

A Description of a Typical Rural *Shinpyu-nartha-ahlu* in Myanmar Today

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The ceremonies of ordination have been elaborated into a complex religious ceremony, now so much central to the religious and social life of Buddhists in Myanmar. These ceremonies bear different names depending on the type of ordination as well as some social aspect involved. In the case of the candidates of *sāmanera*-hood alone, it is called *shinpyu-ahlu*, "the donation of *pabbajja* ordination"; for candidates of *sāmanera*-hood and *bhikkhu*-hood, it is *shinpyu-yahankham-ahlp*, meaning, "donation of *pabbajja* and *upasampada* ordination". If daughters are included for ear-boring, the name changes a little adding it with the prefix "*nartha*", "the auspiciousness of ear-boring" as *shinpyu-nartha-ahlu* or "the donation for *pabbajja* ordination and ear-boring". All kinds of ceremonies are usually abbreviated to *Ahlp* (တၤလၢ) meaning, "the great donation", strongly indicating that the Burmese Buddhists see the occasion as the practice of generosity (*dana*) as much as renunciation (*nekkhamma*).

As it is believed by Myanmar Buddhists that *shinpyu* or *shinpyu-nartha-ahlu* is the most important and an inevitable religious duty to be fulfilled, they usually hold these ceremonies as grand as they can afford. On the one hand, adults tend to feel inferior and not attained of the status worth of respect until they have sponsored such a ceremony and on the other, a son is not considered to be a good Buddhist or worthy son until he has fulfilled the *pabbajja*. Therefore, all levels of society are compelled to fulfill to the best of their ability the *Ahlu*. From the time of the birth of a son, parents start thinking of that ceremony and to save for many years to meet the lavish expense of that special occasion and to be ready for *Ahlu* by the time their son comes of age. Their new born son inspires parents' life with great expectation of forthcoming donation ceremony. When the son reaches the age of five or six, the *Ahlu* is held to the limit of what parents and family can afford for that ceremony. Wealthy families will frequently sponsor the

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pabbajja not only for their own son but also help other boys whose parents cannot afford the expense of that ceremony. If a family does not have a son, the **pabbajja** ceremony of a relative's son may be sponsored to cultivate this wholesome deed. There is also a tradition that when one family holds an **Ahlp** for their own sons and daughters, their relatives' sons and daughters are also invited to be the postulants, "**shinlaungs**"² (၈၅၆၅မိ၆). Therefore, the number of postulants may be one or many at any **Ahlp**.

The **Ahlu** has thus becomes socially compulsory and the most important of all religious ceremonies for Myanmar Buddhists. This is because the laity understands that the merit accrued by the celebration of **Ahlp** is the most auspicious among the different kinds of meritorious deeds acquired through charity, "**dana**". This act is also valued as the highest spiritual and ethical deed for posterity, for which both the parents and child accrue immense merit in this life and the hereafter. The parents are blessed by this supreme meritorious act which is the noblest and holiest they can ever fulfill towards their sons³. They are cultivating the real merit of supporting the **Sasana**, "**sasananuggaha**", by offering their own son to the **Sasana**, by doing which the parents consequently become the close relatives of **Sasana**. This type of offering is the noblest **dana** in Buddhism. Moggaliputtissa Thera's comment to the King Asoka regarding the real benefactor of the **Sasana** was, "Even a lavish giver of gifts like [you] is not a kinsman of the religion, [a] giver of wealth is he called, O ruler of men. But he who lets son or daughter enter the religious Order is a kinsman of the religion and [together with this] a giver of gifts"⁴. Hence it is the great expectation of every parent in their life to give the **Ahlp** for their son so that he may gain what is difficult to obtain, that is, **samanera**-hood, "**pabbajjitabhava**". On the other hand, every son should receive the **pabbajja** in order that his parents may accrue the merit of religious sponsorship, "**sasanadayaka**". Moreover, each ceremony with its decoration, size, and invited guests, indicates the social status of the family who organizes the event.

Occasionally there are communal **shinpyu-ahlus** in some part of Myanmar such as a **pabbajja** ceremony of one hundred postulants, of one thousand postulants in mass. Such grand ceremonies are publicly sponsored and organized by a well-known abbot, or a religious leader or a powerful official. Thus Myanmar society is consolidated and unified by the spirit of the **pabbajja** ceremony. It also happens that a rich individual or group gives the financial support to celebrate this kind of ceremony, or some well-known and glorious **sayadaws** also can do so.

