

Who are the Buddhist Deities?



Bodhisatta, receiving Milk Porridge from Sujata

Introduction: Some Buddhist Vipassana practitioners in their discussion frown upon others who worship Buddhist *Deities*¹ or practice *Samadha* (*concentration meditation*), arguing that Deities could not help an individual to gain liberation. It is well known facts, that some Buddhists have been worshipping Deities, since the time of *king Anawratha*, for a better mundane life and at the same time practicing *Samadha* and *Vipassana Bhavana*. Worshipping Deities will gain mundane benefits thus enable them to do *Dana*, *Sila* and *Bhavana*. Every New Year Burmese Buddhists welcome the *Sakka's* (The Hindu *Indra God*) visit from the abode of thirty three Gods - heaven to celebrate their new year.

In the beginning, just prior to Gotama Buddha attains the enlightenment, many across the land practice *animism* – worship spirits. The story of *Sujata* depicts that practice. Let me present the story of *Sujata* as written in *Pali canon* :-

In the village of Senani, the girl, Sujata made her wish to the tree spirit that should she have a good marriage and a first born son, she vowed to make yearly offering to the tree spirits in grateful gratitude. Her wish having been fulfilled, she used to make an offering every year at the banyan tree. On the day of her offering to the tree spirit, coincidentally, Buddha appeared at the same Banyan tree.

On the full moon day of the month Vesakha, the Future Buddha was sitting under the banyan tree. Sujata caught sight of the Future Buddha and, assuming him to be the tree-spirit, offered him milk-porridge in a golden bowl. She was later converted to Buddhism, after Buddha attained enlightenment

¹ **Deities** –.The Deities that Burmese adopted from the Hindu tradition are the God and Goddesses of the Hindu Vedas, like **Vishnu, Indra, Ganesha, Saraswati**, etc. These God and Goddesses belong to the heavenly abode as defined in the 31 planes of existence. They are not Nat as used casually by some; Indra (Sakka) being the head of the 37 Nats in the Burmese reckoning, thus why the confusion. Except Sakka, all the 36 Nats are local earth bound spirits that belong to the Apaya plane.

The Hindu Influence in Burma

Buddha himself was once a Hindu and Gotama Buddha founded Buddhism. Before the King Anawratha, Burmese were influenced by the *Ari Monks* who came from India carried with them the Hindu tradition of worship. When the great king *Anawrahta* of Pagan united the whole of Burma into a single kingdom in the eleventh century and made *Theravada Buddhism* the national religion, there were already in existence numerous primitive religious cults. There were the worship of *Nat² spirits, astrology, and alchemy*. There were also debased and distorted native cults of magic and sorcery.

The astrology which had its origin in Hindu astrology was practiced then. Thus many worship some of the Hindu Deities God in the Hindu tradition.

At first the *Nats* were impersonal and local, like the *Nats* of the banyan tree, and the lake outside the village, and the guardian *Nat* of the village. Later on, thirty-six personal and national *Nats* came into being who were distinct personages with their own life histories and who were worshipped all over the country. The most important of the thirty-six were the Lord of the Great Mountain and his sister Lady Golden-Face, whose abode was on Mount Popa, *Popa Mae Daw*.

When *Anawrahta* made Theravada Buddhism the national religion of the country all the images of the Hindu gods were seized and placed in a *Vishnu temple, (NatHlaung Kyaung)* which was renamed the '*Prison of the Gods*'.

The followers of the cult of *alchemy* modified their conception of an eternal youth to seek immortal youthful body for thousands of years in order to live until the coming of the next Buddha so that they could listen to his preaching. The followers of the cult of astrology conceived their ritual and ceremony, to the ceremony of the Nine Gods, to replace the gods of the nine planets to Buddha and his eight disciples. (*Pha Yar Ko Zu*) In facts, all the nine Gods were Hindu in origin, including Buddha.

To the *Nat* worship, the Anawrahta finally decided to bring them over into Buddhism. The figures of the Thirty-six Lords were taken from their shrines and placed in the king's great pagoda in an attitude of worship; he declared that the number was now *thirty-seven*, because *Sakka*, the king of the gods and guardian of Buddhism, was at the head of the pantheon. The cult of Thirty-six Lords, therefore, became the cult of the Thirty-seven Lords, and Anawratha replaced some of the earlier lords with the *Nat* spirits of some of his dead heroes³.

