

A Study on the Tradition of Different Hair Styles through the Ages in Myanmar

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Abstract

It is roughly regarded that there are 10 types of Myanmar hairstyles. Among them, the coiffure and preserving of /naban; zan/, /zàdàú/, /mjei' lu'/ and /hsají wain:/ that Myanmar people have valued are mainly going to be described. The aim of this study is to value tradition, culture and cultural heritage of Myanmar. Literature and culture of different eras and hairstyles, which can also be seen nowadays have been examined. This paper also intends for the foreign students who are learning Myanmar language and culture. The customs of beautifying hairstyles throughout different ages are presented with reference to literature and traditional songs. The respectable customs of Myanmar people who value and preserve Myanmar culture are expressed. This study presents the facts with the analytical method of studying conventional Myanmar prose from poetry and prose and songs. Although the hairstyles originated from Bagan Era is different from today's hairstyles, the present study examined these. The traditions and customs of hairstyles are observed from literature and songs. The respectful customs of Myanmar people who have valued Myanmar culture are expressed in this research.

Keywords: /zàdàú / (a kind of hairstyle distinguished by a short fringe), /hsají wain:/(style of hairdo with a top knot and a circular fringe),/naban; zan / (tufts of hair tied on either side of the head to hang over the ear), tradition, culture, preserve, hairstyles

Introduction

This paper presents the tradition of different hair styles of Myanmar people. Myanmar people always preserve their traditions and customs. These traditions and customs are the cultural heritage of Myanmar people which they preserve and hand over generation after generation. It is the duty of Myanmar people to preserve their culture to exist for a long time. Preserving cultural heritage is the value of a country so people should give much effort in maintaining their culture. Hair styles and traditional dresses of Myanmar people expressed that Myanmar people are simple and contented people. This paper aims for both local and foreign learners of Myanmar language. It aims not only to know the hair styles of Myanmar men and women of different ages but also to take more interest in them. The researcher is inspired to do this research by the questions of foreign learners of Myanmar language who are interested in Myanmar language. This paper focuses on ... hsají wain:...and ... naban; zan which most of Myanmar women and children used to practice in ancient time. It also studies which is the hair-do of ... zàdàú which is a national trade mark of Myanmar.

Aim

The aim of this paper is to discover and prove that Myanmar people always preserve the valuable Myanmar traditions and possess gentle and polite nature. It also aims to make Myanmar well-known all over the world by famous Myanmar people's practice of maintaining their tradition.

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Research Questions

1. What is the role of Myanmar hair styles such as zàdàú, hsají wain, naban; zan in preserving Myanmar culture?
2. How do study of hair styles and culture of Myanmar people contribute towards learning Myanmar language?
3. To what extent is preserving culture important for a country?
4. How is different between hairstyles in Bagan Era and nowadays?

Literature Review

Myanmar people have a tradition of doing their hair and taking care of it lovingly. This tradition has been existing for ages.

Yaway Shin Htwe (930-980), a poetess of Taungoo Era wrote an An Chin (a kind of poem at that time) and described the 55 kinds of hair styles of Pagan Era. A famous Myanmar writer Saw Mone Nhyin (1989) also described Myanmar's hair styles in her book "naban; zan '(Myanmar women's hair styles). The writer "Shwe Gyne Tha" discovered the hair styles of Myanmar people of olden times from the evidences of ancient paintings and sculptures and presented in his book " naban; zan "(Myanmar ways of hair-doing'. He discovered the hair styles of Myanmar people from Inwa Era, Amarapura Era and Mandalay Era from the traditional art such as painting and sculptor and also from literature.

Materials and Methods

In the paper, ancient Myanmar literature, written homily and articles are studied to discover the different hair dressings of different places with evidence. The findings from this study will prove that Myanmar tradition and custom has strong foundation and Myanmar people have been preserving and handing over them generation after generation. In this study, the descriptive analysis will be used.

Findings

Myanmar people do hair-dos are always decent and show politeness. In traditional Myanmar hair-dos, Myanmar people are used to do their hair-dressing neatly and tidily according to different ages. Myanmar traditional hair-dos are

1. / dabàshou / (Single-knot-hair-do)
2. / bja ba zan / (young girl's hair style with locks of hair falling from behind the ears)
3. / hsají wain:/ (style of hairdo with a top knot and a circular fringe)
4. /naban; zan/ (stuffs of hair tied on either side of the head to hang over the ear)
5. / za daú / (a kind of hair style distinguished by a short fringe)
6. / kjé taun si: / (locks of hair gathered atop in a tuft and tied with a strand of pink wool or a ribbon)
7. / u: si: hpoú / (forelock)
8. / gja jí / (circular line appearing between the top knot and the fringe of hair when these have been shaved off)
9. / mjeí lú / (name for a style of hairdressing worn by ladies in olden times)
10. / mjeí sou. / (name for a style of hairdressing worn by ladies in olden times)

