

NOVEMBER 2020



# Friends of Sanon

Changing Lives, Building a Future for Myanmar Youth



## Mingalaba

Welcome to Sanon's November newsletter, we hope our news finds you and your loved ones well and safe.

Plan now, travel later is a motto we have seen recently. We'd like you to plan now, travel later to Myanmar and put a visit to Sanon training restaurant on your list of things to do, places' to see. Here are some ideas for you that we have shared and experienced for ourselves during our travels through Myanmar. Festivals and cake - what's not to like! November is usually a time of celebration at Sanon for our students, a time for their graduation but not this year. Our September 2019 students' training remains suspended and we continue to support them and their families and our staff who remain furloughed.

Can you help to support us to support them?

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Two must see festivals to experience in November in Myanmar are the Festival of Lights and Festival of Offerings; along with another must experience eating Sanwei Makin, Burmese semolina cake traditionally eaten during festivals and available at Sanon training restaurant.

## Thithi Ntyut

The first is the festival of Thithi Ntyut (Thadingyut or Festival of Lights), the seventh month of the Myanmar calendar. It marks the end of the lent. The sky is very clear and bright and the monsoon is on the way out. Sunny days are here to stay. Traditionally takes place on the cusp of the end of October beginning of November as it is a movable feast. There are three days for the festival, namely the day before the full moon, the full moon day and the day after the full moon, will be those of dance, music and fun. Illuminations are there to celebrate the anniversary of the Buddha's return from the celestial abode when he had spent the lent teaching the gods above His Law.



All public buildings, streets and houses are full of lights and festooned with coloured electric bulbs and plastic or paper lanterns. One feature of the festival in small towns and villages is see-mee lighting; small earthen bowls are filled with sesame oil and a piece of cotton is soaked in each bowl and lighted. These lighted oil bowls are placed on the terraces of pagodas. The lights last longer than candles and the little tongues of flame quivering in the breeze lend an uncanny beauty to the scene steeped in silvery moonlight. A must see especially in Yangon with a visit to Shwedagon Pagoda where the whole of the pagoda is lit up with what seems like millions of see-mee lighting, It truly is a magical and uplifting experience.

## Tazaungmone

The second is the festival of Tazaungmone (Festival of Offerings). After four month of rain comes a succession of festive months starting with thadingyut lights festival. It is rather convenient, so say fun-loving Myanmar that the paper lanterns and decorations are still in fairly good condition to be put up again in three weeks' time. The festival that is held in Tazaungmone is usually called Tazaungdaing festival. The festival is mentioned in stories before the Buddha's time as kattika festival, in honour of the guardian gods of the planets, It is said that certain planetary signs of the zodiac are in the ascendant during the month. The influence of the planets in ascendance if such people's thoughts are bent in mischief. It is during the month that thieves are moved to ply their trade.

Though the Tazaungdaing lights festival began in the times immemorial as a folk ritual, it is regarded today as an essentially Buddhist festival. The month is the time for offering the robes to monks. Many monks are in need of new robes. Offering of robes and other gifts, in the season are made not to any individual monk. Offering of gifts to monks, if it is to bear highest fruition must be made to the



Order as a whole and not to an individual monk. Donors, being human, are often moved to offer gifts to monks by personal feelings. It is the custom of the community to organize the offering of gifts; everyone contributes in cash or in kind. Members of the same for this purpose and collect gifts for the monastery. People make wooden triangular structures standing everywhere. Gifts are hanging in structures. Common gifts hanging to structures are sets of yellow robes, towels, napkins, cups and umbrellas. They are kathina gifts and anyone is welcome to hang whatever he wishes to contribute, a small coin or a cake of soap-no matter however the things are small.

## SANWEI MAKIN

Recipe of the month is Sanwei Makin (pronounced sinwamakin) #Sanonsweet. A delicious semolina cake, eaten hot as we could never wait for it too cool, can be eaten cool. It is known as Burmese semolina cake at Sanon and served with ice cream. Here are the ingredients if you wish to make it. It is really easy and delicious, give it a try.

500 gm semolina  
500 gms sugar  
400 mls coconut milk  
400 mls sunflower oil  
2 eggs  
80 gms butter  
50 gms raisins  
20 gms cashews  
400 mls water



Ice cream raisin and cashew for garnish.

### Instructions

1. First up, preheat that oven to 160° C. Pop semolina in a large saucepan and stir fry it dry until golden brown over a low to medium heat. This will take 5 to 10 minutes, keep stirring until it's ready and be careful not to leave it unattended or it'll cook unevenly or burn.
2. Once it's toasty, add in your brown sugar, coconut milk, water, eggs, sunflower oil, raisins and mix well. You might need a whisk to break up any clumps, but apart from that it'll be really watery at this stage. |
3. Now, bring the mixture to a boil over a medium high heat and stir continuously. It'll start to thicken quickly. Once bubbles start rising through the mixture reduce heat right down too low and continue to stir until the mixture thickens pulls away easily from the side of the pan. Will take around 8-10 minutes.
4. Once it's all clumping together nicely, transfer it into a pre-greased oven safe dish and smooth out the surface with an icing spatula or the back of a spoon.
5. Sprinkle with nuts, traditionally poppy seeds, sesame seeds or desiccated coconut is used and pop in the oven. Bake for around 30-40 minutes until the top is golden-dark brown and the cake has set.
6. It's delicious soft served warm from the oven, but just as good at room temperature.
7. Tips: You can substitute white poppy seeds with sesame seeds, chia seeds or even desiccated coconut at home if you prefer. While it's baking in the oven you might see a few bubbles rising to the surface – that's the butter rising to the top, which is a mighty fine thing since it will give the top of your Burmese Semolina Cake a little extra delicious crunch
8. If you look at our website page you can see a photo of plates and plates of Sanwei Makin being prepared for a group attending Sanon

Could you donate to Sanon Training Restaurant to support us in supporting our furloughed staff and our students whose training is suspended? We are supporting students' families with money to buy cooking oil and rice on a monthly basis. Sanon training restaurant has been closed for 9 months, we would naturally generate 85% of our income,

and we now have **Can you support us to support them?** Thank you. If you've enjoyed reading this email let us know if you think someone else will why not send it on to them

**DONATE**

**Thank you for all your continued support . All the team at Sanon**