The Burmese who practice *astrology, alchemy, or Nat* worship do so for safety and success in their mundane life, and some Burmese will also observe the Buddhist

² Nats – Myanmar used this term to define both the celestial and terrestrial spirits.

³ Dead Heroes – the thirty six spirits that were substituted by king Anawratha were the dead heroes in the history book of Burma. All of them were local spirits who had met with violent death.

religious ritual days and perform deeds of merit in preparation for the countless existences that they must undergo in the cycles of rebirth.

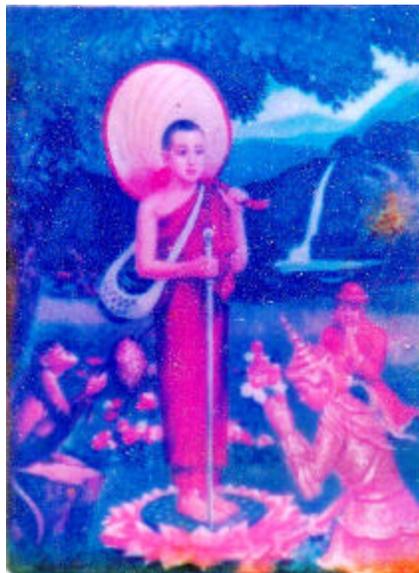
The final Burmese Buddhism then includes many Buddha's disciples and Hindu Gods and the most prominent deities among them are – *Sakka* (Thagyar Min, the Guardian of Buddha sasana), *Tipitaka Mae Daw* (The guardian of Buddhist Tipitaka).

1.0 Buddha Disciples - Prominent Buddhist Arahats

Unlike Mahayana Sect, Theravada Sect. adopted by the Burmese Buddhist encourages Buddhist to worship only *the image of Gotama Buddha*. However, since the introduction of Theravada Buddhism by *Shin Araham Thera* to the King Anawratha, Burmese across the land worship images of Buddha and some Buddha disciples and some Deities. Buddha image is worshipped for attainment of awakening and Buddha disciples and Hindu Deities for their mundane life.

We have two of the most prominent Buddhist arahants, that we will find on some private altars are – *Shin Thiwali Maha Thera* and *Shin Upagutta Thera*. Shin Thiwali (*Sivali*) is worshipped to bring wealth in abundance and Shin Upagote for protection by his enormous magical power, as the conqueror of the great Naga – Dragon.

Maha Sivali Thera (Shin Thi Wa Li Thera)



Maha Sivali (Shin Ti Wa Li Thera) to many households in Myanmar is fairly popular because he was the foremost in receiving the most requisites among the Buddha disciples. In most of the house hold shrines, they have a tiny statue of *Shin*

Ti Wa Li so family will get enriched with all the necessary requisites in a household. Parents used to tell their children to revere this statue so you will always be blessed with all the household requisites – *wealth and riches*..

Even Buddha must make sure that *Maha Sivali* accompanied the group of monks when journeying through the uninhabited forest, because even the Devas will be happy to provide the Thera with all the requisites. Many Bhikkhu's will relied on him for necessary requisites when they journey through uninhabited terrains. His statue (image) is seldom seen in public places but *we will see them in most of shrines in households as a symbol of abundance of food and prosperity*.

Sivali Thera made his aspiration some 100,000 world cycle ago before the **Buddha Padumuttara** and again before the **Buddha Vipassi**, to be the foremost in receiving the most requisites. He had made great merits to realize his aspiration as predicted by **Buddha Padumuttara**. He attained the Arahantship at the age of seven as *Samanera (Tha Ma Ne Ko Yin Ba Wa)*.

Many Burmese believe that he is still living, that he can be invoked to come by a prayer of special mantra and that **his mere invisible presence will bring them prosperity and good fortune**. Therefore, a tiny image of him, carrying a staff in one hand and a fan in the other, as if ready for travel, is kept for worship in many Burmese households.

Moggaliputta Tissa Maha Thera

Shin Upagote



Along with ShinThiwali, Shin Upagote are the most highly revered Arahants after the Great Lord Buddha, Gotama. In private shrines throughout Burma we will see the ir images of both arahants:.

? **Shinthiwali** – provides wealth and Riches in Abundance, and

? **Shin Upagote** – provides great magical power of protection against all evils.

We seldom see the images of these Theras at public Stupas built across the Golden land in Burma; however, in private shrines in most Buddhist residences we will see the images of the two Theras placed side by side with the Image of the Buddha Gotama. *Shin Thiwali* to bring good fortune; and *Shin Upagote* to ward off evil and provide protection from evil's attack.

