

## MON WRITING AND INSCRIPTIONS IN THE FIRST ERA (5<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> CENTURY AD) OF MON LITERATURE DEVELOPMENT\*

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### Abstract

There are several national ethnic groups in Myanmar. They have their own unique languages, literatures, and cultures. They found their own kingdoms both in Thailand and Myanmar and enriched own literary records, religious buildings and cultural heritages. During Bagan era, Mon literature and culture has greatly achieved. Mon literature had been famous from Dvaravati era to the present time. Mon literature divided in three eras such as ancient, mediaeval and modern. The paper reveals the inscriptions of Mon literature and their development writing in the first era from 5<sup>th</sup> century AD to 12<sup>th</sup> century AD. The paper intend to reveal the nearly disappearance of Mon literature, to value and pay regard as the high standard of Mon literature as the oldest literature in Myanmar and their location. The paper is based on literature search method from various information centers. The paper includes the history and civilization of Mon, inscriptions of Mon literature in each era and writing system of alphabets. This paper will be beneficial to all the new Mon generations as well as other nationals who are interested in the Mon literature development. Besides, the paper will surely support the development of national literatures.

**Keywords:** Information Sources, Mon stone inscriptions, ink inscription and votive tablets

### Introduction

Literature is the culture of a race and heritage of national culture. When measuring the cultural standard of a nation or race, literature is a basic role of culture. Any individual race and language commonly has alphabets and literature. Now, the absence of alphabets and literature in small nations are not negligible on the world. The development status of a race can be measured based on the prosperity degree of language, literature and culture.<sup>2</sup>

The successive changes in historical events of each race usually reflect the status of literature, culture and environment of community people as well as morality and concepts of people. If the literature of a race is perished, the culture and the race will be vanished totally.<sup>3</sup> The Mon literature and culture have developed since before Myanmar was emerged as a state. Mon literature divided into three eras as ancient, mediaeval and modern. The Mon literature used from the 5<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> century AD is called as the ancient which include the period of Dvaravati (၄၀၀-၁၀၀၀) (AD 600-1000), the period of Thaton (AD 1000-1100) and the period of Bagan (AD 1100-1200). The literature used from the 12<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> century AD is known as the medieval age literature which include Haripunjaya period (၁၂၀၀-၁၃၀၀) (AD 1200-1300) and period of Hanthawaddy (AD 1300 to 1500). The literature used from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to date is noted the modern literature.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Bohmu Ba Thaug, *Cā chui to' myā" áthhuppatti* (ပဏ္ဍိတဝိမာန် တီထွင်) (Yangon: Yar Pyae Saroak Taik, 2002), 26.

<sup>3</sup> U Min Pe Myint, "Mvan' yaꣳ' kye" mhu nhai' rui"rā dale' thuú" caü (ရေ၊ ဝေဗုဒ္ဓေ၊ နှစ် "အုပ်စု")၊ *Mon Magazine*, 2006, introduction. (hereafter cited as Min Pe Myint)

<sup>4</sup> Ashin Nyanavansa (Kaw Bain), "Mvan' lāmyui" tui' e\* cāpe yaꣳ' kye mhu nhai" bhāsātārā" (ရေ၊ ဝေဗုဒ္ဓေ၊ နှစ် "အုပ်စု") (M.A thesis, State Pariyatti Sāsana University (Yangon), 2001), 5. (hereafter cited as Nyanavansa)

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In this paper firstly described history of Mon people and their civilization in Thailand and Myanmar. The development of Mon literature from Dvaravati era, Thaton era and Bagan era are described. Under each era, the writing of Mon literature on various materials and their locations are described by the stone inscriptions, bell inscriptions, votive tables, ink inscriptions. And, also presents the changing of Mon alphabets from one era to another. Moreover, the list of stone inscriptions are described at the end of the paper and arranged alphabetically according to subject by using the Serars List of Subject Headings 18th edition.

### Aims and Objectives of the Paper

The objectives of the paper are:

1. To know the standard of Mon literature according to three eras
2. To prevent the nearly disappeared Mon national literature
3. To become the new generations like their cultural heritage
4. To support the readers who interest ancient Mon literature and outstanding Mon literates
5. To support in any to united native people who inhabitant in Myanmar

### Mon People and Civilization in Southeast Asia

The various ethnic groups are peacefully settled in Myanmar. Among of them, Mon ethnic group has a very long history as the rich cultural practices. They received Buddhism first from India. They were a major source of influence on the [culture of Myanmar](#). They settled higher standard with throne along the delta of the Ayeyawaddy River, Sittaung River, the upper area of the Thanlwin River as well as areas of Patheingyi, Myaungmya, Dagon, Hanthawaddy, Martaban (Mottama), Mawlamyine in the Ramanya Desa, and then in Phra Pahtom (ယံယံ) (Nakhon Pahtom) (နယ်နယ်), Lopburi (လုပ်ပူရီ) and Lamphum (လမ်ပူ) in Dvaravati (သွာရာဝတီ) Thailand.<sup>1</sup>

