

## **SYMBOLS OF KINGSHIP: COMPARATIVE STUDY ON ROYAL CORONATION REGALIA OF MYANMAR AND THAILAND\***

Win Pa Pa Lwin\*

### **Abstract**

Royal coronation regalia are the sacred objects used in a coronation ceremony. No other ceremonies will be more important than the coronation ceremony and the coronation regalia become the symbols of kingship, power and majesty of monarchy. Myanmar and Thailand have been neighboring not only by human culture but also by geographical features since the early periods. Moreover, Buddhism originated from central India and has been dominated in these two countries since early history. With the arrival of Buddhism, some customs and ideas of Hinduism have also been imported to these two countries. Therefore, there may be some cultural affinities and differences between these two countries. By depending on socio-political and religious factors, their coronation regalia show some similarities in typologies. The research paper focuses on the detailed decorations and the royal customs related to the coronation regalia of these two countries. It examines in which ways these are similar and different according to their cultivated cultures and accepted customs by using the comparative, descriptive and analysis methods. As the royal customs of Myanmar were ended and disappeared after the British colonized the whole country, the royal coronation regalia of Myanmar cannot be studied in full accounts like the coronation regalia of Thailand which are the living cultural heritage of the surviving monarchical system.

**Keywords:** coronation ceremony, coronation regalia, Myanmar and Thailand

### **Introduction**

The coronation regalia facilitates the process of crowning a king and provides information on how traditional and religious customs affect the sovereignty of a nation. The symbols of kingship become the parts of the coronation ceremony because of the religion and the historical tradition of a nation that has come through. Therefore, the practices of the coronation regalia are commonly provided from the ancient literatures and religious scriptures in the successive reigns by revealing the nation's high cultural standard. As Myanmar and Thailand have been the Buddhist devoted countries, the ceremonies of these countries have mostly followed the customs derived from the mixed interaction of Buddhism and Hinduism of India. Concerning the symbols of kingship, Myanmar coronation regalia are mainly recorded in the ancient literature while Thailand coronation regalia have been the surviving material remains of the living royal traditions. Although both Myanmar and Thailand have traditionally held the coronation ceremonies as the sovereign states, the procedures of coronation ceremony and the coronation regalia have some cultural affinities. In fact, an approach on the comparative study of the coronation regalia of these two neighboring countries can throw light on the result of the cultural relationship between two Buddhist nurturing countries of Southeast Asia. The research paper organized the historical linkage and the actual description of the respective coronation regalia of Myanmar and Thailand by using the descriptive, comparative and analysis methodologies.

### **Methodology**

The paper was preceded with the initial field explorations to National Museum (Yangon) and Universities' Central Library for studying, investigation and acquiring the data and photographs concerning coronation regalia of Myanmar. In regards to the coronation regalia of Thailand, the data provided from the Ministry of Culture (Thailand) are mainly used. In processing

---

\* Best Paper Award Winning Paper in Archaeology (2022)

\* Department of Archaeology, University of Yangon

the research work, the descriptive method, analytical method and comparative method were applied on actual evidence with the special references of library works.

### Coronation Ceremony and Coronation Regalia of Myanmar

As Myanmar practiced the Buddhist teaching of central India, Myanmar cultures and traditions were transmitted and intertwined with Indian culture. The coronation ceremony of Myanmar kings followed the coronation procedures of the ancestral kings ranging from king *Mahāsammata*.<sup>1</sup> After coronation, the king has become the true king and has received the consecration in order to promote the religion, to obtain the right to issue an order designating an ordination hall (*sima*), to enter the council and dispense justice and to collect the taxes due from the people's labor.

