

## Three Stūpas that Human Beings Cannot See

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### Abstract

*Stūpas* are one of the signs that Buddhists take refuge in. People pay obeisance to those *stūpas* by aiming at Buddha and his wisdom. Relics and utilities of Buddha are enshrined in pagodas and Buddha images are sculptured to aim and pay obeisance to Buddha. Therefore, after Buddha had attained *Nibbāna*, the relics of Buddha were enshrined and worshipped. Since the time Buddha was alive, the deity beings and Brahmins built *Chūlāmaṇi stūpa* in *Tāvataṃsā* abode, *Dussa stūpa* in the abode of *Brahma* and *Mahesara stūpa* in *Mandhagiri* hill in Himalayas to pay homage by aiming at Buddha. This paper aims to highlight the fact that people cannot see those *stūpas* since they are created by *Brahmas*.

**Keywords:** Tāvataṃsā, Nibbāna, Brahmas, Stūpas

### Introduction

The term “*stūpa*” derived from Sanskrit word “*Caitya* (Sanskrit Dictionary, 402:1990. Delhi: Narendra Prakash) and Pāli word “*Cetiya*” (Tīpi-dan,2000: 587; Hote Sein, U.1954:396). In *Tipiṭaka* dictionary, it is stated as “*stūpa*, pagoda, shrine or *gandhakuṭī* monastery” (Tīpi-dan, 2000: 790; Hote Sein, U.1954:396). “*Pathoe*” derived from Sanskrit word “*stūpa*” and Pāli word “*thūpa*”. In *Apādāna aṭṭhakathā*, it was stated that the term “*thūpa*” is used since it was made in mass amount and built for the pagodas and *stūpas* throughout Myanmar. Among them, three *stūpas* that ordinary people cannot see will be presented.

### Aim

The aim of this paper is to know the relationship between the life story of the Buddha and that Pagoda, to observe Buddhist art and architecture, to notice the intangible culture concerning with the customs, traditions, religion and belief and to know that pagodas have existed in the abode of celestial being rather than people, and that pagodas, which are a symbol of Buddhism, are also worshiped in the land of gods and *Brahma* (the higher celestial regions).

### Materials and Methods

This research paper uses the Descriptive method and Archival method. This study is a religious study. Facts used in this paper were quoted from the Pāli literature, commentaries (*Aṭṭhakathā*), sub-commentaries (*Tīkā*), and other miscellaneous religious literature.

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## Discussion

### The Beginning of Worshipping

Early human beings who did not have enough knowledge for worshipping were afraid whenever they suffered from various diseases and faced flood, earthquake, lightning, wildfire, rumbling and thunderstorm since they did not have anything for worshipping.

Therefore, they looked for a powerholder who could remove different disasters. (Minsithu 2013: intro-ka). They believed that there were spirit guardians for rivers, streams, fire, water, wind, trees and mountains, and they could bring positive and negative effects for human beings. Therefore, they worshipped the nature and they created spirit beings and deity beings in their imagination.

### Worshipping with Wisdom

After worshipping the nature for a long time, human beings started to look for the worshipping accompanied with wisdom. After worshipping the nature, deity beings and guardian spirits created in imagination, Buddha attained enlightenment in Mizzima region six centuries before Christ. (Minsithu 2013: intro -ga)

*Gotama* Buddha was accomplished with truly virtuous qualities from the beginning to the end and guided the people the right ways such as eight ways to *Nibbāna* to escape from *samsāra* (birth and rebirth cycle). Buddha also made *Vinaya* (disciplines) and rules of conducts for his disciples to practice. The blessing one attained *Nibbāna* at the age of eighty, forty-five Buddhist lent.

After that, the relics of Buddha's body were enshrined in *thūpa* (*stūpas* and pagodas) and they were paid homage by aiming the alive Buddha and Buddha statues are sculptured. (Minsithu 2013: intro-gha).

