

## STUDY OF THE ROLE OF *HSAING WAING GYI* WITH SPECIAL REFERENCES TO *ZAT POH HSAING*

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### Abstract

Myanmar performance arts are inter-dependent on one another and Myanmar traditional performance arts and Myanmar musical arts also have inter-relation. The playing of musical instruments and singing arts has to perform suitably depending on the time and place. This paper examines the cum-conductor of a Myanmar ensemble, by choosing the suitable one out of nature of musical instruments and various songs, has to play in conformity with the time of nightfall or at dawn. It is found that *Zat Poh Hsaing Waing* and *Balar Hsaing Waing* are of the same in structure and arrangements of musical instruments. *Balar Hsaing* makes emphasis only on playing musical instruments without joining with *Zat* and *A-nyeint*. The main aim of the study is to describe the role of *Zat Poh Hsaing* in the *Zat Thabin*. It also aims to describe the artistic qualification of cum-conductor in *Zat Poh Hsaing*. The main questions for this study are: (1) What are the roles of *Zat Poh Hsaing* in the *Zat Thabin*? (2) Why is the role of artistic qualification of cum-conductor important in *Zat Poh Hsaing*? So, we have chosen this title of the Role of *Hsaing Waing Gyi* with special references to *Zat Poh Hsaing*. In this paper, attempt will also be made to study the importance of artistic qualification which the *Zat Poh Hsaing* has to play in support of the *Zat Thabin*. This paper is employed as the method of historical description. Therefore, this research paper supports for those who want to study Myanmar *Hsaing* in performing arts.

**Keywords:** *Zat Poh, Hsaing, Thabin*

### Introduction

This paper is presented the role of *Zat Poh Hsaing* in *Zat Thabin*. *Hsaing Waing* (Myanmar traditional orchestra) was used as the royal terms in Ancient King's times. In Myanmar traditional cultural field, in consistence with the nature of playing in unity, there are five kinds of *Hsaing*. They are *Balar Hsaing, Zat Poh Hsaing, Yokethay Hsaing, Nat Hsaing* and *Anyeint Hsaing*. Out of these five *Hsaing*, the performance role of *Zat Poh Hsaing* will be described in this paper. Therefore, the important role of *Zat Poh Hsaing* will be described by dividing into episodes: with the title "Study the role of *Hsaing Waing Gyi* with special references to *Zat Poh Hsaing*".

### Materials and Methods

In this paper, secondary sources such as papers and rare books are used greatly. These sources are collected and obtained from National Culture and Art University Library. Based on secondary sources and personal interviews with *Hsaing* Players, descriptive method is used for knowing the Role of *Hsaing* with special references to *Zat Poh Hsaing*.

### Results and Findings

This paper supports for those who want to study the performing arts in cultural fields. There are also *Hsaing* experts who play only *Balar Hsaing* exclusively and who play only *Zat Poh Hsaing* exclusively. It can be said these two musical arts remain separate apart. Therefore, entertainment of *Balar Hsaing* and *Zat Poh Hsaing* have its value in respective area and these tunings can firmly be stood in Myanmar

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society. So that, this paper will help the researchers to study the distinct between *Balar Hsaing* and *Zat Poh Hsaing*.

### Discussion

Myanmar *Zat Thabin* has emerged since the time of 1500 years ago. King Bayinnaung of Hanthawaddy Hsinbyushin had taken back the artists and handicraftsmen including the *Tabin* artists from Yodaya. However, prior to the time of Yodaya *Zats*, the *Zat* entertainment had already appeared in Myanmar. The prelude to these early *Zat Thabin* entertainments was *Ni-pat-khinn* (Stage one of the Buddha's birth stories) including the "550 Buddhist Jataka stories" which are the essence of Myanmar culture and Myanmar national music which based on "*Win Koe Win*"<sup>6</sup> (Nine entries) with "singing, crying, and talking".<sup>7</sup> The duration of "*Nipatkhin*" was from A.D. 1532 to A.D. 1752. This period was the later part of Inwa dynasty and it was also the period when national literature had developed. Therefore, *Pat Hsaing* which is the *Zat Poh* musical instrument of Myanmar was already invented in A.D. 1488<sup>8</sup> and it can be assumed that *Zat Poh Hsaing* had already played in that *Ni-pat-khinn* *Zat* entertainments.

During the reigns of ancient Myanmar kings, the art of singing, playing musical instruments, and dancing, was classified into "*A-nyeint Thabin*, *A-neint Thabin* and *A-myint Thabin*". "*A-nyeint Thabin*" is still called "*A-nyeint Thabin*" up to the present time. But "*A-neint Thabin*" has changes in entertainment on the stage and it is now called "*Zat Thabin*". "*A-myint Thabin*" is called "*Yoke Thaye*" (Puppet Show). During the reigns of ancient Myanmar kings, scholars had written "*Pyo*", "*Ka-byar*", "*Lin-kar*", "*Maw-gun*" and varieties of music.<sup>9</sup> In the Konbaung period, King Alaungmintaya was the monarch who had achieved victory in a number of wars.

