

Dressing and Hair Styles of Deva of Nyaungyan Period in Mural Paintings

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Abstract

This paper studies the hair styles and dressing in Nyaungyan period that will provide the importance of Myanmar culture in archaeology because only a few articles have been written about them. Most researchers focus on the development of the mural paintings. The mural paintings of the Nyaungyan period can provide the important clues to the celestial decoration items. The celestial decoration items such as the figures of the Buddha, monks and Devas are worth paying special attention. The dressing styles of the Devas in Myanmar are rather different to commoners and they are dressed like a royalty. The finding of the figures of Devas in mural paintings testifies that they were once adorned like Kings. This paper will highlight the styles of dress and hair style of Devas from mural paintings in Nyaungyan period (1597-1752 CE).

Key Words: Celestial decoration, Mural painting, Devas

Introduction

Paintings are the interesting articles in the study of Myanmar culture and they can be seen in Bagan, Pakokku, Pakhan Gyi, Pinya, Sagaing, Aneint, Amyint, Powintaung, Salingyi and Yesagyio in central Myanmar. To fulfill the archaeological research purpose, this paper focuses on the paintings of the Buddhas, the life scenes of the Buddha, twenty-eight Buddhas with their respective Bodhi trees, monks and mostly the Devas especially the Brahma and the Indra. The dressing styles of the Devas in Myanmar are rather different to commoners and they are dressed like royal families. The term 'Deva' is applied to the Indra, Deva, Brahmas, and it is widely used in religious texts. The term Deva derived from the root '*Nata-pali*' and it means to worship. There are three types of Devas in Pali Literature and they are '*Sammuti*, *Upapatti* and *Visuddhi*'. The term '*Sammuti*' is used to imply the leader of the society such as the King, the crown prince etc. The term '*Upapatti*' is used to imply the Devas in '*Cātumahārājika* Deva realm and they can be subdivided into '*Kāmapon*, *Rūpabon* and *Arūpabon* Devas. The term '*Visuddhi*' is used to signify the holy persons such as the Buddha, the *Pacceka Buddha* and *Arahat*. Among the three Devas, *Upapatti* and *sammuti* Devas possess the beautiful appearance. The figures of the *Upapatti* and *sammuti* can be observed in the wall paintings with the figure of the Indra and Brahma. The figures of the Indra, the Brahmas and Devas are decorated like the kings and they are painted on the wall paintings with the Buddha.

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The decorative items of the Devas

The decorative items of the Devas are a bit different from other persons and they usually wore the headdress. The headdress of the Devas are the main part of the celestial beings and they are varied to different shapes and designs. The headdress of the Devas is called the '*baung, the crested headdress, and the thraphu* and they consist of the '*htupika, kalat, seindaung or tamayut, baung or kayut, gwedauk-kone, thin-gyit, and u-kup or u-kin, naradin or naking* etc. The necklaces of the Devas are also decorated with different items such as '*suhla-thabet, kanotetet, valakwei or leicha*'. The royal attires such as '*myinto, myinshei, tuyin, kharpon and du-kanotes*' are used to decorate to the Devas in the wall paintings. [Reff; Maung Maung Thiri, "မြန်မာမှုအခြေခံနည်းစနစ်များ မှတ်စု" (*The notes of the Myanmar Mhu Basic System*), Archaeology and Department of National Museum, Naypyitaw, 2018, December, P- 76.]

The Figure of Brahma

The pictures of Brahma and Indra can be seen throughout the history of Buddha. Buddhist litterateur says that there are two kinds of Brahmas: Rūpa Brahmas existent in 16 Rūpa realms and Arūpa Brahmas existent in 4 Arūpa realms. The Brahma that can be found in the history of the Buddha is the king of Brahma in Rūpa Realm. [Reff; U Aye Naing (B.A) Dhammarcariy, "ဗုဒ္ဓကျမ်းလာနတ်ဒေဝီ (*Deva in Buddhist Scripture*), Yangon, Alin Thit Sarpay, 2010, August(2nd Edition), P- 39, 40]

In every period, mural paintings contain Brahma in episode of Jātaka Story and the Great chronicle of Buddhas. The picture of Brahma drawn in the early Bagan period has 3 heads, 4 hands and 6 eyes. It is learned that the dressing styles are as follows. The Brahma's head is covered with Magai (crested headdress with ornamentation) and wearing crop top and short sleeved shirt. Some pictures can be seen without dressing upper garment. As nether garment, the Brahma is worn trouser with elastic band at the waist and wrapped the diaphanous cloth. Some Bhramas pictures can be seen knocking hair called Jātamakuṭa. In the late Bagan period, the pictures of Brahma were drawn only one head with a full face. It is like Indian style. (See Fig:1,2,3)

