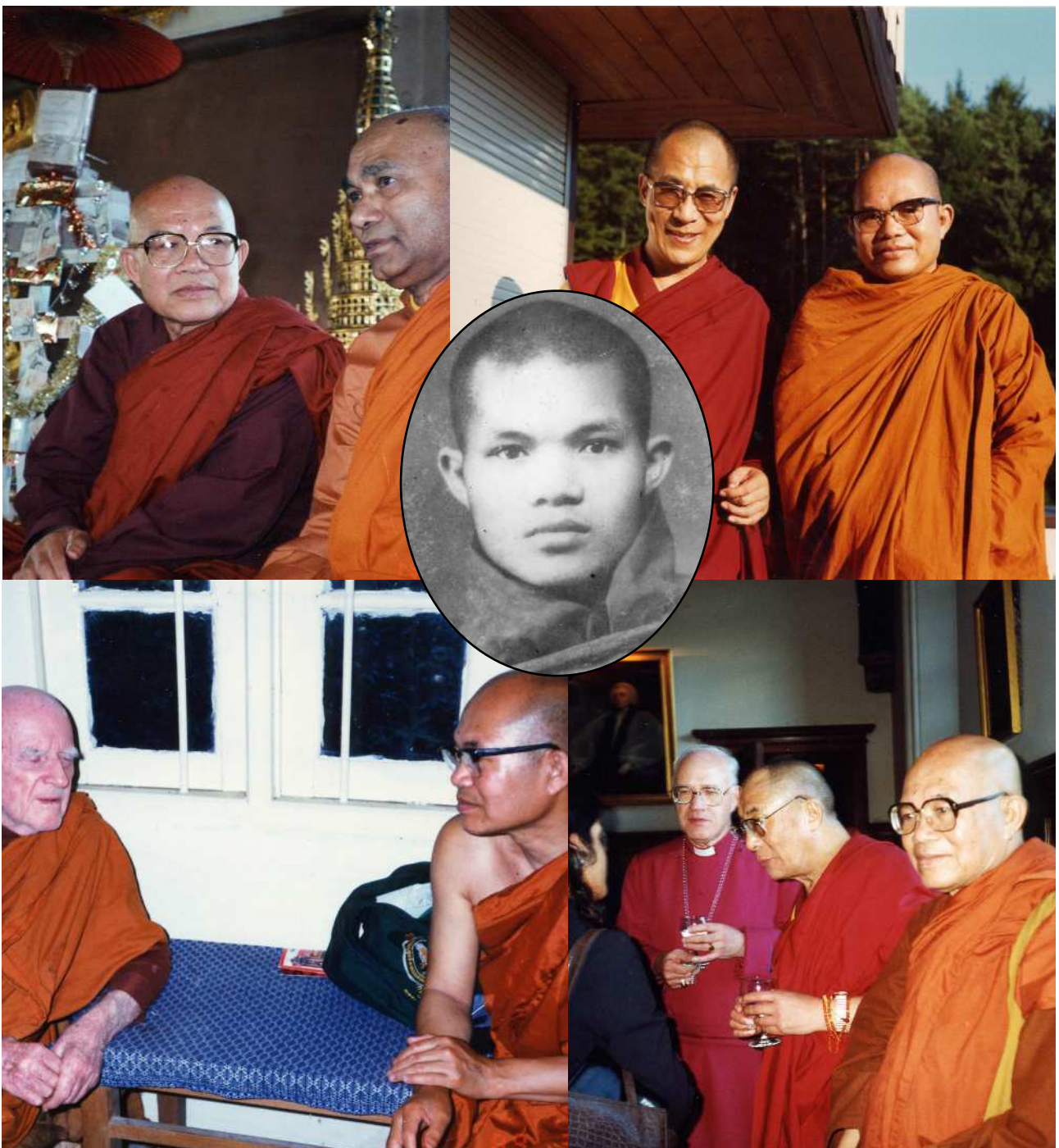
Email to Steve Palmer from Antonio Arancio (former steward at Carlyle Road, now living in Hong Kong)

I was very surprised to read about Bhante's death. Being at the Vihara was a wonderful time for me and it wouldn't have been possible without Bhante. I remember he had a strange management style but he will be remembered for his quiet manner but strong determination to finish his Buddhist temple. He will also be remembered for his effort to touch people with the Buddha's words, without consideration of class, race or gender.

Having written this, I wept at the thought that we will not see Bhante again. I believe we were lucky to have met and heard him teach the Buddha's words. We were perhaps even more fortunate to have served him too. I still remember him cooking his Burmese pork curries and his relationship with Hercules the cat, another quiet but strong character. Sadly, the last time I saw Bhante was a few years ago when I was only able to catch the back of his head as his car drove off.

Photo Essay

In photographic terms Dr Rewata Dhamma's life and work has only been intermittently recorded and even where we do have a picture, it has not always been possible to date it. It is hoped, however, that the photographs gathered here will reflect something of his life as well as show the high regard, respect and esteem with which he was held in the Buddhist world and beyond.









Gems of Wisdom

by **Mike Regan**



Gems of Wisdom

selected from the works of Ven. Dr. Rewata Dhamma

BPr: *The Buddha's Prescription* (Triple Gem Publications). ERAS: *Emptying the Rose-Apple Seat* (Triple Gem Publications).
FD: *The First Discourse of the Buddha* (Wisdom Publications). PCM: *The Process of Consciousness and Matter* (forthcoming)

Experiential Truth

Even the most profound statements of particular religions are valueless if they do not invoke an experiential response. The lesson is that no religion can claim to be in sole possession of the Truth, nor can it claim that only its own adherents are capable of experiencing it.

BPr, *Buddhist and Christian
Vision of the Absolute*

Dhamma

The teaching of the Buddha can be summed up in the word 'Dhamma'. This word means 'truth', or 'that which really is'. Dhamma also means law, the law that exists in a human being's heart and mind; it is the principle of righteousness existing not only in human beings but in the universe as well. All the universe is a revelation of Dhamma. The Buddha appealed to human beings to be noble, pure, and charitable, not in order to please any supreme deity but to be true to the highest truth within themselves. If one lives in accordance with Dhamma one may well escape suffering and realise nibbana. However, until one is able to still the storm in one's heart and extend compassion to all beings, one will not be able to take even the first step toward this end.

FD, p. 14

The Origin of Dukkha

The Buddha explained how life itself is not different from dukkha. He established that the cause of dukkha is craving, or thirst (tanha). There is no arbitrary creator who controls our destinies. Suffering and the cause of suffering are not attributable to any external agency, but can be explained by life itself. Craving, a mental factor, is the most powerful force causing not only suffering in this very life, but also the perpetuation of existence. It builds and rebuilds the world over and over again. Life depends on the desire for life. However, craving is not the first or only cause for the arising of dukkha. Craving is itself conditioned by other causes. The most immediate cause of tanha is vedana, or feeling. According to Buddhism there is no first cause. There are innumerable and beginningless causes and effects, which are interdependent and related one to the other. Things are neither due to a single cause nor are they causeless. Everything in the universe is conditioned, interdependent, and related. Craving, or tanha, is regarded as the proximate cause of suffering. According to the Abhidhamma, the cause of the arising of suffering, or dukkha samudaya, is lobha (greed), one of the fifty-two mental states. Tanha (also translated as 'thirst'), raga (craving), and upadana (attachment) are closely related to lobha

(greed). Lobha conditions and causes the arising of dukkha, whereas tanha is the root cause of suffering.

FD, p.60

Mind and Matter

In Buddhism a human being is regarded as a psychophysical organism free of any spiritual addition outside itself such as a soul. Therefore Abhidhamma looks at mind and matter in great detail. In fact, when we see what we call a human being, we are really seeing a manifestation of a deeper underlying reality i.e. the present state of a certain combination of mental and material phenomena.