In Myanmar, the coronation ceremony was firstly called as *rājabhisik* (ရာဇဘိသိက်). King *Bodawpaya* (1782-1819) started to entitle the ceremony as *muddhābhisik* (မုဒ္ဓဘိသိက်).<sup>2</sup> King *Bodawpaya* sent his counselors and Brahmins to central India in order to get the Pali and Sanskrit scriptures and later translated them into Myanmar literature. After reviewing those scriptures, he made some changes and adaptations on the royal things and other kings' related things. The later kings after king *Bodawpaya* held their coronation ceremonies as *muddhābhisik* (မုဒ္ဓဘိသိက်). In the ceremony, one must revere and make offerings to the three jewels and has to revere and make offerings to gods from Hinduism.<sup>3</sup> The *Sangha* and Brahmins are also involved in this ceremony. The coronation ceremony was held in accordance with three features; celebrating with ancient traditional ways, consecrating by the ancient traditional words and pouring the consecrated water over the head through a clockwise conch.<sup>4</sup> Amongst these three features, celebrating with ancient traditional ways meant for celebrating the coronation ceremonies with five coronation regalia.<sup>5</sup>

In Myanmar, the coronation regalia were used as parts of the ceremony in order to be safeguarding from calamity and the eight Brahmins offered the respective coronation regalia to the king by reciting the Pali verse concerning each of the coronation regalia. The custom of using the coronation regalia in coronation ceremonies came from the Pali script<sup>6</sup> and that tradition can be seen on the mural paintings of the Bagan period.<sup>7</sup> Literally, there were two ways in counting the five royal regalia; the counting on the royal throne, decorative frontlet, royal slipper, dagger and yak tail fly-whisk as five royal regalia by separating the white umbrella solely and the counting on the white umbrella, decorative frontlet, royal slipper, dagger and yak tail fly-whisk as five royal regalia. The coronation regalia without separating the white umbrella were commonly practiced in

<sup>1</sup> U Tin, မြန်မာမင်း အုပ်ချုပ်ပုံစာတမ်းနှင့် ဘိုးတော်ဘုရား၏ ရာဇသတ်ခေါ်သော အမိန့်တော်တမ်းကြီး (၅တွဲပေါင်းချုပ်) (*The Collection of Myanmar King's Administration and the Edict of King Bodawpaya (Collection of Five Series)*), Yangon, Seikku Cho Cho Publishing House, 2012, p. 138 (Hereafter cited as U Tin, *Myanmar King's Administration*)

<sup>2</sup> Tun Yee (Researcher), ကုန်းဘောင်ခေတ်ဘုရင်များ မုဒ္ဓဘိသိက်ခံယူပုံစာပေါင်းချုပ် (*The Summary of Konbaung Kings' Muddhābhisik Coronation*), Yangon, Yar Pyae Press, 2009, p. 18 (Hereafter cited as Tun Yee, *Muddhābhisik*)

<sup>3</sup> Than Tun, မြန်မာတီးမှုနန်းရာ (*Myanma Court Etiquette*), Yangon, Yone Kyi Chat Press, 2003, p. 87 (Hereafter cited as Than Tun, *Myanma Court*)

<sup>4</sup> Thu Dhamma, ရာဇသေဝကဒီပနီကျမ်း (*The Book for Kings' Ethics*), Yangon, Seikku Cho Cho Publishing House, 2013, p. 21 (Hereafter cited as Thu Dhamma, *Ethics*)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 21

<sup>6</sup> Zayyathinkhayar, ရွှေဘုံနိဒါန်း (*Introduction to the Golden Realm*), Mandalay, Pitakattaw Press, 1955, p. 11 (Hereafter cited as Zayyathinkhayar, *Introduction*)

<sup>7</sup> Bo Ma, *A Study on Royal Regalia found at the Mural Paintings in Bagan Period*, PhD dissertation, Department of Archaeology, University of Yangon, 2017, p. 58 (Hereafter cited as Bo Ma, *Royal Regalia*)

royal traditions of Myanmar. The five coronation regalia of Myanmar were white umbrella (ဆီးဖြူ), decorative frontlet (*sañ:kyac* - သင်းကျစ်), yak tail whisk (*sā:mrī:yap* - သားမြီးယပ်), dagger (*sanlyak* - သန်လျက်), and footwear (*khrenañ:* - ခြေနင်း).<sup>1</sup> Amongst those five coronation regalia, the yak tail whisk, the dagger and footwear were parts of the left hand side royal regalia.<sup>2</sup> In the coronation ceremony, the king adorning the decorative frontlet received the consecration either by holding the dagger and yak tail fly-whisk or by wearing the footwear under the shade of white umbrella. Some royal regalia including the white umbrellas were lost in the British colonization, the coronation regalia of Myanmar can only be studied from the *purapuik*<sup>3</sup> and ancient literature.