During the reign of his son King Hsinbyushin, the kingdom became developed and prosperous. As literary field in that period was very extensive and it was also the time when Myanmar dramas composed in poem and verse was born. The dramatic art not only attracts the mind of human beings but also rectifies the moral characters, as well as it can raise and encourage religious affairs. Therefore, King Singu who ascended the throne in A.D. 1776 did not neglect these dramatic arts and exalted them. During his reign, *Tha-bin Wun* (Official in charge of dramatic performance) U Toke and U Phoe Phyu were appointed and a separate department was opened. Rules and regulations which were favorable to the king and subject people were laid down exactly and *Thabin Wun* was entrusted authority and power on dramatic performance. From that time onwards, the king has recognized the art of dramatic performance.<sup>10</sup> According to the Buddhist culture of Myanmar people in ancient time, considering that it was not suitable for elderly and male persons to watch from beneath the stage, entertainment was made on the earthen ground and it was called "*Myay Waing Thabin*". In the time of the British Colonial rule, *Myay Waing Zat* entertainment disappeared and from 1922 onwards, *Zat* entertainment was made on the stage with stage curtains and it was called "*Zat Thabin*". The person who knew thoroughly the nature of *Zat Thabin* and who has qualification was appointed "*Thabin*

<sup>6</sup> (1) Buddha (2) Mahawin (3) Yazawin (4) Anagatawin (5) Dathadhatuwin (6) Dipawin (7) Thupawin (8) Bawdiwin (9) Sasanawin

<sup>7</sup> Maung Win War, Than Lyin, *Ni-pat-khinn*, Yinkyehmu Magazine, No. 1, Yangon, Arr Man Thit Sarpay, 1997, p. 148 (Henceforth: Win War, 1997)

<sup>8</sup> Win War, 1997, 148

<sup>9</sup> U Gon Ban, *Myanmar Zat Thabin* (Myanmar Dramatic performance), Yangon, Sarpay Loka Sarpay Taik, 1966, p. 287 (Henceforth: Gon Ban, 1966)

<sup>10</sup> Gon Ban, 1966, 287

*Wun*". Moreover, dramatic performers who obeyed the rules and regulations were raised to the rank of "Ywa-sar" and "Myo-sar". *Thabin* was allowed to give punishment the dramatic performers who did not obey the rules and regulations. *Zat Thabin* could make development to the race, religion and language for the country.<sup>11</sup> At that time, the Yodaya style singing and dancing had already been at the royal palace. While the *Zat* were entertained at the royal palace, *Myaing Waing Zat*, walking dance, and *Nat* propitiation dance were prevailed in rural areas. In 1786, with regard to arrangement of *Myay Waing Zat*, bamboo poles were erected on earthen ground, dried cooked rice and oil dregs were put in *In-ton* for lighting at the top of bamboo pole, and entertainment was made by playing *Lachan Hsaing* up to the time of daybreak. At the plot to entertain the *Zat*, trees and Thabye flower plants were grown and it is also called "Pann Bin Waing Thabin" (Dramatic performance with flower plants in circular shape). There were 17 dancers and 10 players in this *Myay Waing Thabin*.<sup>12</sup> In front of the orchestra, at one *Taung* (Cubit) distance, two poles of four *Taung* and two *Mite* (One *Mite* is equal to six inches) in height were erected. At the top of the poles, a bar of one inch in circumference and five *Taung* in length was erected. On this bar, sticks of one *Mite* in length were erected at ten inches apart. On this pole, figure head was put on. Moreover, figures of *Galon* (Mythical bird), *Naga* (Serpent), horse, elephant, tiger, hermit, *Keinara* (Male mythical bird), *Nat* (Spirit) and *Tha-gyar* (Indra God), *Gon-Man* (a sign of ogre), *Bi-lu* (Ogre), and bird were hanging on.<sup>13</sup> By watching the number of these figures, the audience used to make critics on the standard of *Zat Thabin*. In front site of the *Zat Thabin*, a large teak box was placed. This box will become the throne if the king sits on it, or it becomes the monastery when the hermit sits on it. By taking the figure in random out of this box, performance is made. Therefore, the term "Thit Tar Hmauk" (Box placed in invert position) was derived since the time of *Myay Waing Zat Thabin*.<sup>14</sup> Propitiations are made to respective *Nat* spirits and beverage is offered. No one is allowed to wear slipper at the site of dancing before making propitiation to the *Nat* spirits concerned. But they can wear slipper after propitiation. In feeding the members of *Zat* troupe, remnants of offertories are put in green banana leaf called "Manaw Phet" and are eaten. Some persons decry them with the term "Phet Khwet Sar". But the "Manaw Phet" is the green banana leaf and it was the King's exalt.<sup>15</sup> In *Myay Waing Zat*, as *Min-thar* dances with *Bon Shay* (Long drum) slung over the shoulder, it is called "Bon Shay Zat".<sup>16</sup> These *Min-thar* dance wearing the Myanmar turban with a fabric piece standing up. It is different from the cosume of present time. The drama of *Bon Shay* includes the iron xylophone, brass gong circle, and long drum. *Bon Shay Zat* includes twenty members.<sup>17</sup> Entertainment of *Myay Waing Zat* is also called "Yoe Pyat Ninn Zat" (Dramatic performance by treading on the stubble of paddy) in Lower