PCM, Introduction

Theory and Practice

To draw another analogy with modern science, we could say that if one reads a book on theoretical physics then one could develop a better understanding of, say, the structure of the atom. But to pursue this analogy a little further, we must realise that the knowledge of the theoretical physicist is just that: it is only theoretical, intellectual knowledge. It is only when physicists use the correct equipment and observe matter, that they will actually have direct experience of the phenomena of the material world that they are seeking to understand. Similarly, a biologist or a biochemist must go to the laboratory and use a microscope in order to observe the microbes and complex molecular structures that he or she has learned about in the lecture theatre. So, then, if one studies Abhidhamma, yes, certainly one's intellectual understanding of the realities that it talks about in such fine detail will deepen. But it is only by the practice of meditation that these realities can actually be experienced.

PCM, Introduction

The Concentrated Mind

In Buddhism the mind is considered of prime importance. Mind is the forerunner of all activity, mind is chief; all is mind made. In order to understand the ceaselessly changing nature of the mind one has to develop it in various ways. The Buddha taught two kinds of meditation: concentration or

tranquillity (samatha) and insight or understanding (vipassana). If one practices the way of concentration, one's mind becomes pure and focussed. Only with a concentrated mind can one see things as they truly are and this is the insight of vipassana. We can here draw an analogy with the modern scientist (say a biologist or physicist), who needs special equipment in order to do his work. Thus a biologist may need a microscope, or a physicist may need a particle accelerator. They need this equipment in order to effectively and systematically pursue their investigations within their respective domains of organic matter and inorganic matter. In a similar way the student of the fundamental realities spoken of in Abhidhamma must have a tool and that tool is none other than the student's own highly concentrated mind.

PCM, Introduction

How Do We Meditate

How do we meditate? There are as many answers to this question as there are Buddhist schools and traditions. Every school has its own approach to meditation and each teacher will favour a particular meditation technique and way of explaining it. Moreover, it cannot be said that one method is better than another as every technique is meant to suit the individual meditator's temperament. One method may suit one type of person but not another.

ERAS, p. 66

A Balanced Path

There are some who hold that contemplation on pleasant feelings constitutes indulgence in sensuous pleasure, while contemplation on painful feelings constitutes self mortification. According to them, one should avoid both of these feelings and only contemplate on equanimity, that is, neither pleasant nor unpleasant feelings. However, in the Mahasati-patthana Sutta, the Buddha states explicitly that pleasant feeling, painful feeling, and neutral feeling are all objects for contemplation. This is reiterated in many of the other discourses. Therefore, any feeling that is experienced, whether painful, pleasant or neutral should be observed as an object of meditation.

FD, p. 27

Right Speech

From the point of view of the highest, non-discriminatory wisdom, the attainment of Nibbana and pleasant speech are of equal importance and capable of giving equal happiness, for in this web of blessing all things are interlinked; any one must lead eventually to perfection in all the others.

BPr, *Bliss through Buddhism*

Devotion in Buddhism

Quite often it is people of the intellectual type who are drawn to meditation. Their great need is to slow the mind down, to put a stop to its pointless round of speculation and comment so as to enter a state of stillness from which they can observe how things really are, free of misconceptions and prior judgments. Those who are naturally devotional, on the other hand, risk remaining content simply with that. However, devotional practices alone are not enough. Meditation is needed in order to deepen progress in the Buddha's training. Devotional practices are really teaching devices that point towards the necessity of giving oneself wholly to that training. It is for this reason that devotional practices may be appreciated by the intellectual type too. Understood in this manner, they serve to strengthen motivation, reminding one in the simplest way of what should be uppermost in our mind. They are an object lesson to set at the very beginning of our meditation practice.

ERAS, p. 10

Children and Meditation

It is seldom that meditators bring their children with them on retreat. Many Westerners assume that serious practice is only for adults. This is probably the fault of the books they read, which are hardly accessible to youngsters. One question seldom answered there, although asked often enough by visitors to our Pagoda in Birmingham, is at what age meditation is taught to children. The answer is given by events in the Buddha's own life. It is recorded that the young prince Gotama attended a harvest festival at the age of seven and, sitting under a rose apple tree, began spontaneously to concentrate on his breathing. When his attendants came to him, he had already passed into a meditative trance.

ERAS, p. 12

Blessings

Even the most humble actions skilfully performed, are a means to liberation, open not to a chosen few but to anyone willing to make such an effort. This is the highest blessing in life.

BPr, *Bliss Through Buddhism*

Our Own Effort

All Buddhist teachings, including all the multitude of different schools and approaches, have the same basic aim, to attain liberation. In Buddhism liberation means becoming free from the limited boundaries and the suffering that characterise our rounds of rebirth. The Buddha taught that we can only realise this liberation by means of our own effort, directed towards a deep understanding of ourselves and the world around us. We will not realise such understanding simply by being handed it on a plate by someone else, however exalted or even divine that person or being is.

PCM, Introduction

Banishing Fear

The core of Buddhist teaching is 'the art of living', the essential first step by which change is brought to pass. Its aim is to banish the fear and despair which clog effective action. These negative states so cloud vision that they give rise to remedies which too often only perpetuate what is bad.

BPr, *Social Change and Individual Change*

True Practice

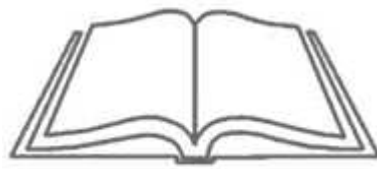
In the West there is sometimes the misapprehension that sitting is all of the practice. Sitting, however, is just the training; the true practice is applying meditation awareness in daily life, achieving balance there.

BPr, *Bliss through Buddhism*.

Do Not Delay

Do not delay, seize the moment. Remember death is near to you and it may come at any time and that moment may be now.

BPr, p.15



Review

by **Mike Regan**

A Review of *The Buddha's Prescription*

Collected Essays of Ven. Dr Rewata Dhamma

The aim of the core teaching of Buddhism 'is to banish the fear and despair which clog effective action. These negative states so cloud vision that they give rise to remedies which too often only perpetuate what is bad'. Dr Rewata Dhamma wrote these words twenty years ago, but they seem strangely, even eerily relevant today. Why did he choose these particular words to summarise all the vast teachings of the Buddha? Why those particular mental states: fear and despair? Why did he talk about clouded vision?

In *The Buddha's Prescription* we have some eighteen essays written by (or based on talks by) Dr Rewata Dhamma, spanning the period from the late 1970s onwards. The quote above is from his essay on Social Change and Individual Change, which is based on a talk given in 1985. What strikes me most about this book is the tremendous scope of issues that Bhante so skilfully held in balance, both in his teaching and his life. The essays display an incredible breadth of subject matter, and as one reads particular passages, one also becomes aware of the depth of what Bhante is saying - and insights can seem to suddenly flare up.

Mountains are mountains and rivers are rivers

We see in Dr Rewata Dhamma's writings the subtlety and complexity of the Abhidhamma, through to the practical aspects of meditation, and how to apply all this in daily life. We see a profound knowledge of the cultural and historical context in which

the Buddha lived and taught. Bhante had a deep knowledge of these lands and their customs, particularly of course of his homeland, Myanmar.

But Bhante did not just write about particular lands and cultures, or about complex metaphysics. He also wrote about social issues and the environment. In these essays, we see him skilfully blending ancient wisdom with a very contemporary way of thinking. Yes, we do see teachings for the scholar and for the advanced meditator. But we also see teachings for the complete beginner, and for the householder, for those who are 'on top of things', and those who aren't. We see kindness and fairness to those of other faiths, and a willingness (and in fact an enthusiasm) to participate in dialogue with them.

The editor of this book (Yann Lovelock) has done a fine job in bringing together such a wealth of material. In the first instance Bhante must have presented Yann with a truly massive amount of material, which Yann has distilled very effectively. In the Preface Yann himself writes: 'Sayadaw once commented on my editorial practice that: 'You give Yann a telegraph pole and he hands you back a tooth-pick!''