² Novice-to-be, novice-designate, boy-aspirant or applicant is called in Myanmar, ၈၅၆၅မိ၆.

³ *The Initiation of Novice-hood and the Ordination of Monk-hood*, p.18.

⁴ *Mahavamsa*, p.43.

The **Ahlu** is celebrated when a boy candidate comes of age in his early adolescence in general, but the ceremony can be performed at any age. The **Ahlu** may be held for a candidate even at the delicate age of five but only if he can chant the Three Refuges **Pali** phrases quite articulately. There is no upper age limit for **pabbajja**, so a boy can be given the **pabbajja** at the very late age of 15 years or more for which he will be known as an old novice, "**koyingyi**". Late entrance into **samanera**-hood is usually because of poverty or some other inevitable matters.

A boy can be initiated as a **samanera** not just once in a life. A boy may remain in **samanera**-hood for any length of time, be it for a day or lifetime, leaving **samanera**-hood at any time one wishes. Also the **pabbajja** can be repeated more than once for a boy, if desired.

The simple affair of ordination becomes a communal affair in Myanmar with a splendid feast to celebrate the traditional **Ahlp**. To illustrate the more traditional cultural elements of ordination, which are still to be found in rural areas of Myanmar, a description of a typical rural **shinpyu-nartha-ahlu** unspoiled and in keeping with ancient traditions will be described. Such ordinations are usually held in the cold season in rural areas and during the summer schooling holidays in urban areas. However, the **Ahlu** can be celebrated at any time of the year. As to the rural **Ahlu**, around five or six months before the **Ahlu**, an auspicious date and time for the ceremony carefully calculated by the **bhikkhus** or lay astrologers needs to be selected. In this author's experience, local abbots usually have a good knowledge of the auspicious days and dates of a year, and they can suggest a suitable time and date. As soon as the date is fixed, a number and list of **bhikkhus** the donor wishes to invite must be given to the abbot who must approve and in turn distribute their invitation to each nominated **bhikkhu** to the **Ahlp**.

With dates set, a whole train of systematic preparations for the **Ahlp** set in motion. Firstly, a troupe of traditional Myanmar orchestra (ဂန္ထဝင်) is engaged. Also essential is a consecrator or anointer, a "**bhisek-sayar**" (ပုဂံပုဂံ) who performs an anointing ceremony of the postulants by formally pouring lustral water whilst reciting narrative songs and poems, which symbolizes the **abhiseka**, "the consecration or anointing ceremony" at the coronation⁵ of a new king. Even in the cities like Mandalay and Monywa, the **pabbajja** ceremony is not complete without a **bhisek-sayar**. Then a **mandap**, a "grand marquee" and its ornate prefab marquees, "**ma%āpsin**"⁶ are also hired. These three things, orchestra, **bhisek-sayar**

⁵ *Muttābhissita* in *Pā'li*, which means "consecrating by pouring water from one's forehead".

⁶ In Myanmar, it is called "ဂံယံ" which derives from the *Pā'li* "*ma%āpa*", meaning, "a temporary shed or hall erected on special or festive occasions" (*PTSD*, p.516). Its

and grand marquee, are the essential requisites of any **Ahlu**. With these secured, the other items of preparation can be dealt with. Royal costumes are required by the public presentation of the postulants and usually rented before hand. Then a studio set, electric generator, and other fixtures and fitting are required. To serve food for the forthcoming guests, lots of foodstuffs such as rice, cooking-oil, onions, salt, pepper, dried fish, dried shrimp and tea have to be purchased especially for the main feast of the **Ahlu**. Capable cooks in the village are recruited in advance to cater for the **Ahlu**. Invitations composed in formal rhymed prose are printed and circulated well in advance to all of the donor's friends and relations.

When the ceremony is drawing near, the postulants are sent to a monastery to receive key instructions from the abbot and to memorize some important **Pali**. The robes and other paraphernalia of **samaneras** are also made ready.

About three days before the date of the **Ahlp**, The main and secondary marquees are erected in the donor's compound. The secondary marquee (အုတ်ခန်း), a "dining house" or "enclosure", is intended as a temporary dining hall. Tables are shared by each home in the village and other items collectively owned by the village (အိမ်ထောင်စု) such as plates, cups, spoons etc. are brought from the storage to the dining hall.

