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Eight Hindu women arrive back Myanmar together with their children. **PHOTO: MNA**

‘This area is our territory’: ARSA extremist terrorists

Hindu women return from Bangladesh, recall horrific massacre

EIGHT Hindu women and eight children who were abducted by ARSA extremist terrorists to an IDP camp in Bangladesh were brought back to Myanmar yesterday and gave their accounts of a bloody massacre by Muslim terrorists that killed at least 45 Hindu men who ended up in mass graves, according to local

authorities.

The eight Hindu women who witnessed the killings of Hindu villagers from Yebawkya Village by extremist terrorists on 25th August were returned to Myanmar with a police escort following the government's demand to bring back them through diplomatic channels

during the visit to Bangladesh on 2 and 3 October of a delegation led by the Union Minister for the State Counsellor's Office.

The eight women – Rica, 25, Onnica, 20, Fawmila, 18, Gaungga 20, Gura Puni, also known as Rushila, 19, Bina Falar, 22, Puja alias Rabia, 18 and Raj Kumari, 15, recounted their experiences

on 25th August. A group of about 500 Muslims terrorists led by a foreigner in black clothing and Noru Lauk from Khamaungseik Village entered their homes in Yebawkya village at about 8 am on 25th August and attacked. They took away their belongings, jewellery and mobile phones.

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BEST BANK IN MYANMAR

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Rice, cash reach IDPs in northern Rakhine

AMYOTHA Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung delivered aid and cash assistance to villagers who fled their homes in northern Rakhine after the 25 August attacks by terrorists.

The delegation led by U Aye Tha Aung have been touring conflict areas since 30 September, providing bags of rice and cash to villagers at the IDP camps of Sittway, Punnagyun and Kyauktaw townships and at the villages in the conflict areas in Buthidaung and Maungtaung townships.

From 30th September to 4th October, more than 3,000 bags of rice and more than Ks7.5 million have been delivered to the IDPs so far, according to local authorities. The Tatmadaw and the Myanmar Police Force have

also provided Ks 2.5 million to the local ethnic villages during this visit.

Yesterday, the Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung, donors and the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement gave words of encouragement and provided 20 sacks of rice to 43 families in IDP camp of Lawka Manzain Pagoda (Ordination hall) in Punnagyun Township.

The delegation continued on to the IDP of Maha Kan Gyi Shin Pagoda in Kyauktaw Township. Fifty-one IDPs families were given words of encouragements and provided with 21 sacks of rice. The party praised the Maha Muni pagoda in Kyauktaw Township, for which cash was donated.



Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung, centre, in white shirt, delivers cash assistance and rice to villagers yesterday after the 25 August attacks by terrorists in northern Rakhine State. **PHOTO: MNA**

The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement also provided Ks23.05 million for 2,305 families who

remained in their villages, even though they were attacked by Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) extremist ter-

rorists. The respective administrators received the provided cash on behalf of the villagers. — Win Min Soe (IPRD) ■

14 Myanmar migrant workers alleging rights abuses indicted in Thailand

Mark Angeles

FOURTEEN Myanmar migrant workers were indicted and arrested on criminal defamation and false information charges brought by the owners of a poultry farm in Don Muang Magistrate's Court in Bangkok yesterday, less than three weeks after Thailand's Supreme Court dismissed the final appeal of the poultry farm that forced them to pay 1.7 million Thai baht (US\$52,000) in past wages to the same 14 workers who alleged brutal and abusive work conditions.

The workers, who pleaded not guilty yesterday, have been embroiled in a landmark case in which the workers alleged forced labour and other rights violations at Thammakaset 2 poultry farm in Central Thailand.

Thammakaset Company Ltd. filed criminal prosecutions against the 14 workers in October 2016, alleging offences of criminal defamation and also giving false information to public officials in relation to the worker's complaint in July 2016 to the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand (NHRCT). This complaint concerned alleged abuse at the farm and the worker's failure to receive adequate remedy. If found guilty of these two offenses, the workers could be imprisoned for up to one-and-a-half years and/or fined up to 21,000 Thai

Baht (US\$628).