<sup>11</sup> Gon Ban, 1966, 288

<sup>12</sup> U Maung Maung Tin, *Myanmar Pya-zat Sar-pay Thamaing* (History of Myanmar Pyazat literature), Yangon, Yar Pyae Sarpay, 2019, p.42 (Henceforth: Maung Maung Tin, 2019)

<sup>13</sup> Bo Htay, *Zat Sin Monmanhmu Pyinnya Laelarchet* (A study of the arrangement of *Zat* stage art), B.A. Department of Thabin, University of Culture, 2005, p.2 (Henceforth: Bo Htay, 2005)

<sup>14</sup> Sein Maung Oo, *Myanmar A-ka Thabin* (Myanmar Dance Performance), *Yinkyehmu Magazine*, Volume IV, No. 1, 1963 February, p. 73 (Henceforth: Sein Maung Oo, 1963)

<sup>15</sup> Maung Maung Tin, 2019, 43

<sup>16</sup> Kyaw Kyaw Lwin, Myanmar *Zat Thabin* hnit Phont Phyo Toetet Larthaw Hartha Yatha (Myanmar Dramatic Performance and developing aesthetic enjoyment of humour), B.A. Department of *Zat Thabin*, University of Culture, 1997, p. 5 (Henceforth: Kyaw Kyaw Lwin, 1997)

<sup>17</sup> Personal interview with U Sein Maung:, Chariman of Division Thabin Council, 75 years of age, 27.4.1948, Mandalay, on 17-9-2023

Myanmar. In Lower Myanmar, at the harvest time, novitiation ceremony is held. As it is performed on the harvested paddy farm, it is called “*Yoe Pyat Ninn Zat*”.<sup>18</sup>

### (i) *Myay Waing Zat*

Concerning with the procedure of *Myay Waing Zat*, *Hsaing Waing* has to play “*Khon-na-than-chi*” (Beat at the top of its tune) at the first phase of night. Then, *Nat-ka-daw* (Female spirit-medium) goes out. As soon as the *Natkadaw* goes back, four *Wungyi* (Court official) go out and attend the *Hluttaw* and make the talking. At the time the king is about to go out, an order is issued to arrange the seats. Then, *Hsaing Waing* has to play the tune of arranging the seats.<sup>19</sup> The entertainment of *Myay Waing Zat* between 8:00 to 11:00 pm is meant for youths to be humorous. Between 12:00 and 3:00 am, the plot of the play is begun and *Hna-par-thwar* is performed. From that time up to the daybreak, plot of yarning and sorrow and lamented songs are performed in consistence with the plot of the play.<sup>20</sup> *Myay Waing Zat* had prevailed along the early Konbaung period. *Myay Waing Zat* were made to perform on the stage during King Mindon’s reign and entertainment was made gradually on the stage.<sup>21</sup> During the reign of King Sinbyushin who ascended the throne in A.D. 1763, musical art greatly developed due to the encouragement of King Sinbyushin and efforts of Myawaddy Mingyi U Sa.<sup>22</sup>

### (ii) *Zat Thabin*

It gradually improved from the period of *Myay Waing Zat* to the entertainment on the stage. After the outbreak of the Second Anglo-Myanmar war, the British conquered Lower Myanmar and after that, such aliens as Chinese and Indians entered Myanmar. The instruments of *Zat Thabin* were carried together with them.<sup>23</sup> The first person who invented the *Zat* stage to transform from *Aneint Thabin* to *Zat* performance on stage was Pazontaung U Kyaw Zan. Flat roofed temporary sheds were fully fenced not be seen from outside and it entertained the *Zat* performance by taking admission fee. In the time of *Myay Waing Zat*, performance was made with the light of cotton seed lamp and oil dreg lamp and it became developed to the level when performance was made with the light of *Auk-lin-mee* (Storm-lantern) which was hanging.<sup>24</sup>

The *Zat Poh Hsaing* (*Hsaing* which support others to bring the plot into focus) became widespread from the *Manikat Pya-Zat* of *Wungyi Padesa Raja* during King Sanay’s reign in A.D. 1672.<sup>25</sup> Among the programs of *Zat Pwe*, the role of *Hsaing Waing* began since the time prior to the commencement of entertainment. When weather condition is good and there is no other disturbances on the day of performing the *Zat*, *Zat Sayar* confirms the *Hsaing Waing* leader to make performance at that night. Then, *Hsaing Sayar* sticks the *Pat-sar* at 3:00 pm and makes others aware with

<sup>18</sup> Ludu Daw Ah Mar, *Aung Bala, Phoe Sein, Sein Ka Don*, Mandalay, Kyipwayay Book Stall, 2022, p. 35 (Henceforth: Ah Mar, 2022)