In a village, all inhabitants energetically render their service to the **Ahlp** as it draws near. Everybody, young or old, male or female in the community extends helping hands and ardently contributes their labour to the donors so that the necessary preparations are in no way incomplete. Normally, the **Ahlp** may be performed by an individual family, but in reality, it develops into a communal celebration. The entire society becomes active and alive, each one playing an important role. An **Ahlu** provides the occasion for villagers from widely scattered areas and different social backgrounds to come together in common service. The ladies artistically make special gifts to be presented to all guests as a token of the donor's gratitude for their moral support and participation. Huge long cheroots and cigars, small hand fans and packets of pickled tea leaves are to be made as presents. Even young children are employed with small errands. All the duties are voluntarily contributed generously by rural society. The donor supplies the basic materials and the rest is done by the volunteer villagers. Everybody is eager and happy to contribute their spiritual and physical services towards the **Ahlu**. The volunteers are fed by the donors for several days prior to the **Ahlu** days.

ornamentation symbolizes a palace. These ornamentations are called "*ma%ḍapsin*" (မာ%ḍါပိန်).

The completed marquee resembling a palace of the ancient kings of Myanmar is adorned with its cultural furniture of paintings from the *Jataka* stories, colourful decorations, sheets curved in shape and many other ornaments that look beautiful to behold a symbolic palace of Siddhattha, the Buddha-to-be. Loudspeakers in and about the marquee blare out songs, only to be interrupted by announcements of news and calls to action. In the evening prior to the *Ahlu*, an image of the Buddha is brought ceremoniously from the village monastery for the duration of the *Ahlu*, and placed in a temporary shrine made in the marquee. As a result, people take off their footwear before entering the marquee and pay respect to the shrine. Next, a tray of offerings including three hands of bananas, a coconut and a few other things are put on the roof of the marquee and dedicated to Shin Upagotta, an *arahant* believed to have the powers to ward off natural as well as supernatural calamities such as storms and untimely rains. Lengthy protection is needed in general, a *shinpyu-ahlu* lasts two days, the entry day followed by the *pabbajja* day.

On the entry day, the orchestral troupe arrives and starts entertaining the guests around 8:00 a.m. playing a fare of traditional music. The relatives and friends bustle about with the duties they have accepted for the *Ahlu*, while the guests and dignitaries keep arriving and acknowledge the *Ahlu* with various presents, such as money and other things. Most of the guests from all neighbouring villages and towns, who are invited, come on the entry day to encourage the donors by providing some proper presents. They do not need to meet the donors personally but leave the presents and names with the board of receivers (trustees) usually placed at the entrance of the main marquee. They are given gifts in return such as cheroots and cigars, small hand fans and packages of pickled tea (၁၆၀) and on entering the marquee, they can then enjoy the entertainment of the orchestra.

In the meantime, the dining hall marquee goes in to full swing serving lunch⁷ of local favourites including one main dish and two or three side dishes all to the guest-hearts' content. The dining marquee serves a free flow of the newcomers all day long and is usually crowded with people relishing their meals sitting on mats around each table to cater to the huge audience. Hundreds of people are served at a time, with one shift following another till the late evening. One and all, invited as well as uninvited ones come to enjoy the great feasts. In the village of donor and its neighbouring villages, a village crier (၁၆၁) publicly announces to come and enjoy the *Ahlu* around two or three days before entry day of *Ahlu*, it is a Myanmar saying "*Meegodate*" (၁၆၂), meaning, "put out the smoke" which

⁷ Although it is said "lunch", it is almost the whole day feast from around 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

implies by coming and eating at the feast on that day, they do not need to light cooking fires at their home. Therefore, entire families resident in those villages come to enjoy that great feast. It becomes thus the biggest feast day of an *Ahlp* and it resembles the great feasts narrated in the stories of the Buddha, such as in the instances of the donation of Vessantaræ, Sumedha, Kosala, and Velæma, etc. who contributed a great amount of their *mahædæna*, the great donations to those at the celebration irrespective of whether they were invited or not, be they low or high casts.