### Mon Civilization in Central Thailand

In the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD, Mon people settled in the Southern Part of Thailand and founded the Buddhist State of Dvaravati (သွာရာဝတီ) in 5<sup>th</sup> century AD. The capital of the state was Lopburi (လုပ်ပူရီ), the state between Cambodia and Myanmar was called “To-Lo-Po-Ti”. Phra Pahtom (ယံယံ) was a large city of Dvaravati and Mon people settled in Dvaravati state from 6<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> century AD. The famous Mon civilization of Phra Pahtom pagoda was built by Mon people. In 7<sup>th</sup> century AD, Mon State Dvaravati and Lopburi (လုပ်ပူရီ) were the most powerful in the area.<sup>2</sup>

In the 11<sup>th</sup> century AD, when Mon-Khmer people from East Cambodia invaded Lopburi (လုပ်ပူရီ), the city was moved to the area of Haripunjaya (ဟရိပုဏ္ဏသာယာ) (or) Lumphum (လမ်ပူ). It was the last Mon state developed in Thailand. The city was founded and ruled by Mon Queen Jamadevi (ဗုဒ္ဓမာရီ). In 11<sup>th</sup> century AD, Mon Queen and people took refugee in Hanthawaddy

<sup>1</sup> Naing Pan Hla, *Sutesana cāpe myā* (စုတေဇာနည်) (Yangon, Moe Kyi Sarpay, 1998), 30. (hereafter cited as Pan Hla)

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Than Tun, *Khet' ho'i' mranmā rājava'i* (နယ်နယ်) (Yangon: Mahar Dagon Sarpay, 1964), 89. (hereafter cited as Than Tun)

(Bago) via Thaton due to the outbreak of cholera disease. In this way, because of the Mon people returned from Hanthawady, the writing style of inscriptions found in Lamphum were similar to Bagan and the culture of lacquered arts in Bagan was diffused from Lamphum via Hanthawaddy. In the late 12<sup>th</sup> century AD, Dvaravati was absorbed by the Thai empire; Mon people were disappeared from that area in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries AD.<sup>1</sup>

### Mon Civilizations in Myanmar

Mon people migrated into lower Myanmar established Mon Kingdom at Suvannabhūmi (ဝပ်ဝံ) (Thaton) region from 6<sup>th</sup> century BC to the middle of the 11<sup>th</sup> century AD. The state was important trading ports between Indian Ocean and mainland Southeast Asia. It became a primary center of Theravada Buddhism in Southeast Asia and applies to the whole region of continental Southeast Asia. In AD 1057, King Manuha of Thaton surrendered by Bagan king Anawratha, and Thaton's literary and religious traditions became Bagan civilization. Moreover, between AD 1057 and AD 1085, Mon craftsmen helped to build some two thousand monuments at Bagan.<sup>2</sup>

Mon people were powerful in the whole Myanmar (Burma) from the 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> and from 13<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. In AD 825, the Hanthawaddy Kingdom (Bago) was founded by Kings Thammala and Wimala. As King Tissarāja (ဝပ်ဝံ) (AD 1043-1057) the first Hanthawaddy was occupied by King of Bagan. After the fall of Bagan, King Wareru established dynasty at Martaban (Mottama) in AD 1287. At that time, King Narathihapate ruled in Bagan. The Wareru dynasty maintained from AD 1287 to 1539. From 1369-1539, Hanthawaddy was the capital of the Mon Kingdom. In 1539, Mon Kingdom was occupied by King Mintaya Shwehtee or Tabin Shwe Htee (AD 1538 -1550) of Taungoo. The kings of Taungoo made Bago their royal capital from 1539-1599. After the Wareru dynasty was ended in AD 1539, the Mon revolted and founded the restored Hanthawaddy Kingdom by Banya Dala or Byamaungdirit (ဝပ်ဝံ) in AD 1745. But Myanmar King Alaungpaya or Alaung Mintaya (တပ်မိတ်) (U Aung Zeya AD 1714-1760) captured the city in 1757. From that time, there was no more Mon Kingdom in Myanmar.

Mon people were once of highly cultural status in the Southeast Asian region. Though they could not unite the whole region, many Mon words are still found in various ethnic languages of the Southeast Asian nations. Due to this fact, it can be said Mon culture has influenced in this region. Mon people are not only the oldest inhabitants in Myanmar but also developed literature and culture.<sup>3</sup>

### Mon Alphabets and Changing Period

Mon people started writing alphabets by taking Pallawa (ယဝ) alphabets written in the Southern part of India during 5<sup>th</sup> century AD. When Shin Maha Buddhaghosa (ရွှေမာ) brought the Pitaka literatures in Magada alphabets, Mon people revised their own alphabets based on the Magada alphabets. The writing system of alphabets was changing from one era to

<sup>1</sup> Pan Hla, 22-24.

<sup>2</sup> Nyanavansa, 26-29.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 60-62.

another. Ancient Mon scripts written in 5<sup>th</sup> century AD called ancient Mon literature. The ancient Mon alphabets were found by the verse of “Yedhammā (a, "rṃ)” written in Pali. That can be seen in the compound of the Bothataung Pagoda in Yangon.