Paying reverence homage to the two Arahants – Shin Thiwali and Shin Upagote is one of the many traditions that still prevails in Myanmar to this day.

2.0 The Buddhist Deities

Before Buddhism, animism and ancestor worship were the native religions. Burmese believe that it is a natural phenomenon that some people were possessed by Deities and some by the spirits of ancestors. Spirits possession is a natural phenomena that occurs every where across the land. So many considered Deities and spirits deserve veneration and that they should be worshipped and receive offerings.

Early in the History, when Hindu merchants arrived for trade they brought with them their Hindu Brahmanism and some of their Deities - Gods and Goddesses like *Vishnu, Brahma, Shiva, Indra, Ganesha, Saraswati*, etc. they became Deities of popular worship among the natives. When Theravada Buddhism was introduced to Bagan by the great *Shin Arahan Maha Thera*, King Anawrahta (A.D. 1044-77) promoted the new religion and soon spreads to the four corners of his kingdom. The old religion was able to get adjusted with Theravada Buddhism So to this day, Hindu Deities are still worship in Burma. With *Sakka* (Indra) Thagyamin at the head of the thirty Seven Nats; and thus Nats worship still remains to this day.

Thus, Buddhists across the land worship the Buddha, as well as Burmanized Hindu Deities, and local Nats without differentiation. Most Burmese said that to worship Buddha is for one's liberation now and hereafter; and to worship Deities is for the benefit of their mundane life.

Astrology to the Burmese meant not only the methods of tracing the courses of the planets and their influence on mortals, but also the ritual by which the planets were appeased (*Yataya*)⁴ and made to withdraw their baneful influence. In other word, it involved a worship of the planets. As Burmese astrology had its origins in Hindu astrology, so the worship of the planets involved worship of at least some of the Hindu Deities. In Pagan there are remains of *Vishnu* and *Ganeshe* temple style pagodas. There are a number of gods and goddesses from the Hindu tradition who appear in the Buddhist context. The *Brahma, Indra* and *Sarawasti* are the three prominent Deities that Burmese worship to this day.

2.1 The Brahma

⁴ *Yataya* – to apply appeasement to the Gods to ward off bad omens and bad kamma.



Hindu version of Brahma



Burmese version of Brahma



Thai version of Brahma

The Brahma statue located at Erawan at the center of the city of Bangkok shows that Brahma is highly regarded and revered in many Theravada countries.

Lord Brahma symbolizes the aspect of the Supreme Reality that brings forth the creation. For this very reason, Hindus call Lord Brahma the *Creator of the universe*. He is the first member of the Hindu Trinity that also includes *Lord Vishnu* and *Lord Shiva*. His divine consort is *Saraswati, the Goddess of learning and knowledge*. Goddess Saraswati provides Lord Brahma with knowledge that is necessary for the process of creation.

Brahma is usually conceived of by Hindus as a bearded, four-faced, four-armed deity. In popular images, He carries a rosary in the upper right hand, a book in the upper left hand, a kamandalu (water pot) in the lower left hand, and bestows grace with His lower right hand. The four faces represent the sacred knowledge of the four Vedas (Rig, Yajur, Sama, and Atharva), and this is the most prominent feature of any image of Brahma. The four faces, therefore, symbolize that Brahma is the source of all knowledge necessary for the creation of the universe. The four arms represent the four directions and thus represent the omnipresence and omnipotence of Lord Brahma.

The four hands represent the four aspects of human personality: mind (back right hand), intellect (back left hand), ego (front right hand), and the empirical self or conditioned consciousness (front left hand). The rosary symbolizes the time cycle through which the world moves from creation to sustenance, from sustenance to dissolution, and from dissolution to new creation. The rosary also symbolizes the materials used in the process of creation. Its position in the back right hand suggests the intelligent use of these materials in the process of creation.

A book in the back hand (symbolizing the intellect) illustrates that right knowledge is important for any kind of creative work. A water pot (kamandalu) in the front left hand symbolizes the cosmic energy by which Brahma brings the universe into

existence. The hand symbolizing ego (the front right hand) is shown in the pose of bestowing grace. This conveys the idea that the Lord bestows grace and protects all sincere devotees.