In accordance with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGP on BHR), two Nordic poultry importers and a Thai poultry exporter will cover bail costs for the 14 workers up to €15,000 (588,000 Thai Baht). Following the arrest, indictment and pleas of not guilty at yesterday's court hearing, this contribution should ensure the workers are immediately released temporarily from detention on bail pending a full criminal trial, with potential additional conditions on freedom of movement overseas imposed by the Court. The full trial of the workers is expected to commence next month, according to Andy Hall, a migrant worker rights specialist.

On 14th September, Thailand's Supreme Court dismissed Thammakaset's second and final appeal requesting overturning of a 1st August 2016 compensation order by Lopburi Department of Labour Protection and Welfare (DLPW) requiring 1.7 million Thai baht (US\$52,000) in past wages be paid by the farm to the 14 workers concerning their alleged abuse. The workers will receive this compensation in the coming days.

The worker's own litigation filed in September 2016, claiming 44 million baht (US\$1.25m) in damages and compensation

for abuses suffered, remains pending a final ruling of the Supreme Court, expected later this year. Thammakaset 2 farm was previously contracted to supply poultry for export by Betagro

The workers have been embroiled in a landmark case in which they alleged forced labour and other rights violations.

Group, a major food processing company, and for this reason the worker's compensation claim was filed against both Thammakaset Farm, Betagro as well as Lopburi DLPW officials.

The 14 workers contend the 2016 DLPW order doesn't award them adequate compensation for up to 5 years of abusive work conditions at Thammakaset.

The workers alleged working days up to 20 hours and forced overtime including sleeping in

chicken rearing areas overnight. Further, the workers alleged unlawful deduction of salaries, threats of further deductions, unlawful confiscation of identity documents and limited freedom of movement.

Two of the workers were charged with multiple counts of theft from an employer, carrying up to seven years imprisonment if found guilty, following a police complaint filed by Thammakaset in June 2016. The complaint alleged time cards were removed from the employer's possession and given to DLPW officials as evidence of rights violations and long working hours. The case was recommended for prosecution by Lopburi Province police but was dropped following an order not to prosecute by the province's Public Prosecutor's Office. Thammakaset however recently revived the case by filing new private theft prosecutions against the two workers at Lopburi Court, thereby sidestepping public prosecution officials, Mr. Hall said. In November 2016, Thammakaset filed criminal defamation and computer crimes litigation against Mr. Hall, the former Migrant Worker Rights Network international affairs advisor, at Bangkok South Criminal Court concerning his social media campaigning on the case. Hall left Thailand days after the prosecution, citing inability to

work amidst increasing judicial harassment.

"The imminent arrest of the 14 workers in this case has attracted considerable international concern including a statement by the United Nations (UN) Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and a joint open letter to the Thai Prime Minister by 87 businesses, civil society organisations, trade unions and members of the European Parliament," said Andy Hall.

On two separate occasions, five UN Special Rapporteurs on Human Rights and the UN Working Group on Human Rights and Transnational Corporations have officially sent letters of allegation to the Thai Government given the human rights implications of the case", Mr. Hall said yesterday.

The Thammakaset case continues at a time when Thailand's migrant worker management and protection policies as well as human trafficking record are under increased global scrutiny. Thailand is the world's 4th largest poultry exporter supplying chicken, often for use in processed or ready-made meals, mostly to European Union and Japanese markets. Thailand's poultry export industry has come under increasing scrutiny for its poor labour conditions since 2015 research reports published by watchdog groups Finnwatch and Swedwatch. ■

Agro techniques, machinery and pedigree seeds for Maungtaw



Farmers planting seeds on the farming land in Maungtaw, Rakhine State.
PHOTO: A ONE SOE

IN an effort to improve, modernise and increase the agricultural presence in the Rakhine State, State and Union governments will provide training, techniques, machinery and high-quality seeds, it was announced yesterday.

“Concerning the agricultural sector in all of Rakhine State, there are a total of 1.2 million acres of farming land. Now that the harvest season for monsoon paddy is coming soon, arrangements are being made for farmers in Maungtaw to acquire their needs — agro-techniques, pedigree seeds and machines for harvesting and winnowing,” said U Kyaw Lwin, the minister for agriculture, livestock, forestry and mining for Rakhine State.