In Myanmar-English dictionary, 2006 / za daú / is defined as a kind of hair style distinguished by a short fringe (affected by young ladies).¹

Myanmar girls, from their adolescence to 18 years of age, let the hair grow long apart from hair on forehead. This style of hair dressing is called qH&pf0dkif; / hsají wain: /. (Myanmar Encyclopedia)²

In Myanmar dictionary, qHawmuf / za daú / is defined as a style of hairdo with a knot at the top and a short fringe on the nape.³

In Myanmar-English dictionary, / hsají wain: / is defined as a style of hairdo with a top knot and a circular fringe.⁴

In Myanmar-English dictionary, / naban; zan / is tufts of hair tied on either side of the head to hang over the ears; hair style favoured by younger people in olden days.⁵

This type of hairdo was especially popular among young people. It can also be seen on a doll in the form of a roly-poly boy or a puppet representing a royal page. These dolls are very lovely because of this hair style.

According to Sayamagyi Saw Mon Hnyin , / bja ba zan / is not the hair style with locks of hair falling from behind the ears but those that can be seen nearly above the ears.⁶

The lecturer Daw Mya Than defined / bja ba zan / as the locks of hair tied under the ear and the ends curled up at the front. In Myanmar dictionary, it is defined as young girl's hair style with locks of hair falling from behind the ears or a short fringe of hair spread to the sides.⁷

In Inwa Era, the Poet Shinmaha Rahtathara, in the poem composed for the ear-tearing ceremony of the daughter of the king second Ming Gaung, the hair-style of the princess is described as “ mjeí lú ” (The heiress to the throne with the royal hair-style ‘ mjeí lú ’).⁸

In Taungoo Era, the poet Laurate Nat Shin Naung who was well known as the king of ‘Radu’, in his poem “ Tint Hla Pay Han” (Graceful and Elegant), the hair dressing style of the princess Raza Datu Kalayar was composed as “mjeí lú ” . In this Radu, the breathtaking and charming beauty of a Myanmar lady was described vividly.⁹

In Kone-baung Era, the poet Salay U Pon Nya composed the TayHtut ‘Yin Te Ma ’

(A Graceful Lady) and in his poem, he described the girl's talent in doing her hair beautifully as “ mjeí lú ”. He composed the beauty of a girl with hair style called

¹ Myanmar-English dictionary, 2006, (p. 135)

² (Myanmar Encyclopedia),1979 , pg.288.²

³ Myanmar dictionary,1999,pg 103.

⁴ Myanmar dictionary,1999,pg .136.

⁵ Myanmar dictionary,1999,pg .224.

⁶ Saw Mon Hnyin,1989,pg.48.

⁷ The lecturer Daw Mya Than, 2005,pg,219

⁸ Shinmaha Rahtathara,

⁹ Nat Shin Naung, 1940,pg 86.

“ လှလှရဲ့ထွတ်ခေါင် ခြံတံလွတ်ကယ် ပြေယောင်နှင်. ပိတုံးရောင်ကေသာနဲ့ကို ပန်းထည်လိုထုံး” decorating with beautiful flowers.¹

In a country folk song called “Ah Kyun Tot Le Kauk Site Tone Ga” (When transplanting paddy), hair-dressing style of the girls of olden days and their manners matched with this style is clearly portrayed. The reader can see the Myanmar culture as well as Myanmar traditional hair-dressing in this song.

The venerable monk of Manle described the hair styles of Myanmar women in his Pote Taw Wada written homily as,

“ထိုထိုတန်ဆာ ဆင်ယင်ကာလျှင်
နံသာနပ်ခါး လပ်မအားအောင်
ရေးသားတင်ပ တသသရှင့်
ဆံစဆံထုံး မျက်ခုံးမင်သတ်
ဆံပတ်ဖိးပုံ ပန်းမျိုးစုံနှင့်.”²

In this composition, polite and gentle manner of Myanmar women and their decent hair styles can be seen.

In Konebaung Era, Yama Yakan (a kind of satirical poem) of U Toe is about the hair styles of royal ladies-in-waiting as

“ ဗျာပါဆံစွယ်စုံကို ၊ အပုံကြီးလည်း မရဘူး ၊ ပါးအထက်မှာ ငှက်လိပ်ပြာပျံ”.

In this poem, the / bja ba zan / of ladies-in waiting are very beautiful with hair styles “ bja ba zan ” like little butterflies flying on their cheeks.³

These hairstyles of Myanmar women are composed not only in Myanmar literature but also in some songs. In the famous song “Nabanzan ” sung by a famous Myanmar actress and singer Daw Myint Myint Khin, the lovely traditional hair style of Myanmar young people is composed as “နားအထက်ကဗွေမှာ သူပန်းပန်ပန် နားပန်းဆံ နားပန်းဆံ နားထင်ဘေးကတွဲကျဟန်” (wearing flowers above ears , the style of ‘ nabanzan ’ hanging over the ears) . Therefore, Myanmar traditional hair styles are to be valued.