Postulants will be beautified all morning. They are adorned in special princely dress, with a long white blouse, a long silk lower dress, crested headdress (၂၀၂၅), a sash (၂၀၂၆), and a double edged sword (၂၀၂၇) which are all the regalia of a king. They now become the princes ready to renounce the world. They are shown before the public with pomp and splendour, the focus of public attention. Dressed in royal costume of silk, gold and precious stones, they glitter in the sunshine. In the days of the kings, this was the only opportunity for the average commoner to wear such royal apparel, for its appearance was never allowed by the king, with transgression severely punished. However, the postulants, about to enter the *Saµgha*, were regarded as extraordinary persons, much nobler than royalty; so the king happily conferred this privilege on *sæma¼era*-designates. This extension of privilege is still celebrated in the dressing style of the traditional *Ahlp*.

The female postulants are dressed in grand ornamented clothes called "*mallika*", the abbreviation of "*mahælatæpasædhana*", "one piece of lady's dress bedecked with matched jewelry or other ornaments" made with the different kinds of precious jewels. It is reported that only three ladies, Visakha, the great female supporter of the Buddha, Mallikæ, the chief consort of King Pasenadi of Kosala and Sumanadevæ, deserved to wear this type of dress in this Buddha's dispensation. Taking these women as precedence, teenage applicant girls are usually embellished in this beautifully ornamented dress of the occasion of the *Ahlp*. Girls have the right to jointly enjoy this ceremony for the special purpose of ear-boring, nothing more is necessary for them to do after ceremony but some girls seek admission into Buddhist nun-hood for a few days or for life. However, this rarely happens in Myanmar today.

Around noon time, it is the turn of the *bhisek* (၂၀၂၈) to entertain. Standing in front of the orchestra, facing the audience dressed in *brahminical* cloths of knee-length-white-coat, long-silk-sarong, and a Myanmar turban, the *bhisek-sayar* gathers all postulants around him. Composed in manner, he starts with an introductory speech to audience with backing music by the orchestra. A *bhisek-sayar* needs to be a good speaker with speech to arrest the interest of audience. Before the actual

consecration of *bhisek*, he congratulates the donors and postulants, by name, in a pleasant voice, sometimes interjecting his recital with narratives, stories and songs suited to the *Ahlp*. Then he feeds a lump of rice to each postulant and puts a band of cotton thread around the necks of the postulants praying for longevity, prosperity and advancement of wisdom. This wearing the ritual amulet made of a band of cotton thread is called "*letphwekhyeemhyinsut*". Then *ahisek-sayar* uses suitable flowers to sprinkle ceremonial water from conch shell with on the postulants saying prayers to grace them. This is called "*bhisek mhyaug*", "actual consecration". It symbolizes the coronation or consecration of ancient Myanmar kings when water was poured on prince's forehead to consecrate him as a king along with conferment of the other necessary insignias of a king. Sometimes, to stir the interest of public, a *bhisek-sayar* conducts a debate with members of orchestra on some controversial points in traditional, cultural or on religion. He concludes by having the male postulants cradled a silver cup (အိဗ် မး) or an alms-bowl in their hands and go around the audience to receive any gifts from the onlookers who usually present them with cash, handkerchiefs, towels, soap etc. It is really striking to see them like young princes were going around. Soon after the conclusion of the *bhisek*, the orchestral troupe takes a sojourn till the night.

At night starting from around 7:00 p.m. the orchestral troupe resumes entertaining the audience with nonstop song and music. They regale the guests and villagers, from near and far with music and dancing until far into the night. If there is no dancing, two or three members of the orchestra entertain the audience as stand-up clowns. They relate humorous stories they have experienced or heard, tell jokes, sometimes even at a slight expense of the donor, especially if they have not been fed or treated well. It is customary for the relations and friends of the donor to present them with cash awards. If the orchestra is popular among the people, the marquee will be overcrowded that night, and even if not so popular, the audience usually fills the marquee, as the villagers seeing the live-spectacles such as this occasion. The orchestra plays to the crowd as best they can, catering to younger people with modern music and songs in early night and more classical music and tunes later in the night for the elders.

With the breaking of the next day, comes the actual *pabbajjæ* day. The orchestra (without the *bhisek*) strikes up soon after dawn, and keeps on playing intermittently until the *shinlaungyþ*, the "taking the postulants". It is the afternoon procession that takes postulants round the village and to the monastery. On this day, all the guests and villagers are fed breakfast in the dining hall enclosure. Nearly the whole morning is taken up dining. Then, guests make cash contributions towards the *Ahlp*. The donor responds to their act of *cetana*, "good-will" by giving them cheroots, small fans,

pickled tea packages, etc. as return-gifts. Needless to say, the invited *bhikkhus* are sumptuously feasted that morning at the village monastery.