Moreover, the writing system of Mon alphabets written in 5<sup>th</sup> century AD, which is found at Phra Pathom (y&yxH. It contained 23 consonants and is different with the alphabets written on Lopburi (avmABD) stone inscription in 8<sup>th</sup> century AD. Lopburi (avmABD) stone inscription is found in old city of Lopburi (avmABD) in the Southern part of Thailand and contained 25 consonants. Those writing system are also different with the writing system of stone inscriptions in the reign of King Manuha, King Anawratha and King Kyansittha.<sup>1</sup> In the era of Thaton and Bagan, the consonants of Mon alphabets were increased 33. When the literature was writing on pay and parabaiks, the system of alphabets were changing to the rounded corner.

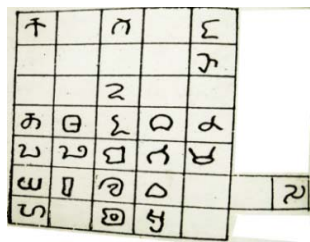


Fig. 1 Mon Alphabets in Para Pathom Era

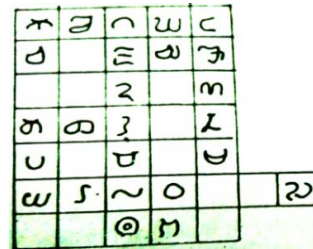


Fig. 2 Mon Alphabets in Lopburi Era



Fig. 3 Mon Alphabets in Thaton and Bagan Era

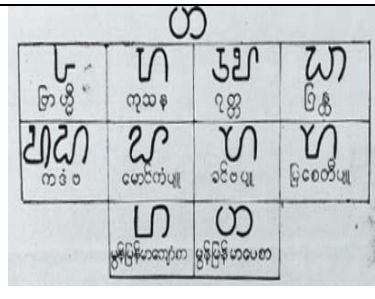


Fig. 4 Mon Alphabet on Pay

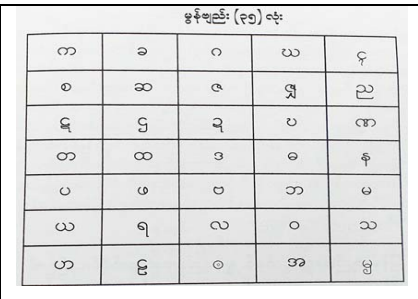


Fig. 5 Mon Alphabets at Present Time

When printing machine and computer are emerged, the alphabets of Mon are changed according to each material. The modern era, Mon alphabets are improved 35 consonants. In this way the writing system of Mon alphabets are changing from one period to another, likewise the standard of Mon literate developed from one period to another.

**Mon Writing and Inscriptions in First Era ( 5<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> Century AD)**

The Mon literature and culture have developed since before Myanmar was emerged as a state. Ancient Mon Scholars had recorded Mon literature on stone, votive tablets, glaze tablets, walls by ink inscription, bells, palm-leaf as well as in paintings, craft works, mason works and so on. Those records can be found in pagodas, temples, some Mon monasteries, the National

<sup>1</sup> Naing Tun Thein. “Mon ákkharā samuī” (rēft u&morli) in *Mon á kroī” si koī” cayā nhai” á chyā” choi”pā” myā”* (rēft alumi f&odumi f&n&Esh tjcmaqmi f&ygr&n) (Yangon: Mon Literature and Culture Committee, 1995). 20-24. (hereafter cited as Tun Thein)

Library of Myanmar (Yangon, Nay Pyi Taw), the National Museum in Myanmar and other Southeast Asia Countries, some cultural museums in States and Regions.<sup>1</sup>

### (1) Mon Writing and Inscriptions in Dvaravati Era (5<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> century AD)

#### Stone Inscriptions

Mon was highly skilled in stone inscriptions, sculptures, stucco and terracotta mouldings for architectural decoration. The beginning of Mon literature is started from the period of Dvaravati (5<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> century AD). In this era, the Mon literature were inscribed on the stone those can be found on Thailand, Laos and Cambodia. The Phra Pahtom (၂၅၂၈) Mon stone inscription that inscribed in 5<sup>th</sup> century AD is the most ancient. Phra Pathom (၂၅၂၈) was a large city of Dvaravati which is 30 miles away at the west of Bangkok. Phra Pathom (၂၅၂၈) stone inscription inscribed in 5<sup>th</sup> century AD is “Ye Dhamma (၁, "၂၈)” verse with Mon alphabets. According to that stone inscription, Mon literature was adopted by Pallawa (၂၅၀) scripts that derived from Brahmic script (၂၅၀).<sup>2</sup> The Phra Pathom Mon inscription inscribed in 5<sup>th</sup> century AD found in the Phra Pathon pagoda. It is the record of donation and described the charity materials.<sup>3</sup>

The other well-known Mon stone inscription is Lopburi (၂၅၂၈) stone inscription inscribed in the 8<sup>th</sup> century AD. It is a record of donation. It was found in Lopburi (၂၅၂၈) city and situated 80 miles away at the north of Bangkok. It is famous and a good evidence not only for Mon history but also for Thai chronicle. According to those stone inscriptions of Davarati period, it can be known Mon people are followers of Theravada Buddhism and they worship Buddha images, pagodas and monks. Besides, the donors always describe the name of their charities materials after doing the religious offering in those period. Besides the usage of vocabularies in Lopburi (၂၅၂၈) stone inscription is similar to the stone inscription inscribed in Bagan era.<sup>4</sup>



**Figure 6** Phra Pathom Mon Stone Inscription

The 9<sup>th</sup> century AD stone inscription inscribed in Mon language found in Ban Thalat, Laos. Now, it is located at the Vat Ho Phra Kaeo Museum, Vietniane. It is the record of donations. It describes the list of charity materials and slaves offered to the pagoda and monastery.