<sup>19</sup> Maung Maung Tin, 2019, 45

<sup>20</sup> Maung Maung Tin, 2019, 46

<sup>21</sup> Ma San San Htwe, *Myanmar Zat Thabin hnit Ei Naung Zat*, (Research paper on the subject of Art), Department of Thabin, 20052006, p. 5 (Henceforth: San San Htwe, 2006)

<sup>22</sup> Nan Nyunt Swe, *Shay-khit Zat Thabin* (Dramatic performance in ancient times), *Yinkyehmu Magazine*, Volume I, No. 5, Yangon, Myawaddy Press, 1995, p. 45 (Henceforth: Nan Nyunt Swe, 1995)

<sup>23</sup> Bo Htay, 2005, 3

<sup>24</sup> Kyaw, 1997, 6

<sup>25</sup> Ma Han Zar Htwe, “*Zat Poh Tay-gi-ta Twin Maha Gita ei A-yay-par-hmu*” (Importance of Maha Gita in *Zat Poh* music), B.A. Thesis, Department of Music, National Culture and Art University, 2005, p. 2 (Henceforth: Han Zar Htwe, 2005)

sound by playing the big drum hard and loud.<sup>26</sup> This preliminary tune can be the play from the *Zat* stage to get the attention of audience. The preliminary music played for entertainment was started systematically during the Second World War at the theatres located around Kandawgyi and Shwe Gon Taing in Yangon.<sup>27</sup>

### (iii) Episode of paying obeisance to the Lord Buddha

The performance at night begins with the episode of paying obeisance to the Lord Buddha. The song beginning with “*Htoo Ma Char Nar*” is played. *Zat* Sayar, Minthar, Minthamee, comedians, Minthargyi, Minthar Lat, troupe of choras girls, and villains have to sing the song.<sup>28</sup> After the episode of paying obeisance to the Lord Buddha, preliminary song of the *Zat* troupe concerned is played. The preliminary song is the notes which make glorious to the *Zat* troupe. It is composed about the factors, such as the name and attributes of the *Zat* troupe etc. This preliminary song is sung by all persons in the *Zat* troupe by ascending on the *Zat* stage as in the episode of paying obeisance to the Lord Buddha.<sup>29</sup>

### (iv) *A-pyo-daw* or *Nat-ka-daw*.

After singing the Preliminary song, it is the section of *A-pyo-daw* or *Nat-ka-daw*. It is studied that *Natkadaw* dance is commenced from *Yoke Sohn Sin Daw* (Puppet or Marionette show). In imitation of *Yoke Sohn Sin Daw*, *Zat* troupe began the dance of *Nat-ka-daw* in A.D. 1900.<sup>30</sup> *Zat* Thabin is entertained for two days and *Apyodaw* dance is performed on second day. It was designated by tradition that *Apyodaw* dance has twelve episodes in dancing style and instrumental accompaniments. In the episode of *Natkadaw* dance, *Hsaing Waing* makes the destruction of world by playing cymbals and gongs. Then, the tune of “*Bein Maung*” is played.<sup>31</sup> “*Kadaw Pwe*” (Offitory consisting of hands of banana, coconut, etc. decoratively arranged) is to be lifted three times because it pays obeisance to *Yadana Thone Par* (Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha) as the most sacred venerables. In demonstrating the ideology, such as the destruction of world and creation of world, etc. *Hsaing Waing* has to play the tunes. Then, *Zat Poh Hsaing* has to play the music at the top of its voice. The playing of music at the top of its voice before the *Nat-ka-daw* dance was that the king had taken care of the Lamaing female *Nat* spirit who guarded the wood and bamboo in ancient times. Therefore, people in ancient times started the performance by making the *Nat-ka-daw* figure in the style of female Lamaing *Nat* spirit. The term changed from “*Thit Thar Saunt Shin Ma*” (Female *Nat* spirit who guarded the wood), to “*Lamaing Ma*” or “*Nat-ka-daw*” etc. step by step with the passage of time.<sup>32</sup> Before the appearance of *Nat-ka-daw*, *Hsaing Waing* plays with the top of its voice the tune in reference to seven trees, namely “*Kokko*” tree in the east, “*Htein*” tree in the west, “*Padesa*” tree in the north, “*Thabye*” tree in the south, “*Letpan*” tree from the abode of *Galon* (Mythical bird), “*Tha Khut*” tree from the abode of “*Ah Thu Yar*”, and “*Ka Thit*” tree from the abode of “*Tha-gyar*” (Indra God). It was the propitiation to the Female Lamaing *Nat* spirit. Therefore, it can be

<sup>26</sup> Gon Ban, 1966, 420

<sup>27</sup> Bo Kyaw San, *Pwe Oo Shwe Alinkar*, Yangon, Myawaddy Press, 1990, p. 30 (Henceforth: Bo Kyaw San, 1990)

<sup>28</sup> Soe Tint Lwin, 2019, 17

<sup>29</sup> Personal interview with U Zaw Moe Kyaw, Associate Professor, National Culture and Art University, 54 years of age, 19.2.1970, Mandalay, on 9-7-2023

<sup>30</sup> Bo Kyaw San, 1990, 46

<sup>31</sup> Bo Kyaw San, *Thabin Thit* (New Dramatic Performance), Yangon, Sarpay Beikman Press, 1989, p. 87 (Henceforth: Bo Kyaw San, 1989)

<sup>32</sup> Bo Kyaw San, 1990, 46

assumed that the term “*Lamaing Kat Thi*” or “*Lamaing Ma Kat*” is derived from the *Zat Thabin*.

