Cock Crowing; A Time Mark of Myanmar Tradition

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Abstract

In the era of the Myanmar kingdom, the rural areas which were distant from Naypyidaw, used to mark the time as per timely crowing of cocks. There are ten types of cock crowing and the country people gave the names and identified the types of cock crowing. In this paper there have been shown the relationship between cock crowing and Myanmar village traditional custom in accordance with the ancient Myanmar ink inscriptions or literary documents.

Key words: Cock crowing, Time, Ink inscription, Rural areas, Custom

Introduction

In any language, an utterance is meaningful only when it is uttered in a particular context and in any utterance, one usually uses personal pronouns to refer to the addresser, the addressee or the other(s). However, as each language is used in a different socio-cultural group, the use of personal pronouns, which comprises three categories of pronouns: first person, second person and third person, differs from one language to another. In the English, the same set of personal pronouns are used irrespective of the age, rank, status, the degree familiarity, etc. of the addresser, the addressee and the other(s). However, in Myanmar, a wide range of personal pronouns are used depending on the relationship between the two interlocutors and there are many ways to express one's feelings or attitudes towards others or the relationship with others by switching from one form of personal pronoun to another. Moreover, it is seen that Myanmar people sometimes deliberately leave out and sometimes deliberately include the personal pronouns to have some effect on the relationship between interlocutors.

The cocks are exact clocks for Myanmar villagers and they had appeared for many years before the clocks were invented. Ancient Myanmar people explored and found the natural clocks for Day time and Night time. The sun for day time and cocks for night time were usually used in Myanmar rural areas because they were far from the capital or Naypyidaw.

Naypyidaw people could listen to the sound of drum or *Bahosi* which gave the alarm on time and urban people could do their job timely according to the sound of drum struck from the tower of the palace.

But, people in the rural or suburb areas could not hear the sound of drum. So they relied on the sun moving and clock crowing. The cock is a chief of time and he instructed people to start the jobs in time, without delay. Peacocks, cuckoos and partridges can crow but they do not do it regularly like a cock.

The sound of cock crowing is not only rhythmic, but also regular. The sound "Oud Ei Ei Aut" or "Cock-a doodle-doo" is very loud and very rhythmic. The old aged person marked cock crowing as a symbol of time and thus it has become a traditional custom of Myanmar rural society.

This paper discusses the nature of cock crowing and marking of time as per literary document of ink inscription, as follows.

Materials and Methods

The theme of this research is based on ink inscriptions which are involved with the field of Linguistics. Ancient Myanmar ink inscriptions with particular date are used as resources for this research and how the way ancient Myanmar people created new vocabulary to define the passing of time in a day based on the roosters crowing at different times of the day is carefully scrutinized and discussed in this paper in the discursive style.

Discussion

Marking Time with Cocks' Crowing

In Myanmar dynasty, people marked the time by listening to the beats on the royal drum. But, those who lived far from the capital used to mark the time by Cocks' Crowing.

- ခ ခ?်**ဋိ'်**ပုံမစ္ဆဲအစားကော်ကောခ
- စ အညာာ၁€ ညာဘခနဏ်အာဏေထေထေထေ⊃ထ(သင်္တေ ဘ
- ဓ ပ(်ဉ့≕ေသါ်ဗ−ာအ'ေစာ္တာ ဘေ စက္ော်တွေ့သြား ဘေ
- e ညာတဲ့ဆဲတ်& ′့∜ ဧ[ဂြ. ံœœœœœလာ∵်e
- ര ക്കാര്യ പ്രത്യത്തായ ക്ര

The poetry stated above is a type of three stanza one which was composed by an anonymous person at ancient time, indicating the difference of urban and rural cultures.

In the past, in the royal capital, there were eight times of drum beating, that is, four times at day and four times at night. In villages, people marked time by Cocks' Crowing. They mark the sound of cock crowing based on people habits, cock habits and natural light and darkness. Followings are the ten types of cock crowing in details.

- (1) Aik Tan Tat (Sleeping time for Cock)
- (2) Thu Nge Taik Saik (Sleeping time for children)
- (3) Thet Kyi Gaung Cha (Sleeping time for old aged persons)
- (4) Lu Lin Pyan (Maung Yin Pyan) (Time for coming home of youths)
- (5) Than Khaung Kyet (Corks' Crowing for midnight)
- (6) Kyet Oo Tun (Cork's crowing the night after tomorrow)
- (7) Ayon Kyet (Cork's crowing for dawn)
- (8) Lin Arr Kyi (Cork's crowing for early morning)
- (9) Lin Kyet Saw (Cork's crowing for morning)
- (10) Aik Tan Sin (Cork's crowing for getting up)

The time marking of Cocks' Crowing can be seen in Myanmar ink inscriptions.