The book is divided into three sections: Historical Perspectives, Active Buddhism, and Interfaith Dialogue. As evidence of the breadth of Bhante's vision we only have to look at the list of topics that are covered: from the aesthetics of The Contribution of Buddhism to the World of Art and Architecture, to the gritty practicalities of Social Change and Individual Change. In his essay on The Human and Environmental Crisis we sense Bhante's

concerns at the global level, but at the same time in Buddhism in Myanmar Today we see his deep understanding of a more specific culture and its trials. In *The Fundamental Forces of the Mind* we see a strong, bold presentation of the key Buddhist principles underlying the Abhidhamma. On the other hand a deep understanding of Christian values (and their relationship to Buddhism) is presented in the interfaith oriented paper on Sunyata and Kenosis: Buddhist and Christian Visions of the Absolute.

Coming originally from a Christian background, I feel that I am already steeped in the stories around the life of Jesus and his disciples, and I have some inkling of 'where they were coming from' and the sort of difficulties they faced. For example I know about how the angels ministered to Jesus during his forty days in the wilderness, and how the devil tempted him; and these (Christian) stories actually mean something to me at an emotional level, not just intellectually. As for Buddhism though, I feel that I just about know the basics of the life story of the Buddha and his teaching. But when it comes to having any real feel for the stories about the various arahants and other figures that are mentioned in the scriptures, I am pretty well at a loss.

Even the most profound statements of particular religions are valueless if they do not invoke an experiential response.

Speaking personally then, I feel that I have long been in need of stories like those presented in Bhante's essays on the Emperor Asoka and Arahant Upagutta. It was inspiring, in the essay on The Emperor Asoka and His Mission, to find sentiments that are strikingly contemporary, for example concerning animal husbandry. Asoka's pillar edicts included 'lists of living beings which are to be exempted from slaughter. He felt that proper consideration should be given to does and pigs that were bearing or suckling young ones. He said that animals should not be fed on other animals'.

It was during the time of Emperor Asoka, several hundred years after the Buddha had passed away, that Upagutta was born. Upagutta attained

Arahatship at the age of twenty, only three years after he had entered the order of monks. The Arahatship that he had achieved was 'of an exceptionally high order, becoming a Buddha without the marks'.

In one story we read that '...the king of the Naga water dragons came to pay his respects to the Sangha. As he approached them, a Garuda-bird, the mortal enemy of Nagas, flew overhead. Spotting the Naga king, the Garuda swooped to attack and the terrified water-dragon ran for refuge to the Elders and begged them to protect him using their meditative powers. The most senior turned to the next most senior and confessed: 'I am old now and cannot attain the absorptions quickly; please save the Naga for me'. But that monk excused himself and asked the next and so it went on until the request was made to a seven year old novice. The youngster announced that he could tame the garuda and, quickly attaining the fourth absorption, applied his mind to constructing an impenetrable wall of energy about the Naga. Admitting defeat the Naga promptly fled. Now the Elders turned to the novice and said that since he had not offered help immediately, he must be punished. And what would that punishment be, the novice asked. They replied: 'You must go and prevent Mara from ruining the Emperor's great and meritorious celebration'. That was beyond his ability, the novice explained, but he knew of one who could do it. The novice was referring to none other than Arahant Upagutta who 'lived in the south in a magnificent palace magically created under the sea'.

After many struggles Upagutta does indeed subdue Mara. But then the story takes, at least to my Western way of looking at things, a quite remarkable twist. Mara is bound with the chain that Upagutta has used to restrain. Mara says 'I did much wrong and many destructive things to the Buddha but he never retaliated. His disciple Upagutta has no compassion; he's bound me, he's tortured and greatly humiliated me. Yet in the past I accumulated many perfections that will enable me to attain Buddhahood one day.' Hearing this, Upagutta unbinds Mara and sets him free saying: 'Mara, please forgive me. It was to safeguard the Emperor's celebration from your attack that I did this to you. Now that you aspire to become a Buddha you are worthy of my respect. Your aspiration to become a Buddha will be realised. The Buddha himself predicted that you would

become a Private Buddha one day'. With that Upagutta returns to his jewelled palace under the sea.

Besides stories such as this I found many other essays which, although perhaps somewhat less exuberant, were nevertheless extremely valuable in helping to increase my understanding and appreciation of the Buddhist world. A chief example would be *The Contribution of Buddhism to the World of Art and Architecture*. Again, although I count myself a Buddhist, when I ask myself which religious buildings and art really inspire me, I have to admit that my gut feeling is to return to the great Christian churches and cathedrals of Britain and Europe, and to the Christian art of Italy, Holland and so on. So I found this essay very valuable. In it Bhante says that he wants 'to give a glimpse of what is in a way Buddhism's fourth jewel, its art and architecture.'

**In the West there is sometimes
the misapprehension that
sitting is all of the practice.**

Bhante reiterates the Buddha's declaration that he was 'a human role model to be followed but not idolised', and that 'Of himself he said, Buddhas only point the way'. Bhante talks about some of the early aniconic representations of the Buddha: 'A riderless horse, recalling Prince Siddhatta's renunciation of worldly life at the beginning of his search for the path to Enlightenment'. And again: 'An empty throne, which serves as a reminder of the Buddha's passing away and attainment of Parinibbana'. The essay then traces later developments in Buddhist art, including the developments of iconic styles and of Mahayana art. The essay ends with a true story of how as a young child the late Buddhist scholar and writer, John Blofield, saw a strange statue that he did not recognise in a shop window. The shopkeeper kindly explained that it was a statue of a Buddha. This was the start of what was to become for John a life-long association with Buddhism.

In *Bliss through Buddhism* we have an interesting perspective on the historical situation that the Buddha-to-be was born into. The essay starts with philosophy, and ends with practice. We begin by reading about the Buddha's refutation of the extremes of annihilationism on the one hand, and

**The aim of the core
teaching of Buddhism
is to banish the fear and
despair which clog
effective action.**

eternalism on the other. For those who (like me) are sometimes rather perplexed by the sheer extent and complexity of the Buddha's teaching as we have it today, it is reassuring to read: 'If the original simplicity of his instruction was later elaborated into vast philosophical systems, we may put it down to the pressure of debate and the speculative spirit of the times'.

The essay ends with an exposition of the *Mangala Sutta* (the Sutta of Blessings). Bhante explains almost scientifically how the benefits (or blessings) actually arise: 'In the East it is the custom to invite monks round on special occasions for a chanting of the sutta, as if that alone could produce the blessing. It has to be stressed that it proceeds only from diligent listening and then putting what is heard into practice'. On the other hand there is advice for Westerners: 'In the West there is sometimes the misapprehension that sitting is all of the practice. Sitting, however, is just the training; the true practice is applying meditation awareness in daily life, achieving balance there'.

We see the encouragement of humble actions, be they performed by monks or by lay people, busy householders, mothers, or children: 'From the point of view of the highest, non-discriminatory wisdom, the attainment of Nibbana and pleasant speech are of equal importance and capable of giving equal happiness, for in this web of blessing all things are interlinked; any one must lead eventually to perfection in all the others'. And again: 'Even the most humble actions skilfully performed are a means to liberation, open not to a chosen few but to anyone willing to make such an effort. This is the highest blessing in life'.

In *Social Change and Individual Change*, Bhante explains that 'although the Buddha gave political advice on occasion, he is chiefly concerned with the individual. His teaching is that the main reason for social ills is to be found at the individual level'. The Buddha's way of effecting social change is therefore to 'sensitise as many as possible to their individual

contribution to social malaise and to encourage change at this level'. This essay, coming as it does from a Theravada monk, seems to go some way to redressing the idea that some Westerners appear to have that the Theravada is not engaged.

This socially concerned essay is based on a talk given in Thailand in 1985, and sponsored by the United Nations. It contains a very open and honest account of why Buddhism disappeared from India. 'The reason Buddhism eventually disappeared in India was not simply a Hindu resurgence coupled with the Islamic invasions. It was due more to the Buddha's message losing its original character and the erection in its place of a religion of forms. Those who professed to be Buddhists had failed to change their nature in line with the Buddhist ideal'.

Here (as elsewhere) we see Bhante talking to a specific audience, in this case to United Nations workers: 'Nowadays there is a plurality of political and religious ideologies. It would be best if Buddhism did not draw attention to itself in a missionary way as just another of these 'isms''. We see Bhante acknowledging the specific needs of his audience when he says that his approach in this talk '...has been to strip the Buddha's message of the cultural accretions that have been attached to it from various sources over the centuries'.