### Coronation Ceremony and Coronation Regalia of Thailand

Royal coronation ceremony of Thailand is the ancient traditional procedure for a king’s enthronement and is celebrated to show the legitimacy for the procession of the throne. Without the performing of this ceremony, the future king’s order was not called the royal order. There are three main procedures, the purifying the king’s head with sacred water (royal ablution ceremony), the receiving the golden plaque inscribed with his official title name and the receiving the royal coronation regalia from the chief Brahmin.<sup>4</sup> After completing these procedures, he will become the official king and get the supreme sovereign of the country from then.

Ancient traditional royal coronation ceremony procedure of Thailand is highly influenced by the cultures of India, Hinduism and Buddhism. In 1782, king *Rama I* founded the *Chakri* dynasty and the first coronation ceremony was simply celebrated and in 1783, he also published the writing of “manual on royal coronation ceremony procedure collected from *Ayutthaya* period for official use” by the helps and advices of learned civil officials from *Ayutthaya* period, supreme patriarchs and high-ranking monks. He also celebrated his second royal coronation ceremony in full scale following the procedures. Therefore, king *Rama I* is the prototype used for the complete traditional accession to the throne. The coronation regalia of Thailand are the great tiered umbrella, the crown of victory, the royal sword of victory, the royal fan and fly-whisk, the royal scepter and the golden slippers.

### Comparative Study on Royal Coronation Regalia of Myanmar and Thailand

#### White Umbrella (ဆီးဖြူ) of Myanmar and Great Tiered Umbrella of Thailand

In Myanmar, the custom of coronation white umbrella originated from the two Buddha life stories of *temi* and *sonna*.<sup>5</sup> Although there were the eight royal white umbrellas, only one white umbrella called *abhiseka* (အဘိဓေကဆီးဖြူ) was used as the coronation regalia. By the record of *muddhābhiseka*, the white umbrellas called *nawadaṭṭa* (နဝဒဏ္ဍ), *mabohara* (မနောဟရ), *ātapatra* (အာတပတြ) and *wizaya* (ဝိဇယ) were said to be set up on the right and left sides of the royal throne, respectively. By the record of *sankdakinnarī*, the white umbrella called *kanakkadaṇ* (ကနက္ကဒဏ်), *suriya* (သုရိယ), *wisakrui* (ဝိသကြို) and *samuti* (သမုတိ) were said to be set up on the left side of the royal throne and the umbrella called *kambu* (ကမ္ပ), *sanda* (စန္ဒ), *paduma* (ပဒမ) and *kumuda* (ကုမုဒ)

<sup>1</sup> A Researcher, ရှေးရိုးဆင်လာ မြန်မာအဆင်တန်ဆာဟု ခေါ်ဆိုထိုက်သော နန်းမှုနန်းရတနာဆင်တန်ဆာနှင့် သိပ္ပံတိပွယ်ရာများ (*Royal Adornments and the Knowledges called as Ancient Myanmar Tradition*), Yangon, Ngweyamon Press, p. *kī* (နီ) (Hereafter cited as A Researcher, *Royal Adornments*)

<sup>2</sup> Tun Yee, *Muddhābhisik*, p. 321

<sup>3</sup> See figure 1

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Culture (Thailand), *The Royal Coronation Ceremony*, Bangkok, Rung Silp Printing, 2018, p. 44 (Hereafter cited as Culture, *Royal Coronation*)