### Gotama Buddha, the Exaltation of Buddhists

*Siddhattha* was born as the son of Queen *Māyā Devī* and King *Suddhodana*, leader of the *Sakya* clan in the kingdom of *Kapilavattu* in *Kosala*, in the garden of *Lumbinī* located between *Kapilavattu* and *Devadaha*. (Bv, A, 2, 32). At the age of sixteen, *Siddhattha* got married to *Bhaddakiccanā* (*Yasodharā*), the daughter of *Suppabuddha* king and entitled the royal property. (Bv, A, II, 2011: 152-153)

After entitling the royal property for thirteen years, until the age of 29, the son *Rāhulā* was born. On that day, *Siddhattha* saw the vision of four persons the aged, the sick, the dead and the recluse. Therefore, he got apprehension and tried to find ways to escape from troubles such as aging, illness and death. Then, he decided to give away all his wealth away and live in the renunciation. (Bv, A, II, 2011: 155-167)

He was practicing *dukkaracariyā* in *Uruvela* forest for six years. After that, he knew four truths and got enlightenment under Bodhi tree. (Minsithu, 2013: 3-4) After getting enlightenment, the blessing one uttered *Dhamma* for 45 Buddhist lent and entered *Nibbāna* in *Lumbinī* garden near

*Kusinārā* country. (Bv, A, II, 2011: 233-262)

### Giving Permission to Build Stūpa

The residents of *Sāvatti* went to *Jetavana* monastery to see Buddha. At that time, Buddha was visiting cities and villages to preach Dhamma. They could not meet Buddha. Therefore, they were displeased physically and mentally. They left after leaving flowers, candles and incense they had taken at the gate of *Gandakuṭī*.

While Buddha got back from itinerary, *Anāthapiṇḍika* merchant approached to Shin Ānanda and asked him to tell Buddha to put something for paying homage when Buddha was away. Shin Ānanda said that case to Buddha. Buddha uttered about *Cetiya* and took the seed from *Mahā* Bodhi tree located near the gate. Then, he uttered to plant Bodhi tree and said “Ānanda, if Bodhi tree is grown in *Jetavana* monastery, it is the same as I am residing here”. (J. A. IV.1959: 229)

#### Four Types of *Cetiyas*

1. *Sārīrika Cetiya* - enshrined with the relics of Buddha’s Body (Also known as *Dātu Cetiya*)
2. *Paribhoga Cetiya* - enshrined with requisites used by the Buddha and Bodhi tree
3. *Uddissa Cetiya* - built or made in remembrance of the Buddha by aiming the features of Buddha
4. *Dhamma Cetiya* - recorded *Dhamma* such as *Paṭīccasamuppāda* on the silver of golden plate ( J, A,IV, 228-237).

#### Four Types of *Thūpāraha*

There are four types of people who deserved to be paid homage by human beings and deity beings are

1. Buddha, the blessing one
2. *Paccekabuddha*
3. *Arahats*
4. *Cakkavatti* king who is accomplished with seven kinds of Four-Wheel treasure. (D II,1957: 117; A, IV 1982: 567)

#### The Period of Building Pagoda

The place where people keep as a thing of worship is called in Sanskrit, *Caitya*, in *Pāḷi*, it is called *Cetiya*. Therefore, *Ceti* is a *Pāḷi* derivative word which means something which is elevated, a heap or something which could be taken measured. In other word, it means *stūpa*, pagoda and shrine which is worshipped and paid homage by people. Everything which is worshipped according to the belief such as tree, forest, mountain, a collection of sand, bricks and statues can be regarded as *Ceti*. *Cetya* = *Cetiya* (1) Big tree near the village (2) Tree for the spirit being (3) Shrine for spirit being (4) *stūpa* (5) The place of doing sacrifice (6) Place for taking guest. (Hote Sein, U, 1954: 396)

The word “Pathoe” derived from Sanskrit word “*Stūpa*” and it became “*Thūpa*”. It is worshipped by aiming at Buddha and paying homage to *Cetiya* or Pathoe or Buddha images. Among different *stūpas*, there are three *stūpas* which cannot be seen by ordinary human beings.