The final essay in the book presents a sincere reaching out to those of the Christian faith. It is titled: Sunyata and Kenosis: Buddhist and Christian Visions of the Absolute. Bhante skilfully builds on the Mahayana teaching of Sunyata, whilst retaining

its link with the Theravada: The term *sunyata*, round which the Mahayana school has raised its system, is defined in Theravada as 'emptiness of self'. He then explores the relationship between Sunyata and the Christian teaching of Kenosis - in which Christ gave up his divinity and took the form of human flesh and was crucified. Bhante writes that: 'In Zen, religious consciousness as a self determination of absolute Nothingness is a point where there is neither self nor God as other, but a point wherein all things are just what they are - 'Mountains are mountains and rivers are rivers''.

**Even the most humble
actions skilfully performed
are a means to liberation.**

I have only been able to touch on a small number of the essays presented in this fascinating book. The others cover many more topics, such as Traditional Wisdom and Modern Knowledge, and the Buddhist way of Transferring Merit to the Dead. I feel sadness that Bhante has passed away, but also joy and gratitude that he has left teachings in this and other books. We will not have the benefit of the many more years teaching that we might have had from him, teachings which would have all the time been widening and deepening in insight. This collection of essays then is all the more valuable, as representing the fullest portrayal that we have of the great breadth and depth of his understanding. ♦

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY		
DHAMMACAKKA DAY	Wednesday, 20 July	7.30pm
PAGODA ANNIVERSARY AND DR REWATA DHAMMA COMMEMORATION	Sunday, 24 July	10.30am
TEN DAY RETREAT LED BY DR OTTARA NYANA	Friday 19 - Sunday 28 August	7.30pm
ENGLISH HERITAGE	Thursday 8 - Sunday 11 Sept.	9am-5pm
ABHIDHAMMA DAY (PAVARANA) and ANCESTORS & PARENTS COMMEMORATION	Monday, 17 October	7.00pm
KATHINA	Sunday, 23 October	10.30am
BUDDHIST CONFERENCE	Sunday, 26 November	9am-5pm



A Partial Bibliography of Dr Rewata Dhamma

compiled by Yann Lovelock

1. Books

● *Anuruddhacariya's Abhidhammatta Sangaha with Sumangala Samitthera's Abhidhammattha Vibhavantika*, edited and revised by Bhandanta Rewatadhammathera. Bauddha Swadhyaya Satra, Varanasi, India, 1965. [Hindi language]

● *Anuruddhacariya, Abhidhammattasangaha I-II*, with Hindi translation & Abhidharma-Prakasini commentary. Critically edited, translated & commented by Bhadant Rewatadhamma and Ram Shankar Tripathi, Varanasi Sanskrit University, India, 1967.

● *Buddhaghosâcariya, Visuddhimaggo I-III*, with Paramatthamañjusatika of Bhadantacariya Dhammapala. Edited and revised by Dr. Rewatadhamma, Varanasi Sanskrit Univ., India, 1969-72. [Hindi language]

● *The First Sermon of the Buddha*. 1st ed. Dhamma Talaka Publications, Birmingham, 1994.

2nd ed. as *The First Discourse of the Buddha*, Wisdom Pbls, Boston, USA, 1997.

French translation by Tancrède Montmartel as *Le premier enseignement du bouddha, le sermon de Bénarès*. Eds Claire Lumière, Saint-Cannat, France, 1998.

● *Maha Paritta: The Great Protection*. Dhamma Talaka Pbls, Birmingham, 1996.

● *The Buddha and his Disciples*. Dhamma Talaka Pbls, Birmingham, 2001.

● *Emptying the Rose-apple Seat*. Triple Gem Pbls, Chino Hills CA, USA, 2004. [Web versions of pp. 19-28 at <http://www.birminghambuddhistvihara.org/samatha%20meditation%20objects.html>; 120-4 at <http://www.birminghambuddhistvihara.org/Paths%20of%20purification.html>]

● *The Buddha's Prescription* - selected talks and essays. Ed. Yann Lovelock. Triple Gem Pbls, Chino Hills CA, USA, 2005.

● *Process of Consciousness and Matter* (awaiting publication)

● *Caminho para a Libertação (The Way to Freedom)* - talks edited and translated into Portuguese by Ricardo Sasaki. Edições Nalanda, Belo Horizonte/MG, Brazil, due 2006.

2. Pamphlets

● *An Introduction to the International Burmese Buddhist Sangha Organisation*. Birmingham Buddhist Vihara, 1985. [For the introduction under the title *The Buddhist Missionaries* see <http://www.nibbana.com/mission.htm>]

● *Introduction to Buddhism*. Birmingham Buddhist Vihara - 4 editions 1985-1992; reissued, Dharmatalaka Pbls, Birmingham, 1996. [Web version at <http://www.nandawon.demon.co.uk/vihara/introbud.htm>] Portuguese translation by Ricardo Sasaki as *Uma Introdução ao Buddhismo*, Edições Nalanda, Belo Horizonte/MG, Brazil, 2005.

● *Buddhism - Rights, Justice & Responsibilities*. Birmingham Buddhist Vihara, 1993. A French version, *Bouddhisme - droits, justice et responsabilités*, trans. Christine de Ryck and Marie-Cécile Vandergucht, is published in the same format (Dhamma Group Brussels, Belgium, Dec. 1993). [Web version at <http://www.birminghambuddhistvihara.org/human%20right.html>]

● *Arahant Upagutta*. Dhammikarama Temple, Penang, Malaysia, 1996.

● *The Buddha*. Dhamma-Talaka Pbls, Birmingham, 2001. [3 extracts from *The Buddha and his Disciples* and *The First Sermon of the Buddha*, limited edition of 100 copies]

● *Sermon at the Funeral of Dr Daw Yee* [original Burmese language version for presentation at Dr Rewata Dhamma's funeral], Birmingham Buddhist Vihara, 2004; also an English version, trans. by Kyaw Thinn.

3. Contributions to Books

- *Monachesimo Cristiano, Buddhista, Indù. Incontro interreligioso sulla vita monastica.* Editrice Missionaria Italiana, Bologna, Italy, 1978. [Report of the inter-religious monastic encounter at Praglia Abbey]. "*La Sangha Buddhista*", pp. 88-92; "*Risultati Pratici della Meditazione Vipassana*" ("The Practical Results of Vipassana Meditation", see under 4), pp. 161-8 [now on this site - http://www.risveglio.net/corsi/corso_vipassana.html].
- *Radical Conservatism - Buddhism in the Contemporary World* (articles in honour of Bhikkhu Buddhadasa's 84th birthday). International Network of Engaged Buddhists, Bangkok, Thailand, 1990. "Buddhism and the Environment", pp. 156-161.
- *Einheit in der Vielfalt: Buddhismus im Westen.* Deutsche Buddhistische Union, Munich, Germany, 1992. "*Buddhismus - Rechte, Gerechtigkeit und Verantwortung*" (trans. of *Buddhism - Rights, Justice & Responsibilities*), pp.19-36.
- *Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma, the Abhidhammattha Sangaha of Acariya Anuruddha.* Buddhist Publication Soc., Kandy, Sri Lanka, 1993; reprint by DharmaNet Dharma Book Transcription Project, 1995; reissued BPS Pariyatti Ed's, 1999). Introduction and explanatory guide by Bhikkhu Bodhi & U Rewata Dhamma. [Introduction to the Abhidhamma at <http://web.ukonline.co.uk/buddhism/abidama1.htm>]
- *Our World, how it came into being and our responsibility for it*, papers presented at the second interfaith symposium, ed. Frank Whaling. Dzalendra Publishing, Samye Ling, Scotland, 1994. "*The Buddhist Abhidhamma, the world and human responsibility*" [prototype of "*The Human and Environmental Crisis*"], pp. 106-23.
- *Religions for a Just Economic Order*, ed. Guenther Gebhardt. Ecumenical Centre, Geneva, Switzerland, 1997. "*Buddhism and Economic Justice*", pp.44-7. [Web version at <http://www.nibbana.com/councils.htm#BUDDHISME> co].
- *Studies in Inter-Religious Dialogue.* Pharos, Kampen, Netherlands, 1997. "*What I Expect of Friendship with Christians*", pp.48-55. [Web version at <http://www.nibbana.com/rdhamma3.htm>]
- *Proceedings of the First World Buddhist Propagation Conference.* Kyoto, Japan, 1998. "*Buddhism for the Future Generation*" (with facing Japanese translation), pp.109-13; "*Buddhism in Myanmar*" (with facing Japanese translation), pp.183-8. Also the cased hardback commemorative book with the respective essays on pp. 383-92, 393-8, with facing translations.
- *Toward an Environmental Ethic in South-East Asia.* Buddhist Institute, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 1998. "*The*

Human and Environmental Crisis", pp. 37-51. [Web version at <http://www.birmingham-buddhistvihara.org/human%20and%20environmental%20crisis.html>].