On the mural painting, supposed to be in the Pinya period, in the episode of cutting the hair of Prince Siddhattha in Kyike-lat Chaung(monastery), Brahma and Indra can be seen beside the Bodhisattva. Paṭikāra Brahma is offering the Buddha sacred robe in a lotus bed (As the painting is a little damaged, it is not clear) and the Indra is holding a Yek tail fly-whisk. Here the ornamentation of the Brahma's head is similar to the helmet in the Bagan period. By the time it was drawn, it was not far back in the Bagan period, the circle of beam is drawn in this mural

painting. (See Fig:4) And the Brahma is drawn beside Venerable Sāriputta on the right of the Bhūmiphassa Mudrā. The ornamentation of the Brahma's head is similar to the Magai of the Bagan kings. The neck is with Ba-le-gway (gorget with upswept wings), therefore it is like the dressing style in the Bagan period. (See Fig:5)

In the Nyaungyan period (second Inwa period), the Brahma's head is covered with Magai which contains a full band worn across the forehead and Naradin (ear lobe). And it is worn sleeveless jacket, full-skirted coat, long sleeved shirt, Duyin (the jacket of kings and princes) and lower garment which covers the lateral malleolus. Some have Ba-le-gway and some do not have.

On the mural painting in the episode of cutting the hair of Prince Siddhattha in Tilokaguru Chaung Brahma and Indra can be seen beside the Bodhisattva. Paṭikāra Brahma is offering the Buddha sacred robe in a lotus bed. In this painting, one can see the Brahma worn neem-leaf turban, green smock, Dabayat (the ornamentation sheet placed in the middle of the stomach), Ba-le-gway and red diamond shaped nether garment. (See Fig:6)

Two Brahmas and Indra can be seen on the mural painting in the episode of the Buddha descending from Tāvatiṃsa in the Aungtheikdhi pagoda, Yezagyō. One Brahma is in front of the Buddha and another one is behind the Buddha. The Brahma in front of the Buddha is adorned with Magai which contains Naradin, Ba-le-gway, Dabayat, green shirt with double three-quarter sleeve and red nether garment. The Brahma behind the Buddha is adorned with Magai which contains Naradin, Ba-le-gway, Dabayat, red long shirt and red nether garment. (See Fig:7)

Brahma and Indra can be seen on the mural painting in the episode of preaching the first sermon with Bhūmiphassa Mudrā in Taungbhi Piṭaka Teik, Bagan. The Brahma is adorned with Magai which contains Naradin, shawl on the neck and two Dabayats, double shirt with green sleeveless jacket and white full-skirted coat and a piece of garment tying around the wrist. (See Fig:8)

Brahma and Indra can be seen on the mural painting in No.266 Temple of Powin Hill in Yinmarbin Township. The Brahma is adorned with Magai which contains Naradin, shawl and Dabayat. He is worn double shirt with white sleeveless jacket and black full-skirted coat and white double length nether garment circle shape. (See Fig:9) The complexion of Brahma is differently drawn white. It is supposed to draw in accordance with the Buddhist literature. The Brahma's sīla and samādhi are spotlessly white, therefore it is drawn white.

On the mural painting in No.284 Temple of Powin Hill in Yinmarbin Township, Brahma can be seen next to the standing Buddha statue. The Brahma is adorned with gladiolus wreath Magai which contains Naradin, Ba-le-gway, shawl on the neck, sash across both shoulders, Dabayat on the sash, double shirt with green sleeveless jacket and full-skirted coat, red double length nether garment and a piece of garment tying around the wrist. (See Fig:10)

On the mural painting in No.1 Monywa, Salingyi Township, Brahma can be seen on the right of Buddha Statue, Bhūmiphassa Mudrā. The Brahma is adorned with Magai which contains Naradin, shawl on the neck dangling front and back. And the neck is adorned with Ba-le-gway, necklace under Ba-le-gway and sash across both shoulders is drawn on the Dabayat, however the sheet of Dabayat is placed on the sash, double shirt with green sleeveless jacket and full-skirted coat, white double length nether garment circle shape. (See Fig:11) In this temple, in the mural painting of requesting the Buddha to preach, he worn neem-leaf with Magai which contains Naradin, green shirt with three-quarter sleeve and red nether garment. He worn Ba-le-gway and shawl on the neck. (See Fig:12)

