နေလ ဘုရား
   (*nay la hpaya*, pagoda of the sun and of the moon):   7 4 5 4
သောကြာ သား
   (*thawkya tha*, son of Friday):   6 2 6

A more in-depth interpretation was still required. These figures allowed numerous combinations in the choice of a definitive number. Complicating matters, there were concurrent deciphering methods. The written form of some letters or signs was linked, for example, to one of the Arabic numerals that Burmese people know and often use. This way, the word Theravāda (ထေရဝါဒ, *htayrawada*) could be deciphered in at least two ways and could give two possible series of numbers:

   7 4 4 7   (using a correspondence between letters and days of the week)

   6 8 7 0 3   (using a comparison between signs and letters and occidental numbers; ၈ looks like a horizontal '8', and ရ like '7')

In addition to the multiple deciphering methods, the affinity between numbers had also to be taken into account. Some numbers seemed to exist in pairs according to series that circulated in various tables.

With our first indication in hand, we left Shwe Zaydi and arrived in Htandabin around 12:30 p.m., where we stopped a short while to eat. We started visiting monasteries to find new clues. These forest monasteries were located near but outside the city and away from inhabited zones and were accessible via dirt roads that peeled off from the main road. The sermon of the "Monk Who Makes the Bankers Run Away" would not begin until three or four o'clock in the afternoon, so we had enough time to sound out other monks.

Shortly after leaving town, we turned left. At the crossroad, an army of side-cars were waiting for gamblers without their own transportation to take them on the narrow road that winds through paddy fields toward a monastery approximately two kilometers away. The monastery is a permanent structure, with two main buildings and a pagoda. The headmonk was resting; his sermon was not scheduled until three that afternoon. His second in charge welcomed visitors who regularly came to collect clues. A

flow of departures and arrivals filled the room with a small, but constant, crowd of ten to fifteen people. Others were waiting patiently outside for the headmonk to wake up and give his sermon. In her notebook, Ma Aye wrote three sentences and Arabic numbers that the headmonk had received in a dream and written on a piece of cardboard for devotees unable to listen to his sermon:

1. ပျားရည် သောက်
   (*pyayay thauk*)   1. Drink honey
2. ဗုဒ္ဓဂါယာ (*bokdagaya*)   2. Bodhgaya[5]
3. သီလရှိသမျှလူတွေ
   (*thila shi-tha-hmya ludway*)3. People who cultivate morality
အကုန် ပျက်သွား နိုင် တယ်
   (*akon pyet thwa naing de*)   everything can be destroyed
                    031   479
                    036   453
                    662   957
                    770   641
                                       631

အတွဲ (*atwe*, pair)
                    10 | 26 | 53 | 42 | 68 |

The translation of the third part—"everything can be destroyed"—was difficult for the Burmese themselves, because several interpretations were possible, and none was making clearly any sense. In these circumstances, it was common for the monk to address his audience in enigmatic terms not immediately apparent to devotees.

We set out again for Htandabin. We turned back onto the main road but instead of going back to town, we headed into the countryside. This time, we were following a dirt road on the opposite side. At the beginning of the trail there was a donation post managed by a layman to finance some sort of new religious building. Ma Aye put a bill in the donation pot that the man was holding out to us. She greeted him, saying only the word "numbers" (*ganan*). The man gave her a scrap of paper. Four, three-digit numbers were written on it. He had probably received the numbers from a monk nearby. Ma Aye copied them in her notebook.

The trail went through a bamboo forest where there were several independent monasteries. Some were famous for predictions by their headmonk,