<sup>1</sup> Nyanavansa, 81.

<sup>2</sup> Pan Hla, 125.

<sup>3</sup> Nyanavansa, 100-101.

<sup>4</sup> Nyanavansa, 102-105.



**Figure 7** Laos Mon Stone Inscription inscribe in 9<sup>th</sup> century AD

**Source:** Mon Stone Inscription, post to Mon History Facebook page, November 16. 2016. (7:24 a.m.), accessed August 2, 2019, <http://www/facebook.com/monhistory>.

### Terracotta Votive Tablets

The 9<sup>th</sup> century Mon inscriptions have been found on the terracotta votive tablets. The terracotta votive stupa has been found near the site of the old city of Thap Chumphon in Nakhon Sawan Province. It incised in Mon and Pali. The votive tablet which incised in old Mon scripts has been found at the Phanat Nikhom, Chonburi. Now it can be found in the Bangkok National Museum.<sup>1</sup> Nowadays, all Mon old literature and ancient civilization in Dvaravati are absorbed by Thai.

### (2) Mon Writing and Inscriptions in Thaton Era (10<sup>th</sup> -11<sup>th</sup> century AD)

After Dvaravati was fallen under the Khmer in the 10<sup>th</sup> century AD, Mon literature was developed in Thaton. The life span of Mon literature in Thaton period was not longer than the Dvaravati ('&OwD) period. However, the writing Mon literature was much better improved than that of the Dvaravati ('&OwD) period.

### Mon Literature on Stone Inscriptions

In Myanmar, there are many national stone inscriptions. Among of them, the ancient Mon stone inscriptions can be found in Thaton, Kyaik Kha Mi, Pyay, Myingyan, Kyaukse, Bago and Pathein. Apart from, the stone inscriptions found in the Thaton, Pyay, Bagan and Myingyan are most ancient than the other national stone inscriptions in Myanmar. Though the ancient Mon stone inscriptions did not have the inscribed date, it can be assumed that the date depended on the period of Kings who ruled in that kingdom.<sup>2</sup>

The stone inscription of Kawgun (aunfēf) cave was inscribed in 6<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> century AD. It is situated about 28 miles north of Mawlamyine and 8 miles from the left of Thanlwin river in lower Hpa-an. The alphabets are half in Sanskrit and half in Mon.<sup>3</sup> It is approximately similar to the alphabets of Phra Pathom (y&yxH) and Lopburi (avm&B) stone inscriptions in Thailand. Though, it is not more ancient than the stone inscriptions in Thailand, it is more ancient than the stone inscriptions in Thaton, Bagan, Pyay, Kyaukse, Pathein, Yangon, Bago, Mottama,

<sup>1</sup> Emmanuel, 81.

<sup>2</sup> U Chit Thein, She Haung Thutethana Wun Htauk, "Rhe" hoï" mvan kyokcā poi" chyup' (a/ſa [ mi f rēh&u&pmaygi fcyj)'' (Rangoon: Department of Archaeology, 1965), Ga-Gagyi. (hereafter cited as Chit Thein)

<sup>3</sup> Emmanuel Guillon, *The Mons : A Civilization of Southeast Asia* (Bangkok: The Siam Society, 1999), 83. (hereafter cited as Emmanuel)





### Mon Literature on Terracotta Votive Tablets

The literature written on votive tables as like as the literature on the stone inscription are the evidence of historical events. Those are very valuable for the researchers. Though there is no written on the votive tables, it can be assumed that the era, the time and the donor or person by looking the images incised on the votive tablets. Sometimes, the votive tablets can reversed the history. The Mon literature votive tablets were found in Shwesaryan pagoda (Thaton), Ayet The`ma (**တဲမာ**) village, Winka village and Bayingyi cave which is located on the road of Thaton and Hpa-an those are earlier than Bagan period. Thagya Pagoda situated near the Shwesaryan (**အလံ**) Pagoda in Thaton can be found the votive tablets and inscribed the donor's prayer to become the Buddha. Some of the votive tablets inscribed the prayer of donor. Mon votive tablets can also be found in the Bayaingyi cave in 1932-1933, they have no date. In 1979, Mon script votive tablets was found in Ayet The`ma and Winka but most of the scripts were ruined but the writing were similar to Lopburi stone inscription inscribed in 6<sup>th</sup> century AD.<sup>1</sup> Those inscriptions are additional evidence for associating the Mon with lower Myanmar. According to the votive tablets, it can be known Mon people wrote a short letter on the votive tablet, but they always compose with a poetry system if they have a chance.