On the mural painting in Kyauk-taw-gyi pagoda, the style of Amarapura period, the Brahma is distinctly drawn with three heads. It is adorned with Magai, Ba-le-gway and protruded shoulder. (See Fig:13)

On the mural painting, which is the style of Yadanabon period, in the Maharmuni pagoda, the Brahma is adorned with Magai, Ba-le-gway and protruded shoulder, shawl arabesque. (See Fig:14)

In every period, Brahma is drawn on mural painting in the episode of the twenty-eight Buddhas from Taṇhaṅkarā to Gotama, the Buddha descending from Tāvatiṃsa, cutting the hair of Prince Siddhattha and requesting the Buddha to preach. Various kinds of ornamentation of the Brahma's head can be found in the Nyaungyan period. It is learned that there are four kinds of ornamentation: neem-leaf shaped turban, Magai, Magai with Thingyit (a full band worn across the forehead) and Naradin (ear lobe) and Magai with gladiolus wreath turban with Naradin. It is known that drawing Dabayat is the most common in the early Nyaungyan period and drawing two Dabayats in Taungbhi Piṭaka Teik is in the middle of Nyaungyan period. In the late Nyaungyan period, it is seen Dabayat and Salwe(sash). The word Salwe is the earliest. Salwe was just cord joining from left shoulder to right hip. In the late period, it was the cord that joined both sides, right and left and fixed flower at the chest where two cords coincide. [Shae Haung Sarpae Thutaethi Ta Oo - "နန်းမှုနန်းရာ အဆင်တန်ဆာနှင့် သိမှတ်ဖွယ်ရာများ" (Royal Custom, Dress and Ornamental and Knowledge), p. "Khi"]

The Figure of Indra

The pictures of Brahma and Indra can be seen in history of the whole life of the Buddha. Indra is the leader of the 33 chief Devas in Tāvatiṃsa Realm. [U Aye Naing *"Devas in Buddhist Scripture"*, P.216]

In every period, mural paintings contain Indra in episode of Jātaka Story and the Great Chronicle of Buddhas. The picture of Indra drawn in the Bagan period can be seen its head covered with neem-leaf shaped Golden Magai and wearing crop top and short sleeved shirt. For

lower garment, it is girding its loins and tying around the wrist with the peace of garment. It is like Indian style. (See Fig:15,16,17)

On the mural painting, supposed to be in the Pinya period, in episode of cutting the hair of Prince Siddhattha in Kyike-lat Chaung(monastery), Brahma and Indra can be seen beside the Bodhisattva. The Indra is holding a Yek tail fly-whisk. The ornamentation of the Indra's head is similar to the helmet in the Bagan period. By the time it was drawn, it was not far back in the Bagan period, the circle of beam is drawn in this mural painting. The Indra's head is covered with neem-leaf shaped Magai which contains a full band worn across the forehead and wearing crop top, short sleeved shirt and girding its loins. (See Fig:18)

In the Nyaungyan period (second Inwa period), the Indra's head is covered with Magai which contains a full band worn across the forehead and Naradin (ear lobe). And it is worn sleeveless jacket, full-skirted coat, long sleeved shirt, Duyin (the jacket of kings and princes). Some have Ba-le-gway and some do not have.

On the mural painting in episode of cutting the hair of Prince Siddhattha in Tilokaguru Chaung, Sagaing, one can see the Indra wearing turban the head and wearing black smock long to knee and putting the palms together. (See Fig:19)

On the mural painting in episode of the Buddha descending from Tāvātīmsa in the Aungtheikdhi pagoda, Yezagyō, the Indra can be seen holding conch shell, wearing neem-leaf turban and Ba-le-gway on the neck. (See Fig:20)

On the mural painting in Taungbhi Piṭaka Teik, Bagan, the Indra can be seen holding conch shell, wearing gladiolus wreath turban with Naradin, Ba-le-gway on the neck, two Dabayats, green shirt with the sleeveless jacket and red full-skirted coat, red double length nether garment and shawl. (See Fig:21)

On the mural painting in Temple No.266 of Powin Hill, the Indra can be seen holding a Yek tail fly-whisk with the right hand and conch shell, wearing gladiolus wreath turban with Naradin, shirt with white sleeveless jacket and black full-skirted coat, shawl, Dabayat and hook-shaped double length nether garment. (See Fig:22)

