

The Study of the Four Historic *Simās* that Shin Arahan Consecrated in Mandalay

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Abstract

In this paper, the four *Simās* that were consecrated by Shin Arahan as Sunrise *Simā*, Noon *Simā*, Sunset *Simā* and Midnight *Simā* are presented in this paper. The state of the *Simās* in the present day, Shin Arahan's historical links, Min Shin Saw's religious works for the development of *Sāsanā* are presented for being taken as an exemplary and for emulation. Moreover, kinds of *Simā*, the accounts of consecration, the benefits that can be acquired by donation of *Simā* are also presented. This research work will enable to know the benefits that can be acquired by the donor of the *Simā*.

Key word : the four *Simās*, development of *Sāsanā*, donation of *Simā*

Introduction

The meaning of *Simā*

Myanmar means Sim (Thein), *Pāḷi* means *Simā*, English means a boundary (or) a limit (or) a chapter house for Buddhist monks. *Simā* is the place which is designated as a separate territory where all the *Samgha* assemble and perform the greater and lesser rites unitedly. The functions that have to be performed only by the monks such as ordination, assembly of *Samgha* reciting Vinayas in a *Simā*, asking to reprimand one another at the end of Buddhist Lent, offering of yellow robes, etc. are called greater and lesser rites. In performing one of the greater and lesser rites, the monks have to assemble in a *Simā*. The monks have to sit in the *Simā* at a distance of two cubits and a span. Such an assembly of monks is called "*kāyasamaggi*". This denotes bodily unity or agreement in satisfaction.

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The *Simā*, the place where the monks assemble is consecrated with *sīhasammutikammavācā* according to the Buddha's order and Vinaya rules. Such a consecrated order of *Sīhasammutikammavācā* penetrates and extends the mass of lithosphere which is 24 thousand yojanas in thickness to the hydrosphere below the lithosphere. Such a *Simā* cannot be destroyed by human king, celestial king, Brahma king and opposing enemy however much they may be powerful. Therefore *Simā* is the place which is indestructible by any person apart from the Saṃgha.

Kinds of Sīmā

There are two kinds of *Simā*. The *Simā* that is consecrated by a chapter of four monks or a chapter of monks more than four by reciting *ñattikammavācā* in unison and the *Simā* which becomes a *Simā* of its own accord without reciting *ñattikammavācā*. Of these two kinds of *Simā*, the first kind is called *Baddha Simā* (the *Simā* that is constituted of *ñattikammavācā*) and the second kind is called *Abaddha Simā* (the *Simā* not constituted of *ñattikammavācā*). Of these two kinds of *Sīmā*, *Baddha Sīmā* is further divided into three kinds, namely, (1) *Khaṇḍa Simā*, (2) *Samānasamvāsaka Simā* and (3) *Avippavāsa Simā*. *Abaddha Simā* is also subdivided into three kinds, namely, (1) *Gāma Simā*, (2) *Udakukhepa Simā* and (3) *Sattabbhantara Simā*.

Khaṇḍa Simā

The word "*khaṇḍa*" means division. *Khaṇḍasimā* has to be consecrated separately within the delimited area of *Mahāsimā*. Therefore it is a somewhat small *Simā*. The *Simā* that can accommodate from twenty monks to one thousand monks is called *Khaṇḍasimā*. Although the number of monk is more than a thousand, as the number falls within the limit of *Mahāsimā*, it is designated as *Khaṇḍasimā*. The *Simā* that is consecrated encompassing the whole monastery complex or one or two domains of village but not covering more than three *yojanas* is the *Mahāsimā*. Not only the *Simās* in Mandalay but also all the *Simās* in Myanmar country belong to the category of *Khaṇḍasimā*.

Samānasaṃvāsaka Simā

The word *Samānasaṃvāsaka Simā* means the place which is designated for assembling of the monks for performing greater or lesser religious rites with common agreement. This place can be *Baddha Simā* or *Abaddha Simā*.

