

# Ultimate Reality Pilgrimage 2017

## Meeting the Buddha in Myanmar (Burma)

### 8<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> February 2017 (16 nights/17 days)

Our 2017 pilgrimage will take us back to the golden land of Myanmar (Burma). On this pilgrimage we will be exploring a number of the most important sites connected with the development of meditation in Burma. We will be going to monasteries, meeting teachers and immersing ourselves in the culture of the Burmese people.

We are fortunate indeed to have the expert guidance of Joah McGee, an American Vipassana practitioner. Joah has spent many years living in Burma, researching meditation teachers, centers and the Burmese meditation culture for his E-book "*The Golden Path*".

(You can download the publication at [https://store.pariyatti.org/The-Golden-Path--PDF-eBook\\_p\\_4810.html](https://store.pariyatti.org/The-Golden-Path--PDF-eBook_p_4810.html))

Our pilgrimage will also include daily meditation practice, led by Grahame White, at each of the sites we visit.

This pilgrimage should be a remarkable experience integrating the history, teaching and meditative culture of Burma.

**Pilgrimage cost:** U.S \$1980.00 Twin Share Room  
U.S \$2480.00 Single Room

### Our Guides



provide.

**Joah McGee** first visited Burma/Myanmar in 2003 as a young meditator and immediately knew he had to get back. Initially considering a return as a student at Yangon's Buddhist university and then as an English teacher at a local monastery, little did he know that he would ultimately do so as a diplomat! Since then—nearly ten years to date—he has stayed on, doing so in increasingly diverse incarnations, from monastery resident to Burmese language student, from pilgrimage leader to author on Burmese Buddhism, from businessman to senior trainer. He is the author of the comprehensive meditator's guide to Myanmar, has managed a regular blog on Burmese Buddhism since 2012, and occasionally produces documentaries on the country's great

monks and important sites. Joah will be bringing this unusual depth of background, experience, and knowledge to the pilgrimage, providing an insider's look into how the Dhamma has been preserved and shared in the Golden Land. Relatively unknown yet significant sites will be included in our schedule, and even well-known sites will be covered with greater background and historical context than usual tours



**Grahame White** has been involved in Buddhist meditation practice for over 40 years. He began his study of Buddhism in England in 1969 before being ordained as a Buddhist monk for one year in BodhGaya, India in 1971. He took a primary role in the establishment of Vipassana meditation in the tradition of Mahasi Sayadaw in Australia and co-founded the Blue Mountains Insight Meditation Center. He currently leads introductory and day-long courses in Sydney and Wollongong, and also regularly teaches longer intensive retreats in the United States and various countries in Asia. Grahame has also helped pioneer the workshop format of teaching meditation that enhances the transfer of mindfulness

from the formal sitting practice into daily life.



## **Itinerary**

**Day 1:** Introduction, welcome and check-In. Today we greet all new pilgrims as they enter the Golden Land, and head together to the splendid Shwedagon Pagoda for an opening ceremony. We explore this revered pagoda together, and then use this highly auspicious site as our backdrop for reviewing our upcoming two weeks together. Overnight Yangon.

**Day 2:** Yangon. The former capital is home to the country's most important pagodas and is the headquarters of many modern monasteries and meditation centers. Pilgrims will get a glimpse of the Dhammic riches that Myanmar has to offer by beginning to explore the historic Buddhist sites and revered teachers of modern day Yangon. Overnight Yangon.

**Day 3 & 4:** Our group flies to Bagan "where it all began". Nearly one thousand years ago, a Burmese king joined with a Mon monk to firmly establish Theravada Buddhism in this land, and the remaining structures of Bagan represents their achievement. We will visit the important pagodas established at that time, as well as some of the important monasteries and meditation centers that have come in later years. Two nights Bagan.

**Day 5 & 6:** Our group travels to Mandalay, forward in time to the next great era of Burmese Buddhism. The last in a long line of nearby rotating royal capitals, this "upcountry" region is Myanmar's great spiritual heartland, and the backbone of its Buddhist past. We will visit some of the many important monasteries and pagodas established before the last Burmese king was sent into exile and the Colonial Era begun, and discuss how the Sasana was kept alive here, ultimately allowing it to be brought to us today. Overnight Mandalay.

