CONCLUSION

A study of the foregoing pages, will indicate the wide interest how Buddhism came into settle down in the Myanmar. According to history records, it is clear that the introduction of Buddhism in invariably connected with India and later with Ceylon. It is true the trace of religion through all these centuries is not fully discernible, some are doubtful because they are written on the basis of an assumption, not yet conclusively proved. Some are based on traditional chronicles, which are claimed as authentic stories.

Nevertheless, the clear point is that Myanmar is indeed the only country where Therevāda Nikāya survives to this day and its pristine purity for many centuries. Baring the story of Sona and Uttara theras, there is no other concrete evidence that Buddhism flourished in Myanmar before the 3rd century BC. This evidence is based on traditions but it cannot as yet be accepted as a fact of history. So, this historical evidence requires further investigation for authenticity. But from this period onwards there are definite records to prove not only the existence but also the flourishing stage of Theravāda Buddhism in Myanmar.

The sculpture, bronzes, terracotta votive tablets, epigraphic documents discovered from the ruined capital of old Prome or Pyay. It had proved that there was a very flourishing condition for the religion of the Buddha. The Chinese accounts leave no doubt that the Theravāda form of Buddhism with Pali canonical texts was introduced in the Myanmar.

It has been already pointed out that Therevāda was not the only form of Buddhism in the country. According to the evidence of Sanskrit Buddhist epigraphs, some sort of Mahāyanism and
Tantricism had also prevailed in Upper Myanmar which might have come by the land route like Tibet, Assam and Manipur. The prevalence of Mahāyana and Mantrayana are also testified to by more than one Tibetan text.

Besides these, there were Samanakuttakas and Aris which prevailed in and around Bagan. The painting on the wall of some temples of Bagan and discoveries of sculpture, terracotta proved the existence of Tantric Buddhism. With the zeal of a new covert King Anawratha and his successors became the great champions of the Theravāda form of Buddhism and it extended over the whole of Myanmar. He brought complete copies of the Tipiṭaka from Ceylon and collected Texts with the help of Ashin Arahan, from Thaton, Lower Myanmar.

The role of Sangīti or Sangāyana, (Buddhist Councils) is tremendously important to keep up the doctrines of Buddha authentically. From the middle of 10th century when introduction of Theravāda Buddhism in the country up to 20th century two Great Councils called the 5th and the 6th Councils were held in Myanmar. These historic works were recorded to make popularly known to the country as a strong Theravāda Buddhism.

Indeed, the Myanmarese Saṅgha community and the people joined hands together to Purify, perpetuate, and propagate Buddhism. Actually, the Theravāda Buddhism is the one civilising factor in Myanmarese daily life. Today, the attractive Myanmarese life and society and manners, literature and its traditional culture have come to what they are following according to fundamental ethics of Theravāda Buddhism.