Avippavāsa Simā

The word *Avippavāsa Simā* means that is consecrated for the benefit of staying on *Samānasaṃvāsaka* which is *Baddha Simā* free from three robes.

Gāma Simā

The word “*Gāma Thein*” is derived from *Pāḷi* word “*Gāma Simā*”. It means village boundary. The village boundary is not only the village within fencing but also the hills and the paddy fields belonging to the village. The place of village including the hills and paddy field is called *Gāma Simā*. The river, saline stream and naturally formed lakes within *Gāma Simā* are not called *Gāma Simā*. Not only the village boundary but also the boundary of large villages and towns are also called *Gāma Simā*. Therefore the boundary of village, the boundary of large village, and boundary of town means *Gāma*, *Gāma Simā* and *Gāma* domain. The above mentioned village boundary, large village boundary and town boundary become *Simās* of its own accord without consecration.

Udakukkhepa Simā

The word “*Upakukkhepa Simā*” means that is erected in shallow water. *Simās* erected in river, ocean and naturally formed lake become *Simās* automatically without consecration.

Sattabbhantara Simā

The word “*Sattabbhantara Simā*” means that becomes *Simā* automatically without consecration with *kammavācā* in a place without any inhabitants.

Shin Arahaṃ

The original name of Shin Arahaṃ was *Dhammadassi*. After becoming a monk when he came of age, he became an Arahat who was learned in *Piṭaka* literature. He became distinguished as “Arahaṃ”. Shin Arahaṃ’s teachers were Venerable *Mahākānu* and Venerable *Sīlavuddhi*. Shin Arahaṃ went to Pagan for the purification of *Sāsana*. He could preach King Anawratha to become convinced in the admonition of Therāvada Buddhism. After the arrival of Shin Arahaṃ, the *Sāsana* of Pagan brightened like sunshine and moonshine. Htisaung Pagoda, at the foot of Taywin Taung that was enshrined with bone relics of Shin Arahaṃ, can be worshipped until today. In Natmauk Htun Shein’s National literary award winning book, Prince Min Shin Saw, the son of King Alaung Sithu, was banished from Pagan. The Prince came to Mandalay with multitude of elephants, horses and troops. Then Prince Min Shin Saw invited Arahats such as Shin Arahaṃ to propagate the *Sāsana*. Furthermore in the book “Mandalay before King Mindon built Madalay Palace” it is also described that as Shin Arahaṃ Thera knew that Mandalay Shwe Taung area was going to be a place where the *Sāsana* flourished, King Anawratha and fifty Arahats headed by Shin Arahaṃ built *Simās* and consecrated. As Prince Min Shin Saw knew that the places where Shin Arahaṃ consecrated *Simās* were auspicious and replete with glory, he built town and palace on a place called Putetkon formerly (Botetkon now) to the west of Shin Arahaṃ *Simā*.

Therefore Shin Arahaṃ who built the four *Simās* is considered to be Shin Arahaṃ who came to Pagan from Thaton.



The Four *Simās*

There are four *Simās* in Mandalay that were consecrated by Shin Arahāṃ. They are:-

- (1) Sunrise *Simā*,
- (2) Noon *Simā*,
- (3) Sunset *Simā* and
- (4) Midnight *Simā*

It is noted that Shin Arahāṃ called these *Simās* as Sunrise *Simā*, Noon *Simā*, Sunset *Simā* and Midnight *Simā* with reference to the auspicious times when stakes were driven to mark off ground plan. These *Simās* were well known as Arahāṃ *Simās* because they were consecrated by Shin Arahāṃ himself. Although the original *Simās* that were built of teak, they were substituted with brick *Simās* when the teak structures were ruined. The four *Simās* belong to the category of *Khaṇḍa Simā*. The four *Simās* were consecrated by Shin Arahāṃ in B.E. 1601.

