

The Monastic Schools



Daw Sumanacari and the six teachers

Appamada Monastic School

We arrived at 8 am, just as school was beginning. All of the students – nuns, novices, and lay kids – were lined up outside in the courtyard. They started to sing various songs for about 15 minutes. We were told that the songs are about how to be a good citizen. The kids were incredibly disciplined, and even the youngest seemed to know all the songs by heart. Then, in a very orderly fashion according to age, they went inside, and we heard them chanting. Every day, they chant the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (the first discourse given by the Buddha) in Pāli, which is followed by mettā chants. After dedicating and sharing the merit, they meditate for three minutes!



*Daw Sumanacari and her assistant
Assembly in the courtyard
Recitation the in hall*

There are 6 teachers for the 226 students up to 5th grade. The teachers, who live nearby, receive a salary of 200'000 Kyats (43 Euros) per month. Daw Sumanacari had her dream come through when MIA decided to help her set up the monastic school in 2011. Ever since then, she is wholeheartedly dedicated to provide the best possible facilities for the teachers and students to teach, learn, and get educated.

In addition to managing the school, Daw Sumanacari is the abbess of the Appamada Nunnery with 20 resident nuns. She admits that managing a school requires considerable skill and organizational talent, especially ensuring that teachers receive their salaries. Raising 1.2 million Kyats (258 euros) each month for teacher salaries is no easy task. The support she receives from MIA is invaluable – every day she radiates mettā to all the MIA donors.

At the end of the school year in March, she organizes an event for the parents with songs, dances, and the distribution of awards for the kids. Unfortunately, we had left for Upper Burma and could not join the festivities. However, she did send us some photos.



*A young student
Receiving an award
A traditional dance
The parents watching
the performances*



Chanmyavati Monastic School



Patthana recitation

As usual in January, the two head nuns Daw Paññāsiri and Daw Kesara organized a traditional five-day Patthāna recitation. The Patthāna is one of the seven books of the Abhidhamma and is recited continuously day and night. The nuns take turn reciting for 30 minutes each.

We were invited to a big lunch during these Patthāna days. The place was crowded with visitors, which showed us that they also have Burmese supporters.

35 nuns live at the nunnery. The older ones attend other schools, while the younger ones, up to the 5th grade, attend the monastery school on the grounds.

In total, there are 170 students (nuns, novices, lay kids) and 6 teachers. The two-story school building was donated by a Japanese group, and initially, a Japanese translator taught the students in Japanese.

The new building is finished, but the wooden floor still needs to be laid on the upper floor. Another project is paving the weed-choked area in front of the school because it turns to mud during the rainy season. This leaves the children with no place to play.

We noticed several similar-looking bicycles in front of the school. Apparently, a Burmese donor offered ten bicycles to be used by teachers and students who live further away.



Nuns in their classroom



The new building



It is a joy to offer such a pile of dāna!

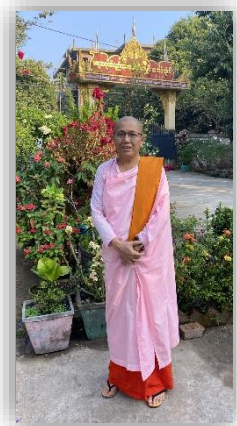
Saranagonyee Monastic School



The new building

This is a new monastic school on the grounds of the Saranagonyee Nunnery. A retired teacher, now a nun, set up the school, for nuns only. In its first year, 100 students, all nuns, attend the school, taught by 10 teachers. Some of the teachers are retired, and four of them live at the nunnery. They teach from KG through 11th grade. To be recognized by the government, she needs to work together with another monastic school open to girls *and* boys. Therefore, the students need to go to the other school for their exams.

The head teacher said that it is a lot of work to get everything going, and also to get the salary for all the teachers, 2.5 million Kyats (532 Euros) in total. Despite her health challenges – high blood pressure, diabetes, and a stent in her heart – she is doing everything she can to provide the nuns with a good education. The school building is almost finished, but one important thing is still missing: toilets! MIA has offered sufficient funds for the construction of four toilets.