Figure 10 Terracotta Votive Tablets in Winka

### Mon literature on the Terracotta Glazed Tablets

The terracotta glazed tablets can be found at Thagya pagoda in the compound of Shwesaryan Pagoda in Thaton. It inscribed about Ngayangase Jatakas (**ဂါယာဂေဇာတက**) and the Ten jatakas (**တိရစ္ဆာန်တရား**). According the Jatakas on the glazed tablets, the standard of literature in Thaton era is not inferior than the Dvaravati era.<sup>2</sup>

### (3) Mon Writing and Inscriptions in Bagan Era ( 11<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> century AD)

#### Mon literature on Stone Inscriptions

Bagan was founded in 9<sup>th</sup> century AD. After the rule of successive Kings in Bagan, the literary writing was first identified in the reign of King Anawrahta. There was not Myanmar alphabet in the reign of King Anawrahta. After Anawrahta conquest Thaton in AD 1057, Mon king, monks and wisdoms were taken to Bagan. Even in the time of King Saw Lu and King Kyansittha, the most writing language was Mon alphabet and the Mon language. So, Mon literature was developed in Bagan from 11<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> century AD. Besides, the early Kings of

<sup>1</sup> Nyanavansa, 167-192.

<sup>2</sup> Min Pe Myint, 29-31.



Bagan had to use the Mon language before Myanmar alphabets.<sup>1</sup> The culture in Bagan mainly depended on religion, so the literature in the Bagan era was religious literature.

As the encouraged of king Kyansittha the pride of the Mon language and literature became very powerful. There are seven obvious stone inscriptions inscribed by King Kyansittha. They are:

- (1) Pyay Shwesandaw Pagoda Stone Inscription
- (2) Thaton Kyaiktee Pagoda Stone Inscription
- (3) Thaton Kyaikthalan Stone Inscription
- (4) Bagan Myakan Stone Inscription
- (5) Alan Bagan Stone Inscription
- (6) Kyansittha Min Authtupatti Stone Inscription
- (7) Khansittha Min Nanti Stone Inscription

There are four items of Pyay Shwesandaw Pagoda Stone Inscription. It was inscribed by Kyansittha on 3 June 1093. Those were inscribed by the intention to know he was a prophecy King and the State was developed and peaceful in his ruled. Thaton Kyaiktee Pagoda Stone Inscription was incised on April 1098 and intended to the Mon people. It is a record of donation. Thaton Kyaikthalan Stone Inscription was found in the compound of Kyaikthalan Pagoda in Thaton. It is also a record of donation. The King Kyansittha organized the people with the language and belief in religion by those stone inscriptions. Besides, the writing system and aims of Bagan Myakan and Alan Bagan Stone Inscriptions are the same to organize the people and to respect him.<sup>2</sup>

The Bagan Shwezigon Pagoda Stone Inscription is also called the biographic inscription of King Kyansitha and can be seen in the compound of Bagan Shwezigon (Now, Bagan Museum erected by No. 4, 5). It is not about the shwezigon pagoda and not also the donation record. It was a proclamation of King Kyansittha to the citizenries. It started with preaching of the Buddha. Then, it eulogy about the pride of King Kyansittha. The writing is the style of prose poem about the king who conducted to develop and peace the state. Then, the inscription is written in rhetorical literature about the king help to the citizenries. So, the inscription is highlighting the standard of Mon literature in Myanmar history.<sup>3</sup>

The founding the palace of Bagan Stone Inscription (Khansittha Min Nanti Stone Inscription) was found in Tharapa (O&yj) gate (Now, Bagan Museum erected by No. 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9). By studying those inscriptions, it is clear that Mon language and literature was a major medium in the Bagan period. The King Kyansittha also organized the people with the language and belief in religion by those stone inscriptions. As the introductory note of the inscription was written about the preaching of the Buddha, the practice has been followed as a literary writing custom by all Myanmar and Mon scholars to date. Those stone inscriptions are not only the records but also the milestone of Mon literature in early Bagan.<sup>4</sup> By studying the King

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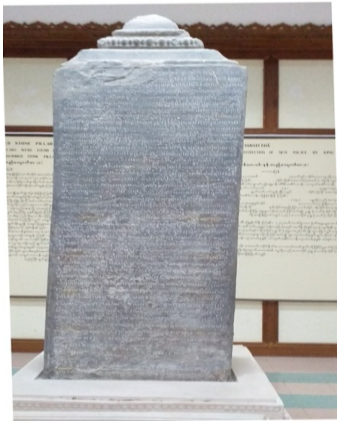
<sup>1</sup> Min Pe Myint, 29.

<sup>2</sup> Nyanavansa, 133-136.

<sup>3</sup> Nyanavansa, 136-134.

<sup>4</sup> Nyanavansa, 137-144.

Kyansittha's stone inscriptions, it can be seen the later writings are more complete with poetry than the earlier. They have high value of literature and are very famous, and from founding the palace stone inscription can get the evidence of the standard of Mon literature and Music.