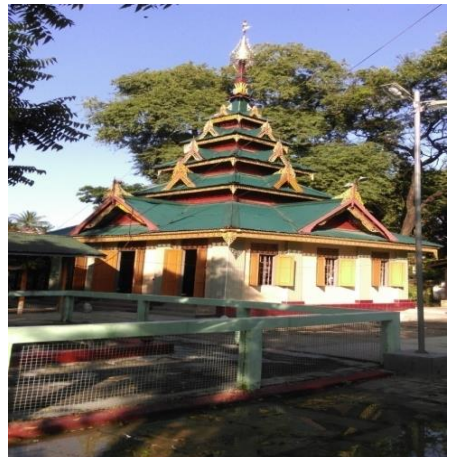
Sunrise *Simā*

Sunrise *Simā* is located at Botetkon village where Prince Min Shin Saw built a palace. It was included in Patheingyi Township. On the sixth waxing day of Wāso in M.E.1295, a person called U Sin from Thanpataw Village rebuilt the *Simā* with brick. It is 35' in length and 21' in wide. Most of the worldly persons who believe in omens go to the Sunrise *Simā* to pray for their success, prosperity, promotion, etc. when they are carrying out various worldly affairs.



Noon *Simā*

Noon *Simā* is located in the Ywa-U Kyaung in Kankauk Village. Now it is included in the additional quarter in the eastern part of Chanaye Thazan Township. Formerly it was included in Patheingyi Township. Kankauk quarter, relying on Aungpinle Lake, is located in the west of the embankment of Aungpinle Lake. U Chit Maung and Daw Ma Ma rebuilt the Noon *Simā* with brick M.E.1325. It is 21' in length and 15' in wide. Although Noon *Simā* was formerly built with three tiers, now it is built seven tiers. People are in the habit of going to this *Simā* before noon to pray for maintaining one's rank, and who do not want to be transferred.



Sunset *Simā*

Sunset *Simā* is located in the Nyaung Kwe Quarter on the west of the embankment near the Ayeyarwaddy River. Although Nyaung Kwe Quarter is not included in the list of quarters, it was a distinct place in history. On looking at the Mandalay map, it is a place where the Ayeyarwaddy embankment makes a bend to the east. It is adjoining with Obo Shwekyin Quarter on the east and Phyigyī Yanlon Quarter on the south. Thayettapin Village and Kyunpaung Village are located on the west. It is included in Aung Myay Thazan Township. Now the mass are reconstructed with teak pillars. It is 35' in length and 21' in wide. As this *Simā* has a Buddha Image that fulfills the prayers, it is well known as a pagoda that fulfills prayer for breaking off the habit of drinking and prayer after taking a vow.



Midnight *Simā*

The Midnight *Simā* is located on the east of Mandalay-Yangon highway within the compound of Pyay Kyaung Taik in Taguntaing Quarter in Pyigyī Tagun Township. Queen Sīmahāratanaṅdevī rebuilt the *Simā* on the fifth waxing day of wāso in M.E.1218. Now the Midnight *Simā* is graceful with stucco flower decoration as it has been reconstructed with

brick. But as the teak doors are still in good condition, they are found to be reused remarkably. The Midnight *Simā* is 42' in length and 42' in wide. It is known that the persons who want to compound medicine, those who to overpower sorcery and those who want to make solemn vow usually go to this *Simā*.

Out of many *Simās* which were consecrated Shin Arahāṃ who was a missionary Thera in the Pagan period, the four *Simās*, namely, Sunrise *Simā*, Noon *Simā*, Sunset *Simā* and Midnight *Simā* are particularly distinctive *Simās* on account of the people's beliefs because the lay-men go to these *Simās* to make solemn resolutions.



The Benefits of Donation of *Simā*

There are four kinds of benefit acquired from donation of *Simā*. They are:-

- (1) Just as the monks receive *adhisīla sikkhā* (training in higher morality) in the *Simās* donated by one-self, one will meet with Buddha *Sāsanā* in every life in the *Sam̐sāra* and will able to practice *adhisīla sikkhā*.
- (2) Just as the monks cleanse the breached morality on the *Simā* donated by one-self, one is free from breached morality and the danger of *sīlavipatti* in every life in the *Sam̐sarā*.

