

# Preparation for A Place of Worship

At  
Home



**Buddhists** in Myanmar would have a place of worship in their private home. It is a place where you find tranquility and Peace of mind after a day's work at their offices. This is where you do your daily ritual offerings of waters and food to the Buddha and is a place to meditate to gain wholesome merits –like taking precepts, meditate for concentration and to gain the knowledge of four Noble truth - **Anicca, Dukkha , Anatta** . A shrine, can have one or several Buddha Images with flower vases placed on both sides.

## Choice of Location

In locating the shrine at home, the choicest place (room) is preferred; and it should never be placed under the stairway, near the toilet or in western style home at the fireplace. It should be a well-lit place to receive natural exterior light. The best place would be at the highest level in the house.

## How to Select Buddha Image

Typically, most houses in Myanmar, we see Buddha image of one Mudra (posture) – known as *Bhumisparsha Mudra* (posture). This mudra is the most popular Mudra used throughout the country, because it symbolizes peace and tranquility and dispel evils. However, outside of Myanmar in other Theravada countries, we see other variations of Mudras are used at home. This paper would address only a few of them.



*Bhumisparsha mudra*  
*Touching the Earth in Witness*

*This Bhumisparsha mudra is usually recommended for Worship at home for worshipper to receive spiritual calmness and compassion. It is a symbol to dispel evil spirit.*

*This Mudra is considered as a spiritually balanced posture*



*Dharmachakra mudra*  
*Expressing the Turning the Wheel of Dhamma*

*This Dharmachakra mudra is usually recommended for worship at home to receive the Buddha teaching. This mudra is helpful in gaining enlightenment because symbolizes Buddha First Sermon of Eightfold Noble Path.*



*Varada mudra*  
*Charity, Compassion and Boon-granting*

### Image Materials Selection

A fortuneteller is consulted when an image is to sculpture so the image place at home will be compatible with the owner of the house to provide greater benefit, peace and prosperity. The common materials used are – Ivory, varieties of wood, and never Sagrin marble. Although the Sagrin material, the original marble named – Sagrin – has been used for images placed in many pagodas, we seldom use Sagrin marble for worship at home. Those who wish to use the white marble image should consult professional sculptors and fortuneteller of its use in residential premises. To show an example – *Lawka Chantha Abbayalaba Muni* –



*Varada mudra*  
*Charity, Compassion and Boon-granting*

Typical materials used are: gold, silver, brass, jade, marble, wood, ruby, sapphire, amber and coral. Individual preference and affordability of the householder and professional advice, the material can be selected .

## Consecration of Images

Images should never be placed for worship without being properly consecrated. The process of blessing the image is to symbolize spiritually as an image dedicated solely to Buddha and Buddha alone and that no other spiritual beings shall reside at this image. This process in Burmese is called – *Ah Ne Kaza Tin Gyin*. Normally Monks are being invited to home to do the image consecration; or it can be done at the monastery.



Wood Image or Bronze Image

## Palm Open or Palm Down Images are available in the Market

Images of different Mudra, either with palm open (*Varada mudra*) or one with palm down (*Bhumisparsha mudra*) varieties are available in the market or could be customized to order.

## Offerings at your Shrine

As a daily routine of doing charity (Dana), we offer the first fruit, that is the daily foods like rice or fruits, before anyone consume, are Offer. As a minimum three small cups of clean water together with fresh flower in two vases are typical ritual offerings. In reverence to the Buddha, the shrine should be kept clean and tidy and should not be cluttered with other things like books. Cleanliness reflects good spiritual blessings.

## Benefits for Having a Shrine at Home

To have a shrine at home is not just to follow the family tradition; it has many benefits to all living in the house. The clear attributes are:

- a. Performing your routine task is to show you are close to Buddha you revered.
- b. Daily meditation in front of Buddha inspires you, more
- c. Seeing Buddha on a daily basis inspires you to understand his teaching and thereby accrue knowledge (panna).
- d. Observing daily five precepts before the Buddha to be more vigilant of the precepts
- e. Daily routine of performing charity gain merits daily
- f. Daily meditation brings constant peace and tranquility
- g. A Shrine at home brings **Ariya** beings to the shrine all the time. Thus, prevent evil spirits from intrusion.

**Note to readers:** - There are so many varieties of posture to choose from like - *Dharmachakra mudra, Bhumisparsha mudra, Varada mudra, Abhaya mudra, Dhyana mudra, Abhaya Mudra, Detasayi Mudra, Mahagayuna Mudra.* It is advised that consultation with appropriate knowledge be taken before making a mudra selection to gain the best benefit.



Ananta Metta

Maung Paw

References:

<http://www.portalmarket.com/bronzebuddha2.html>

<http://www.myanmar.com/BDHDefault.aspx>