

# Moggaliputta Tissa Maha Thera

## Shin Upagote



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**Introduction** – Along with ShinThiwali, Shin Upagote were the most the most highly revered Arahants after the Great Lord Buddha, Gotama in private shrines throughout Myanmar.

- ? **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 Stupas built across the Golden land in Myanmar; 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.

## Shin Upagote

**Moggaliputta-Tissa Thera**, popularly known in Myanmar as Shin Upagote, depicted in image as an Arahant holding a bronze bowl for alms collection, was the Presiding Chairman of the Third Buddhist Council during the time of **King Asoka**. He was the prince **Tissa Kumara**, the younger brother of **King Asoka**. He was ordained as Monk early in his life and soon attained the Arahantship.

He was well known as the one who had tamed the enemy of Buddhism, the great **God Mara** . When King Asoka was preparing to hold a great festival in honor of the religion, and the monks, realizing that God Mara would do everything in his power to destroy the festival, King Asoka sent for Tissa Thera )Shin Upagote\_. Thera Tissa by his great miraculous powers, not only defeated God Mara in a great struggle, but also converted him to Buddhism.

Some Burmese believe that Shin Upagote still lives in a floating brazen palace in the southern ocean, and that he can be invoked to come by a special prayer, and that his mere **invisible presence will prevent storms and floods**. Myanmar believes that he can be invoked when danger in the form of some physical violence threatens. To this day, Burmese in various part of the delta regions, celebrate festivals in honor of Shin Upagote.

### **Shin Upagote Light-floating Festival in Shwegyin**

#### **Shin Upagote Festival - Shwekyin, Bago Division**

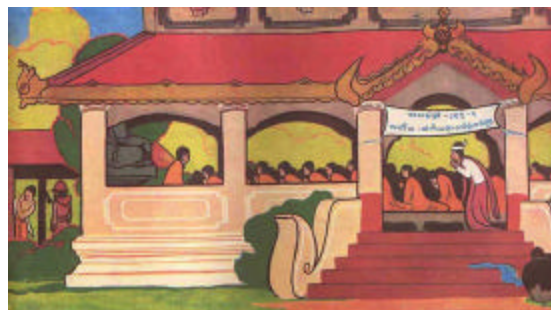
Dances by day and, on the eve of 1st Waning day of Thidingyut, light floats dedicated to **Shin Upagutta** are put onto Shwekyin canal. The festival is normally celebrated in late October in the 1<sup>st</sup> waning of Thadingyut.

### **Sin Upaote Festival in Yangon**

#### **Shin Upagote Festival - Sin-Oh-dan, Yangon**

Sin-Oh-Dan Chinese temple sponsors the floating ceremony, dedicated to shin Upagutta on Yangon river. The festival usually is celebrated in the late or early November. All participants at the procession must all have observed vegetarians for a minimum of 9 days.

### **The Fame of Moggaliputta Tissa**



### **The Third Buddhist Council**

**There** reigned in the newly founded city of Patna (Pataliputra), a Mauryan king named **Chandragupta**. **King Bindurasa** was his son, and he had sixteen wives who bore him One hundred and One sons. Of them **Asoka** was the most distinguished. His mother was Subhadrangi, also known as "Dharma", Sumana or Susima, who was his eldest stepbrother, Tissa, also called Vitasoka or Vigatasoka, was his younger uterine brother.

Tradition has it that Asoka won his throne through shedding the blood of all his father's sons save **his own brother**, **Tissa Kumara** who eventually was ordained and achieved **Arahantship**.

In the reign of **King Dhammasoka**, he gave great support to the cause of Buddhism, encouraged the subjects to follow the Doctrine in their daily lives. With his royal patronage, Buddhism flourished, and the Sasana gradually grew in importance and numbers. Tempted by worldly gain, many undesirables of alien sects joined the Order and polluted the Sasana by their corrupt lives and heretical views which they taught.

Then, the king was told that **Arahant Tissa** would be able to unified the sasana. The King sent word to the Arahant, but he would not come. Failing twice, the third time he sent a messenger inviting him to come to protect the Sasana. The Venerable Thera accepted the invitation and arrived at Pataliputra. The King received him with due honor and accommodated him in Asokarama, built by the King himself. For seven days the King stayed with him, and studied the Dhamma sitting at his feet.

Good monks could not live together with these sham monks and there was trouble. The King consulted the **Venerable Moggaliputta Tissa** to protect the Sasana. The Bhikkhus were then tested with regard to their views, and the undesirables were eliminated from the Noble Order, The pure Bhikkhus that remained performed the Uposatha for the first time after seven Years. The Arahant Moggaliputta Tissa availed himself of this opportunity to hold the third Council in order to protect the Dhamma and the Sasana. One Thousand Arahants participated in the Council which was held at Asokarama, in Pataliputra (Patna) in the 18th year of King Asoka's reign, about Two hundred, and Thirty Six years after the Parinibbana of the Buddha. The Venerable Moggaliputta Tissa was the presiding Thera, and it was he who was responsible for the composition of the Kathavatthu-Pakarana, one of the seven books of the Abhidhamma, at this august Assembly.

In the previous Second Buddhist Council, only matters pertaining to the precepts (i.e. **Vinaya**) were discussed and no controversy about the Dhamma was noted. In the third Buddhist Council, convened in **326 B.C** (about 235

years after the death of Gotam Buddha), the Third Council discussed the differences of opinion in both the **Vinaya** and the **Dharma**.

**Buddhism had entered into a period of great flourishing and splendor. It was recorded that the Tripitaka existed with distorted and misled interpretations were totally revised.**