

The Bodhi Mirror



Dharma Master U-Thondra

Reverend U-Thondra was born in 1947 to a merchant family of Chinese parentage in Rangoon, Burma. As a young boy he was brought up in the business circle of China Town in Rangoon. He received his education in Chinese at an early age and graduated from Chinese High School. Later on, he continued his education in the Vernacular High School and went on to enroll in College. Unlike most others of his generation, however, he was endowed with a strong inclination to pursue the Buddha's teachings, and this same inclination led him to enter the life of a Bhikshu.

Bhikshu U-Thondra began his left-home career while still attending high school by taking his summers off from school to live as a novice and taking part in the Summer Retreat practiced by left-home Buddhist disciples. From that experience, he firmly decided to continue on as a Bhikshu. In his early years as a fully ordained Bhikshu, he received instruction in the Buddha's teachings from Master Bhikshu Sayadaw U-Tilawka of Kan Baw Za Monastery, Ta Mine, Burma. His strong interest in the teachings drew him ever more deeply into the life of a Bhikshu in the Theravadan tradition of Buddhism, which is the only form of Buddhism that predominates Burma and Sri Lanka. However, not wishing to be confined to that tradition, he was driven by his interest to pursue the Mahayana--Great Vehicle--teachings of China, Korea, and Japan.

As a young Bhikshu, he traveled throughout the delta region of Burma, from village to village, offering the teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha to the laity. Until recently, he has been the Teaching Master of Vipassana Meditation to the Chinese community in Rangoon.

Now visiting the United States, Dharma Master U-Thondra has been invited to stay on by the Progressive Buddhist Association in Monterey Park, California. This organization was formulated on behalf of the Dharma Master in order to lend organized support to him in his teaching of the Dharma in the United States.

Recently, Dharma Master U-Thondra visited the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas with a delegation of forty Dharma protectors. Later, in San Francisco, the Dharma Master spoke Dharma twice at the newly-founded Bodhimanda of the Dharma Realm Buddhist Association located in Chinatown. Having been a considerate and helpful guide to the 1984 World Delegation from Dharma Realm Buddhist Association, he was given a warm welcome by the Bhikshu members of the Association, thus affording him an opportunity to deepen his affinities during his stay in San Francisco.

compiled by the Vajra Bodhi Sea editorial staff