“In the Maungtaw region,

there are over 72,000 acres of paddy plantation. So as to reap these, harvesting and winnowing machines had been carried from Yangon to Maungtaw. In reaping them, farmers will reap and winnow manually, with the government to provide farmers with machinery, seeds and techniques as much as they can.

For regional development, peace and stability is urgently needed. The Union Government, Tatmadaw, Hluttaw and State Cabinet are implementing national tranquility as the first priority, in combination with authorities concerned from management sectors. With the development of peace and stability, rule of law and creation of job opportunities will be brought about. Then, many people will come here to settle

down. And the fertile land will result in many benefits.” It has been learnt that the State Cabinet is making arrangements to provide local people in the Maungtaw with agricultural needs and for breeding freshwater and saltwater fish and prawns.

To operate the Maungtaw border trade zone, a budget allotment amounting to Ks1.5 billion has been passed. Use of the budget allotment was under suspension due to the terrorist attacks. This year, at the time when up-grading of the border trade zone was arranged, the events of the terrorist attacks took place. As soon as regional tranquility can be established, the suspended implementation scheme will be resumed. —Naing Lin Kyi ■

Myanmar media meets to discuss northern Rakhine fake news

Union Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint held talks with local journalists and foreign correspondents in Yangon yesterday over the issue of fake news disseminated in international communities on the issues in northern Rakhine State.

The Union minister called the Rakhine situation a “side issue” which emerged while the country was heading positively toward a federal democratic nation.

“When the conflicts occurred in Rakhine State, Muslims emigrated into Bangladesh and they returned when the situation returned to normalcy, and as a result, the population of ethnic Rakhine people has decreased and the population of Muslims has increased there”, he said.

By highlighting displaced people at IDP camps in Rakhine, international communities are putting pressure on Myanmar and accusing the country of oppressing minorities, he added.

With the 9 October attacks by terrorists on police outposts in 2016, the previous conflicts between the two communities in Rakhine State has turned

into terrorist attacks, which are meant to attract the world to see their movement, said Dr Pe Myint.

“The Rakhine issue can be considered an issue made with political aim by a group of people who want to occupy the area in northern Rakhine,” he said, highlighting the role of the media, which is being used by organisations as a weapon in the communication age.

“Some think that this is a media war, but I don’t think so. This is a political war in which international organisations and communities are intentionally involved with aims and objectives,” said Dr Pe Myint. “Their influence also reaches an international organisation like the United Nations putting pressure on Myanmar,” he added, “Because they who self-identified themselves as Rohingyas have conducted movements for decades in the international arena with the assistance of some organisations with their same faith.”

One year after the attacks of 9 October, 2016, the latest coordinated attacks on more than 30 police outposts by terrorists



Union Minister Dr Pe Myint discusses with local journalists and foreign correspondents in Yangon. **PHOTO: MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY**

happened with a huge intention. The latest attacks were not done to demand grievances, but to declaring themselves as terrorists, he said. “When the government did respond to the issue, the attack of the extremist terrorists on 30 police outposts was fading out while the cries of “genocide” and “ethnic cleansing” went up loudly in the world,” said Dr Pe Myint. “According to the previous situation and the latest situation in northern Rakhine, a group of people are attempting to occupy the area”, he said.

“They got involved in the aid provision programmes of international societies whose race and religion are the same with them. While working together with

them, they organised them and disclosed their affairs to them. In such a way, many people from the outside world accepted their account as true.” “They managed to spread their accounts across the world beforehand. As known by all, they managed to arouse furore among the public by inventing fabricated news whenever an affair happened. But powerful international leaders also applied the news knowing that they were false.”

“Just by seeing this, the spread of false news has great effect. But we firmly believe that people of politically influencing-show their contempt on us not due to the effect of those fake news. They know most of the

news are false, however, they themselves like things to happen in this way. That’s why they make themselves known as if they accept rampant news that are mostly false. What I mean is that we are in the midst of media world and we are attack by powerful media”.