*Hsaing Waing* has to play loudly the songs chosen by the *Zat* troupe with the intention of praying for the well-being of others, making pleasant and prosperous and peaceful to the state. These songs are “Shwe Bone Taw Toe Par Loh”, “Ngwe Moe Tway Ywar”, “Nain-gan-daw Pyi Ah-yay” Thar Hla Tel Lay”, and “Shwe Bone Raung Htein Htein Tauk Par Loh”, etc. These songs are sung before the start of *Nat-ka-daw* dance and *A-pyo-daw* dance. This tune intends to the seven places, namely Tha-gyar, Ga-lon, Ah Thu Yar, East, West, South, and North. Moreover, it also refers to the seven trees, namely Tha Khut, Let Pan, Ka Thit, Htein, Tha-bye, and Pa-de-sa etc. Therefore, *Zat Poh Hsaing* has to play seven parts of tone, namely “*Hsaing Taw Bwe*”, “*Galon Taung*”, “*Pat Yaing*”, “*Tra Yaing*”, “*Tabaung Taik Than*”, “*Sar Taw Taik*”, and “*Bein Maung*.” etc.<sup>33</sup>

*Pwe Oo Htwet Nat Than* (Song recounting the story of the previous existence of a *Nat* and it is performed as the first item of Myanmar stage play) is included two parts: in the first part, Indra is sent back with the tune beginning with “Bone Bone Tann, Bone Tann Tay Zar” etc. and then it gives the key note to continue the singing of the second part. In the chanting of ballads about the *Nat* spirits which is called “*Nat Than Pyit*”, Indra God goes out as Thagyar and the song is sung in steady and stable style. Then, *Hsaing Waing* plays the tune of sending back the Indra God, beginning with “*Mingalar San Khinn, Pwe Taw Paung, Gon Raung Lin Par Tet*”, and it is changed to the second part.<sup>34</sup> In the second part, when the song is sung as “*Myodaw Shin, Mae Lyin, Kandawt Par ei*” (Guardian spirit of the city, Mae Lyin, shall pay obeisance), it can be known that it was not the Indra God (*Tha-gyar Min*). Therefore, *Hsaing Waing* has already sent back the Indra God, Minthamee as a dancer appealed for mercy to the Guardian spirit of the city concerned to give assistance. After singing the song in consistence with the tradition of *Zat Thabin*, the song beginning with “*Ah Tu Lay Yal Tet Shin Kar Pyaing*” is sung happily up to its end by raising up the *Tha-bye* flower.<sup>35</sup>

*Lamaing Nat* is also propitiated by dancing. *Lamaing Nat* is accepted as the Guardian spirit who looks after the Musical instruments made of Bamboo, cane and wood etc. The propitiation with foods to the *Lamaing Nat* is called “*Sarr-taw Taik Thi*”. In propitiating with foods, the tune of “*Lay Kyun Set Kyar*”, “*Lu Pyo Maung Htwe*” etc. are played. In order to be free from danger for the *Thabin* performers in their mistake of talking or manner of living, it is left as *Sin Taing Ka-dawt Khann*” (Episode of paying obeisance) or “*Sarr Taw Taik*” tune.<sup>36</sup> Some of *Nat Chin* (Particular and special song for and about the *Nats* ) are the songs composed by Royal poet *Wungyi Padesa Raja* who was well-known during the *Nyaungyan* period in A.D. 1745.<sup>37</sup> When King Mindon was at princehood in A.D. 1820, Prince Mindon ordered *Myawady Mingyi U Sa*, *Kawi Deva Kyaw Razawin U Nu*, *Hsaing Taw Tee U Myat Thar* and *U Tayoke* to compile the *Nat Chins* to be in collection.

