

Metta In Action Update (3)

December, 2017

## *Safety and Abundance*

Support for Nuns



Support for nuns has long been a prominent part of our Metta in Action work. In updates from previous years we have written at length about how important the safety net of nunneries is in keeping girls and young women safe, healthy, and loved – as well as in providing young girls from all over the country with both worldly and dhamma education.

If anything, the role of nunneries as places of refuge for women and girls has become even more essential than before. Each year we hear more heartbreaking stories of desperation and despair about people who have found safety in nunneries. Like the one about a girl from the Shan State who ran away to the nunnery after her stepfather and mother sold her brother and sister. Or another about a seven-year-old who was unable to speak for months after arriving at the nunnery: her family had been farmers in a ‘black area’ (a conflict zone); one day her parents went out and never came back. And there are many more. But thanks to the nuns, the stories have happy endings.

In spite of all this, nuns only get a little local support. So your dana is a lifeline that accomplishes so many things: this year your generosity built new toilets, wells, and covered bathing areas; added roofs, ceilings, walls for protection, and additional rooms; repaired badly termite-damaged buildings, upgraded kitchen facilities, prevented flooding in the rainy season – while of course offering basic health care and per-capita general support!

Because of your donations, over 900 nuns, as well as several orphaned infants and boys living in 30 nunneries can live safely and comfortably – and the nuns in charge of each nunnery can sleep *much* more easily, not having to lie awake at night wondering how they will find all the resources they need to keep everything going.

Instead of a long description of the state of each nunnery, this year we will let the photos do the talking; we hope you enjoy the visual update of where your dana has gone!



So many nuns of all ages have benefitted from your dana!



Here in Burma, wood does not last long before being eaten by termites and hollowed out by nesting ants. So old walls need continuous renewal – which they have gotten, thanks to you!



Thanks to your dana, nunneries also have new brick walls and floors keep out the rain, new kitchens, and private screened-in bathing areas.



Aye Mya Yaungkyi Nunnery, Nwe Kwe village (left); and Mya Thita Oo Nunnery, (center and right)

The general support we offer is essential for young and old alike – they are the basic requisites that keep everyone fed, clothed, and healthy. This allows the nuns to focus on other things that are no less important: worldly educations, Dharma training, and the long-term care for elders.



Clockwise from top left: Chanmyawati Nunnery, Maukasivanna Nunnery, Paññayaungkyi Nunnery, Sayanagonyee Nunnery, Susita Nunnery, and Appamada Nunnery.



Everyone has a role in the community, no matter how small – even if it's only folding the endless quantities of laundry that are an inevitable part of living in the Burmese heat.



Chanmyavati Nunnery (left); Appamada Nunnery (right)

As time has passed, we've taken great pleasure in watching young nuns grow. Ma Khemavati, who is now a confident teen, has been in our update photos since she was five years old:



Then and now: Sasanasukhacari Laputta Nunnery, 2008 (left); 2011 (middle); and 2017(right)

Steadily, little by little, the nun's dwellings have grown too: your dana has helped construct buildings that are durable, safe, and hygienic. Traditional houses may be more 'atmospheric,' but they are nightmares to live in! Bricks and mortar safer, drier, and *much* easier to keep clean. They are also much more secure, which (sadly) is now more of a concern than it once was.



Sasanasukhacari Laputta Nunnery, 2008 (left); 2012 (middle); and 2017(right)



While preparing this update and looking back at old photos, I was struck by how dramatic some of the transformations have been – our dana has made a *big* difference!



Sayanagonyee Nunnery, January 2014 (left), December 2015 (center), and December 2017 (Right)



Seinyaungkyi Nunnery, March 2012, (left); December 2015 (center): and December 2017 (right)

As one head nun said to us, “It is a dream come true!” It is an ongoing joy to support these amazing women as they fulfill their aspirations. All kinds of women take up the nun’s life, with all kinds of aspirations. There are women who go forth out of faith in the teachings, and young women who come to nunneries for an education; there are little girls who seek safety from trafficking, and orphans who are rescued from the streets; there are infants to be rocked, and elders who will peacefully live out their days surrounded by love and respect.

To *all* these women, you have given the priceless gifts of safety and abundance!

*With boundless and heartfelt thanks~Sadhu, sadhu, sadhu!*

Virañani