The most heartfelt part of an *Ahlp* is the afternoon procession, the "*shinlaungyb*" or "*shinlaung lhai*"⁸. This is the procession of postulants, donors, relatives, friends and other well-wishers going through along the village main road to the monastery lead by continuously beating Royal Myanmar Drum, "*byaw*". The procedures will depend on the presiding person of that procession.

A *shinlaungyb* is a merry affair and the great event of the day for the *Ahlp*. The royal drum announces the time of departure and keeps the march in procession. As a rule, the royal drum leads the walking procession, starting with most elderly gentlemen who brings a flower vase, and then side by side the main male donor, carrying an alms-bowl in its carrier bag, hanging on his right shoulder, and the main female donor, carrying a tray on her head, bearing the golden robe as an offering to the Buddha. There follows the "*kwuntaung*"⁹, "a slaver of gold for the ceremony" borne by a beautiful lady whose beauty deserves public acknowledgement in that locality. Other pretty ladies of the village come after her, holding bouquets and flower baskets, and they are known as the "*pandaung gaing*". Relatives of the donors come next in couples of husband and wife, the man each carrying an alms-bowl and each woman a set of robes. Next the female postulants in their royal costumes follow in single file. Then every body in the village and all guests join the great procession in single file to where the ordination ceremony will be performed. Then the turn of *shinlaungs* comes, starting with the sons of the donors carried by four men on royal palanquins¹⁰ carried by four men. The other *shinlaungs* follow on royal palanquins in single file. While on the procession, the *shinlaungs* scatter coins, pop-rice and pop-corns out of huge silver vessels whilst children jostle with one another to pick up the coins scattered on the ground. Young men shelter each *shinlaung* with golden umbrellas above his head. Lastly a group of lads follow reciting composed verses, which sound very melodious and

⁸ Here, unlike this tradition, the actual meaning of these two terms is explained by Ashin Janakabhivamsa in his *Tabhavathanthayar*, p.44, as, "On the first day, the *shinlaung* (postulant) has to go around for paying respect to elder relatives; this is called '*shinlaung-lhai*' (*lhai* means to visit or go around): On the second day, '*shinlaungyb*' (*yb* means to bring) is performed as if the *shinlaung* from the monastery were brought".

⁹ A "*kwunlaung*", ညုတံဆိပ် is a kind of betel container studded with jewels, used only by the king, which over time became called "*kwuntaung*", ညုတံဆိပ်. Otherwise, it may be derived from the term "*kwundaung*" ညုတံဆိပ်, meaning, "a betel receptacle". A *pantaung*, ညုတံဆိပ် is a flower basket (*Myanmar Court Etiquette*, Than Tun, Dr., p.52).

¹⁰ This palanquin is without a roof, to be carried by four men bearing a holy person, they are used for carrying a *shinlaung*, or a newly ordained *bhikkhu* nowadays. In ancient days, it seems they were only used for carrying king and princes and royal persons.

inspiring. A leader sings the first lines and the group recite the refrain. At the end of every stanza, they shout in unison “*shoh-shoh-shoh*”¹¹. This long procession is followed by a musical troupe to entertain the onlookers overwhelmed by the whole atmosphere.

This great procession marches to the village monastery going round it clockwise thrice. The procession then returns to the *ma%ḍap* where the journey comes to an end, and the *shinlaungs* are returned to the monastery for the actual *pabbajjæ*.

It is only the actual *pabbajjæ* that concerns the *bhikkhus*. So the *bhikkhus* have the *shinlaungs*’ head shaved according to the procedures mentioned in Chapter Seven, and the task of the *pabbajjæ* ordination is carried out by the *bhikkhu* concerned. This is the real essence of the *pabbajjæ* ceremony which elevates the boys to the status of the sacred lives of *sæma%eras* from the ordinary persons in the profane world. After the formal *pabbajjæ*, they become not longer common average boys, but ochre robed *sæma%eras* recognized as being spiritually superior to all laity including their parents. Therefore, even the parents pay respect by making *a³jalo* to the newly ordained *sæma%eras*, including their won sons. This reverential act by parents is the most moving scene of the entire ceremony. It is the normal custom for children to bow down in this manner to their parents. However, this time, the robes are reversed and the *sæma%eras* receive their parents’ respect and *a³jalo*, it is a deeply significant experience to encounter this. This is because the *sæma%eras* are no longer parents’ own sons, but the sons of the Buddha, to whom they should pay their reverence.