“Their news influences a wide range. But our media can’t penetrate in the media world. From the political point of view, Rakhine ethnics are the minority in northern Rakhine State. Similarly, our country is a less strengthened nation, as known by all. Our nation is weak in every way. Likewise, we are still weak in making our affairs known to the world as well.” **SEE PAGE-7**

‘This area is our territory’: ARSA extremist terrorists

FROM PAGE-1

Members of the terrorist mob repeated, “This is not your village. It is our territory. We are the sole owners of this land. You all are same with the Myanmar Armed Forces and police members. We will murder Buddhists and all of you who worship the statues made of bricks and stones.

All Hindu villagers were then divided into two groups, according to gender. Their hands were tied and they were taken to Bawtala Village.

When they neared Bawtala Village, the women said they saw two pits, with a third pit being dug. The terrorists then killed all the Hindu men, slashing their throats, cutting them into pieces and throwing them into the mass graves.

The graves were discovered on 24 and 25 September after security forces received information about slaughtered Hindus who were buried in shallow graves.

The series of attacks on 25 August prompted some 30,000 Myanmar citizens in northern Rakhine to flee south to Mrauk U, Sittway, Kyauktaw, and Minbya, while hundreds of thousands of Muslims fled to Bangladesh border.

The surviving Hindu women said the lives of eight girls and women were saved because of their beauty, according to the eyewitnesses.

“Those girls are beautiful. We must force them into Islam”, Norulauk, the leader of the terrorists, allegedly said, according to the eyewitnesses. The females who were spared ranged in age from 15 to 25, the Hindu women said.

In the presence of the eight remaining Hindu girls who were spared, ARSA terrorists brutally killed the Hindu people from Yebaukkyia Village. One group was killed between 12 noon to 6 pm and buried in the pits. A second group of eight Hindu females and their children were taken to the cow ranch near Bawtalar Village and killed. A three-year-old boy named Phawlar, son of Ma Yi Kha, who was included in the group, saw his father’s throat slit with knife before he was killed.

The boy allegedly told others, “Pa Pa halar (my father was beheaded)”. Hindu girls and children were guarded by five Bengalis, while other Bengalis left to attack and torch police camps. The surviving Hindu women remembered that the remaining five Muslims were Rawphi and Phelrana from Bawtalar Village, Rulia, Mamud, Arlaung and Zubai from Yebaukkyia Village.

At about 12 pm, a number of Muslim terrorists returned and took eight Hindu women and young children to the house of Raw Phi in Bawtalar Village. Until 26 August, five people

guarded the house. Wielding their swords, the Muslim watchmen threatened them, saying: “This is our country. It is not of you ethnics. We will occupy this country.”

Even though the Hindu religion forbids them from eating meat, the Hindus were forced to eat meals of rice and beef. During their arrests, there were many Muslim Bengalis at the house and they were taught the lifestyle and behaviours of Muslim women. At

“Those girls are beautiful. We must force them into Islam”, said Norulauk, the leader of the terrorists.

about 3pm on 27 August, five watchmen led by Raw Phi took away the eight Hindu women and children. They arrived at the border fence at about 5pm and cut the barbed wire. As some Border Guard of Bangladesh (BGB) troops arrived there at that time, they went to a hill and spent the night. At about 6am on 28 August, they crossed the border into Bang-

ladesh and were taken by car to Kutuparlaung refugee camp. They reportedly arrived there at 11 am.

The Hindus were kept together with Muslims at the Kutuparlaung refugee camp and forced to wear burqas, the traditional dress of Muslim women. At about 1pm, foreign media (speaking in English) conducted interviews. The Hindus were told to tell the media that men and their families were killed by the army and ethnics. They had to flee fearing that they would be killed by the army troops. They were threatened that their children’s throats would be slashed unless they said as they were told.

The surviving women said a Hindu girl, 15-year-old Ma Raj Kumari, was being forced to marry a Muslim man, Barbu, who working at the camp. This was reported to Hindu leader Shaw Phaw Nam Shaw Mar Raw Ni living in Bangladesh, who learned that Hindus were being converted to Islam. The religious leader contacted a member of the BGB and immediately went to the camp. There, the eight Hindu women and children were found. The Muslim terrorists had fled.