- *Socially Engaged Buddhism for the New Millennium:* essays in honour of Ven. Phra Dhammapitaka on his 60th birthday. Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation, Bangkok, Thailand, 1999. "*The Human and Environmental Crisis*", pp. 483-97.
- *Vipassana : A Universal Buddhist Meditation Technique*, ed. D.C. Ahir. Delhi, India, 1999. Ch. 2, "*An exposition of Vipassana meditation*".
- *Pranamalekha: Essays in honour of Ven. Dr. Medagama Vajiragnana on his 75th birthday.* Ed. Ven. Wilaoye Wimalajothi, Ven. Mawathagama Pemaloka, Ven. Uduhawara Ananda and Sanath Nanayakkara. London Buddhist Vihara, 2003. "*Traditional Wisdom & Modern Knowledge*", pp. 225-32. [Web version at <http://www.nibbana.com/rdhamma1.htm>]
- *Meeting Buddhists*, ed. Elizabeth Harris & Ramona Kauth. Christians Aware, Leicester, 2004. "*Meditation: Samatha & Vipassana*", pp.206-14.

3(a). An unrealised project

In January 2000, Dr Rewata Dhamma signed a contract with Könemann Verlagsgesellschaft (Cologne, Germany) for his part in an extensively illustrated book provisionally titled *Buddhismus*, to be edited by food and wine writer André Dominé. This consisted of an introduction to Theravada (*Lehre, Überlieferung und Entwicklung des Theravada*) covering *The Pali Tipitaka*; *The Vinaya*; *The Arahanta* (since published on the Birmingham Buddhist Vihara website - <http://www.birminghambuddhistvihara.org/Dr.Rewata%20Dhamma.html>); *The Buddhist Councils* (published by the webzine Dhamma Journal -<http://www.buddhism.ndirect.co.uk/councils.htm>); and *The Theravada School*. So far as we know, this was never published and the firm went bankrupt in 2003.

4. Magazines

- "*The Practical Results of Vipassana Meditation*". *The Maha Bodhi* (Calcutta, India) 85/8-10, Aug-Oct. 1977, pp.264-9. [See *Monachesimo Cristiano* for Italian translation]
- "*Bliss Through Buddhism*". *The Middle Way* (London), 54/2, August 1979, pp. 76-80.
- "*Vipassana Meditation*". *The Maha Bodhi* (Calcutta, India) 89/4-6, April-June 1981, pp. 124-8.
- "*A Meditation Course: the first lesson*". *The Maha Bodhi* (Calcutta, India) 89/7-9, July-Sept. 1981. [Early version of what was re-edited in *Emptying the Rose-Apple Seat* pp. 63-9]

- "A Meditation Course: the second lesson". *The Maha Bodhi* (Calcutta, India) 90/1-3, Jan-March 1982, pp. 31-5. [cf. *Emptying the Rose-Apple Seat* pp. 70-6]
- "The Fundamental Forces of the Mind". *Buddhist Forum* (London Buddhist Vihara), 14/2, 1982, pp. 80-9. Reprinted in *The Maha Bodhi* (Calcutta, India) 92/7-9, July-Sept. 1984, pp. 137-45.
- "The Theravadin Perspective on Life after Death". *The Maha Bodhi* (Calcutta, India) 93/1-3, Jan-March 1985, pp. 2-8.
- "Teaching for the Many". *Middle Way* (London) 66/3, Nov. 1991, pp. 155-9. [Web version at <http://www.birminghambuddhistvihara.org/teaching%20for%20many.html>; Spanish translation by Bertha Imaz, "Buddhismo para todos", at <http://www.cmbt.org/fdd/pdf/confrew.pdf>]. A re-edited version appeared in *Lotus* (Birmingham Buddhist Vihara) 14, Winter 2004, pp.1, 4-6.
- "Sunyata-Emptiness and Self-Emptying-Kenosis". *Middle Way* (London) 68/2, August 1993, pp. 77-84. [Web version at <http://www.nibbana.com/rdhamma2.-htm>]
- "World Peace". *Buddhist Himalaya* (Nagarjuna Institute, Lalitpur, Nepal)) 5/1-2. 1993. [Also available on their web site at <http://www.nagarjunainstitute.com/buddhisthim/backissues/vo5.htm>]
- "What I expect of Friendship with Christians". *Current Dialogue* (World Council of Churches, Geneva, Switzerland) 30, December 1996. [See *Studies in Inter-religious Dialogue*]
- "Was ich von der Freundschaft mit Christen erwarte" [trans. of *What I expect of friendship with Christians* by Gisela Köberlin]. *Dialog der Religionen* (Gütersloh, Germany) Sept. 1996. [Available on the Buddhist-Christian Studies web site - <http://www.buddhist-christian-studies.org/hamburg.htm>]
- "Ce que j'attends de l'amitié avec les chrétiens" [trans. of *What I expect of friendship with Christians*]. *Voies de l'Orient* (Brussels, Belgium) 63, April 1997, pp.32-40.
- "Buddhism in Myanmar" [prototype for various versions of the essay of this name]. *Middle Way* (London) 74/2, August 1999, pp.114-7 [See also an amplified version at <http://www.buddhism.ndirect.co.uk/rdhamma4.htm>]. A further expanded version appeared in *Lotus* (Birmingham Buddhist Vihara) 13, Summer 2004, pp. 7-10. [Ricardo Sasaki's Portugese web version of this under the title *O Buddhismo em Myanmar* appears at <http://nalanda.org.br/sala/buddmyan.php>]
- "Paths of Purification". *Lotus* (Birmingham Buddhist Vihara) 6, Autumn 2002, pp. 7-8. [cf. *Emptying the Rose-Apple Seat*, pp. 120-4]
- "Buddhism & Social Justice". *Lotus* (Birmingham Buddhist Vihara) 11, Winter 2003, pp. 3-5. [An expanded version of *Buddhism & Economic Justice*; web version at <http://www.birminghambuddhistvihara.org/buddhism%20and%20social%20justice.html>].
- "Traditional Wisdom & Modern Knowledge". *Lotus* (Birmingham Buddhist Vihara) 12, Spring 2004, pp. 5-8. [Edited version of the paper given at the 1991 Samye Ling Interfaith Symposium]
- "Vipassana Meditation". *Samadhi: the journal of the London Buddhist Vihara*, 24 May 2004 [Web version at <http://www.londonbuddhistvihara.co.uk/samadhi/May2004.htm#VIPASSANA%20MEDITATION>]
- "Globalising Spiritual Values". *Lotus* (Birmingham Buddhist Vihara) 15, Spring 2005, pp. [Talk given at the Millenium Summit of World Religious Leaders, United Nations Headquarters, New York; web version at <http://www.birminghambuddhistvihara.org/globalising%20spiritual%20values.html>]

5. Web Publication only

- "Dhamma, Ethics and Human Rights". [Talk given at the Asian Leaders Conference. Seoul, S. Korea, December 1994, available on the Burma Library website - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/reg.burma/archives/199506/msg00111.html>]
- "The Contribution of Buddhism to the World of Art and Architecture" [talk given at the Buddhist Seminar, Sarnath, Varanasi, India: November 1998, on the Dhamma Journal web site - <http://www.nibbana.com/rdbudart.htm>]

