

Abstract

Despite the vast research by various scholars on contemporary Myanmar, almost all of them are about socio-economics and politics describing little about Burmese Buddhism and its current vicissitudes. On the other hand, some which paid full attention to Buddhism in Myanmar do not completely reflect the present situation as well. Many changes have been taking place in Myanmar Buddhist community in recent years. This study conveys both general and specific changes within Burmese Buddhism—monastic institution and lay society—due to the impacts of current socio-political movements in Myanmar. Drawing on reliable historical accounts, government's printings, reports by relevant organizations, field study, interviews, as well as other documentary sources and the researcher's own experience, this dissertation examines the situations of current Burmese Buddhism. The analysis of the above sources results in negative and positive impacts on Burmese Buddhism. Becoming less of rural monks' functions, decreasing in monastic recruits, the educational style of monastic institution being criticized, the traditional simple life style of monastic institution affected by the materialistic society, Burmese Buddhism manipulated as political tool and exploited by the communal conflicts, being misunderstood of the monks due to certain monks' involvement in socio-politics and being underestimated by the world are negative aspects of current Burmese Buddhism. Trying to remedy the shortage of monastic recruitments in their own ways, coming to found Buddhist Universities while maintaining the traditional way of learning, having systematically established Dhamma School foundation for Buddhist generations, being still able to serve the spiritual needs of the Buddhists through learning texts and meditation of monastic members despite many difficulties and criticisms, the gradual involvement of monastic members and lay Buddhist community in inter-religious activities together with political trend to equality and in social welfare works are the progressive aspects of Burmese Buddhism. We strongly believe that our present contribution will shed new light on the understanding of contemporary Burmese Buddhism and society as well. However, since Myanmar is formed with relatively different large states with different ethnic Buddhists and non-Buddhists with different socio-economic background, the specific or comparative research on different ethnic