(1) Aik Tan Tat (Kyet Tet)

The cocks, hens and chickens always wake up in the morning and they find their food the whole day. Then at sunset, they fly to their usual sleeping place. At that time, the cock crows and it is bed time for cocks, hens and chickens. This crowing is 'Aik Tan Tet' crowing and people used to mark that time for cocks sleeping. We can find such Cocks' Crowing in ink inscriptions of old pagodas.

An ink inscription, Sr. No.(10), of Lawka Hteik Pan pagoda of Bagan has shown as follow;

- စ ၃ဿသတဦးအံုးေငးစ
- ေ ၄၁၁န၅ အနင့္ ထမ
- ေ ၅ဿ ါ့ ထဘာါ ေ
- ေ ဖြဘ္သာာတဲ့ပ တဲ့မ
- o ၇ဿ_႔္ဆပ်႑ွည္က်စြ
- ဓ ၈၁ၼလည္ နဲဏလေဓ

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(2) Thu Nge Taik Saik

Children are used to playing the whole day and then around 8:00 pm, they go to bed. At that time, the cock crows and it is the same time as the children bed time. So people say that cock crowing is a bed time for children or *Thu Nge Taik Saik* cock.

An ink inscription, Sr. No.(15), Shew Thabeik Kone pagoda, in the east of Leyar village of Bagon, has shown as follow;

- e ၃၁xxxေတဦးသွားလေး၅၉ေၾကာေန့ကာ''ထြ ၂့ဓ
- ေ ၄၁ဆ (တံ့ အခါ ၏ စ ဆောှာလြန့်မ
- ဓ ၅၁**ရုိပ**ဲ့ထူ ့ဆေပ်ဌာဆ ၁**ဓ**
- စ ပါသည္အေသ ရအာ့ ခ ူိင္လာမြပ **၁**ဓ

There are various orthographic writing such as 'ဆာလူလ်ရှု ်ပံ့သား ဆည.္ဋ္မေ၂်ပံ့သား ဆည.္လရွု ်ပံ့ 'and so on.

(3) Thet Kyi Gaung Cha

This is the third time of cock crowing from sunset sleeping time for cocks. It is also time for elderly people who go to sleep and rest their heads down on their pillows in bed. That is why, people say that cocks' crowing is a time when old aged people fall asleep.

In other words, people say that 'ထားထုိ့ တ်ံဆ တဲ့ထ ် ခေဆည္သုု ်ပံ့နယာျှ ့လေဆတို့ တ်ံခ လ်အှူ ်အုတ္ရ ့ဖလေဆတို့ တ်ံလ်အျာ `အာ့လေဆတို့ တ်ံခနင္နနက်အnd so on.

It can be found in an ink inscription, Sr. No.(25), Thone Pen Hla pagoda, out of wall and nearby North East side and East face;

- ဓ ၄၁၁?ကြားခလော **'** စားါ့ တော**တ**ို့ တော်ပ တဲ့ထ **့ အ**ဆဋ္ ဧံ့ဓ
- ဓ ၅၁<u>ရု်ပ</u>န္ထာကု ဆယာါဘက်အာဆာေတြ စုံတ်ဌာဆာ္ရဲ့အႏုပ_{နား}ဓ
- ဓ ၆၁ၼနန္ အကားႏွာ ညာအုိဆခပ ၁ဓ

Also we can find such cock crowing word at Mon pagoda nearby north east city corner monastery that is in west of Taungbi Village of Bagan city.

Ink inscription Sr. No (30)
၃၁ၼတာ၌သွား ၅၄နေတာ ?စ့္ ထား၅၆နေတာဓ

၄၁ဆ ဌ ဆပ ့ဆာထု့တျ ါ့ ဆော်ပု့ နေစ ၅၁ဆ 'ခါ စ လေဆတ္နီ တီဆနင္န ထာ ၆၁ဆာု ့ဆေပ်ဌ ဆွ်တ်ဌ အတာာ့ ့ခ

ဓ ၇၁ခုအ့္/ ခုအျဖ**ားဟ**ာ ၁**ဓ**

4. Lu Lin Pyan

In the past, Myanmar lads and maidens could meet each other and they could choose their life partners with whom they fell in love themselves. Especially in upper Myanmar, the lads visited the houses of girls. Girls also made themselves look beautiful and attractive as much as possible by doing their hair and putting on Thanakha, Myanmar traditional branch of tree whole weaving on looms. At night time the lads visited the girls to woo. After 'Thet Kyi Gaung Cha' cocks' crowing, it was already 11:00 pm and the cock crowed again to signal it was the time for them to go back home.

