

Summary of “The Four Puppets”

There was a puppet master who was not only a puppet maker but also a puppeteer. He had a son called **Aung** and he was not eager to learn puppetry and interested to go other place to seek his fortune.

Scene (1)

Aung and his father were argued when puppet master came back from a puppet show after performing. However, father agreed his son to leave home but he gave four puppets as companions. He explained about the virtues of the puppets and their relationship. Aung paid respect to his father and left home.

Scene (2)

Aung reached a dark thick forest in the evening and looked for a place to spend the night. He asked the advice of the first puppet, **Deva**, and followed his instruction. He was safe from dark lurking dangers because of “**Wisdom**”.

Scene (3)

When he saw the caravan loaded with gold and silver, Aung wished he could have them all. Aung approached the second puppet, **Yakkha**, and asked how to get. Yak-kha showed off his virtue “**might and strength**”, and they got everything when caravaners run away.

However, **Mala**, daughter of the caravan owner was left and Aung also seized her.

Scene (4)

Aung was more and more greedy and asked the third puppet, **Zawgyi**, the virtue of “**knowledge**” and he became richer and richer. However, Aung was not happy because Mala did not speak to him.

Scene (5)

Aung tried to get love from Mala giving everything valuable but she only glares at him and said not a word. Finally, Mala run away and Aung realized because of the fourth puppet, **Khema** that he was wrongly served “**strength**” and “**knowledge**” rather than “**wisdom**” and “**goodness**”.

The story presents here features for **FOUR familiar figures.**



The King of the gods is **Thagyarmin**, the Burmese name for the deity called **Sakka** by Indian Buddhists and **Indra** by Hindus. (The rest of India’s heavenly gods-called **Devas**-have been replaced by the Burmese with native gods called **nats**.) For Buddhists, a god is a powerful being still of lower rank than one who becomes a Buddha or Bodhisattva. (His robes of snowy white flowed down in folds like fleecy clouds and the edges rose in golden wisps and tendrils that ruffled in the wind)

The figure here called an ogre is more accurately termed a demon-**Yakkha** in Sanskrit. But with its great strength and its habit of eating people, it comes closer to the ogre in Western fairy mythology. (His body was sheathed in emerald green scales: from his shoulders and elbows sprouted gold spiky fins)



The Sorcerer-**Zawgyi**, in Burmese-is a survivor from pre-Buddhist Burma. The Zawgyi practices alchemy to attain immortal life, along with lesser attainments such as the power of flight. An almost exact parallel is in the Chinese popular concept of the Taoist “**Immortal**”. The “Dance of the Zawgyi” is one of the most popular portions of the puppeteers’ pre-play warm-up. (His whole body was aflame with red and gold flecks and he carried a red wand in his hand)

Finally, the hermit-**Khema** is a seeker who lives in solitude and strives for spiritual advancement. Though he is more characteristic of the Hindu tradition-which many Buddhist fables drawn on-the puppet is costumed as a Buddhist monk. (He was robed in dark brown and he carried a brown staff in his hand)



Members of HTWE OO MYANMAR

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| 1. KHIN MAUNG HTWE | Artistic Director |
| 2. TUN KYI @ DAUNG YIN | Puppet Master |
| 3. MAUNG KYI | Puppet Master |
| 4. TIN NAN MYINT @ NAN TIN | Puppeteer |
| 5. CHO CHO SAN | Puppeteer |
| 6. TIN TIN OO | Puppeteer/Manager |