The hair style of ‘hsajiwain ’ can be seen in younger people, both girls and boys. It is still practiced in Pagan region and Gadu Ganan regions.

Therefore, Myanmar people have been doing their hair neatly and beautifully since olden days to the present age. Their hair styles are suitable with their ages. Foreign learners should study Myanmar culture to learn Myanmar language effectively. It is lovely manners and hair styles that raise the prestige of Myanmar people to a high standard.

¹ Tin Htwe, 1991,pg.153.

² The venerable monk of Manle,pra 265.

³ U Toe,1789,pg.59

Discussion

Myanmar people both young and old value their hair and beautify them. Especially they do their hair very neatly. They also value their tradition. Today Myanmar can take pride of their own nation among other countries because they present and follow the tradition handed down by their ancestors.

Myanmar people are respectable as they describe their valuable traditions in their literature, preserve to exist till present time and hand over through ages. It is very beneficial for those who study Myanmar literature to learn Myanmar traditional heritage described in it. The tradition of hair styles handed down from our ancestors can still be seen in Pagan region and Gadu Ganan regions. Even foreigners intentionally go and learn them in these places. One can see those who love and value their tradition still wearing these hair styles there.

Conclusion

Since Myanmar has a country of long tradition, it is respectable that they preserve their cultural heritage. Therefore, preserving our own culture means preserving our Nation's and people's prestige.

There is a Myanmar saying "Glory of women lies in their hair knot". Myanmar women accept this saying and follow this tradition. It is a pride for Myanmar people to show the politeness of Myanmar women in their manner. Preserving one's culture is doing something beneficial for one's country. By studying this paper, foreigners of Myanmar language can know how Myanmar people value and preserve their culture.

ကျမ်းကိုးစာရင်း

ကထိကဒေါ် မြင့်သန်း ။(၁၉၉၇) ။ အလှသုံးဖြာစာပဒေသာ ၊ စာပေဗိမာန် ၊ ရန်ကုန်မြို့။

ချမ်းမြဦး၊(မဟာဝိဇ္ဇာတည်းဖြတ်သူ)။(၁၉၇၇) ။ရှင်မဟာသာရ၏တောလာနှင့် ဘဝ ပတ်ဝန်းကျင်ကဗျာများ၊ တက်နေလင်းပုံနှိပ်တိုက်။

စောမုံညင်း။ (၁၉၈၉) ။မြန်မာအမျိုးသမီးများဆင်ယင်ထုံးစံ။ ၊ စာပေဗိမာန်(၁၉၈၉) ၊ ရန်ကုန်မြို့။

နတ်ရှင်နောင်။ (၁၉၄၀)။နတ်သျှင်နောင်ဆိုရတု၊ပြည်ကြီးမဏ္ဍိုင်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ရန်ကုန်မြို့။

မနိလည်ဆရာတော် ။ (၁၉၉၉) ။မဟာသုတကာရီစာပဒေဝလင်္ကာသစ် ၊ ဇေယျသုခပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ရန်ကုန်မြို့။

မြန်မာနိုင်ငံစာပေဘာသာပြန်အသင်း ။ (၁၉၇၅) ။မြန်မာ့စွယ်စုံကျမ်းအတွဲ(၄)၊စာပေဗိမာန်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ရန်ကုန်မြို့။

မြန်မာစာအဖွဲ့။(၂၀၀၆)။ မြန်မာအင်္ဂလိပ်အဘိဓာန် ၊ တက္ကသိုလ်များ ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ရန်ကုန်မြို့။

မြန်မာစာအဖွဲ့။(၁၉၉၉နှစ်)။ မြန်မာအဘိဓာန်အကျဉ်းချုပ် ၊ ဥက္ကာကျော်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ရန်ကုန်မြို့။

မြန်မာစာအဖွဲ့။ (၂၀၀၂) ။ ဦးပုညစာပန်းကိုး၊ဥက္ကာကျော်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ရန်ကုန်မြို့။

တင်ထွေး။ (၁၉၉၁) ။ဦးပုည၏စာပန်းကိုးများ ။ ပထမအကြိမ် ၊ကြေးမုံသတင်းစာတိုက်နှင့်ဂါးဒီးယန်သတင်းစာတိုက်၊ ရန်ကုန်မြို့။

ရွှေကိုင်းသား ။ (၂၀၀၅ခု ဒီဇင်ဘာလ) ။ ရွှေကိုင်းသား ဆင်ယင်ထုံးစံ။ ၊ ကြီးပွားရေးပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ မန္တလေး။

ဦးတိုး ။ (၁၇၈၉) ။ ရာမရတနံ ၊ ဟံသာဝတီပိဋကတ်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ရန်ကုန်မြို့။

အကယ်ဒမီဒေါ်မြင့်မြင့်ခင်၊နားဝန်းဆီသီချင်း ။နောက်ဆက်တွဲ