The Hindu women and children were taken from Kutuparlaung Camp to a BGP Camp where they spent the night. A Hindu monk came and took them from the BGP Camp and sheltered them at his house

the following day. On 30 August, officials of the Bangladeshi government took them back to Kutuparlaung Camp, saying that they would provide relief supplies for them. The eight Hindu women and children were accommodated at a chicken farm inside the refugee camp, and a Bangladeshi Hindu man was assigned to guard them.

On 19 September, one of eight Hindu women was able to contact her brother-in-law in Maungtaw by phone and told him the location of the scene where Hindu followers, including her husband, were killed. On 26 September, she was able to contact Hindu religious leader U Ni Mal in Sittway, who suggested returning them to Myanmar with the assistance of Myanmar security forces.

The women consulted and left the camp on the pretext of visiting a Hindu religious festival. They arrived back in Myanmar safe and sound with the assistance of Myanmar security forces.

With the eight Hindu women and the children safely returned to Myanmar, authorities are providing them with necessary assistance, officials said. Because of their tragic accounts of the inhumane acts and brutal slaughtering by extremist Muslim terrorists, it is hoped that the motives and intentions of the attackers is exposed, authorities said.—GNLM ■

Myanmar media meets to discuss northern Rakhine fake news

FROM PAGE-3

“We have no intention of making lies with false news to the world. And, we will never encourage such a deed. But we assume that it is necessary to make true situations of the country known to international communities, being a problem that is concerned with global countries. We are making arrangements by considering ourselves so that news and information about us can spread.”

“On the other side, well-known friends from our friendly media circles gave advice to us that we should get advice and ideas from local media circles, for this is the national affairs of the country — as to what should be done and what they can give.

That is why we invite persons from the media circle to discuss the matter.”

“According to the first programme, your assumptions will be freely talked about. After that, results which will come out will be recorded after concluding exactly, it is hoped. Regarding false news, reasonable responses will be made by removing false news explaining how and why these are not true. We want to implement these. We will accept ideas and advice. It is necessary for us to make the UN, powerful countries and the ones fighting against us to ascertain the true situations of the problem.”

“On the other hand, we have countries of great power, India, China and Russia, which support and encourage us concerning

the Myanmar affairs. We need to make them trust us and our situations more than ever by informing them of our true situations. And we are required to inform true news and information to Bangladesh, our neighbour and the one which is directly related with this affair.”

“We assume that ASEAN countries need to be informed of true situations. Here, we must consider how they will be informed. The more important thing is that our citizens themselves need to be well convinced of the true situations, to know what kind of losses can affect the country, to rightly assess which are true or false, to decide wisely with broad-minded judgement and to perform the task of true facts and intellect.”

After the Union minister’s opening speech, those from news media organisations, locally-based news personnel and invited guests shared their personal views.

Present at the meeting were U Thiha Saw and U Kyaw Swa Min of Myanmar Press Council, U Ye Min Oo and Daw Ei Ei Tin of Myanmar Journalist Association, U Wunna and U Zaw Thet Htwe of Myanmar Journalists Union, U Myint Kyaw of Myanmar Journalists Network, Aupie Kyal and U Moe Htet Moe of Cartoonists Association, U Ko Ko and U Thihe Tun of Shwe Than Lwin Media Group, U Moe Kaung and U Khin Maung Htay of Forever Media Group, U Wai Phyoo of Eleven Media Group, U Zeya Thu and U Kyaw Min

Swe of the Voice Daily, U Nanda of 7 Day Media, U Sunny Swe of Frontier, U Thein Tun of Myanmar Times, U Soe Myint of Mizzima, U Toe Zaw Latt of DVB, U Kyaw Swa Moe of Irrawaddy, Scholars U Maw Lin and U Aye Maung Kyaw, U Myat Khaing of Snap Shot Journal, U Aung Soe Thu of the First Weekly, U Myo Yan Naung Thein, NLD central research bureau, U Min Ko Naing and U Mya Aye of 88 Generation Peace and Open Society, U Nay Phone Latt, Ko Wa, U Aung Myo Lwin and invited guests.