6. Taped Talks

● SERIES 1

- RD1 *Metta Bhavana + Vie quotidienne*
- RD2 *L'effort de développer la sagesse*
- RD3 *Les trois connaissances profondes*
- RD4 *Paticca Sammupada*
- RD5 *Les cinq khandas*
- RD6 *Introduction au stage*
- RD7 *Samatha-Vipassana*
- RD8 *Les cinq facultés*
- RD9 *Les quatre chemins*
- RD10 *Satipatthana*
- RD11 *Les sept vissuddhis*
- RD12 *Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta, Pañña*
- RD13 *Les quatre bases de l'attention dans le traditions*
- RD14 *Les quatre nobles vérités* (Oct.2003, n°3)
- RD15 *Sati et Sampajañña*
- RD16 *Les cinq empêchements*

- RD17 *La première noble vérité*
 RD18 *Le désir, cause de Dukkha*
 RD19 *Vipassana, pourquoi, comment*
 RD20 *Pañña*
 RD21 *Comprendre l'univers*

Dhamma Group Brussels tapes, Namur, Belgium, 1992-2003. [The A side of these is the original English, the B side contains the French translation by Marie-Cécile Forget]

● SERIES 2

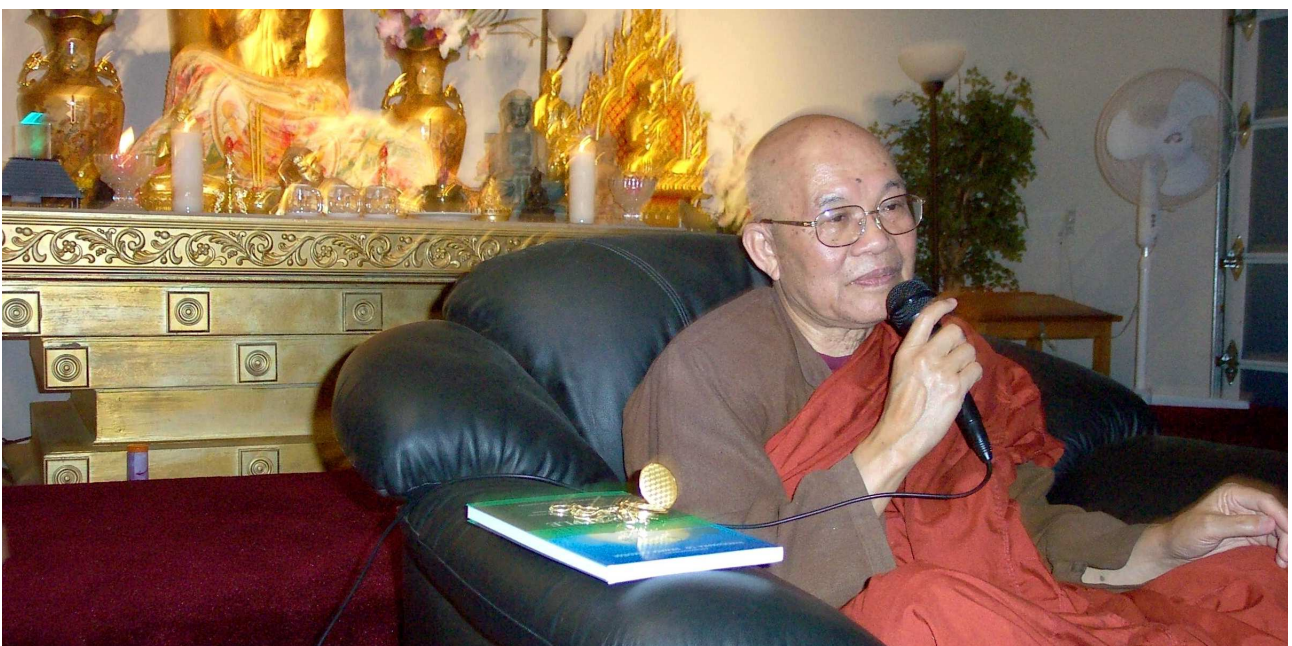
- RD 1 *The eightfold path. Sila-Samadhi-Pañña. 5 Precepts. Meditation instructions 2003*
 RD 2 *Different meditation techniques. 5 Hindrances. Concentration. Effort and awareness*
 RD 3 *Vipassana-Samata, Pañña, Karma etc.*
 RD 4 *The four noble truths*
 RD 5 *The five hindrances*
 RD 6 *Karma and rebirth: Enlightenment*
 RD 7 *Intro. to Mahasatipathana Sutta. Contemplation of body*
 RD 8 *Contemplation of the body*
 RD 9 *The four elements: Contemplation of feelings, of mind and of mind objects*
 RD 10 *Contemplation of mind objects*
 RD 11 *The Four Noble Truths*
 RD 12 *Metta meditation*
 RD 13 *Chanting*
 RD 14 *Closing talk, Beatenberg 2003*
 Dharma Tapes, Ebertswil, Switzerland, 2005.

7. Interviews and Discussions

- “*First International Meeting Between Mahayana and Theravada*”. [A dialogue convened by the Dalai Lama in

which Dr Rewata Dhamma led the Theravada side and played a leading role in the conversation]. *Boeddhayana* ('s-Gravenhaage, Netherlands 3/5, 1979, pp.37-64.)

- “*Emptiness and Compassion*”: A panel discussion at the European Buddhist Union Congress on 27th September 1992 with Sogyal Rimpoche, Thich Nhat Hanh, Dr. Rewata Dhamma and Sangharakshita. Clear Vision Trust Video, Manchester, UK, [66 mins].
- “*Meeting with Dr Rewata Dhamma*”, interviewed by San Lwin, *Dhamma Yoksom* (Yangon, Myanmar) 10, 1994, pp.18-21 [Myanmar language].
- “*Birmingham Sayadaw, Dr Rewata Dhamma*” [interview with Chit San Win on Jan. 22, 1995], *Pan Myotitya*, Yangon, Myanmar, 1995 [booklet publication in Myanmar language].
- “*The Background to Aung San Suu Kyi's Release from House-Arrest*” [article originally written for the October 1995 issue of “*This Is Yomiuri*”, a monthly magazine published by The Yomiuri Shimbun], available on the web at <http://www.ibiblio.org/obl/reg.burma/archives/199509/msg00166.html>
- “*Birmingham Sayadaw, Dr Rewata Dhamma*”, interviewed by Aung Thinn, *Nawaday* (Yangon, Myanmar) 8-9, 2000, pp.55-62 [Myanmar language].
- “*Shining example of peace*. In the third of its series on faith leaders, Dr Rewata Dhamma tells Jo Ind about Buddhism in Birmingham”. (Features, *The Birmingham Post* (England), 1/16/2003. [Available at http://www.highbeam.com/library/doc0.asp?DOCID=1G1:96494900&refid=ip_encyclopedia_hf]



Appeals

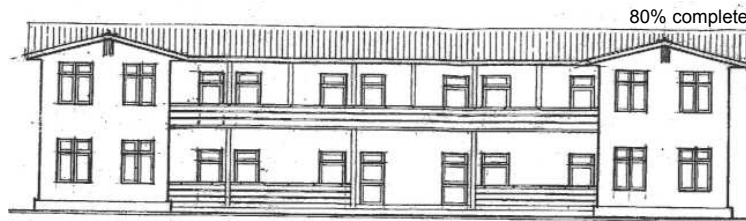
Dhamma Hall and Thamangone Village School



Thamangone Village School

The following was prepared by Dr Rewata Dhamma as a 75th birthday appeal shortly before his death

In December 1929 I was born in a village called Thamangone (Zalun township), in the Henthada district on the banks of the



Irrawaddy. The river was then the main route from upper to lower Burma; the land was very fertile and the district was a major agricultural area. There were about 400 houses in our village and it was surrounded by other smaller villages. The village had three Buddhist kyaungs (monasteries) and a state primary school, all of which provided the children with a basic education, with the result that most people in the area could read and write.

