

## 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.



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

- ဥဒ္ဓါတိတိတိတိ ငှး ဝ
- ငှာနဂ္ဂ ဝနဂ္ဂ ဝ
- ဂ္ဂါယ ဂါ ဝ
- ဝိဇ္ဇာတိတိတိ
- ဂ္ဂါယ ဝပံဂ္ဂိတိ
- ဝါယာတိတိတိ
- 

(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;

- ဥဒ္ဓါတိတိတိတိ ဝိဇ္ဇာတိတိ
- ငှာယ ( တုမာခါ ခါ စ ဝါယာတိ
- ဂ္ဂါယ ဝပံဂ္ဂိတိ
- ဝိဇ္ဇာတိတိတိ

There are various orthographic writing such as 'ဝါယာတိတိ' ဝိဇ္ဇာတိတိ ဝါယာတိတိ 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 'ဝါယာတိတိ' ဝိဇ္ဇာတိတိ ဝါယာတိတိ ဝါယာတိတိ and 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;

- ဥဒ္ဓါတိတိတိတိ ဝိဇ္ဇာတိတိ
- ငှာယ ( တုမာခါ ခါ စ ဝါယာတိ
- ဂ္ဂါယ ဝပံဂ္ဂိတိ
- ဝိဇ္ဇာတိတိတိ





**(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' ကိစ္စဆေတုဉာတုမ္ပုပ္ပု၊, 'Kyet Na Phan (Kyein) Tun Pi' ဣာတုပ္ပုပ္ပု၊. နေ၊, 'Moe Thaunt Kyet Oo Tun' ကိစ္စဆေတုဉာတုမ္ပုပ္ပု၊, 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):

- သာဆေတ( မုဇေဇုနဇု။ ။ ။ ရေ?ဣဇုတံသိဝံသောကံကြယ်
- သာဆေတ( မုဇေဇုနဇု။ ။ ။ ရေမ. မိဒုဆု. မပ သပ မ

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

- သာဆေတ( မုဇေဇုနဇု
- သာဆေတ( မုဇေဇုနဇု
- ရာမိ?ဣမတ။ ရေဇု ဝ. ပ
- ဇေ. ဆေတုကြက် ပ ဖန်တုန်ပြီ
- ရာဆေတ. သာဆေတ

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

- သာဆေတ( မုဇေဇုနဇု) န ဣ ။ ရေဇု ဣ
- သာဆေတ( မုဇေဇုနဇု) ထတုဉာတုမ္ပုပ္ပု၊. ဣာဆေဇေ) မ
- ရာဆေတ ပ. သိဝံသောကံကြက်ဦးတုံဆေ. ဆေ. မ

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 'ဣာတုပ္ပုပ္ပု၊. မုဇေဇုနဇု' means 'ထု. ဆေတုဉာတု' 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)

- သာဆေတ( မုဇေဇုနဇု) ရာမိဇုနဇု ခဇေ. ထု မ
- သာဆေတ ( တုရခါ ကိစ္စဆေတ

- ၅ဆောတုဏာတုပုဂ္ဂိုလ် . ဝ
- ဝေဇ္ဇာဘုပုဂ္ဂိုလ် . ဝ

**(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 'အိဆောတုဏာတုပုဂ္ဂိုလ်' and so on.

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

- ၃ဆောတု( မုဇ ၃လေပံ၌ ရာ၃နော်ပု . တူဉ္ဇ
- ၄လိ ပံ . ခါ အိဆောတုဏာတုပုဂ္ဂိုလ် . ဝ
- ၅ရံ၇ . ရ် မုဉ္ဇာတုပံ၇ နှစ် ထ

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

- ၃ဆောဏာမုရ၃၃နော်လ ? . ရှာ၅လေပံ၇ ပု . ဝ
- ၄ရံ၇ ၃အံ၇ထု ဂါ . လပု ဝါ မု ( တုမခါ ခါ အိဆော
- ၅ဆောတုတုဏာ မုနယုဂါ . ထု . ဆပံ၇ ဆာဇ္ဇာဓု . အာဏာ
- ၆ဝှာ ဉ္ဇာ / အာ . ဇု . ဆသ ဝင်္ဂ မဲနှစ် ထ

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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