The color gold symbolizes activity and thus the golden face of Brahma indicates that the Lord is active when involved in the process of creation. The white beard denotes wisdom and the long beard conveys the idea that creation is an eternal process. The crown on the head of the Lord implies that the Lord has supreme power and authority over the process of creation.

The lotus symbolizes the Supreme Reality, the essence of all things and beings in the universe. Brahma sitting or standing on a lotus indicates that He represents the creative power of the Supreme Reality. The color white symbolizes purity. Thus Brahma wearing clothes that are off-white, represents the dual nature of creation, that is purity and impurity, happiness and unhappiness, vice and virtue, knowledge and ignorance, and so on.

In Hindu mythology, a swan is said to possess a unique discriminating faculty, which enables it to distinguish pure milk from a mixture of milk and water. The swan is therefore used to symbolize the power of discrimination. Brahma uses the swan as a vehicle. This is intended to convey the idea that although creation is pluralistic in nature, there is only one Supreme Reality that the entire universe emanates from. This knowledge can be acquired by an individual by training his mind and Intellect to acquire the power of right discrimination.

As creation is the work of the mind and the intellect, Lord Brahma symbolizes the Universal Mind. From the standpoint of an individual, Brahma symbolizes one's own mind and intellect. Since an individual is naturally gifted with the mind and intellect, he or she may be said to have already realized Brahma. For this reason the worship of Brahma is not very popular among all Hindus. *He is, however, worshipped by seekers of knowledge, such as students, teachers, scholars and scientists.*

2.2 - Sakka – Tha Gyar Min



Hindu version of Sakka



Burmese Version of Sakka

Sakka - Thagyamin

In Dhammapada, *Sakka* is every where; he is present whenever and wherever he is needed to help out the Buddha. He is the protector of Buddha sasana and thus, in the Buddhist context, he is very prominent to the Burmese Buddhist. Every new year, he will come down to pay a visit to the human world. Every mid April, there is the Feast of the New Year. The astrologers have published broadsheets in which the details of the New Year forecasts are given. This is the time, when the King of the Gods, (*Sakka*) *Thagyamin*, comes down to the earth for his annual visit.

Thagyamin, brings with him two big volumes, one bound in dog-skin, the other in gold, and he records in the dog-skin book the names of those who have committed misdeeds during the course of the year, and in the gold book the names of those who have performed acts of merit.

On the front porch of every house there stand the *New Year pots* filled with special flowers and special leaves (*Tha Pye Pan*) to welcome Sakka. At the exact time of his arrival the head of the household lifts up the pots towards the sky as a gesture of homage, and at the exact time of his departure the head of the household pours out slowly the water from the pots on to the ground with a prayer for good fortune, good rainfall and good harvest for the coming year. As both the husband and the wife are joint heads of the family these ceremonies are performed either by the husband or the wife or by both, and are performed simply and quietly.

Among the few Hindu Gods, Vishnu, (Maha Peiktano Nat Min Gyi) was next and then Ganesha (Maha Peinne nat Min Gyi) are the most popularly worshipped as Burmese gods.

The Thagyamin, the King of the Gods, is none other than **SakKa**. In Hinduism he was **Indra**, the god of the thunder bolt, but he was adopted by Buddhism as its guardian-god under the name of *Sakka*. When Prince Siddhatta, the future Buddha, after renouncing his family and his kingdom, cut off his hair to become an ascetic, Sakka received the hair in a golden bowl, and taking it to the abode of the gods. He built a pagoda over it, *Sulamani Cedi*. According to Mahavamsa, the standard chronicle of Ceylon, **he was charged by the Buddha to see to the establishment of Buddhism in Ceylon and to act as its special guardian there.** According to a Burmese belief, when the Buddha was nearing his death he thought of ordaining that his religion should last 2,500 years, but Sakka begged him to increase the period to 5,000, promising to guard it with his thunderbolt during the second 2,500 years. Although this Burmese legend is not found either in the Pali Canon or the Commentaries, many Burmese still insist on referring to the present era of Buddhism as '**Thagya's Era of Buddhism**'. (The 2,500th Anniversary of the Buddha's death occurred in **1956**, according to Burmese reckoning.)