- (3) Just as the monks cleanse themselves of the breached morality and free from the dangers of *saggattaraya* (the danger of celestial journey) and *maggattaraya* (the danger of *magga*, the donors of *Simā* do not meet with *saggattaraya* and *maggattaraya* and also free from *apayavaṭṭa* in every life in the *Saṃsāra*.
- (4) Just as the *Simā* that one has donated exists penetrating the great earth, one will definitely acquire the indestructible benefit.

Conclusion

Among gems, diamond is the noblest. Among the offerings, the food received in the alms-bowl is the noblest. Among offerings of yellow robes, the offering of yellow robes between the first waning days of Thadingyut to the full-moon day of Tazaungmon is the noblest. Among the offerings of monastery, the offering of *Simā* is the noblest. Therefore the ancient scholar set a traditional saying: “diamond in pagodas, *Simā* in monasteries, *kathina* in robes, alms in the bowl is the noblest. In the Buddha *Sāsanā* there can be monks only when there are *Simās* (ordination halls). Only when there are monks, Buddha *Sāsanā* will be propagated, perpetuated and thrive. From the Buddha’s time to the present day, the prospective monks become monks on the *Simās* and carry out the religious affairs. Without the existence of various *Simās*, the prospective monks cannot be admitted into the Order of *Samgha*. Therefore *Simā* is a great and noble institution for propagation and perpetuation of Buddha *Sāsanā*.

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ငွေပန်းရုံဆရာတော်၊ ဒေသနာပန်းခင်း(ပထမတွဲ)၊ ၁၉၈၅၊ ရန်ကုန်မြို့။

ထွန်းရှိန်၊ နတ်မောက်၊ ဝင်းတွေနဲ့တည်ခဲ့သည့်မင်းနေပြည်တော်၊ အမျိုးသားစာပေဆု(သုတပဒေသာဝိဇ္ဇာ)၊ ၂၀၀၁၊ မန္တလေးနေ့စဉ်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ မန္တလေးမြို့။

ပညာမဟာထေရ်၊ အဂ္ဂမဟာပဏ္ဍိတ၊ အရှင်သီဟဝိနိစ္ဆယကျမ်း၊ ၁၉၉၉၊ သာသနာရေးဦးစီးဌာနပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ရန်ကုန်မြို့။

မြန်မာစွယ်စုံကျမ်း၊ အတွဲ-၁၃၊ ၁၉၇၄၊ စာပေဗိမာန်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ရန်ကုန်မြို့။

မှန်နန်းရာဇဝင်တော်ကြီး၊ စတုတ္ထတွဲ၊ ၂၀၀၈၊ မုံရွေးပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ရန်ကုန်မြို့။

ရွှေရိုးမန္တလေး၊ မင်းတုန်းမင်းမြို့နန်းမတည်မီကမန္တလေး၊ ၂၀၁၅၊ ရွှေရိုးစာအုပ်တိုက်၊ ရန်ကုန်မြို့။

သာသနာလင်္ကာရစာတမ်း၊ ဟသာဝတီဝိဇ္ဇာကတ်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၅၆၊ ရန်ကုန်မြို့။

သီလနန္ဒာဘိဝံသ၊ အရှင်၊ ဒုတိယနာယကဆရာတော်၊ အဘယာရာမရွှေဂူတိုက်၊ သိမ်သင်တန်း၊ ၁၉၇၈၊ ဟံသာဝတီဝိဇ္ဇာကတ်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ရန်ကုန်မြို့။

ဟုတ်စိန်၊ ဦး၊ ပါဠိ-မြန်မာအဘိဓာန်၊ ပြည်ထောင်စုမြန်မာနိုင်ငံတော်အစိုးရပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၅၄၊ ရန်ကုန်မြို့။