Source: Bagan Museum



Source: Bagan Museum

**Figure 11** Stone Inscription of founding the palace by Kyansittha

**Figure 12** Shwezigon Stone Inscription by Kyansittha

The Rajakumara's Myazedi stone inscription a prominent documentary evidence of cultural heritage of Bagan was found in two places. One was found near Myazedi Pagoda of Myingaba Village and now had been placed in the Archaeological Museum in Bagan. Another one found near Gubyaukyi Pagoda and now placed in the precinct of Myazedi Pagoda. It was inscribed in four languages such as Mon, Myanmar, Pali and Pyu in AD 1113. The inscription tells all the story of Prince Rajakumara and King [Kyansittha](#). The inscription can be observed Rajakumara's respect and love for his father. It was submitted by Myanmar and recommended for inclusion in the Memory of the World Register in 2015 according the meeting of International Advisory Committee of UNESCO's from 4-6 October 2015.<sup>1</sup>



Source: Bagan Museum

**Figure 13** Rajakumara's Myazedi Inscription

<sup>1</sup> "Myazedi Quadrilingual Stone Inscription", United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, accessed September 4, 2019, <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/memory-of-the-world/register/full-list-of-registered-heritage/registered-heritage-page-5/myazedi-quadrilingual-stone-inscription/>

Kyaukse Mon Stone Inscription was inscribed by Mon monk. It has been found in the Ordination Hall of the compound of Tawya Monastery, Waybu Street, Northwest of Kyaukse Mountain in Kyaukse. It does not have the incised date. According to the writing system it can be assumed that the inscriptions of Bagan period ruled by Kyansittha and Alaung Sithu. The name of charities materials, prayer and share the merit were incised.<sup>1</sup>

Bagan Petlaik Pagoda Stone Inscription was situated at the Petlaik (**zuvv**) pagoda in the east of Thiripyitsayar, Bagan. It was found in 1906 and inscribed with Mon language. The pagodas were built the early 11<sup>th</sup> century AD. So, it can be the message that the people in Bagan belief the Mahayana Buddhism.<sup>2</sup> Thaton Nyaung Wine Stone Inscription was inscribed by King Kyansittha. It was found in the corner of east south of Daw Shwe Mi's yard. Now, it was erected by the name of No. 14 stone inscription in the stairway of Shwesaryan Pagoda.<sup>3</sup> Myint Thar stone inscription was inscribed in 11<sup>th</sup> century and it is the record of donation by Saw Lu Min. It inscribed Pali language with Mon alphabets.<sup>4</sup>

After Suvannabhūmi (**oPöb**) was fallen under the King of Bagan in AD 1057, many professionals as Mon Sanghas and persons were taken to Bagan. So, many Mon literary records were used in the time of Bagan dynasty. Mon literature was mostly used along the reign of King Kyansittha (AD 1084-1112). After that, some ancient Mon stone inscriptions can be found in the extensive locations from Kyaukse to Pyay, Taungsoon, Thaton, Dawei and Ayet The'ma (**t&ubn**) village. As the Myanmar language and literature became developed in the reign of King Narapati Sithu (**e&yw**) (AD 1173-1211), the Mon literature became decreased in Bagan, however, many Mon terms are embedded in Myanmar vocabularies. When the Bagan dynasty was ruin in AD 1287, the Mon literature and culture also became faded.<sup>5</sup>

As Mon people gained culture 1000 years earlier than Myanmar people, late Myanmar territories had to follow the Mon cultural practices. The literary works done in the time of King Kyansittha include full essence of literary writing system which is made up with poetic style of writing providing examples or comparisons or adjective forms. As Kings of Bagan encouraged the Mon literature and culture with force, the pride of the language and literature became very powerful.

### Mon literature on Terracotta Votive Tablets

Mon literatures were scripted not only on the stone and bell, but also on the terracotta glazed tablet and votive tablets. The scripts inscribed in the votive tablets are the valuable ancient historical evidences for the researchers. Though the votive tables do not have the scripts, it can be estimated the era, the period and the person by looking the image. The votive tablets can be reveal the misstate history. In the Moemeik Shweli Pagoda votive tablets inscribed the name of

<sup>1</sup> Nyanavansa, 111-115.

<sup>2</sup> Than Tun, Rhe ā" mran'mā kyok'cā myā" (**a/30jrefmausupmrs**), 217.

<sup>3</sup> U Chit Thein, Ka.

<sup>4</sup> Sein Win, Assistant Director-general (Retd.), "Mantale" tuii" desa krā kyok' chay' kha ruii' mrac'sā mruī' nay' mruī'ma árhe rap' kvak' (11) lam" rhi peto kyoī" tiuk' átvaī" rhi pyā, mvan' kyok'cā tui' mha pyā kyok'cā ā" pha't rhu lelá khyai" (**rEāv;wllfa' ollu) ausubqnt' f jrpbmjrlle, fjrlrt a/30jrefmausupmrs (11) vrf/30jrefmausupmrs t wllfa' rEāv;wllfa' ollu) ausubqnt' f jrpbmjrlle, fjrlrt a/30jrefmausupmrs (11) vrf/30jrefmausupmrs**)". paper, Department of Archaeology. [n.d.], 4.

