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PINIT SUKSATHIT : AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF THE CHAKĀMĀVACARADEVATĀ
IN THE TRIPITAKA. THESIS ADVISOR. ASSO. PROF. SAKSRI YAMNADDA,
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A critical and analytical study on the gods mentioned in the Theravāda Tripitaka shows that these gods, like human beings, are not free from sensual defilements (Kilesa). They have their own abode in the so-called Chakāmāvacara (the Realm of Six Heavens), which they attain through various levels of performance of merit. These heavens are named from low to high as follows : Cātummahārājikā, Tāvātimsā, Yāmā, Tusitā, Nimmānaratī and Paranimmitavasavattī.

These gods exist in a state and environment far superior to that of man. Physically, they are endowed with more illustrious form and longer life. They are, however, still bound to the law of the Three Characteristics of Existence (ti-lakkhaṇa), and subject to being reborn in the endless cycle of Saṃsāra. Human individuals with high virtuous accomplishment, such as the Buddha and a number of his disciples (ariya-sāvaka) are highly revered by them, who then exert themselves along the right path in order to cross over the ocean of unending birth and death. These gods are often mentioned to help leading human beings to perform merits and they occasionally come to rescue virtuous men in adversity.

The belief in these gods has exerted strong influence on the Thai mind, evidenced in several Thai literary works from Sukhothai period onward and from numerous mural paintings.