#### *Stūpas* Which cannot be Seen by Ordinary People

The first three *stūpas* in Buddhism which cannot be seen by human beings are-

1. *Cūlamani stūpa*
2. *Dussa stūpa* and
3. *Mahesara stūpa*

### ***Cūlāmaṇi Stūpa***

*Cūlāmaṇi Ceti* is built and worshipped in *Tāvātimsā* heaven, the second layer of the six layers for celestial beings.

The *Bodhisatta* to be tried to cut his hair by holding the royal dagger on his right hand and the hair knot together with crested head-dress on his left hand. Then, he cut off the hair. However, he did not remove all hair. Only the *Cūla* or the foremost part of hair was removed. The *stūpa* got the name “*Cūlāmaṇi*” since was built by enshrining the foremost part of the hair. (*Jinā*, Ṭ, 233. Bv, A, 332; Thito, 2000:1-5).

It is the *stūpa* built by king *Sakka* in *Tāvātimsā* heaven. *Siddhattha* prince rode *Kaṇḍaka* horse and left the palace together with Mg San. When they arrived at *Anomā* river, the prince asked Mg San and the horse to go back to the palace. Then, he cut off the hair knot and made the vow, “If I get the enlightenment, this hair knot should be existed in the sky. If I do not get the enlightenment, this hair knot should fall into the ground”. Then, the hair knot together with the head-dress was thrown to the sky and it stood still in the sky, one *yūzanā* above the ground. At that time, king *Sakka* saw the hair knot and took it in the treasure basket and enshrined it in *Cūlāmaṇi stūpa* which was decorated with seven treasures. (Bv, A, 322/332). The *stūpa* has a height of three *yūzanās*. It is built with Inda sapphire on the top of Mount Meru. It is built in *Tāvātimsā* heaven and has a height of thirty *yūzanās*. (*Jinā*, Ṭ, 261/233)

Not only the hair of Buddha but also the right eye-tooth of the Buddha which was hidden by Dona Brahmin in his hair while allocating the remaining relics to the kings of eight countries was also enshrined in the *Ceti*. Moreover, the right clavicle of Buddha was also enshrined there. *Cūlāmaṇi stūpa* is located on the second floor of the six floors of celestial abodes. It is worshipped by deity beings. The reasons for building the *stūpa* is as follows.

*Siddhattha* prince, the *Bodhisatta*, was enjoying his royal property in *Kapilavatthu* country. At the age of 29, he saw four signals: aging, sickness, death and monk. He got he got apprehension and abandoned the royal property. On the full moon day of year 97 of Bodaw *Añjana* king, at the midnight of Monday, he rode the *Kaṇḍaka* horse accompanied by *Chanda* servant and left the palace. After travelling for thirty *yūzanās* in one night, they crossed the *Anomā* river which has a width of eight *Usabha* (distance of 140 cubits). After that, he descended from the horse and gave his clothes and horse to *Chanda*, and asked him to go back to *Kapilavatthu*.

Then, he cut off his hair knot with the royal dagger and made the vow “If I will attain enlightenment, the hair would not fall into the ground and stay in the sky”. The hair stood still in the air like the festoon. *Sakka* saw the hair and took it with the treasure basket. The hair was enshrined in *Cūlāmaṇi stūpa* by decorating with seven treasures. According to *Buddhavaṃsā Atthakathā*, it has a height of three *yūzanās*.

According to *Buddhavaṃsa Atthakathā*, not only the hair but also the right eye-tooth, which was hidden by Dona Brahmin in his hair while allocating the relics of Buddha’s body to kings of eight countries, was enshrined in the *stūpa* by *Sakka*.

The right clavicle was not mentioned. However, it was assumed that *Sakka* took both the eye-tooth and the clavicle and enshrined them in the *stūpa*. Therefore, three relics of Buddha are enshrined in *Cūlāmaṇi stūpa*.