<sup>5</sup> Thu Dhamma, *Ethics*, p. 393

were said to be set up on the right side of the royal throne.<sup>1</sup> In the reign of king *Bodawpaya*, the existing white umbrella names were further added with new names as followings: *kanakkadaṇ* (ကနက္ကဒဏ်) as *nawadaṭṭa* (နဝဒဏ္ဍ), *suriya* (သုရိယ) as *mabohara* (မနောဟရ), *wisakrui* (ဝိသကြို) as *ātapatra* (အာတပတြ), *samuti* (သမုတိ) as *wizaya* (ဝိဇယ), *kambu* (ကမ္ဗ) as *nawadaṭṭa* (နဝဒဏ္ဍ), *sanda* (စန္ဒ) as *mabohara* (မနောဟရ), *paduma* (ပဒုမ) as *ātapatra* (အာတပတြ) and *kumuda* (ကုမုဒ) as *wizaya* (ဝိဇယ) respectively. The record of *rājābhiseka* also defined not only the left side white umbrellas, especially *kanakkadaṇ* (ကနက္ကဒဏ်), as the king's umbrella, but also the right side umbrellas, especially *kambu* (ကမ္ဗ), as the queen's umbrella.<sup>2</sup> As *kanakkadaṇ* (ကနက္ကဒဏ်) were regarded as the *nawadaṭṭa* and mentioned as the king's umbrella, it might be used as the *abhiseka* (အဘိသေကထီးဖြူ). Hence, *nawadaṭṭa* (နဝဒဏ္ဍ) or *kanakkadaṇ* (ကနက္ကဒဏ်) was the most important white umbrella used by the kings and was made of nine tiers like spire-like roofs while other white umbrellas had one tier. The makings of that umbrella were different from each reign to another and the Myanmar king measured the diameter of the umbrellas with his hand length. The stretchers that were tied to the top notch of the umbrella were made by three, nine and six strings. The top ends of those umbrellas were decorated with a golden pot or figure of brahminy-duck.<sup>3</sup>

Although there are seven royal nine-tiered white umbrellas in royal customs of Thailand, the only one white umbrella used as the coronation regalia is the nine-tiered great white umbrella of state.<sup>4</sup> If any king did not complete the coronation rites, he would not be able to sit on the throne under this great tiered umbrella. It is made of white silk cloth and each tier hangs into three layers trimmed with gold bands which are attached to a gilded golden shaft. The umbrella is topped with a finial. In the royal palace, this umbrella is set up above the crucial throne.

Both of the coronation white umbrellas of Myanmar and Thailand were nine tiers white umbrellas. These two umbrellas were similarly made of gold shafts and decorated with gold banyan leaves and gold leaves. In both royal traditions, the coronation white umbrellas were denoted as the symbols of protection. In Myanmar, there were eight total royal white umbrellas while there were seven total royal white umbrellas in Thailand tradition.



**Figure 1.** White Umbrella of Myanmar  
(Source; U Tin, *Myanmar Kings' Administration*)



**Figure 2.** Great Tiered Umbrella of Thailand  
(Source: Courtesy of Ministry of Culture (Thailand))

<sup>1</sup> A Researcher, *Royal Adornments*, p. ku (ကု)

<sup>2</sup> Tun Yee (Researcher), *နန်းသုံးယာဉ် - ပရိဘောဂနှင့် နန်းမှုပဒေသာကျမ်း (ပြည့်စုံကံစာတမ်း) (Royal Vehicle – Furniture and Royal Variety of Treatise (Supplemental Document))*, Yangon, Yar Pyae Press, 2011, p. 46 (Hereafter cited as Tun Yee, *Royal Vehicle*)

<sup>3</sup> Tun Yee, *Muddhābhisik*, p. 309

<sup>4</sup> See figure 2

## Decorative Frontlet (*Sañ:kyac* - သင်းကျစ်) with Royal Crested Headdress of Myanmar and Crown Victory of Thailand

Decorative frontlet (*sañ:kyac* - သင်းကျစ်) of Myanmar had two kinds; decorative frontlet combined with crested headdress (*makuṭābaddhika sañ:kyac* - မကုဋ္ဌာဗဒ္ဓိတသင်းကျစ်) and decorative frontlet itself (*suddika* - သုဒ္ဓိတသင်းကျစ်). The adorning of decorative frontlet linked with the life of Buddha by giving special reference to the signs of Buddha (*unhīsalakkhaṇā* - ဥဏှိသလက္ခဏာ) and the decorative frontlet of kings were gold plated ones.<sup>1</sup> The decorative frontlet is the insignia which covers the forehead from the left side to the right side. The decorative frontlet with crested headdress was used as a part of coronation regalia and of king Thibaw (1878 – 1885) can be seen in the National Museum (Yangon). It was made with gold, emerald, ruby, diamond, velvet and green feather.<sup>2</sup> It has a height of 44.5 cm. Its features can be analyzed as a row of decorated gladiolus (*saccā*), decorative frontlet (*sañ:kyac*), six continuous tiers of decorative device resembling a row of upright leaves (*cinthoñ*) and spike shaped finial (*athwat*).<sup>3</sup>