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2.4 Nat hlaung

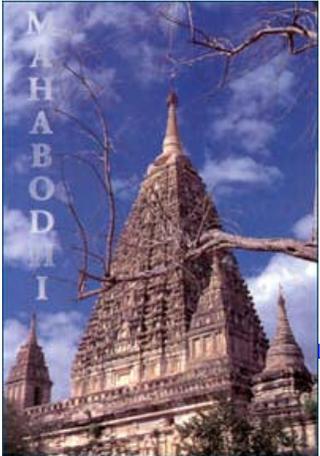
Kyaung (Vishnu Temple)

The only Hindu temple remaining in Bagan is *Vishnu Temple*. It was built by King Taungthugyi in 931; about a century before the southern school of Buddhism came to Bagan following the conquest of Thaton. The temple is dedicated to the **Hindu god Vishnu** and around the outside wall are figures of the "ten Avatars", Gautama Buddha was said to be the ninth. The central brick pillar supports the dome and crumbled sikhara and once had figures of Vishnu on each of the four sides.



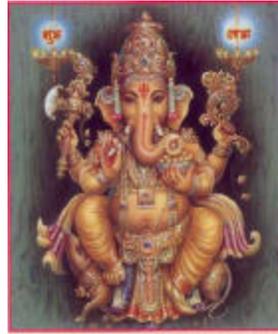
2.5 Maha Bodhi Pagoda - Hindu Architecture

Modeled after Indian style temples, this pagoda is unique in Myanmar. It was built during the reign of



Nantaungmya (1211-1234). The pyramidal spire, covered in niches each enclosing a seated Buddha figure, rises from a square block.

2.5 Shwesandaw Pogoda (Ganesha Pagoda)



Shwesandaw Pagoda (Ganesha)

Shwe-san-daw Pagoda aka. Mahapeinne Pagoda - Ganesha Pagoda

It is a cylindrical stupa with five terraces: the first to be built by *King Anawrahta* after his conquest of Thaton in AD-1057. It is said that some sacred hairs of Gotama Buddha, which were obtained from the Mon city-state of Thaton, were enshrined. The pagoda is also known as the *Mahapeinne* or *Ganesha Pagoda*.

3.0 The Immortals

Alchemy also came to Burma from India but Burmese alchemy became a religious cult. The Burmese alchemists did not merely seek the power to transmute base metals into gold; he also had the noble aim of evolving an eternally youthful body, which would be an answer to the perpetual human lament that beauty and youth must pass.

The followers of the cult of alchemy modified their conception of an eternally youthful body to that of a body remaining youthful for thousands of years in order to conform to the Buddhist doctrine that nothing is permanent, and justified their search for the elixir of youth by saying that they wanted to live until the coming of the next Buddha so that they could listen to his preaching. The followers of the cult of astrology threw a veneer of Buddhism over their ritual and ceremony, as, for example, in the case of the ceremony of the Nine Gods, where the gods of the nine planets gave way to Buddha and his eight disciples.

3.1 The Nine Arahats (Phaya Ko Zu)

In the nine Gods ceremony, the master of the ceremony will place the Buddha image at the center and the images of eight of his Chief Disciples (all *Arahats*) at the cardinal points. (See also Burmese version Appendix – A)

<i>North-east</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South-east</i>
Rahula	Kodanna	Revata
<i>North</i>	<i>Centre</i>	<i>South</i>
Moggallana	<i>Buddha</i>	Sariputta
<i>North-west</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>South-west</i>
Gavampati	Ananda	Upali

Of the eight *Arahats*, six are well known to all Buddhists, but two, *Revata* and *Gavampati*, are not so frequently mentioned in the Buddhist scriptures. Sariputta and Moggallana were the Chief and Vice-Chief Disciples of the Buddha.

Sariputta was in his wisdom next only to the Buddha himself. **Moggallana** was famous for his supernatural powers, and using these powers he often visited the abode of the Gods and the various other worlds of the universe; he even subjugated the Great *Naga* of Mount Mayyu and once scolded Sakka, King of the Gods, and the Great God, Brahma Baka.

Kodanna was one of the eight Brahmin astrologers who were invited by the king, the Buddha's father, to prognosticate the future of his new-born son, and while the other seven foretold that the child would become either the Buddha or the emperor of the universe, Kodanna alone announced that the child would become the Buddha definitely. Confident in his own prophecy he renounced the world and, becoming a recluse in the forest, he awaited the appearance of the Buddha. He was one of the 'Five Recluses' to whom the Buddha preached the First Sermon, and who became, therefore, the first members of the Buddha's Order.