The performance of the first item of Myanmar stage play includes three dances. In the first stage, illustrating dance which makes dancing in line with the tune. In second stage, there is a dance performed with lively tuning. Third stage is the

<sup>33</sup> Soe Tint Lwin, 2019, 19

<sup>34</sup> Gon Ban, 1966, 277

<sup>35</sup> Gon Ban, 1966, 281

<sup>36</sup> Soe Tint Lwin, 2019, 19

<sup>37</sup> Shwe Ku Nan Nwet Nwet, *Myanmar A-hla Gita A-mway* (Myanmar Beauty, Music heritage), Yangon, Sarpay Beikman Press, 1998, p. 257 (Henceforth: Nan Nwet Nwet, 1998)

exposure of *Min-tha-mee*'s qualification in dancing which does not include singing, but only with the tuning. On the first day night performance of *Zat Thabin*, dancing is little. On the second day night performance, as it is the *A-pyo-daw* dance, dancing is performed from the beginning to the end without *Ka-dawt Pwe*. On that second day night performance, *Hsaing Waing* plays the tune with the songs, making known that the dance performed at the present time is the female dance. The songs played by *Hsaing Waing* on the first day night performance are concerned with the *Nat* spirits. In the performance of later nights, the songs concerning with females and the songs dealing with the throne of the kingdom are played.<sup>38</sup> The tradition of entertaining the *Nat-ka-daw* dance in the performance of first day night and *A-pyo-daw* dance in the performance of second day night still continued up to 1995.<sup>39</sup> In the *Zat Pwes* of the present time, dancing in traditional style becomes very little. In order to know the tradition, it is danced a little. Firstly, the episode of paying obeisance to the Lord Buddha is performed. After it, "*Pwe Myauk Khann*" is performed. The term "*Pwe Myauk Khann*" means the dance which is representing the *Nat-ka-daw*. In former times, *Natkadaw* dance took forty minutes, but nowadays, it takes only five minutes and performance duration is reduced. *Nat-ka-daw* dance and *A-pyo-daw* dance are performed just for maintenance of tradition.<sup>40</sup> Although traditional dancing is becoming very little in *Zat Pwes*, *Hsaing* has to take part from the beginning of performance up to the episode of *Nauk Paing Zat* (Plot of play which was dominated by longing with sorrow and lamented episodes).

After the initial episode, palace is built by calculating the time for laying foundation. As soon as the *Nat-ka-daw* (Spiritmedium) enters the back of stage, stage curtain is pulled down and large gong on the stage is beaten. Then, *Hsaing Waing* plays richly in variety the tune beginning with "*Ma-Kyo-Lar, Lu-Pyo Maung Htwe, Kyo-Hle Par-Tok-Lay*" (Bachelor Maung Htwe does not come to meet me on arrival, and Please come to meet me). Then, an *Atwin Wun* (Interior Minister) comes out in grandeur from the right side of *Zat* stage and shows off his prowess to the audience. Then, *Hsaing Waing* changes from *Na-yi Si*: "Chwin Chwin Tauk" to *Wa:-Let Si*: (Regular one-one timing with the bamboo clapper and the timing bell alternately) "Chwin Tauk", *Hsaing Waing* has to play in support till the *Wun Min* enters into left side of the *Zat* stage.

#### (v) Opera

In performing the opera, *Hsaing* (Musical troupe) also plays a larger role. The person who expanded from preliminary drama to opera was Alinkar Kyaw Swa Shwe Mann U Tin Maung. It entered into new age with "La Chan opera" and "Sohn Sel Phyar". *Buddha Win*, *Yazawin* (Chronicle), *Maha Win*, *Dipar Win*, and *Uditha Win*, as well as *Htoe Zat* are performed in opera sector. In the performance of opera, *Hsaing Waing* has to play in support at the episodes necessary from the beginning to the end.<sup>41</sup>

#### (vi) Episodes of singing songs

In the entertainment of *Zat Thabin*, the program of singing songs is also included. The entertainment of songs is divided into two: modern music and

<sup>38</sup> Gon Ban, 1966, 298

<sup>39</sup> Personal interview with U Soe Tint Lwin, Lecturer (Retired), Department of Music, National Culture and Art University, 62 years of age, 28.3.1961, Mandalay, on 2-7-2023

<sup>40</sup> U Thaw Zin, *Ta Khit Ta Khar Ka Aung Myin Kyaw Kyar Thaw Anu Pyinnyar Shin Myar* (Artists who were successful and famous at one time), Yangon, Seik Koo Cho Cho Press, 2020, p. 24 (Henceforth: Thaw Zin, 2020)

<sup>41</sup> Soe Tin Lwin, 2019, 22

Myanmar Music. In singing the Myanmar songs, *Hsaing Waing* has to take part in playing. But in the modern music, it is very little to play the *Hsaing Waing*.<sup>42</sup> Although it has to play a little in modern music, there are combinations of Myanmar voice and modern music in some songs. Therefore, in the entertainment of songs, the performance of *Hsaing Waing* is mainly concerned with the selection of songs by the singers.