When I returned there after fifty years things had changed because of cave-ins as the Irrawaddy shifted its course. Owing to lack of bank maintenance, Thamangone had had to move its site three times. However, it still retained its three viharas and the school had been re-graded to include middle school as well. When I was a boy, none among our young people had gone on to university, but now there are both men and young women there with degrees.

The school should really be expanded to include high school but in the present economic situation the village cannot afford the building costs. However, the government has indicated its willingness to support its re-grading once the school's capacity is increased and would employ local graduates as teachers. At present anyone wishing to pursue higher education must cross the river (over a mile wide at this point) and go to other towns. Although the children are

bright enough, their parents are too poor to support them away from home. Because of the political situation and the

consequent economic sanctions against Myanmar, the population as a whole has become impoverished. Although some NGOs (such as Christian Aid and Swiss-Aid) give a certain amount of support in work like improving school buildings and sinking wells, it is necessarily limited in a country with 52 million inhabitants.

It is my ambition to show my gratitude to those who supported me when I was young, not just in words but in a tangible way as well. Next December I shall be 75 and on this occasion would like to help the village by increasing the school premises so as to house a high school, and also to sink tube wells locally so that pure water can be made available to those in the village. I would also like to be able to provide scholarships for up to five students to pursue university studies. I am informed that building costs would be £15,000; tube wells would cost £1,000 each. Expenses for students would come to £500 each per year and a university course covers four years.

I would gratefully appreciate any help you can give me towards raising this birthday present, which I would hand over when I visit my village in December. Hopefully this will benefit the thousands in the area for many years to come.

Dr. Rewata Dhamma
26/03/04

Buddhist Academy: Dhamma Hall

We need to raise £300,000. Will you help?



Since his arrival in England in 1975 the Venerable Aggamahapandita Dr Rewata Dhamma worked tirelessly to bring Buddhism to the West and make it accessible to all. Starting with a house in a residential area of Birmingham, he gathered supporters and devotees around him whose enthusiasm spurred him on to fundraise and subsequently build the Dhammalaka Pagoda on a site provided by the Birmingham City Council.

Birmingham City Council is very proud of this Myanmar-style pagoda and its golden dome has become something of a landmark within the city. With the Myanmar Royal Relics enshrined in the Pagoda it is also an official pilgrimage site as well as providing a centre for local Buddhists of many nationalities. As the number of devotees grew, so did the Sangha and in 2001 we opened up our own purpose-built monastery on the Pagoda site.

Of course nothing stands still and more monks has meant more opportunity to spread the dhamma. From meditation classes we developed to education and we now have accreditation from the City College to teach Buddhism to a wide audience. Also, we have as our Spiritual Director a teaching monk from the International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University in Yangon who brings in-depth understanding of the suttas to many interested students.

An extensive retreat programme with long retreats, as well as shorter programmes running on

a regular basis, has been developed. Meditation teachers from other parts of the country are keen to use our facilities for their own retreat programmes.

Interest in Buddhism from schools, colleges and interfaith groups have combined to create an ever increasing programme and rarely a week passes without groups coming to learn of our work and to experience the beauty and tranquility of our Peace Pagoda.

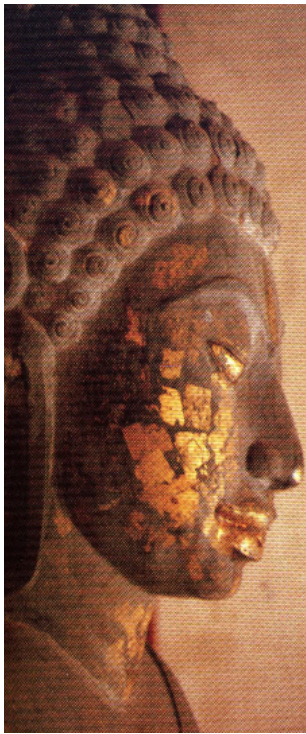
Alongside the growth of the Vihara's work, and with the work done by other Buddhist groups within the city, there has been increased interest in the benefits of Buddhist practice raised by the media. We are pleased to have played our part in drawing attention to Buddhism in this way.

With our educational programme growing as it is, and with dedicated space needed for the increased numbers of visitors, retreatants and students requiring accommodation, it is vital that we expand our facilities. There is, therefore, an opportunity for well-wishers to help us spread the dhamma by contributing to the building of the new hall. We envisage a two-storey building with classrooms and a kitchen at ground level, bathroom facilities and single bedrooms on the top floor.

We need financial help to realise this new project. Can you help?



Sponsors



Remembrance to the Sayadaw
who had been a guiding light,
an inestimable teacher, and
also a good friend
for many, many years
in our lives.

from

DR THET TUN and
DR TIN MAY AYE

In grateful memory of
DR REWATA DHAMMA

from

Dhamma Jotika and Family
in loving memory of our parents
Datuk Korl Choong Wah
and
Datin Yeong Khuan Thye

May all beings be at ease

Tribute to the late Dr. Rewata Dhamma

Seeds of Lord Buddha's teachings may have been first time sown on that very fertile soil in Birmingham by the late Sayadaw. We are proudly witnessing the healthy Dhamma shoots coming through the ground so beautifully radiating in all directions. His deeply rooted yearning wish in building the Dhammatalaka Peace Pagoda for the sole benefit of all mankind was soundly fulfilled. We are all greatly indebted with thanks for his lifelong endeavours and achievements.

**Dr Kyaw Myint Oo and
Than Than Ywe**

In grateful memory of
Dr Rewata Dhamma
from
U Mying Thein and
Daw Khin Wai Thi (Paris)

in memory of our mother
Daw Yin Kyi (age 96)
who passed away on
14th February 2005



“The white clouds are silent above the alter.”



“The Light of Buddha is increasing in brilliance
and the Wheel of the Dharma is always turning.
These temple buildings and this ground are guarding
the Dharma and the trainees.”



We, the Zen Group, offer our heart-felt gratitude to the
Sayadaw, Ven. Dr. Rewatadhamma.



“This ground turned golden;
I have known for some time that a saint would come.”

In memory of

DR REWATA DHAMMA

One of the wisest and most knowledgeable beings we ever had
the honour of knowing.

His inspiration has been passed down through our family for
three generations and for this we will be ever grateful.

A GREAT MASTER & DEAR FRIEND WHO WE WILL SADLY MISS
BUT REMEMBER ALWAYS

DR AUNG MYIN & DAW THEIN THEIN MYIN

Daughters

NILAR, JENNY, MONICA & AMANDA

Grandchildren

MARINA, J.J. & JESSICA



**In Memory of the late Ven. Dr. Rewata Dhamma from
Mr & Mrs S. Lal and Family**

Nammo Buddha

It is with gratitude that it has been bestowed upon me to write a short passage of remembrance on the 1st Anniversary of the late Dr. Rewata Dhamma, affectionately known as Bhante.

My family and I have been honoured to have been in the presence of Bhante since 1975 during which we spent a great deal of time and devotion in the promotion of the Buddha's teachings of love and compassion to all human beings.

Bhante was a normal man who became our Spiritual Director but was part of my family, having resided over the blessing of my children's weddings and blessed all eleven grandchildren.

My family are all privileged to have been in the presence of the late Ven. Dr. Rewata Dhamma. This commemoration is a celebration to rejoice in all that is good in our hearts and minds, as I firmly believe that Bhante would have wanted us to continue to develop our loving kindness to all fellow human beings.

What the Ven. Dr. Rewata Dhamma has left behind is a strong sangha which will also be strong to realise Bhante's dream to develop the Buddhist Vihara and to ensure the teachings of Buddha are promoted in the western world.

I bid well to the late Bhante on that great journey which I am sure we will all follow and I look forward to that day when our paths will cross again.