The great crown of victory of Thailand forms a distinctive style of being a multi-tiered conical diadem, terminating in a tapering spire. It was made of gold with the royal command of king *Rama I* and ornamented with diamonds set in gold enamel.<sup>4</sup> It measures sixty-six centimeters in height. King *Rama IV*, later ordered the “*Phum Khao Bin*” tip of the crown replaced with a large diamond, bought from Kolkata, India. In earlier periods, the king only placed the crown next to himself after receiving the crown of victory in the coronation ceremony. Later, the status of the crown changed when they had more contact with European countries. As the status of kingship in Europe is bestowed when the king puts on the crown, the king *Rama IV* adorned the crown upon his head in a meeting with foreign diplomatic corps.<sup>5</sup>

Although the crested headdress with decorative frontlet of Myanmar and the great crown victory of Thailand are similar in forms, the detailed features and their origin were different. In the features of the crested headdress with decorative frontlet of Myanmar, the focus was on the gold-plated decorative frontlet by giving reference to the signs of Buddha (*unhīsalakkhaṇā* - ဥဏှိသလက္ခဏာ), not on the crested headdress.<sup>6</sup> In the features of the crown victory, the crown itself represents Mount Meru, the sacred mountain and abode of the gods in Hindu and Buddhist cosmology, by giving the god-like status to the monarch. The spike shaped finial of crown victory was tapered with a diamond while the crested headdress was not tapered anything. The six tiers of decorative device of crested headdress were the same and come systematically while the tiers of crown were not the same.

<sup>1</sup> Tun Yee, *Muddhābhisik*, p. 320

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture, မြန်မာ့ယဉ်ကျေးမှုအမွေအနှစ်မင်းခမ်းတော်ဝင်ပစ္စည်းများ (*Myanmar's Cultural Heritage, Royal Regalia*), Yangon, The Department of Archaeology and National Museum Press, 2006, p. 77 (Hereafter cited as Ministry of Culture, *Myanmar's Cultural Heritage*)

<sup>3</sup> See figure 3

<sup>4</sup> See figure 4

<sup>5</sup> Culture, *Royal Coronation*, p. 50

<sup>6</sup> Thudhamma, *Ethics*, p. 400



**Figure 3.** Royal Crested Headdress with Decorated Frontlet

(Source: Photo by the Researcher)



**Figure 4.** Crown of Victory of Thailand

(Source: Courtesy of Ministry of Culture (Thailand))

### Royal Yak tail whisk (*Sā:mrī:yap* - သားမြီးယပ်) of Myanmar and Royal Fan and Fly Whisk of Thailand

Yak tail whisk of Myanmar was a sign of guiding the king not to deviate from the path of *dhamma* like what a yak (ခာမရီ) never let even a tail fall off from its body.<sup>1</sup> The yak is a kind of beast which lives on the Tibet plateau and in Myanmar, it is called as *aon* (အော့င်း). According to the *temiya jataka*, the yak tail whisk was said to be made with hair of yak tail and gold handle which were embellished with rubies.<sup>2</sup> The yak tail whisk of king *Alaungpaya* (1752-1760) can be studied at the National Museum (Yangon).<sup>3</sup> This yak tail whisk is made of gold, ruby, nine gems and yak tail. It has the gold gilded wooden handle which was decorated with nine gems at the ends of the handle.<sup>4</sup> The handle measures 58.5 cm and the length of tail hair measure 40.7 cm.