<sup>5</sup> Than Tun, 96.

Anawrahta in Mon language was found in the compound of Shweli Pagoda, Moemeik Township, North Shan State in 1971. King Anawrahta's the votive tablets of Mon-Myanmar alphabet was found in Kanbe (uebl) village, Twente.<sup>1</sup> Kyundaw Myepon Payarsa (Ulelawnbjryb&mpm) terracotta votive tablet was found in the shrine of Kyundaw Myepon Payar (Ulelawnbjryb&mpm). It is situated near Ayeyarwaddy River at the Mi Kyaung Ye provinces, Magwe and inscribed about the prayer to become the Buddha and sharing of the merits to the parents. The people prayer to Buddha is the concept of Mahayana.<sup>2</sup> According to the votive tablets, it can be known belief and common usage language of the people in those periods.

### Mon Literature on the Terracotta Glazed Tablets

The Ananda (tmeEm) Pagoda which was erected in the time of King Kyansittha, can be found the glazed tablets. Moreover the Ananda Pagoda contains the largest collection of plaques of all Bagan temples. Plaques are a special feature in the temple complex, which depict jataka tales. Each plaque made of terracotta glazed tablets representing Ngayangase Jatakas (ig&mi;g;g, Zmwawm), the Ten jatakas (ZmwluDq, bb), Temi (awrd) Jataka, the Mahanipat Mughapakkha (r [me]jgw rCyu) Jataka, life stories of the Buddha etc. Under the edges of those terracotta glazed tablets inscribed in old Mon and Pali Language. The records from those terracotta glazed inscriptions are very valuable for the researcher and historians.<sup>3</sup>



Figure 14 Glazed Terracotta with Mon Language in Ananda Pagoda

### Mon Ink Inscriptions

Apart from the stone inscription and glazed tablet inscription, the ink inscription in Mon language can be found in Bagan period according to the development of Mon literature. Those were inscribed with Mon language about the chronicle and under the image of Buddhawin Ngayangase Jataka at Myin Pyagu (jrifjy\*), Abeyadana (ty, kwem) Pagoda, Lawkahteikpan (avmuxjyef), Nagayon (e\*g;w), Pyathatshwegu (jyó'á/á), Pahtothamya (ykhom;rm), Kyasin (usqif), Wetgyi Inn Temple and No. 418 Temple. And then, ink inscriptions in old Mon language can also be found the inner or outside walls of Gubyaukgyi (\*bjymuBub) which was

<sup>1</sup> Nyanavansa, 165-166.

<sup>2</sup> Than Tun, Rhe á" mran'mā kyok'cā myā" (a/SOjrefmausupmrsm), 217.

<sup>3</sup> Nyanavansa, 176-177.

built by Rajakumara and Ahlodawpyae (တရုတ်ကျောက်စာ) Pagoda.<sup>1</sup>

According to the paintings of the 550 Jataka tales or stories of Buddha's previous lives and other illustrations on the inner walls of the Gyubyaukgyi temple it is known that Theravada Buddhism was flourished in Bagan but the other kinds of beliefs such Mahayana, Brahmanism and Hinduism were also found as a mixture.<sup>2</sup> The ink inscription written in Mon and Myanmar in the reign of Alaung Sithu was found in Lawkahteikpan pagoda, Bagan and written about the biography of Buddha and Jatakas.

By study Mon literature on early period, the literature were writing on different stationeries as stone, votive tablets, plaque tablets, on brick walls with different styles. On those stationeries wrote about donations, prayers, biography, Jatakas, ceremonies and so on. The composition of literati is very standard and valuable evidences for Myanmar history.



**Figure 15** Mon Language in the Mural Painting on the inner Wall of Gubyauk Gyi Temple

### Conclusion

The cultural ups and downs of a certain ethnic group are depended on its literature writing. Thus, it is needed for every people to make higher literature standard more and more improved one era after another. It is considered that the improvement of Mon literature standard is depended on the political condition of the nation and the encouragement and support from the ruling government of that nation. Since the literature standard of Mon had been developed and highlight in the prosperous time of Dvaravati era and Thaton, and it had been getting moderately weaker in Haripunjaya and Hanthawaddy as the conquest of the political unrest.

The Mon literature at great speed in Dvaravati era had been full swing in Thaton era. In spite of the fall of Thaton to Bagan kingdom, the standard of Mon literature had been reached topmost level because of the special attention from Myanmar kings. When the Myanmar literature had been emerged in the late Baga era, Mon literature had been declined since Myanmar kings emphasized only on their own literature.

According the inscriptions in the first era, the stone inscriptions, terracotta votive tablets, the terracotta glazed tablets, the ink inscriptions are gave the message concerning with the

<sup>1</sup> Min Pe Myint, 29-31.