On the mural painting in No.284 Temple of Powin Hill in Yinmarbin Township, next to the standing Buddha statue, the Indra can be seen playing the harp, wearing gladiolus wreath turban with Naradin, Ba-le-gway on the neck and shawl. (See Fig:23) On the mural painting behind the sitting cross-legged Buddha statue in that No.284 Temple, the Indra can be seen holding a Yek tail fly-whisk and a conch, wearing gladiolus wreath turban with Naradin, Ba-le-gway on the neck and shawl, double green shirt with green sleeveless jacket and full-skirted coat, Dabayat under Ba-le-gway and sash drawn on the Dabayat, the sheet of Dabayat placed on the sash, nether garment and a piece of garment tying around the wrist. (See Fig:24)

On the mural painting in No.1 Monywa, Salingyi Township, the Indra can be seen holding the cylindrical pennant and conch shell, wearing gladiolus wreath turban with Naradin, Ba-le-gway on the neck and shawl, green shirt with green sleeveless jacket and full-skirted coat, Dabayat under Ba-le-gway and sash drawn on the Dabayat, the sheet of Dabayat placed on the sash, red double length nether garment and a piece of garment tying around the wrist. (See Fig:25) In this temple, in the mural painting of requesting the Buddha to preach, he is holding the conch, wearing neem-leaf turban, Ba-le-gway on the neck and shawl, white long smock and red nether garment. (See Fig:26)

On the mural painting in Kyauk-taw-gyi pagoda, the style of Amarapura period, the Indra is adorned with Magai, Magai, Ba-le-gway and protruded shoulder, shawl arabesque. (See Fig:27)

On the mural painting, which is the style of Yadanabon period, in the Maharmuni pagoda, the Indra is adorned with Magai, Ba-le-gway and protruded shoulder, shawl arabesque. (See Fig:28)

In every period, Indra is drawn on mural painting in the episode of the twenty-eight Buddhas from Taṇhaṅkara to Gotama, the Buddha descending from Tāvatiṃsa, cutting the hair of Prince Siddhattha and requesting the Buddha to preach. Various kinds of ornamentation of the Indra's head can be found in the Nyaungyan period. It is learned that there are four kinds of ornamentation: turban, neem-leaf shaped turban, neem-leaf shaped with Naradin and gladiolus wreath turban with Naradin.

Conclusion

The figures of Indra and Brahma on the wall paintings are rather popular and they can be seen in the mural paintings of the temples. The figure of Brahma in Nyaungyan period is decorated with detailed items. The figure of the Indra in Nyaungyan period is decorated like the Brahma. By seeing the holding umbrella over the head can easily know as Brahma, however mural paintings in the Nyaungyan period are not easily known Brahma. It is learned that things in the Brahma's hand can be changed up to the episode such as holding sacred robe in a lotus bed and tray in form of lotus in the episode of cutting the hair of Prince Siddhattha and holding lotus vase in the episode of requesting the Buddha to preach. Indra can be commonly known if holding conch shell, however, as the saying " The chief of the Devas is the Indra.", Indra is drawn the style of holding conch shell, putting the palms, holding harp in the arms and holding Yek tail fly-whisk. In every period, Indra is drawn in the episode of the twenty- eight Buddhas from Taṇhaṅkara to Gotama, the Buddha descending from Tāvatiṃsa, cutting the hair of Prince Siddhattha and requesting the Buddha to preach. However, when comparing Brahma with Indra, the decoration of Indra is slightly reduced and the difference is made clear. It is supposed to be that Ba-le-gway, shawl, sash, Dabayat in the dresses of royalty in Konebaung period descend from the Nyaungyan period.