#### (vii) *Pya-Zat*

After the sector of opera and stage show, *Pya-Zat* was entertained in the *Zat* in ancient times. In Myanmar *Zat Thabin*, performance of *PyaZat* began after 1952.<sup>43</sup> In this *Pya-Zat* sector, it is mostly played only with Myanmar traditional orchestra. In the performance of *Pya-Zat* (Drama or play), when it can be created with the modern developed musical instruments, the role of *Pya Zat* became more extensive. In ancient times, it was not found the entertainment of *Pya Zat* in Myanmar *Zat Thabin*. But in place of *Pya-Zat*, opera and *Pya-Zat* in *Htoe Zat* style can be performed. In the period of contemporary *Min-thar*, such as Sein Aung Min, Shwe Mann Tin Maung and Myodaw Thein Aung etc., they began to play the *Pya-Zat*. Therefore, *Hsaing Waing* has to play in support of “*Zat Sar*”, “*Zat Sagar*”, “*Zat Ah-pyaw*”, background music, and *Zat Win Thi-chin* (Theme songs) etc.<sup>44</sup> In the sector of *Pya-Zat*, “*Doe Chaung*”,<sup>45</sup> players make the playing although the whole orchestra is not taken part in playing.<sup>46</sup>

#### (viii) *Hna Par Thwar Dance*

*Hsaing Waing* continues to play in support of *Hna Par Thwar Dance* after it has played in support of *Pya-Zat* (Drama). The *Zat* entertained in ancient times has the episode of “*Wun A-kyo Khan*” (Court official in prelude) before *Hna Par Thwar*.<sup>47</sup> These two court officials (*Wun*) tell about the *Nauk Paing Zat* which will be entertained in later section of the *Zat* troupe. At that time, *Hsaing Sayar* has to play the tune of “*Wun Pat Taik*” . In Myanmar *Zat Thabin*, *Hna Par Thwar* plays a very important role. The term “*Hna Par Thwar*” reflects the meaning of that episode. It reveals the love of prince and princess, husband and wife, and couple of lovers. If the history of *Hna Par Thwar* is studied, it cannot leave the episode of “*Bon Shay*” (Long drum) which commenced at Shwebo Myay Latt and rural areas, from the episode of *Bon Shay*, *Myay Waing Myaing Hta Hna Par Thwar* dance are descended. The style of “*Myaing Hta Hna Par Thwar*” in ancient time was the position at a distance of the length of towel or stretch of hand. After the era of *Myay Waing Myaing Hta Han Par Thwar*, it changed to the style of *Myaing Hta* in middle age. After that stage, it changed step by step to the present time style of *Hna Par Thwar*. In the section of *Hna Par Thwar*, entertainment is made with complete musical instruments. It can be said that *Hsaing* (Musical troupe) has played a larger role in the entertainment of

<sup>42</sup> Personal interview with U Soe Tint Lwin, Lecturer (Retired), Department of Music, National Culture and Art University, 62 years of age, 28.3.1961, Mandalay, on 2-7-2023

<sup>43</sup> Shwe Nan Tin, *Thabin Thel Bawa Atway Akyon Myar* (Experiences in the life of Dramatic Performer), Yangon, Myanmar Heritage Publications, 2021, p. 129 (Henceforth: Shwe Nan Tin, 2021)

<sup>44</sup> Soe Tint Lwin, 2019, 25

<sup>45</sup> Patmagyi, Sakhont, Chauk Lone Pat

<sup>46</sup> Personal interview with U Soe Tint Lwin, Lecturer (Retired), Department of Music, National Culture and Art University, 62 years of age, 28.3.1961, Mandalay, on 2-7-2023

<sup>47</sup> Personal interview with U Sein Maung, Chairman of Division Thabin Council, 75 years of age, 27.4.1948, Mandalay, on 17-9-2023

“*Hna Par Thwar*”.<sup>48</sup> In order not to unnecessarily prolong the role of *Hna Par Thwar*, entertainment is made with unusual tunes, singing and dancing with the humors of comedians. The musical troupe which plays from the time before the start of *Zat Pwe* up to the time of daybreak also has the chance to show qualifications in the episode of *Hna Par Thwar* which was watched by large audience.<sup>49</sup> As soon as the *Hsaing Waing* beats the *Pat-ma*, audience quietly listen the music. In that occasion, when *Hsaing Nauk Hta* makes the call on drum ensemble to strike up the music, *Hsaing Waing* used to play to make the audience pleased. While the *Hsaing Waing* is playing the music, *Min-thar* and *Min-tha-mee* have to change their clothes. Either the comedian makes the talk or the the song pauses, *Hsaing Waing* makes signal the *Min-thar* to sing the song in ready.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, in dancing “*Hna Par Thwar*”, “*Hsaing Waing*” plays a larger role. But before 1988, modern musical troupe was put into the *Zat*.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, in later years, other sections including the opera and *Hna Par Thwar* were entertained in association with musical troupe. Therefore, *Hsaing Waing* played little role in the *Zat* in later years.

