



# BETTER BURMA

To Metta in Action,

During my last visits to Yangon to help facilitate Daw Ariya's support for the nunnery communities in Pale Myothit Quarter, Mingaldon Township, we were very delighted to help these vulnerable nunneries and the communities of lay people who rely on them for their children's education and so on. We felt their sense of gratitude as soon as we entered their living quarters



where the houses and bamboo huts amid the factories are situated close to each other and the lanes are too narrow. The people welcomed us and some men helped us park our car where my team went together with Daw Ariya, in a small space between some of their houses. As soon as we stepped into their narrow lanes, we could estimate how helpful the nunnery schools were, to these low-income families in the outskirts of Yangon.



The location of the nunnery schools which we donated with Daw Ariya, is in the northern outskirts of Yangon and you can easily reach there heading north when you get out of the airport, instead of going into the downtown of the Great Yangon. As we stayed at a monastery in this area outside of the most populated downtown areas, we could see how hard the grassroots living in this commercial city of Myanmar —at the bus stops, so many factory workers coming back home in the late evenings. I believe we cannot see these sights except this area in the northern outskirts and Hlaing Tharyar in the west of Yangon across Hlaing River.



*Appamāda Nunnery* is the first school we visited and distributed the donations of *Metta in Action* (MIA). At that nunnery, we unexpectedly met a group of Japanese people and their guides —that we learned later —who sponsored building a three-storied school six years ago before the coup and COVID-19. Daw Suamana, the Head Nun, surprisingly said that she was too happy to see both the groups (our group and the Japanese group). She explained —Daw Ariya and her MIA charity helped and encouraged the nunnery



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to open a school offering free education for the children of the families living in



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the quarter while another team offered a school building housing 224 students for their safe and convenient study. Since both the teams visited the nunnery on the same day, she and her assistants — including the volunteer teachers, were surprised and happy to welcome both who had never met each other before. I also commented and talked to the Japanese donors that everything in the Universe came about with

a cause and, “Who would know if our meeting now came from the past meetings in the former lives of Samsāra? Who knows we were **relatives**?” The Japanese donors cordially agreed with this Karmic law and the *Pathāna*, the Relationship between the Cause and Effects in our long-lasting Life Cycle.

The Head Nun invited us to look around the nunnery and showed Daw Ariya the building which they constructed step by step (year by year) through yearly donations from MIA and international donors. houses young boarding nuns and they made a healthy floor for them with MIA’s support last year. I heard the inspiring stories about Daw Ariya and international donors’ support for the nunnery and school. The Head Nun showed



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us the backyard garden where they grow vegetables to feed the residential nuns and told us that they grow them organically. It was amazing to see the foreseeable management of the Head Nun and her assistant nuns. She said that their regular lay sponsors can offer a few Pyi (kilos) of rice per month or on an irregular basis these days. Also, she opened her heart that some local sponsors who do not deeply understand their volition, had stopped their support for the school due to the current political crisis. I can truly feel sympathy for these monastic schools and nunnery schools as we deeply understand their situation. We know their hardship, we know their focus on the education of children from poor and low-income families, we know their compassion to accept and accommodate newly arrived students from IDP families who were evacuated from their villages in the conflict areas, and so on. Who cares about these deep feelings of the compassionate monks and nuns? That is why I am so deeply moved by the support from *Metta in Action* and the international donors.



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During our lunch, a 10 or 11-year-old nun came and greeted Daw Ariya. The Head Nun asked her if she recognized her. In fact, the young nun is an orphan who lost her parents when she was an infant, and the Head Nun brought her to the nunnery to look after her. It was at the time they were starting up the nunnery school through Daw Ariya and MIA's support. I learned that MIA has helped the nunnery and school annually since 2009, and the donors led by Daw Ariya and Daw Virañāni visited there every year before the pandemic. During the pandemic and the first 2 years after the coup, they all have not been able to visit the nunneries again, except Daw Ariya.

Although I was very aware of the overall situation of the monastic schools and nunnery schools across the country with a **bird's eye** and especially, I'm well informed about the ones in the upper part of the country where the escalating armed conflicts between the junta's troops and the insurgency alliances over the last four years since the coup, I have to say I did not feel any deep sympathy for the nuns this much. Now, I have witnessed their happiness to receive international support and heard their voices from the bottom of their hearts, zooming in on their hardship which is not as less as lay people's, too. I, as a household leader of the family with my two own children, can sympathize with these compassionate nuns feeding and educating tens of young nuns every day. I was as happy as the Head Nuns to witness the international support from various corners of the globe because it did not only mean the physical or material support but it also meant the mental support or motivation reaching so far. I can guess they would be feeling motivated to continue their noble causes.



At the same time, Daw Ariya expressed her gratitude to all the Head Nuns of the nunneries we visited that Better Burma helped her charity organization facilitate the funds coming into the country and make the donations happen. She mentioned to them, "Without Better Burma, we would not be able to donate to you this much!" How delightful is it!

This is why, Daw Sumana and other abbesses made wishes for all the well-wishers, the members of Better Burma who made the donations happen with strong volition to help us. She commented on her services, "This act can also be conducted by the one who has an intention to help nuns. Without an



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intention or volition, he/she/they definitely won't do it! These acts of service *Dāna* can also be done by the Buddhas and Ariyas (the Noble Ones), and the ones who have the same spirit to perform *Paramis* (the Perfections). Buddhas and the Noble Ones deeply praised this *Veyyāvacca Dāna* (offering of the service/time/efforts for another's *Dāna*)."

We also feel closer to Daw Sumana who is originally from Myaung Mya Township in Ayeyarwady Region. Since my wife's native village is located in Ayeyarwady Region, we felt like close relatives meeting each other again after a long time. Before we left the nunnery, she whispered to me, "Although we have not seen all your team members, we also invite your team who offered service to arrange these donations on the donors' behalf, to come visit us soon, hopefully wishing for the country's peace in the near future as well." She also mentioned the same to Daw Ariya, "Sister. I would like to see you next year in person. And, please, pass my greetings and invitation to Sister Daw Vira (referring to Daw Virañāni) and all other donors. I would like to see her and all of them next year, too. Let's hope for the best for the country's peace, in the meantime."

Let me conclude my letter for today and I will write to you about the donations to other nunneries on the following days.

Sādhu. Sādhu. Sādhu for all the merits that the MIA and international donors have done for all the vulnerable nunneries and laity communities relying on the former. Your donations did not only help the nuns but also helped the children and their low-income families as well as the volunteer teachers in the outskirts of Yangon, to relieve their stresses and continue their noble services.

Best regards with *Metta*,  
Zaw Win Htet from Burma.  
[Monastic Support Team,](#)  
[Better Burma.](#)

Link to the photos:

[https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/3v5iji03l4gla1f9x5ki9/AMlpzxGIuJ\\_6kU1eU9c7u18?rlkey=pk9brxvphju0b1w12hvzbcfd3&st=0yg32y56&dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/3v5iji03l4gla1f9x5ki9/AMlpzxGIuJ_6kU1eU9c7u18?rlkey=pk9brxvphju0b1w12hvzbcfd3&st=0yg32y56&dl=0)