Then the *bhikkhus* are cordially invited along with the new *sæma%eras* and escorted by an *upæsaka*, the village gentle man, to the *ma%ḍap* to acknowledge the donors for their tremendous generosity. All the *bhikkhus* and *sæma%eras* in order of their *vassas* are placed on a huge spacious stage for the *Saµgha*, where the numerous offertories meant for them are placed on display and exhibited. Then the senior *bhikkhu* delivers a short sermon stressing the various merits to be derived from the *shinpyu-ahlp*. At the end of sermon, all the members of the *Saµgha* recite in unison the *paritta*, the sacred protective discourses. Finally the water libation is performed by the donors pouring the water jointly. The donors then announce that they share their merit with others. Thereupon, the audience in sympathetic joy responds in unison, “*Sædhu, sædhu, sædhu*”, “Excellent, Excellent, Excellent!” Then the *bhikkhus* leave the *ma%ḍap* in solemn procession followed by the newly ordained *sæma%eras* for the monastery. This is the finale of Myanmar traditional *shinpyu-ahlp* ceremony.

¹¹ ○ ㄹ - ○ ㄹ - ○ ㄹ

The newly ordained *səmaḥera* is known in Myanmar as a “*koyin*”, a “novice”, in *Pæ'i* a “*səmaḥera*”. To differentiate them, the young novice is “*koyin-lay*” and the old, “*koyin-gyi*”. From that time onwards, a *səmaḥera* is a regular listed member of the *Saṃgha* for as long as his *səmaḥera*-hood but he cannot participate in the functional ceremonies of *Saṃgha* which is purely the affair of fully ordained *bhikkhus*.

Some donors celebrate their *Ahḥ* associated with the *upasampadæ* ordination. To do so, they purchase the essential requisites of the *upasampadæ* candidate in advance. They usually sponsor a related *səmaḥera* or an intelligent *səmaḥera* who has reached his twenty years of age, or sometimes a candidate who ordains for an intentionally temporary period of time, a *dullabha bhikkhu*, or a *bhikkhu* who takes renewed ordination, “*punopasampada*”. Each of these three types of ordination will be discussed in section 8.6. If the *Ahḥ* involves a *yahan-khan* “*upasampadæ* ordination”, then the *Saṃgha* concludes the ordination in the *səmaḥ* hall and are ready to receive the reverence of the *shinlaungyḥ* procession when it reaches the monastery. As mentioned, ordination is the affair of the *Saṃgha*, so the *Saṃgha* alone can carry this out. When the procession arrives at the monastery, the newly ordained *bhikkhu* comes out of the *səmaḥ* and the donors and their relatives, the *bhikkhu*'s parents and relatives and other well-wishers, waiting in line near from the *səmaḥ* door, pay reverence to the new *bhikkhu* and offer requisites like robes, towels, soap, washing powder, handkerchiefs, etc.

This tradition of donating at the completion of ordination is based on the belief that the new *bhikkhu*'s precept at that time is of the highest purity, flawless and held in the highest esteem of the laity's eyes. The new *bhikkhu* who has just come out of the *səmaḥ* is considered as scrupulous and holy as an *arahant* and by virtue of this to offer him something then may cultivate the great wholesome conditions of longevity, beauty, bliss, strength and wisdom. The merit of offering to a newly ordained *bhikkhu* for life is perceived superior to offering a temporary *bhikkhu* or repeatedly ordained *bhikkhu*.

Then the newly ordained *bhikkhu* for life is carried on a special royal palanquin borne by four strong men and heads the long procession that will return to the *maḥḍap*. On arrival at *maḥḍap*, the new *bhikkhu* gives a short sermon to the audience which concludes with the donors' pouring water libation and sharing merit with others. This ceremony is filled with real excitement for the new *bhikkhu*, because this is usually his maiden presentation to an audience. In the meantime, the task of *pabbajjæ* is completed at the monastery and finally, all the invited *bhikkhus* come to the *maḥḍap* to receive the offertories, the donors perform the libation and sharing merit and the whole ceremony is successfully finalized. The

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aforementioned roles and procedures are based on personal observations of *shinpyu-ahlp* in the upper part of Myanmar by this author.