The royal fan and fly-whisk of Thailand was known as “*walawichani*”, the name taken from the Pali language, and meant for the hair of one type of a cow called yak. In the reign of king *Buddha Yod Fa Chulalok (Rama I)* (1782-1809), it was made of a form of a palm leaf fan.<sup>5</sup> Its handle is made with enameled gold and its rim was trimmed with gold. Later, king *Mongkut (Rama IV)* (1804-1868) recognized the meaning of “*walawichani*”<sup>6</sup> and ordered to change the ways of making from palm-leaf to yak hair. In later periods, the whisk was made with white elephant tail. In present, both of the palm-leaf fan and elephant tail fly-whisk were also used as royal coronation regalia.<sup>7</sup>

Both the yak tail whisk of Myanmar and fly-whisk of Thailand originated from the Pali language. Myanmar continuously made the whisk from the yak tail although Thailand made subsequent adaptations on the materials like palm-leaf, yak tail and white elephant tail. The handle of Myanmar yak tail whisk is a little longer in comparison with its length of the hair while the length of the hair of Thailand whisk is a bit longer than its handle.



**Figure 5.** Royal Yak tail fly-whisk of Myanmar  
(Source: Courtesy of National Museum (Yangon))



**Figure 6.** Royal Fan and Fly Whisk of Thailand  
(Source: Courtesy of Ministry of Culture (Thailand))

<sup>1</sup> A Researcher, *Royal Adornments*, p. ku (ကု)

<sup>2</sup> Thu Dhamma, *Ethics*, p. 389

<sup>3</sup> See figure 5

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Culture, *Myanmar's Cultural Heritage*, p. 80

<sup>5</sup> Culture, *Royal Coronation*, p. 58

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p.58

<sup>7</sup> See figure 6

### Dagger (*sanlyak* - သန်လျက်) of Myanmar and Royal Sword of Victory of Thailand

Dagger (*sanlyak* - သန်လျက်) of Myanmar has two kinds called one-edged dagger (*ekatodhāra* - ဧကတောစာရသန်လျက်) and two-edged dagger (*ubhatodhāra* - ဥဘတောစာရသန်လျက်). Amongst them, the two-edged dagger was used as the coronation regalia.<sup>1</sup> Although the *jataka* revealed the dagger's length as thirty-three finger-breath (63.5 cm), Myanmar kings redesigned the edge and length of the daggers in accordance with their respective times. The royal dagger of King *Alaungpaya* (1752 – 1760) is protected by the National Museum (Yangon).<sup>2</sup> Both the hilt and the scabbard of this dagger are encased in ivory colored velvet adorned with gems – crusted gold rings and there are five such rings on the scabbard. The dagger including its cover measures 76.2 centimeters.

The royal sword of victory of Thailand<sup>3</sup> is linked with the legend and the myth that a fisherman caught the blade in his net in Tonle' Sap.<sup>4</sup> The king *Buddha Yod Fa Chulalok (Rama I)* received this sword from *Chao Phraya Abhai Bhubei* (Ban) brought by an official sent from Battambang in 1784. In 1785, it became the coronation regalia by representing the power of the king and his nation.<sup>5</sup> The sword of victory is a kind of two-edged dagger. The hilt and sheath were ornamented in gold enamel and precious gems. The length of the blade itself is 64.5 centimeters, and 89.8 centimeters when it includes the hilt. When enclosed with the sheath, it is 101 centimeters in length. The neck of the sword between its blade and hilt is decorated with a gold inlaid miniature of *Vishnu* riding the *garuda*.

Both of the swords of Myanmar and Thailand are the two-edged daggers. According to the measurements of their lengths, the sword of Thailand is a bit longer than the Myanmar's although the total length of Myanmar sword is considerably closer with the lengths of daggers mentioned in the Buddhist literatures. As Thailand sword has a gold inlaid miniature of *Vishnu* riding the *garuda*, it would have more affinities to the Hindu literatures rather than the Buddhist scriptures. The sword of Myanmar was made of natural ivory and iron while the sword of Thailand was made of gold and iron.