**Day 7:** Day trip to Amarapura from Mandalay. The capital before Mandalay, this also happens to be the site of two monks who were considered some of the greatest pariyatti and patòipatti masters, respectively, of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. After touring the grounds of their monasteries, we will visit the important pagodas and other Buddhist sites dating from the old days of the royal court. Overnight Mandalay.

**Day 8:** Day trip to Kyaukse from Mandalay. Off the map of many itineraries, and a sensitive area until only recently, Kyaukse offers much to the Buddhist pilgrim. In addition to possibly being the origin of the Bamar people, this region has pagodas older than a millennium years back—most notably, the recently discovered Tamote complex, with its stunning layered Buddha images, and another cave rich with Buddhist images and used by monks for meditation in previous decades. More recently, in the

early 20<sup>th</sup> century, several highly revered recluses found this an ideal place for ardent practice, none more acclaimed than Webu Sayadaw. Overnight Mandalay.

**Day 9:** Day trip to Yedagone Taung from Mandalay. Literally “Waterfall Mountain” in Burmese (and a place the Bodhisattva reportedly visited in a previous lifetime), this lush, tropical landscape is also home to some unknown Buddhist sites that we will explore together. This includes a groundbreaking new institute that will teach pariyatti in English, a presumed arahant from the Mogok tradition, a stunning collection of carved wooden Buddha images, among others. Overnight Mandalay.

**Day 10:** Day trip to Sagaing Hills from Mandalay. For the last one thousand years, monks who wished to devote themselves whole-heartedly headed out to the rolling hills of the Sagaing Hills. Close enough to the rotating royal capitals to get alms food yet far enough away to maintain a much-needed sense of seclusion, this is a living, thriving Buddhist community where the sonorous rhythms of the Patthana ring through the hills. Full of historic caves, stupas, monasteries, and other such sites, there may be no place like it in the world. Overnight in Mandalay.

**Day 11 & 12:** Our group travels from Mandalay to Shwebo. There is a common sentiment amongst the Burmese: “There’s not a single village in Shwebo that has not produced a great monk.” And during these two days, we will discover the truth of these words, spending the bulk of our times in the sites established by Mahasi Sayadaw, Webu Sayadaw, and Thilon Sayadaw. Day 11: Overnight Shwebo. Day 12 we will return to Mandalay after spending the day in Shwebo. Day 12: Overnight Mandalay.

**Day 13 & 14:** Our group travels from Mandalay to Pyin Oo Lwin. A refreshing “hill station” where the country’s leading meditation Sayadaws have been establishing branch monasteries in recent years, allowing their yogis to develop in the Dhamma with an agreeable climate. Here we will visit a number of these sites, stopping longer according to the various Sayadaw’s availability, where we will have an opportunity for a discourse, meditation instructions, and questions & answers. Overnight Pyin Oo Lwin.

**Day 15:** Our group travels to Mandalay airport after breakfast in Pyin Oo Lwin, for a return flight to Yangon. Overnight Yangon.

**Day 16:** A free day for shopping, relaxing and exploring the city centre of Yangon. In the evening we will have a closing ceremony at the beautiful Shwedagon Pagoda. Overnight Yangon.

**Day 17:** Morning meditation and transfer to Yangon airport for departure.

#### **Further travel details:**

- ❖ Pilgrims will travel everywhere in the best available bus except for a possible boat trip between Bagan and Mandalay and two internal flights (Yangon to Bagan and Mandalay to Yangon).
- ❖ All nights will be spent in comfortable three-star hotels (with ensuite) and services such as laundry readily available. Twin share and single options will also be available.
- ❖ Cost will include all internal flights, over land travel (except airport transfers), food and accommodation.

**Please note that our 2017 pilgrimage is limited to a maximum of 20 people. For more information and/or to request a registration form please contact below.**

**For registration please contact:**

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