

Sayadaw Dr. Rewata Dhamma

Sayadaw U **Rewata Dhamma** (4 December 1929, Thamangone – 26 May 2004, Birmingham) was a prominent Theravada Buddhist monk and noted Abhidhamma scholar from Myanmar (Burma).

After pursuing an academic career in India for most of two decades, he accepted an invitation to head a Buddhist centre in Birmingham UK, and over the next three decades gained an international reputation as a teacher of meditation and an advocate of peace and reconciliation.

Life and career

The young Rewata was first ordained as a novice at the age of 12, and received higher ordination at the age of 20. In 1953, he was awarded the title Sasanadhaja Siripavara Dhammacariya, after achieving distinctions in a state examination in Pali. Then, having received a state scholarship, he left for India in 1956 to continue his education at Varanasi University, using the expanded name of Rewata Dhamma for his passport. In 1960, he obtained a BA in Mahayana Buddhism; in 1964 an MA in Sanskrit and Indian philosophy; and in 1967, a PhD. He now became a university lecturer and published works in Pali and Hindi, including the *Abhidhammatta Sangaha*, which was awarded the Kalidasa Prize by the Hindi Academy in 1967.



In 1975 he relocated to England to establish a Buddhist centre in Birmingham which catered for both Theravadins and followers of the Tibetan Karma Kagyu school. Later he set up his own monastery and then went on to sponsor the Dhamma Talaka Pagoda, which officially opened in 1998. He also helped establish meditation centers throughout Europe as well as in North, Central and South America. During that time he lectured at several universities on Buddhist subjects and attended numerous conferences dealing with the application of religious practice to bringing about political and economic justice, harmony among religions and ecological responsibility. From the 1990s too, books by him in English began to appear, the last three only posthumously. In 2002, the Burmese government conferred on him the title Agga Maha Pandita.

Throughout his career, Dr Rewata Dhamma championed the cause of national reconciliation, speaking to international bodies such as the United Nations and Amnesty International. He was one of Aung San Suu Kyi's most

influential Buddhist mentors, first meeting in Rangoon and becoming acquainted with Khin Kyi and Suu Kyi during their residence in India, in the 1960s, and then becoming reacquainted while conducting meditation retreats at the Oakenholt Centre near Oxford.