At the meeting, spreading true news and information at home and abroad and responding to false news spreading across the world were openly discussed. —Myanmar News Agency ■

We Swear that We Always Say Truth

Khin Maung Oo

CONCERNING the issue in Rakhine State, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called on Myanmar authorities to take three immediate steps. One of them is to end the security measures taken by security forces in northern Rakhine State. Here, it must be questioned as to whether UN Secretary-General Guterres will assure that further attacks of the ARSA extremist terrorists group will never take place in the region, for claiming that military operations be stopped. Evidently enough, he cannot do so. The Secretary-General Guterres is obviously behaving as if it need not be included a hint of the atrocious deeds of the ARSA extremist terrorist in his speeches. It must

be questioned to UN Secretary-General Guterres to show any kind of governments allowing terrorist attacks to its race or religion, in the world if ever. Every terrorist group always shouts aloud that they stand for their race and religion, but events happening around the world prove that they always perform for their personal benefits, on the wrong pretext of these claims.

Another urge made by Guterres is to allow unfettered access for humanitarian support. With regard to this, a question must be made to Guterres as to whether enthusiastic help of Myanmar Government is not needed for humanitarian aids to reach people really in need. And, it must also be questioned whether Guterres acknowledges that Myanmar is a sovereign state. It is only a matter of time before

they will come to be well convinced that it will be a foolish attempt to make effort to solve the problem of Rakhine State with the Myanmar Government excluded.

Thirdly, Guterres called for Myanmar authorities to ensure the safe, voluntary, dignified and sustainable return of the refugees to their areas of origin. State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi had definitely disclosed that refugees would be accepted after careful scrutiny in accord with the principles included in the 1993 Myanmar-Bangladesh Agreement.

Any sovereign nations do not accept any policy that anyone under the name of refugee will be accepted as citizen without any scrutiny. The statement that there was no one who illegally immigrated crossing the border line into Myanmar from Bang-

ladesh would be a nonsense in the history. Any countries and any governments will not exercise the kind of policy which will grant right of citizenship to every individual who illegally emigrates in this world. The government of the United States itself is making arrangements to expel illegal immigrants from Mexico from America. We have no alternative but to ask the global countries why they are doing opposite ways, in spite of the fact that State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is calling for all nations to co-operate with the Myanmar government.

In case someone claims that they know about Rakhine State problem more than Myanmar citizens, we will assert that the above-said person will be the one who says words of falsity shamelessly. ■

The Significant and Noble Day of Abhidhamma (The Full Moon Day of Thadingyut, Mahapavarana Day)

Ba Sein (Religious Affairs)

THE Significant and Noble Day of Abhidhamma (the Full Moon Day of Thadingyut, Mahapavarana Day) falls on 5th October, 2017.

In the fourth week, after attaining the enlightenment, the Omniscient Buddha began to contemplate and review the Dhamma (the truth). He had realized near the Bodhi tree. On His seventh Vassa (Seven Years) of enlightenment, the Omniscient Buddha, out of compassion for the Devas and Brahmas, went to the Tavatimsa Devaloka (Celestial abode) where he preached the Abhidhamma Pitaka (Basket of Ultimate things) for a full three months to His deceased mother who was reborn as Santusita Deva, and also to the other Devas and Brahmas assembled there, hoping to make them realize the four ultimate things for which a Knowledge of Abhidhamma is absolutely necessary because it deals with the highest and ultimate sense of things springing into being as facts as distinct from mere names.

After preaching Abhidhamma (Ultimate Truth) to His deceased mother, Santusita Deva and other Devas and Brahmas for a full three months, the Omniscient Buddha returned to the human abode on the Full Moon Day of Thadingyut. According to the Pali Text, three decorated stairways of silver, gold and ruby beginning from the top of the great Mount Meru to the gate of Sankassa town on earth were created as a token of paying deep homage to the Omniscient Buddha who returned to the human abode. The Omniscient Buddha took the middle stairway accompanied by Devas and Brahmas who took right stairway and left stairway. All Devas and

Brahmas from the Tavatimsa Devaloka (Celestial abode) paid deep homage to the Omniscient Buddha for a full three months from 1st Waning of Waso to Full Moon of Thadingyut. According to the Vinaya rules of the Omniscient Buddha, the period of a full three months from 1st Waning of Waso to Full Moon of Thadingyut (round about from mid-July to mid-October) is retreat-period of Buddhists. During retreat-period, all Buddhist monks must not have to go away from their residence (monasteries, temples) not more than seven days. Especially, they have to fulfill their religious duties (Ganthadhura and Vipassanadhura) during the retreat-period more than before. All Buddhist monks have followed and practiced the said Vinaya rules since over 2560 years ago.