In the entertainment of *Zat Pwe*, at the end of preliminary performance, it has little time for dramatic performance of story. *Zat Sayar* and *Hsaing Sayar* are most responsible to make correspond the finale of a play with the time of dawn. Moreover, audience wants to go back home before dawn in conformity with the saying “*Pwe Thwar Kyawt Kyawt, Pwe Pyan Mot Mot*” (Elegant in time of going to *Zat Pwe*, tilted up in time of going back home). Therefore, it is important to have understand about the play and to wind up the play in time. *Zat Sayars* who maintain the *Tha-bin Pyin-nyar* (Dramatic art) and respect on audience arranged to wind up the play before the rising of Sun. If there is no unity among the members of *Zat* troupe, it is likely to bring about inconvenience in time of winding up the play.<sup>52</sup> Besides the Ten Jataka Stories, Maha Win, Buddha Win, and 550 Buddhist Jataka stories are performed as *Nauk Paing Zat*. Moreover, *Htoe Zat* (Drama based on fantasy) are also performed and entertained.<sup>53</sup> The nature of *Zat Thabin* is to make entertainment in every plot by singing, dancing and playing musical instruments. Playing to agree with the words which call on the drum ensemble to strike up the music can be called “*Zat Poh Thi*”. Only with the tune of *Hsaing Waing*, the play can be ended.<sup>54</sup> The entertainment of *Zat Thabin* is mostly found in Buddha Pujaniya festivals and Novitiation ceremonies. In the ceremonies of auspiciousness, it ends the entertainment by performing the graceful songs and tunes. In finishing the entertainment, it is mostly ended by playing *Yay Kin* or *Byaw* or by beating the *Si* (Big drum) with the various songs, such as “*Shwe Bone Taw Toe*”, “*Aung Par Zay*”, “*Sel Sel Raung*”, and “*Mingalar Byaw Nyunt*” etc. It also used to end the entertainment by singing the song composed about the advertisements.<sup>55</sup> Nevertheless, the ending of entertainment by playing the pieces of *Tee-chet* can bring about the maintenance of tradition.

<sup>48</sup> Personal interview with U Soe Tint Lwin, Lecturer (Retired), Department of Music, National Culture and Art University, 62 years of age, 28.3.1961, Mandalay, on 2-7-2023

<sup>49</sup> Gon Ban, 1966, 367

<sup>50</sup> Personal interview with U Soe Tint Lwin, Lecturer (Retired), Department of Music, National Culture and Art University, 62 years of age, 28.3.1961, Mandalay, on 2-7-2023

<sup>51</sup> Personal interview with U Sein Tint Lwin, Skilled practitioner of orchestra, 72 years of age, 28.3.1961, Mandalay, on 26-8-2023

<sup>52</sup> Gon Ban, 1966, 423

<sup>53</sup> Soe Tint Lwin, 2019, 31

<sup>54</sup> Gon Ban, 1966, 442

<sup>55</sup> Soe Tint Lwin, 2019, 33

Although the *Zat* was performed the whole night in former times, Shwe Mann Tin Maung who was popular in the circle of *Zat Thabin* (Dramatic performance) had invented the system of *Zat* entertainment only half of the night in 1955. By reducing the extent of plot, it has to make entertainment only half of the night instead of performing until the dawn. *Hsaing Waing* also does not need to play the whole night and it has to play by watching the signal. In this system of entertainment for half of the night, *pat-sar* is made ready even before the audience entered the theatre. At 7 O' clock at night, bell rings to signal the start, it plays Yay Kin *Tee-lone* (Instrumental rendition of tune) of *Ywa Sar Gyi* (Leader of *Hsaing Waing*) Sein Bei Dar. At the end of "Yay Kin" *Tee-lone*, "*Et-Khan Hsaing*" (Myanmar orchestra music played for entertainment) is played. Then, short tunes are played to entertain the *Ka Byar Luk* (Myanmar basic dance solely accompanied by rhythmic beats) dance. At the end of *Ka Byar Lut* dance, it entertains an episode of comedians. Then, it shows the dance with "*San Taw Chein Tee-lone* (Standard time tune)". After performing these six episodes, it comes the *Hna Par Thwar* (Romantic dance by a male and a female dancer). It takes one and half an hour and *Naunk Paing Zat* is to be performed completely within the period of two hours.<sup>56</sup> But this system of entertainment by half of the night is accepted only in towns and the people in rural areas do not like it and it does not exist for a long time.

### Conclusion

The musical instruments played to create the tunes which vaunted the qualities of music are Myanmar traditional musical instruments. The musical troupe has to support the actors on the *Zat* stage to be good in singing and dancing. But it is known that playing of the musical instruments without reason is prohibited so that the sound of music do not dominate the recited words. Moreover, with the development in modern musical instruments at the present times, modern musical instruments are used in dramatic performances. The audience in nowadays makes more encouragement to modern music. Therefore, Myanmar traditional musical instruments and modern musical instruments should be used only at the suitable place. It is supposed that Myanmar traditional musical instruments should be used in the entertainment of dramatic plots to make the episode of story more conspicuous.

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<sup>56</sup> Ah Mar, 2022, 334

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### **Interviews**

- Personal interview with U Sein Tint Lwin, Skilled practitioner of orchestra, 72 years of age, 28.3.1961, Mandalay, on 26-8-2023
- Personal interview with U Soe Tint Lwin, Lecturer (Retired), Department of Music, National Culture and Art University, 62 years of age, 28.3.1961, Mandalay, on 2-7-2023
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