In grateful memory of
DR REWATA DHAMMA

from

Norman Kain (Myint Khine),
Dr Trudy Chit Khine,
Dr Mynn Thu Khine,
Dr Nyunt Wai Khine,
Myat Myat Khine,
Dr Nyo Nyo Khine,
Mynne Khine and
Khine Khine Chit
in memory of
our parents
U Chit Khine (*Norman*) and
Daw Khin Myint (*Jessie*)

In Grateful memory of
DR REWATA DHAMMA

from

Drs Kyi Tun and
Myint Myint Soe
daughters and
their families
Mark & Thida,

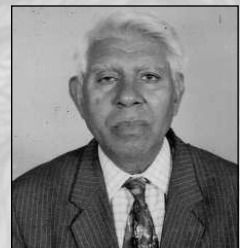
Harry & Mia Bevington,
Matthew and Dr Sandy



The Buddha accepting request for ordination
from Untouchable Sunita



R.L. SAMPLA
PRESIDENT
DR AMBEDKAR EDUCATION
SOCIETY, BIRMINGHAM



Dr B R Ambedkar, the great leader of the Indian Untouchables embraced Buddhism in 1956 and his followers in the United Kingdom have been carrying forward his conversion movement in the United Kingdom since 1960. I have been actively involved with the activities of Dr Ambedkar Buddhist Society in Birmingham, which organised a conversion event in 1973. We were therefore in need of a Buddhist monk to run a Buddha Vihara in the UK.

When Ven. Dr. Rewata Dhamma came to the UK in 1975 all the neo-Buddhists were immediately attracted to him as he was educated in India and had a great knowledge of Dr Ambedkar's liberation movement there. By his learning and focussed dedication he quickly became well known in the Indian Buddhist community.

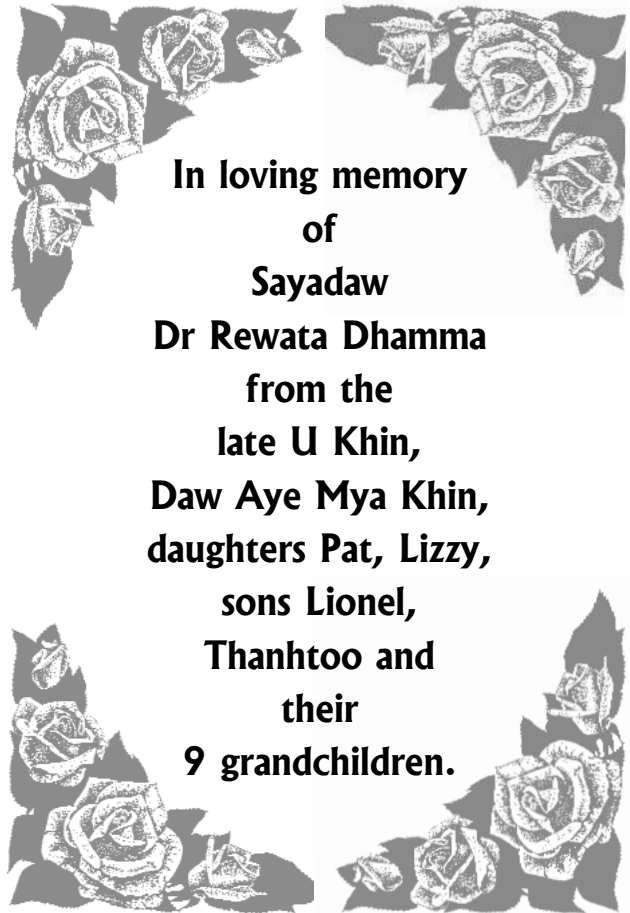
He opened his first Buddha Vihara in Handsworth and later in the Edgbaston area of Birmingham. I feel proud that I became a permanent member of these two Viharas and was honoured to have been appointed one of its patrons. The present Buddha Vihara and the Peace Pagoda established by Dr Rewata Dhamma in Edgbaston serves as a permanent memorial to his ceaseless work and very high ideals.

In grateful
memory of
Dr Rewata
Dhamma, the
first Buddhist
monk I met in Birmingham.
from
Supawan Green



who would like to take this opportunity to share with you her dhamma from her two latest released books: *Einstein Questions, Buddha Answers* and *Do You Know What A Normal Mind Is?* For more information please go to: www.supawangreen.in.th or email Supawan@blueyonder.co.uk

In loving memory
of
Sayadaw
Dr Rewata Dhamma
from the
late U Khin,
Daw Aye Mya Khin,
daughters Pat, Lizzy,
sons Lionel,
Thanhtoo and
their
9 grandchildren.



In grateful memory of
Dr Rewata Dhamma
from
Drs Minn Than Tun
and Soe Soe Kyu
and Sons Thiha Tun,
Thurain Tun and fiancée
Clare Sclater



In memory of our parents
U Soe Maung and
Daw Khin Aye Kyu

In grateful
memory
of Dr Rewata Dhamma
from Malook Chand
and family
and in memory of
our Mother Swarni Chand.
We will miss
Dr Rewata Dhamma's
wisdom and teachings
and his annual visit
to our house.
With all our blessings
and goodwill.

In grateful memory
of
Dr Rewata Dhamma
from
Dr Chit Ko Ko
and
Dr Khin Mar Aye



In grateful memory of
Sayadaw Dr Rewata Dhamma
With Reverence
Dr Peter Soe-Wynn
and
Steve Khine Moe,
in memory of our parents/
grandparents
Dr U Ba Pu
and
Daw Khin Tint



Tribute to Ven. Dr Rewata Dhamma

We were very fortunate in meeting Dr Rewata Dhamma back in 1977 when we were looking for a Buddhist monk to offer dana and send meritorious deeds to my wife Daw Aye Than's mother who had passed away.

My wife and I had promised my wife's late mother that we would fulfil her wish of getting her two grandsons, Robin Than and Steven Than, ordained as Samaneras (novice monks) according to Theravadin tradition. In June 1978, in a joint ordination ceremony held at my house with U Sein Tun Aung (newly appointed Maritime Advisor to the United Nations Organisation) and Daw Hla Hla Aung's family, we realised her wish. This was the first Theravadin Buddhist ordination in Birmingham.

Our family were immensely indebted to the late Sayadaw Dr Rewata Dhamma to have performed the ordination and for all that he brought to the life of the Myanmar community in Britain.

We remember Dr Rewata Dhamma with gratitude.

U Maung Maung Than

Dr George Chryssides and the Religious Studies staff and students at the University of Wolverhampton are grateful to Dr Rewata Dhamma for his help and encouragement over the years. He will be sadly missed.

*In remembrance of Dr Rewata Dhamma
With great respect, honour and gratitude.
David Dickinson*

Dr Rewata Dhamma's influence for good at the Vihara, and all over the world, was immeasurable, but I remember him most as a much loved personal friend whose influence will never leave me.

Bill and family

In grateful memory of Dr Rewata Dhamma
from Dr Swe Win Maung and family - Wynn, Kyaw and Sundi,
Farnsfield, Nottinghamshire.

IN GRATEFUL MEMORY OF DR REWATA DHAMMA
WITH THANKS FROM THE MAY FAMILY:
PAT, BRIAN, JAMES, TARA AND JULIET

In grateful memory of Dr Rewata Dhamma
from
Richard, Ann, Alexander and Elizabeth Pe Win

IN GRATEFUL MEMORY OF ASHIN REWATA DHAMMA FROM
U HLA HTAY, MINNIE HTAY, WILLIAM HTAY & PARTNER,
JASON HTAY & PARTNER, SACHA HTAY & PARTNER.

In memory of Ven. Dr. Rewata Dhamma,
a very good friend and respected teacher. May the benefits of his work around the
world in propagating the Dhamma continue to reap benefits to all living beings.

Karunabodhi & Sue Dawson

To my Preceptor and Teacher, Dr Rewata Dhamma
who I had the privilege of working with as well as receiving
his blessings and teachings.

He will remain in my heart and in my memory.

Upasika Singini

In most grateful memory of
The Venerable Dr. Rewata Dhamma
from *Denys*

Thank you Bhante!



**OMMAGE
TO
DR
REWATA
DHAMMA**

*From all his disciples at
Dhamma Group Brussels:*

*2, rue de la Duchesse
1040 Brussels, BELGIUM*

Board
of
Trustees



*With his death we have lost a great master
of the Buddha Dhamma, an accomplished
scholar of Abhidhamma, a humble and
dedicated monk, and a compassionate man
selflessly devoted to the service of humanity.*

Bhikkhi Bodhi
2005