When the Omniscient Buddha descended from Tavatimsa (Celestial abode), the Devas and Brahmas accompanied Him putting up white sacred umbrellas and fanning Him. At that time, because of unlimited miraculous powers, supernatural powers and glory of the Buddha, the whole earthlings could see the magnificent celestial abode, and also the Devas and Brahmas could see hundreds of thousands of millions of people greeting and paying deep homage to the Omniscient Buddha who descended at the gate of Sankassa Town of the human abode on the Full Moon Day of Thadingyut (Mahapavarana Day).

The Full Moon Day of Thadingyut (Mahapavarana Day) has been marked by Buddhists as the significant and noble day of Abhidhamma since then (over 2559 years ago). On the auspicious occasion of the Abhidhamma (Mahapavarana Day), in remembrance of the Omniscient Buddha, members of the Sangha recite Abhidham-

ma discourses, and multifarious Buddhist devotees offer lights, water, flowers, incense, fragrant scents, fruits and other offertories. And also, Dhamma talks about Abhidhamma (Mahapavarana) Day are held. On this noble day, most Buddhists keep nine-precepts for their meritorious deeds dedicating to the attainment of noble stage of Nibbana (supreme bliss).

The Pali term Abhidhamma is composed of Abhi which means subtle or ultimate, and Dhamma which means truth or doctrine. The Abhidhamma, therefore, means subtle or ultimate truth or doctrine. The Abhidhamma Pitaka consists of the four ultimate things, Mind (Citta), Psychicfactor (Cetasikas), Matter (Rupa) and Nibbana. It is the most important and most interesting to a deep thinker. It is subdivided into seven books.

When the Omniscient Buddha had preached Abhidhamma for a full three months to His deceased mother who was reborn as Santusita Deva and to other Devas and Brahmas at the celestial abode, He said to the king of the celestials that He would return to the human abode. Therefore, the king of the celestial created and arranged three stairways of silver, gold and ruby beginning from the top of the great Mount Meru to the gate of Sankassa Town of the human abode.

Sending forth the six coloured rays emanated from His body, the Omniscient Buddha descended by the middle stairway of ruby to the gate of Sankassa Town of the human abode (on earth). The Devas (Celestial beings) accompanied the Buddha from the right side stairway of gold playing musical instruments and fanning the Omniscient Buddha. The Brahmas (higher celestial beings) accompanied the

Omniscient Buddha from the left side stairway of silver putting up white umbrellas.

At the time, when the Omniscient Buddha returned from the celestial abode to the human abode, the highest Brahma realm, Ekamanta, the lowest Aviji (Apaya planes of miserable existences), the four cardinal points, the ten directions and thousands of worlds were clearly visible without any blockage and barrier because of unlimited miraculous powers, supernatural powers and glory of the Omniscient Buddha.

People could see the whole celestial abode, Devas and Brahmas, and all celestial beings in turn viewed more than hundreds of thousands of millions of people who were welcoming and paying deep homage to the Omniscient Buddha. There was no one that did not wish and pray to become a Buddha, the most noble wish after witnessing the most surpassing splendour.

Up to this day, we can visualize the most surpassing splendour and significant event of the Omniscient Buddha descending to the earth from the great Mount Meru accompanied by Devas and Brahmas to the gate of Sankassa, Town of the human abode.

On the full Moon Day of Thadingyut, we all Buddhists generously offer lights, water, flowers, scents, fruits, food and other various kinds of offertories to pagodas and monasteries and also pay respect to teachers, parents and elders.

These meritorious deeds dedicate to the attainment of the noble stage of Nibbana through the most surpassing splendour and significant event of the Omniscient Buddha descending to the human abode from the celestial abode on the Full Moon Day of Thadingyut. ■