Ananda was a cousin and the attendant of the Buddha. He was so busy attending on the Buddha that he had no time to meditate and become an *Arahat* during the Buddha's life time. He was well-loved by monks and laymen alike because of his humility and good-nature. When the Buddha lay dying, surrounded by *Arahats* and Gods, Ananda was human enough to cry like a child until the Buddha consoled him. **Upali** was the barber to the prince cousins of the Buddha, and when his masters renounced the world he also followed suit. He became the chief authority on the *Vinaya*, or the rules of discipline of the Order. **Rahula** was the Buddha's only son and was received into the Order when he was still a child; after becoming an *Arahat* he became one of the Chief Disciples on his own purity and merit.

Revata and **Gavampati** were also possessors of unusual supernatural powers. Revata once created, by his super natural powers, splendid monasteries for the Buddha and his monks while they were passing through a wilderness, and **Gavampati** once stopped the tide and thus saved some monks from drowning as they slept on a sand-bank. Revata was the youngest brother of Sariputta, and

although he made his abode in the forest he used to come and visit the Buddha and Sariputta regularly. He was later declared by the Buddha to be the **foremost of the forest-dwelling monks of his Order**. As he foresaw that his end was approaching he went and visited the Buddha and Sariputta for the last time, and on his way back to the forest he was mistaken for a thief by some king's officials and arrested and taken to their master. Revata now announced that he was a monk and an *Arahat*, and sitting cross-legged in the air he preached a sermon to the king. As he finished his sermon he died and flames rose out of his body and consumed it.

Gavampati was a god with a golden palace before he was born as Gavampati, but unlike other palaces which disappeared with the death of their gods, this palace did not disappear; Gavampati, in fact, used to spend much of his time in his old age in this palace among the gods, and he was there when he was invited to come and participate in the First Synod, held soon after the Buddha's death. He realized, however, that his own death was imminent and after making an offering to the Order of his begging-bowl and his robes, he died. According to purely Mon and Burmese tradition (i.e. not according to the general Buddhist tradition), Gavampati in a previous birth was a native of Lower Burma; he was hatched from an egg laid by a **Naga-Princess after her union with an alchemist**, but he died when he was only ten years of age; when he was later reborn as Gavampati and became an *Arahat* he remembered his previous life, and on his invitation the Buddha himself visited the kingdom of Thaton in Lower Burma. According to another local tradition Gavampati did not die at the time of the First Synod, and he even assisted in the foundation of the Pyu city of Prome. *The special supernatural powers attributed to Revata and Gavampati impressed the early Burmese. Revata was adopted as their patron saint by the magicians, alchemists, hermits, and monks who dwelt in the Burmese forest performing austerities, and Gavampati became the patron saint of the Mons and the Pyus.*

3.2 The Worship of Five Great Gods

In the Burmese Phaya Ko Zu Ceremony, they include five Great Gods, namely: *Thurathati, Sandi, Paramay-thwa, Maha-Peinne, Peikthano or Gawra-manta*. All these goddesses and gods are Hindu in origin.

1. *Thurathati* is the Hindu goddess Saraswati, the consort of Brahma;
2. *Sandi* is *Chandi*, the consort of Siva;
3. *Paramay-thwa* is *Siva* himself;
4. *Maha-Peinne* is the Burmese name for Ganesh (Burmese Ganesh and the other Hindu gods are considered in detail in another article), the elephant-headed god;
5. *Peikthano* is *Vishnu*, or *Gawra-manta* or 'he with the horse' is the ninth (and future) incarnation of Vishnu.

So the cult of worshipping to the patron saints generates many specialty cults as known in Hindu tradition of worship. Alchemy also came to Burma from India but Burmese alchemy became a religious cult. The Burmese alchemist did not merely seek the power to transmute base metals into gold; he also had the noble aim of evolving an eternally youthful body, which would be an answer to the perpetual human lament that beauty and youth must pass. The alchemy cults include – immortality through the use of mercury metal, iron, zinc, etc.

3.3 Miracle Monk: Shin Itsa Gawna

Shin Itsa Gawna was said to be one of the most influential person in Bagan Kingdom. He is the monk who turned the population to riches by Alchemy (the study of prolongation of life and transmutation of base metals into gold).

King of Bagan supported Shin Itsa Gawna until the king's treasure ran out with no satisfactory results. As the legends goes, the king accused the monk a liar, and punished him by taking out both of his eyes. Monk Gawna got upset and decided to abandon Alchemy. He threw away all his work into the toilet well and there things brightened up and exploded.

He knew that was it! He made it. He finally made that *Dutlone* (a magic wand metal ball).