## Dussa Stūpa

*Ghaṭikāra Brahma*, who used to be closest friend with *Siddhattha* prince in the time of *Padumuttara* Buddha, was in *Avihā* abode for attaining the third stage of enlightenment. (S, I, 85. Ma. II. 242). After *Siddhattha* prince, the *Bodhisatta*, had cut off the hair, he thought that the clothes he was wearing were not appropriate for monks B he planned to abandon them. At that time, *Ghaṭikāra Brahma* who used to be the closest friend during the time of *Kassapa* Buddha offered *Siddhattha* eight articles for monks preserved in a lotus garden forming as the omen at the start of the world. (*Buddhavaṃ*, A, 333) (*Buddhavaṃ*, tha, 2, 205) Buddha to be took the robe from the eight articles and wore like a monk. After that, he took the eight articles and threw up his prince clothes. The Brahma took those clothes to *Suddhāvāsa* Brahma abode and enshrined them in the *stūpa*, which had a height of 12 *yūzanās*. (Bv,A, 2011: 323; Thito. 2000:5)

On one occasion, Ashin *Baddaji* Thera who got extraordinary power took *Dussa stūpa* at the height of a palm tree to the human abode and demonstrated it to human audience and monks. (Mv, 33,11)

The deity beings and *Brahmas* lived in *Kammaja* residence forming because of their fate. *Brahmas* do not enjoy sensual pleasure, whereas the deity beings enjoy it. *Nimmānarati* deity being wanted to enjoy the pleasure more than other kind of deity beings. Therefore, they created their own pleasure. When *Sakka*, the king of deity beings wanted to ride an elephant, a deity being changed himself into an elephant, and took *Sakka* to the place he wanted to go. Deity beings and *Brahmas* had such kinds of features.

Therefore, it is not needed to build *stūpas* with bricks in the abodes of Brahma and deity beings. They can create various jewelries, *Indanīlā* sapphire and the necessary height. In *Nimmita thūpa*, they paid homage to the hair knot and clothes of *Siddhattha*. The stupa is known as *Kammaja stūpa*.

1. Bricks are not needed for *stūpas* in the abode of Brahma
2. The *stūpa* is created with mind and fate. Therefore, normal human beings cannot see it.

## Mahesara stūpa

In Himalayas Mountain ranges, there was a mountain called *Mandagiri*. On that mountain, there was a deity being called *Mahesara*. On one occasion, Buddha was going to Nanthataw area in Himalayas and did the washing up. At that time, *Mahesara* deity approached Buddha and told that he wanted to compete power with Buddha. At that time, Buddha thought that the deity being had extraordinary power, and there would be much benefits for *sāsanā* if he came to believe it. On that competition, *Mahesara* deity being saw the power of Buddha and he regarded himself as the disciple after taking refuge in the three Gems. *Mahesara* deity being told Buddha, “The blessing one, you are too noble to have the ordinary food offered by human beings, so please stay in *Mandagiri* mountain and I will offer you the food of deity beings”. Buddha did not accept his idea. Therefore, the deity asked for the permission to keep Buddha image for worshipping. Buddha accepted that fact. Therefore, a glamorous monastery decorated with seven treasure was built in *Mandagiri* mountain (Mv,2001: 2526; Thito. 2000:5-7; Shin Thiri, 2016:1-9).

In that monastery, *Gandakuṭī* building was created. A Buddha image having all the features of Buddha was created and a monkey king and his followers were assigned the duty to maintain the furniture in monastery. That stupa is known as *Mahesara stūpa*.

## Conclusion and Discussion

Buddhists believe that Buddha as the subject to depend and worship. Therefore, they take refuge in Buddha. They have nothing to take refuge in except from Buddha. Most of the Buddhists inconsolably think that the life-span of Buddha is too short. They have great grief for that. Therefore, they worship the pagodas and *stūpa* by enshrining the relics of Buddha. In *Vimāna Pāli* and *Apādāna Pāli*, it is stated that paying homage to *stūpas* and pagodas is the same as paying homage to the alive Buddha. It can bring a lot of benefits. Not only the human beings but also the deity beings and Brahma build pagodas and pay homage to them. Among the pagodas and *stūpas*, three *stūpas* were built by deity beings and Brahmas. Therefore, normal people cannot see or visit those three *stūpas*. That Three *Stūpa* is not only a place that shares knowledge, but also a region when Buddhist culture and intangible, culture heritages exist , so I believe that this research paper will be useful to notice that fact those heritages should be preserved.

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