**Figure 7.** Royal Dagger (*sanlyak* - သန်လျက်) Myanmar

(Source: Courtesy of National Museum (Yangon))



**Figure 8.** Royal Sword of Victory of Thailand

(Source: Courtesy of Ministry of Culture (Thailand))

### Footwear (*Khrenañ*: - ခြေနင်း) of Myanmar and Golden Slippers of Thailand

In regarding with a king's footwear, there were two types such as royal sandals (*khrenañ*: - ခြေနင်း) and royal slippers (*phinap* - ဖိနပ်). *Khrenañ*: was a kind of footwear which covered the toes and heel<sup>6</sup> while *phinap* did not cover the toes and heel. In Myanmar royal customs, only the

<sup>1</sup> Tun Yee, *Muddhābhisik*, p. 221  
<sup>2</sup> See figure 7  
<sup>3</sup> See figure 8  
<sup>4</sup> Culture, *Royal Coronation*, p. 63  
<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 63  
<sup>6</sup> Thu Dhamma, *Ethics*, p. 395

footwear which covered the toes and heel was allowed to be worn by the king and hence, *khrenañ*: was put as one of the coronation regalia.<sup>1</sup> According to *jataka*, *khrenañ*: was said to be made with gold and embellished with precious gems. The royal footwears (*khrenañ*: and *phinap*) are now collected and protected in National Museum (Yangon). This *khrenañ*: has filigreed tips curving upwards and its forefronts were embellished with precious gems. The royal slippers of Thailand became the parts of royal regalia by following the customs of an ancient Indian belief in the reign of king *Rama I*. They were the gold slippers made of colorful enameled gold which were inlaid with diamonds.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, in Myanmar royal customs, the only footwear covered the toes and heel was denoted as one of coronation regalia and was defined as the one to be worn by the king while the gold slippers of Thailand, as the part of coronation regalia, are the kinds of footwear which only covers the toes. Although the forefronts of the footwear have the filigree tips curving to upwards, the filigree tips of *khrenañ*: of Myanmar is distinctively curving upwards while the filigree tip of Thailand is slightly curving upwards.



**Figure 9.** Footwear of Myanmar

(Source: Courtesy of National Museum (Yangon))



**Figure 10.** Golden Slippers of Thailand

(Source: Courtesy of Ministry of Culture (Thailand))

### Royal Scepter of Thailand

In the royal customs, there are two scepters. The first scepter was made in the reign of king *Buddha Yod Fa Chulalok (Rama I)*.<sup>3</sup> It has the trident finial which was gilded with gold because the gold is inlaid in its iron hilt and its staff was also made with Javanese Cassia wood. The second scepter was made of pure gold and its finial has the figure of a deity while its staff was designed to hide a sword in the reign of king *Mongkut (Rama IV)*.<sup>4</sup> Although king *Mongkut* was in favor of using this second scepter, king *Vajiravudh (Rama VI)* used the first scepter in his coronation ceremony because of his royal admiration of heritage objects.<sup>5</sup> In Myanmar royal tradition, the royal scepter was found as a part of left-hand side royal regalia. In the coronation ceremony, the king ascended the royal throne by holding the royal scepter in order to receive the five-coronation regalia.



**Figure 11.** Royal Scepter of Thailand

(Source: Courtesy of Ministry of Culture (Thailand))

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, p. 396

<sup>2</sup> See figure 10

<sup>3</sup> Culture, *Royal Coronation*, p. 65

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 65

<sup>5</sup> See figure 11



### Conclusion

As Myanmar and Thailand have been the two Buddhist majority countries, their coronation ceremonies have been accustomed to the Buddhism of central India. Therefore, although the direction of their cultural background has the same route, the ways of receiving these ideas and the adaptations are slightly different according to their indigenous cultures. Although the coronation regalia of Myanmar mainly followed the Buddhist scriptures since the Bagan period, the coronation regalia of Thailand followed the mixed interaction of Buddhism and Hinduism. As the neighboring countries, Myanmar and Thailand have been sharing socio-political cultures and a considerable border of geographical factors. The royal traditions of these two countries show some affinities with their own adaptive cultures and crafts. Moreover, the fact that both of the countries received the majority of Buddhism of central India supports having some cultural affinities on royal traditions, especially coronation regalia. As the majority of these two nations follow the teachings of Buddha, the kings have been the supporters of Buddhism. Therefore, the coronation regalia of these two countries show some cultural affinities although their origins and artistic values were cultivated in accordance with their successive cultures. Nevertheless, the royal coronation regalia of Myanmar and Thailand show the affinities and differences in cultural origins and typologies, the major difference today make the royal coronation regalia of Myanmar and Thailand is that Myanmar royal coronation regalia are no longer in royal traditional usage as the British annexed the Myanmar monarchy in 1885 while Thailand royal coronation regalia have been in usage in the ceremonies of living Thailand monarchy.