<sup>2</sup> U Kyaw Nyein (Lak Htauk Hnyun Kyar Ye Hmu (Anyeinsar)), "Pugaü mrui' hoï" mraï'kapā gâprok'krā" bhuyā" (ယုဂျော့ [ မိတ္တီ နှစ်ပတ်စပို့ ] မြန်မာ့အလင်း) (Yangon: Department of Archaeology, 1992). 50-70.

writing system of ancient literary record, religion, belief, donation records, the standard of Mon literature, politics, ethics, biography. Especially, the early Buddhism of Bagan includes the Theravada, Mahayana and Hinayana. In presenting the literary records in each period some of the records are remained because they are difficult to identify the inscribed date.

Nowadays, the development of information and communication Technology the culture has been getting spread and connected one country after another and that of the race. Then, various types of literatures and cultures of different people were invaded into every country. If Mon literature and culture have no specific aims, Mon people will have to face danger. So, Mon new generation should protect their literature it cannot disappeared like Pyu. By means of this, Mon literature standard can be survived for long run. In this way, all the nationals literature will sustain for a long time, if they prevent and valuable their own literature and culture. The paper will support to the scholar and the researchers who interest the status of Mon literature for the ancient time and the creative of Mon scholar.

### **List of Stone inscriptions in the First Era**

The stone inscriptions inscribed in the 5<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> century AD are described their location and inscribed date according the Sears List of Subjection Heading 18<sup>th</sup> edition. Under each subject the title are arranged alphabetically. They are:



Table 1 List of Mon Stone Inscription inscribed in Firs Era

Sr. No	Name of Stone Inscription	Old Location	Now Location	Period
<b>Biography</b>				
1.	Kyansittha Min Authtupatti Stone Inscription	Shwezigon Pagoda and Tharapa Gate, Bagan	Bagan Museum	11 century AD
<b>Ethic</b>				
2.	Paḍḍait Mon Stone Inscription	Shwesaryan Pagoda, Thaton	Shwesaryan Pagoda, Thaton	11 <sup>th</sup> century AD
<b>Politics</b>				
3.	Khansittha Min Nanti Stone Inscription Trap (၆၃၀၄) Stone Inscription	Tharapa Gate, Bagan Shwesaryan Pagoda, Thaton	Bagan Museum Shwesaryan Pagoda, Thaton	11 <sup>th</sup> century AD 11 <sup>th</sup> century AD
<b>Religion</b>				
4.	Alan Bagan Stone Inscription	East of Alan Bagan Lake, Bagan	Bagan Museum Bagan	12 <sup>th</sup> century AD
5.	Bagan Myakan Stone Inscription	Base of Tuywin Mountain, Bagan	Bagan, Museum No. 108	12 <sup>th</sup> century AD
6.	Bagan Myakan Stone Inscription	Base of Tuywin Mountain, Bagan	Bagan, Museum No. 108	12 <sup>th</sup> century AD
7.	Bagan Petlaik Phayar Stone Inscription	Phatlate Pagoda, Thiri Pyitsaya village, Bagan	Phatlate Pagoda, Thiri Pyitsaya village, Bagan	11 <sup>th</sup> century AD
8.	Ban Thalath, Laos Mon Stone Inscription	Ban Thalath, Laos	Vat Ho Phra Kaeo Museum, Vietniane	9 <sup>th</sup> century AD
9.	Kawgun cave Mon Stone Inscription	Kawgun Cave, Pha-an	Kawgun Cave, Pha-an	6 <sup>th</sup> -7 <sup>th</sup> century AD
10.	Kyaukse Mon Stone Inscription	Near Kyaukse Shwethalyaung, Tawya Kyaung Theim, Kyaikse	Near Kyaukse Shwethalyaung, Tawya Kyaung Theim, Kyaikse	11 <sup>th</sup> century AD
11.	Lopburi Stone Inscription	Thailand	National Museum, Thai	8 <sup>th</sup> century AD
	Myint Thar Stone Inscription	Paydaw Kon Monastery, Myint Thar, Kyaukse	Paydaw Kon Monastery, Myint Thar, Kyaukse	11 <sup>th</sup> century AD
12.	Phra Pathom Stone Inscription	Phra Pathom Pagoda, Thailand	Thailand	5 <sup>th</sup> century AD
13.	Pyay Shwesandaw Pagoda Stone Inscription	Shwesandaw Pagoda, Pyay	Shwesandaw Pagoda, Pyay	12 <sup>th</sup> century AD
14.	Thaton Kyaiktee Pagoda Stone Inscription	Kyaiktee Pagoda, Alu Village, Taungsoon, Thaton	Kyaiktee Pagoda, Alu Village, Taung Sun, Thaton	
15.	Thaton Kyaikthalan Stone Inscription	Ayet the` Ma village, Thaton	Yangon University Library	

Source: Nyanavansa, *Ashin* (Kaw Bain)-. "Mvan' lāmyui" tui' e\* cāpe yaḍ' kye mhu nhaḍ' bhāsātara"

(ရဲလှ်ကျော်မိုးပျံ, ဝါးဒဲးတံလံးဝါးပျံ). M.A thesis, State Pariyatti Sāsana University (Yangon), 2001.

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