That mark of time is 'Lu Lin Pyan' cock crowing. Ink inscription Sr. No. (28), at 'Yemanar' pagoda near Letyar Village of Bagan township, has shown;

ခ သဆေးသဦးသံများ ၄၅လာ ဒိစ္ဆိုင္သာသံ ဆွန္းေတာ့ ဆိုက္သည္။ တက္ေခ ၃၁ဆေးတဦးသံများ ၄၅လာ ဒိစ္ဆိုင္သာသံ ဆွန္းေတာ့ သက္ေခ

(5) Than Khaung Kyet

This is the fifth cocks' crowing time and it is midnight. So people say that '*Than Khaung Kyet* or *Tagaung Kyet*'. It cannot be found in ink inscription but it is shown in other words as 'Kyet Oo Matun Mi' and '*Kyet Oo Matun Khin*'. In Bagan, Htilo Minlo Pagoda and Sr. No (76) of ink inscription, has shown;

ပောင်း ဘောတော္ဘာ
 ပောင်း သွင်္သော သွင်္သေ့သွင်္သော သွင်္သော သွင်္သော သွင်္သေ့သွင်္သေ့

In fact, *Kyet Oo Tun* is after the crowing of the Mid-night cock crowing. So, '*Kyet Oo Ma Tun Mi*' can be indicated as the mid-night time cocks' crowing.

(6) Kyet Oo Tun

This is the sixth time from sunset cocks' crowing. It indicates the start of the next day or tomorrow morning, e.g., from Monday midnight to Tuesday early morning. It is very early and the very first time cocks crow in the morning. People say that 'Kyet Oo Tun' cocks' crowing.

(1) In Bagan, Shew Tabeik Kone Pagoda Ink inscription, Sr. No. (16)

- e ေ ငဲဘ⇔လေတီးΩာ (လြံဂ]်ထဘ∋ါအသားေ
- e e ဪတံတိဗိၢိတ^{ြဲ} အေ**ကာ**ီ ဘီအာ်`/ e
- ခ ေ ၆၁ၼႏ္ခတက္သာျိုမပ**ာ**
- ေ ေ ၇၁appာတျှံပျုံ့မ
 - (2) In Hti Pyu Pagoda, nearby Ko Daw Pyauk Pagoda of TawKyaung Village of Amyint town of Chaung Oo township; Sr. No. (1)

- ေ ေ ၄၁ဆင္ဖို့ ခ်ိဳ ေ?ဏာ့ကေ ေါ့ ဆါ့ ေ
- o o ၅ဿသူဘူးတ**ျှ**ပဋ္ဌါ့စ
- ေ ေ ၆သာျပ္ခံုထာပ်႑ွည္က်မ
- െ ര ഗാക്കോക്കാന മായ്യം വരാം

It can be clearly seen that 'Kyet Oo Tun' is after mid-night time.

(7) Ayon Kyet

After the sunset cock crowing, it is the seventh time and that crowing is the time for dawn. Dawn is foreshadow of sunlight and it is before the sun rising. So people say that is 'Ayon Kyet' or 'dawn cocks'.

But this expression has not yet been found in Myanmar ancient ink inscription. But other similar phrase has shown as follow;

Sr. No. (8), Shwe Leik Tu Phaya, north of Htilo Minlo pagoda of Bagan city;

- စ ၅၁၁။။။။ခေါ် အ်အြေ့ဆေသတ္စညာတ္စ
- ဓ ၆၃<u>၃ရှိအယူ]န္</u>ဆလေပ်ဌာည္က်ဴမွှေးသေ**ဓ**
- ဓ ၇၁ခ∕ဘခ။။∥ရှုံ်၏သေ

At present, people say that 'Ayon Kyet' and 'Moe Thaut Kyet Oo Matun Khin' have the same meaning in ink inscription.

(8) Lin Arr Kyi

It is the time for early morning and eighth time cock crowing. It is the time when the sun first appear in the sky after the darkness- the sunrise. That is why, people say that crowing is the *Lin Arr Kyi Kyet* crowing.

It has also not yet been found in old ink inscription. But similar expressions can be seen. They are 'Moe Thaut Kyet Saw Saw Tun' က်ချာဆသာ့စာတဲ့မ၂၄ပ ျှ ့ +, 'Kyet Na Phan (Kyein) Tun Pi' ကြာတဲ့၄ဋ္ဌါ့ ပျူ့် နား+, 'Moe Thaunt Kyet Oo Tun' က်ချာဆသာ့စာတျှင်ပျူ +, as follows:

In Shan Tet pagoda (West face Gu), north to feet of Tai Chut Pagoda of Bagan-Naung-U Road, entrance gate of Tharapar Door of Bagan; Sr. No. (6):

- ခ ၃၁ဿတ (မှ ဆာ၉၄နေးမာ။ ။ ဆုခ ?ဏာ့ ၅တေံ **၁မိုဝ်သောက်ကြယ်**ခ
- ဓ ၄၁**ဆာဝ်၂တွန္**။။။ဆာ်မႉ ့မ်ဒ္ဘားတာ့ မပ ၁**၁**၀ ဓ

Sr. No. (11), East face pagoda of Sale' town.