### References

#### Primary Sources

- Research in National Museum (Yangon) (September – 2022)
- Research in Universities’ Central Library (September – 2022)

#### Secondary Sources

##### Myanmar Books

A Researcher *ရှေးရှိုးဆင်လာ မြန်မာအဆင်တန်ဆာဟုခေါ်ဆိုထိုက်သော နန်းမှုနန်းရာအဆင်တန်ဆာနှင့် သိမှတ်ဖွယ်ရာများ (Royal Adornments and the Knowledges called as Ancient Myanmar Tradition)*, Yangon, Ngweyamon Press

Mg Than Swe *သမိုင်းသံစဉ် (The Sound of History)*, Yangon, Nay Yee Yee Publishing House, 2019 (Dawei)

Ministry of Religious Affairs *မြန်မာ့ယဉ်ကျေးမှုအမွေအနှစ် မင်းခမ်းတော်ဝင် ပစ္စည်းများ (Myanmar’s Cultural Heritage, Royal Regalia)*, Yangon, The Department of Archaeology and National Museum Press, 2006 and Culture

Than Tun *မြန်မာထီးမှုနန်းရာ (Myanma Court Etiquette)*, Yangon, Yone Kyi Chat Press, 2003

Thu Dhamma *ရာဇသေဝကဒီပနီကျမ်း (The Book for Kings’ Ethics)*, Yangon, Seikku Cho Cho Publishing House, 2013

Tin, U *မြန်မာမင်း အုပ်ချုပ်ပုံစာတမ်းနှင့် ဘိုးတော်ဘုရား၏ ရာဇသတ်ခေါ်သော အမိန့်တော်တမ်းကြီး (၅တွဲပေါင်းချုပ်) (The Collection of Myanmar King’s Administration and the Edict of King Bodawpaya) (Collection of Five Series)*, Yangon, Seikku Cho Cho Press, 2012

Tun Yee *နန်းသုံးယာဉ် - ပရိဘောဂနှင့် နန်းမှုပဒေသာကျမ်း (ပြည့်စုံစာတမ်း) (Royal Vehicle – Furniture and Royal Variety of Treatise (Supplemental Document))*, Yangon, Yar Pyae Press, 2011

Tun Yee *ကုန်းဘောင်ခေတ်ဘုရင်များ မုဒ္ဒါဘိသိက်ခံယူပုံ စာပေါင်းချုပ် (The Summary of Konbaung Kings’ Muddhābhisik Coronation)*, Yangon, Yar Pyae Press, 2009

Zayyathinkhayar *ရွှေဘုံနိဒါန်း (Introduction to the Golden Realm)*, Mandalay, Pitakattaw Press, 1955

*မြန်မာ့စွယ်စုံကျမ်း (Myanmar Encyclopedia)*, Vol. IX, Part I, Yangon, Sarpay Beikman Press, 1964

### English Books

- Bo Ma *A Study on Royal Regalia found at the Mural Paintings in Bagan Period*, PhD dissertation, Department of Archaeology, University of Yangon, 2017
- Dhani Nivat, *The Coronation of His Majesty Prajadhipok King of Siam*, Bangkok, Thai Kasem His Highness Prince Printing, 1949
- Ministry of *The Royal Coronation Ceremony*, Bangkok, Rung Silp Printing, 2018 Culture (Thailand)
- Ministry of *The Coronation of King Rama X, His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn Phra*
- Foreign Affairs of *Vajiraklaochaoyuhua*, Thailand, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of The Kingdom of Thailand Thailand Press, 2020
- Poopongpan, *Thai Kingship during the Ayutthaya Period: A Note on its Divine Aspects*
- Woraporn *Concerning Indra*, Silpakorn University International Journal, Thailand, Vol 7, p. 143-171, 2007
- Quaritch Wales, H. G *Siamese State Ceremonies: Their History and Function*, London, Routledge Press, 1931