But both of his eyes were gone. He sent his men to a market to find any eye they can get from butchers. His men got a *cow's eye* and a *goat's eye*. The monk put them into his eye pits, rubbed with the *Dutlone* which he treated with Alchemy. He could see again!

Monk Gawna was happy. The king was happy. The country was happy.

The legend continues that Shin Itsa Gawna announced to the city of Bagan to collect any pieces of metal into pots and pans in every front yard. He went around the city of Bagan to every home, turning all pieces of metal into gold! This is how Shin Itsa Gawna made everyone in Bagan rich.

That's how the story goes. No one can confirm whether this was true or not. But we can see statues of Buddha with 1 small eye and 1 big eye, which are said to be made in memory of Shin Itsa Gawna, the miracle monk.

Across the Golden land, many householder practice alchemy and Samadha Bhavana to gain benefit for their mundane life. Monks also practice alchemy to attain *Dutlone* for the elixir of youth and immortality. Many aspire to become Bhodisatta, Phaya su pan min yauk kyar or live long enough to listen to the preaching of Metreyya Buddha. Buddhism in this Golden land has a mix of Buddha and deities.

The most popular immortals in recent time are: -

Bo Bo Aung



Bo Min Gaung

Yar Kyaw Sayadaw



Taung Dhan Tha Tha Nar Pyu Sayadaw



Many, who practice alchemy, pay their respect and revere the immortals so they can help them to gain the miracle power. Many hope to attain the miraculous philosopher stone called – *Dat Lone* – the ultimate elixir of Youth.

In Myanmar, both householders and Monks alike practice the Alchemy. One must be virtuous and maintain life-long five precepts, at the same time work on *Samadhi* (Concentration). With time, their virtuous life style will pay-off by gaining supernatural power of communion with *Devas* and *immortals*. The celestial power is bestowed on the practitioner with the gift of *clairvoyant, clairaudient, and Clair telepathy*. That was the rational for worshipping the immortals.

Among the practitioners seeking celestial power, some attained the power to recollect many thousands existences and some do acquired the power the ability to speak in many dialects. Like Vipassana meditation, only the hard working practitioners could achieve the miraculous ability. There are many in Burma who have such power and some who truly possessed philosopher stone of some miraculous degree.

References:

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Appendix – A

(က) ပူဇော်ရာတွင် ပါဝင်သည့် ပုဂ္ဂိုလ်များ

ဘုရားကိုးဆူ ပူဇော်ပွဲ ဟူသော အမည်ကို ကြည့်ကာ မသိသူတို့က ရုတ်တရက် ကိုးပါးသော ဘုရားတို့ကို ပူဇော်ပသမှုပြုခြင်းဟု ထင်မှတ်ကြသည်။ သို့သော် ဤသို့မဟုတ်ပါ။ တစ်ပါးတည်းသော ဘုရားနှင့် ရဟန္တာအရှင်သူမြတ် ရှစ်ပါးတို့ကို အမှူးပြုသည့် ပူဇော်သမှုသာဖြစ်သည်။ ရဟန္တာ အရှင်သူမြတ်တို့သည်လည်း ပူဇော်ခံထိုက်သူများ ဖြစ်ကြသဖြင့် ဘုရားရှင် နှင့် တန်းတူပြု၍ ဘုရားကိုးဆူဟု ရေတွက်ကြခြင်းသာ ဖြစ်၏။

ထို ဘုရားကိုးဆူပွဲတွင် ပါဝင်သော ရဟန္တာ အရှင်သူမြတ် ရှစ်ပါးတို့ကား—

- (၁) ရှင်သာရိပုတ္တရာ၊
- (၂) ရှင်မဟာမောဂ္ဂလာန်၊
- (၃) ရှင်အာနန္ဒာ၊
- (၄) ရှင်ဂဝံပတိ၊
- (၅) ရှင်ရေဝတ၊
- (၆) ရှင်ရာဟုလာ၊
- (၇) ရှင်ဥပါလိ၊
- (၈) ရှင်ကောဏ္ဍည တို့ ဖြစ်ကြ၏။

ရဟန္တာအရှင်သူမြတ်များစွာရှိသော်လည်း အရပ်ရှစ်မျက်နှာနှင့် အပ်စပ်သည်ဆိုကာ ဤ ရဟန္တာ ရှစ်ပါးကိုသာ ရွေးချယ် ပူဇော်ကြ၏။