The retired teacher

Paññāsinghi Monastic School

Daw Paññāsiri is a busy person; she is not only the head nun of the nunnery but also the manager of the monastic school. In addition, she is the head of all the nuns in Mingaladon township. As it happened before, when we dropped by unannounced, we were told that she was out ‘taking care of some business’. On our second visit for offering the dāna, she warmly welcomed us and immediately connected with our Burmese friend Mora, as they both grew up in the same town in Upper Burma.

Mora (his pen name) is a volunteer working for Better Burma (BB), a US-based organization that also supports numerous projects in Myanmar. BB provided invaluable assistance with transferring the dāna to Myanmar, and Mora, along with his wife and children, helped us with its distributing. The entire family is very committed to helping their fellow people. They, too, were affected by the political unrest and had to move to another place.



Offering the dāna. Left to right: Mora, Ma Khaing, Daw Paññāsiri, Ariya, Mimmi, Carol, the little daughter



Daw Paññāsiri and the nuns recite the blessing

We looked into the classrooms and exchanged a few words with the students (a total of 200, up to the 5th grade) and the teachers (6).



In the classrooms



Zaloon Monastic School

The large, beautiful bouquets of flowers in the room were from Daw Aye Singhi's birthday celebration the day before. She turned 63 and, after a period of some serious health issues, is now in good health again.



The roof to this building needs to be repaired

longer have a connection with these Japanese donors. The kitchen also needs repair. Daw Aye Singhi will use the MIA dāna for these repairs.

This is the largest monastic school we support, with 544 students, ranging from KG to 8th grade. They have 16 teachers, five of whom are men (which is rather unusual in Myanmar).

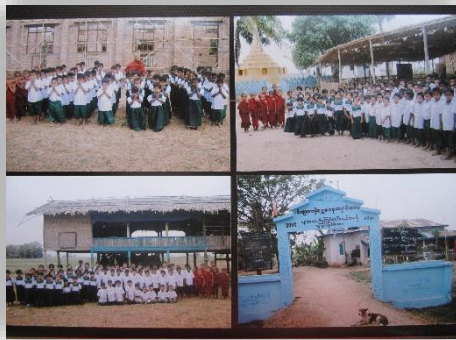
As a registered monastic school, it receives government funding for teachers' salaries, covering about a third of their monthly pay.

The big three-story building, offered by Japanese donors, needs a new roof. They no



Offering the dāna to Daw Aye Singhi

Aung Yatanar Shwe Oh Monastic School



This is how it was in 2012.....



..... and now in 2026

Sayadaw U Indobhasa grew up in a small village in the middle of nowhere near the town of Bago. To ordain as a novice, he left the village and stayed in a monastery. Later, when he was a monk, he returned to his native village and in 2009 he set up a school for the children in that area. He started with a bamboo structure and very little support. We heard about him in 2012 and started to support his monastic school. U Indobhasa is patient, resourceful, and determined ever since the beginning. He came to pick up the donation at CMMC because the trip to his school would not have been safe for us (under the given political circumstances).



Greg & Sayadaw U Indobhasa

There are 295 students and 11 teachers.



*The students of
the Aung
Yatanar Shwe
Oh School*



In conversation with Sayadaw U Indobhasa, he said,

“All I can do is to provide the students with good and suitable conditions. I can build them a staircase so that they can climb to the upper floors, which means a better education and a better position in life. However, the students have to climb the staircase themselves – I cannot do it for them.

It is hard work and not easy to hold everything together. But I do it for these students. I could live a peaceful and happy life with just one set of robes, a bamboo mat, and an alms bowl. But how could I be happy and at peace when all these young students, and also their parents, live in the dark, without education and without any future prospects? This is why I dedicate all my energy, time, and resources to prepare the ground for a brighter future.”



May these children, and all children in the world, have a brighter future!

Ariya Baumann
May 2026