

Golden Boulder

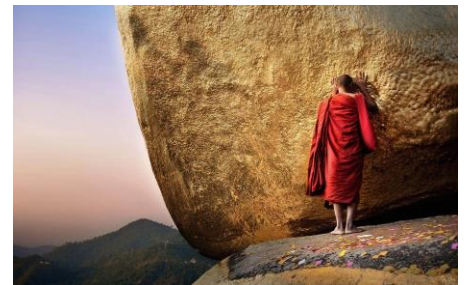
I have been traveling since I was baby, however my best memories were made in Burma.

I was briefly staying in a small village in Burma. The village was quiet but with many happy faces. A kind woman had let me stay in her humble hut, it wasn't much but I thanked her anyway. We had made an agreement that I would have to climb the enormous mountain overlooking the town. She had told me in her mystical voice that, "there is something special". Quietly, I didn't want to go and it would be tiring trekking up to the mountain peak.

On the third day of my trip I left early in the morning with the travel guide, Kian. Slowly, taking each step carefully, scared to step or even find any spider, snake, bug or large vicious beast after a meal. Kian was a villager and was not afraid of the wildlife and snickered.

Eventually I adapted to the environment and became less cautious. I started wondering about what wonderful creatures I would find and carefully looked for a glimpse of the live jungle surrounding me, it was like paradise.

The Sun started to sleep and so we slept too. As I closed my eyes, I felt calm thinking that in the morning I would wake among the shadowing trees, twittering birds and a view of the valley below.



I fell asleep with the sound of tumbling waterfalls. When I woke, my eyes drifted across the horizon taking in every moment and place. I stood up and positioned myself next to Kian. I was admiring my surroundings until my eyes froze as if I was a little kid who had just seen the Christmas presents. Little stars in my eyes twinkled, I could see something magical in the valley.

A whisper interrupted me, "Kyaiktiyo Pagoda." Kian realised I was intrigued by this beauty and so he told me about this great golden boulder. Suddenly, I heard incredible music. I looked up eagerly, trying

desperately to find where the music was coming from. I soon realised that the music was coming from below, in the forest, monks were chanting to the golden boulder.

I told the villager that I wanted to go and learn the secrets of the Monks and Kyaiktiyo Pagoda. He allowed me to do this, so I made my way to the golden boulder excitedly.

Thankfully, I had made it to the golden boulder. When I arrived, strangely the Monks seemed to be expecting me. They brought me to their grand leader and he asked why I was here. I replied anxiously, intimidated by such great power. "I would like to know about the golden boulder." The grand monk thought about this, he accepted the request, however said I must become a Monk first.

That day I decided to become a monk. Firstly I shaved my hair then I was given the outfit and finally everyday I meditated with the other Monks.

It was a year until I was then known as a Monk. That night I sat around a roaring fire, meditating with the monks. Then it stopped. "This is the night of the stories," one monk announced. I listened closely.

"Thousands of years ago, when dragons ruled our earth, there was an extreme food shortage. Each one slowly died. When King Phino started to suffer, he left his baby egg on a mountain and his and few remaining friends left to find another home with more food. His egg was relying on the warmth left behind from King Phino. The humans began to come and one started to start a thing called the monks. When they shaved their hair they put the magic hair on the egg that kept the egg warm and helped it to survive. The egg is now known as Kyaiktiyo Pagoda."

I realised this made sense and it was all coming together like a puzzle. I learnt a powerful secret and I would never let it go. I was left mesmerized and slowly doze to sleep.

Morning came like usual, however at noon there was a surprise. Two noisy Archaeologists came to investigate this natural phenomenon. They said that they could put this in a museum for \$15 000. The elders stubbornly said that they could not put a price on Kyaiktiyo Pagoda. They walked away

annoyed. Unfortunately they came back with cranes, trucks and other people. It was a disastrous day, but luckily so far they hadn't managed to move it.

After a long week I heard a strange noise, then out of the clouds came a ferocious beast. King Phino appeared. In a raspy voice he shouted, "Who is hurting my dragon?"

He looked down, seeing cranes and archaeologists. One took a picture however that was not a good idea, as I heard a loud snap as his bones broke. They all ran frantically. However the monks stayed so I stayed too, keeping close to them.

"I have found a beautiful planet with lots of food," announced King Phino. Then slowly a head appeared from the egg and rose out, reuniting with its dad and they flew off into the distance together. The egg has been fixed with magic and is still there to this day.

A magical place with magical stories and adventures.

By Islay