- ေ ၄၁ဆာ္စ္က မွဆ ခုဧင့္ ထုပ္ပြဲ့ေ
- o ၅၁ဪ ?ဏာ့မတ။ ဆုန္ဒေျခ
- ဓ ၆၁၉ ့ခဆ**့်ကြာက် ၂ ဖန်တွန်ပြီ**ဓ
- o ഗാരവ്ൂമാ**ാ**രവൊ

Pagoda No. (1127) and Sr. No. (2) of south east of Nga Myet Nar pagoda and north west of Htilo Minlo pagoda of Bagan;

- ဓ ၄၁၁၂ အနင့္ ထတူဆူလို ်ပံုစာသာ ဧခ) ဓ
- စ ၅၁ၼခါ ပ**ူ ့ ဆိုဝ်သောက်ကြက်ဦတုံ**ဆောု ့ရှေ့သွ.့စ

In ink inscription, *Moe Thauk Kyet Oo Tun* is the same as *Lin Arr Kyi* or early morning cock crowing. The first crowing after mid-night is '*Kyet Oo Tun*' and the second crowing is '*Ayon Kyet*'. That is why Sale ink inscription expressed that 'ໝາວຸດຊູ]. ອບ_ກຸໄ ໝໍ່ສະ means 'ထຸ ະນລື້ອກ່ອງວຸ'or' early morning cock crowing'.

(9) Lin Kyet Saw

It is the time for morning and at that time the world is full of light because of sun rising. All the cocks crow noisily and continuously in chorus. So, people say that is 'Lin Kyet Saw' or continuous morning cock is crowing.

Sale', Ink inscription Sr. No. (24)

- ဓ ၃၁ၹၹ∸ွိက္ခ်ရွှင္ဖေ ၅၉ဝန္အေပ ခုဇင့္ ထျ ဓ
- ဓ ၄၁ရဲ့ပ (တံဆ)ရ ဒဏ္ဍ ဓဆ**ာ**

(10) Aik Tan Sin

This is the tenth time and last time of the time mark of cock crowing. Now it is a genuine morning when all chickens, hens and cocks wake up. Then they get up from their beds. So, people say that is 'Aik Tan Sin' or the time of the cock getting up and getting out of bed.

This expression can be seen in another similar one in Bagan and Sale' regions such as 'ട്ട്ജൈയാറുത്തുറ്റ്വൂപ്പ് `ച്ച' and so on.

In Sale North face of Pagoda, Sr. No. (39)

Also in Bagan, Htilo Minlo Pagoda, No.(21);

- မ ေ ၄သရာ ဘဲ့အစ္ခဲ့တျ ါ့ ဆ ူ ျမွဴ (တဲ့မခါ ခါ ဒွဲအာ့ ဓ
- ဓ ဓ ၅၁<u>ေဆေသတဲ့တဏာ့ မို</u>နယ^{ြုံ}့ထုံ့ဆပ[်]ဌာဆ**ာ**
- e e ၉၁၆ ဘီအား်\ လာ ဧံဆဘ ၁နှင်မှလျှော်)လာ

At present, people say that 'Li Kyet Saw' instead of 'Moe Thaut Kyet Tun Sone' means 'Aik Tan Sin Kyet' and 'Moe Thaut Kyet Na Kha Tun' means after 'Lin Kyet Saw' that is 'Aik Tan Sin' cock.

Nobody could say, when that time marked with cocks' crowing had started. But, the earliest document states in the time of Bagan King Narathihapate (617-648), in the Myanmar Era (627) and the Christ Era (1265), in ink inscription.

Conclusion

Nowadays, people use machine clocks alongside the advancement of modern technology. As a result, the cock crowing time marks were neglected and regarded as only the symbol of cock's voice. But in ancient time, people used the voice of cock crowing for the symbols of night time. They created the between time for human activities in connection with the cock crowing.

The old aged people valued the cock crowing for their important life style and they created new words and expressions from cock crowing, adding new vocabulary and expressions in Myanmar social language. So we must admire our old aged and learned people for their creation of such new words and expressions as a heritage of Myanmar language.

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