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Shae Haung "နန်းမှုနန်းရတ အဆင်တန်ဆာနှင့် သိမှတ်ဖွယ်ရာများ" (Royal Custom, Dress and Ornamental and Knowledge)

Sarpae Thutaethi

Ta Oo

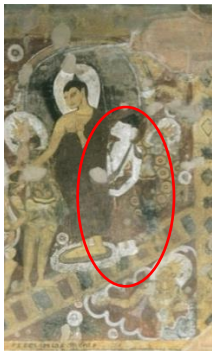


Fig:(1) (Brahma) Descending from Tāvatiṃsā in the Gu Pyauk Gyi



Fig:(2) (Brahma) Preaching the first sermon with Bumiphassa Mudra, Lawkahteikpan



Fig:(3) (Brahma) Descending from Tāvatiṃsā in the Hpaya Thone Zu(Bagan)



Fig:(4) Siddhattha in Kyike-lat Chaung Cutting the hair of Prince



Fig:(5) Brahma from Kyike-lat Chaung



Fig:(6) Cutting the hair of Prince Siddhattha in Tilokaguru



Fig:(7) (Brahma) Descending from Tāvātimsā in the Aungtheikdhi Pagoda, Yezagyo



Fig:(8) Brahma from Taungbhi Pitaka Teik, Bagan



Fig:(9) Brahma from No.266 Temple of Powin Hill in Yinmarbin Township



Fig:(10) Brahma from No.284 Temple of Powin Hill in Yinmarbin Township



Fig:(11) Brahma from No.1 Monywa, Salingyi Township



Fig:(12) Frm Brahma Requesting the Buddha to Preach, No.1 Monywa, Salingyi Township

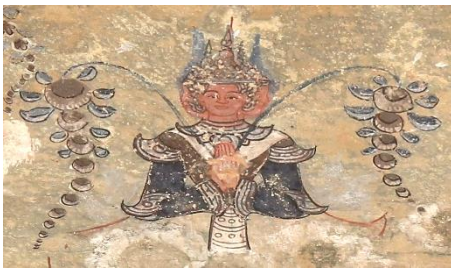


Fig:(13) Brahma from Kyauk-taw-gyi pagoda, Amarapura period



Fig:(14) Brahma from Maharmuni pagoda, Yadanabon period

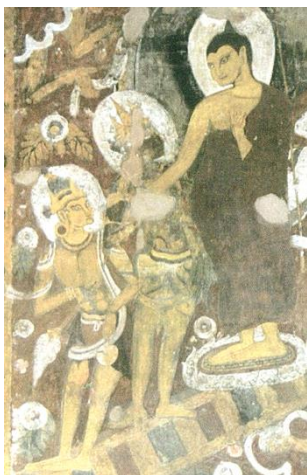


Fig:(15) Descending from Tāvatiṃsā in the Gu Byauk Gyi, Bagan



Fig:(16) (Indra) Preaching the first sermon with Bumiphassa Mudra



Fig:(17) Descending from Tāvātimsā in the Hpaya Thone Zu (Bagan)



Fig:(18) (Indra) Cutting the hair of Prince Siddhattha in Kyike-lat Chaung



Fig:(19) (Indra) Cutting the hair of Prince Siddhattha in Tilokaguru Chaung



Fig:(20) (Indra) Descending from Tāvātimsā in the Aungtheikdhi pagoda



Fig:(21) Indra from Taungbhi Pitaka Teik Bagan



Fig:(22) Indra from No.266 Temple of Powin Hill



Fig:(23) Indra from No.284 Temple of Powin Hill



Fig:(24) Indra from No.284 Temple of Powin Hill



Fig:(25) Indra from No.1 Monywa, Salingyi Township



Fig:(26) Indra from No.1 Monywa, Salingyi Township



Fig:(27) Indra from Kyauk-taw-gyi pagoda Amarapura period



Fig:(28) Indra from Maharmuni pagoda Yadanabon period

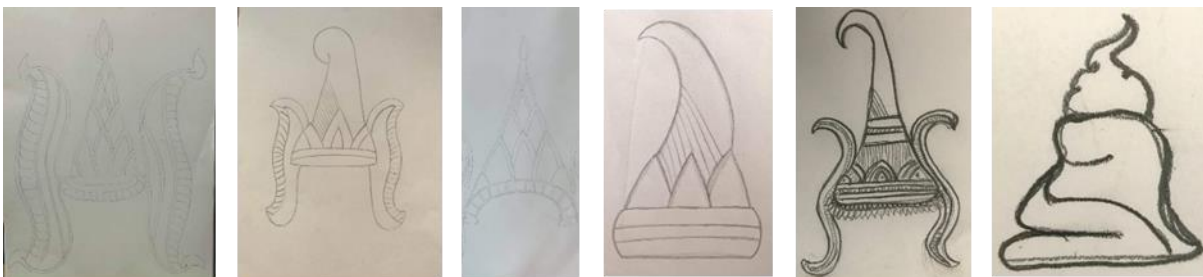


Fig:(29) Drawing Pictures of Deva's hair style