

**Typological investigation of spur pottery Culture from Upper  
Myanmar Sites**

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# Typological investigation of spur pottery Culture from Upper Myanmar Sites<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

Pottery is one of the important artifacts in archaeology and is the most finding in the burials. Their typological feature is an important indicator to the culture of past human societies. Comparative study of the pottery from different cultures shows that each culture has its own characteristic forms and styles. The changes of form and style of the pottery are based on belief, religion and social life style as well as technical achievement of people. Pottery and potsherds were found at the Late Stone Age Cultural Phase of Neolithic sites and abundantly documented in Metal Age Cultural Phases of Bronze and Iron Age sites in the archaeological landscape of Myanmar. Among them, one of the interesting type come from spur pottery style, designated with spurs on the body and spurs at the bottom of the pottery. This type of pottery was mainly found in the Metal Age Cultural Context from Chindwin, Mu, Myint Nge (Dohtawady), and Samon Valleys, particularly more associated to Bronze Age Cultural phase. As the external context, the same type of pottery has been documented from India, China, and Southeast Asia. It shows that there is cultural relation between the communities of the regions, and even indicates to the social rank practiced in ritual activities of Metal Age people in the prehistoric landscapes of Myanmar.

## Introduction

Pottery is one main approach in the study of the archaeological sites. It was found at either the excavation or exploration of the archaeological sites. In Myanmar, the earliest evidence of potsherds and pieces of pottery was found at the Badalin cave in Ywa-Ngan Township, Southern Shan state. They have been assigned as the late Paleolithic period (11,000 years ago). Whereas the rich evidences of pottery come from the Metal Age sites in archaeological landscapes of Myanmar: Nyaunggan and Monhtoo in Chindwin Valley; Halin in Mu Valley, Taungthaman in Myit Nge Valley;

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and others in Samon Valle. In these sites, potteries are found as the grave goods associated with the human skeletons remains.

In fact, in the Metal Age sites, potteries are abundantly found among the other finds in various forms and shapes. Particularly, their forms show up the different characters from one site to the others. Generally, the Metal Age pottery types can be classified into large pottery type, globular pottery type, spur pottery type, medium pottery type, carinated pottery type, cup pottery type, cylindrical pottery type, small pottery type, and bowl, dish and plates. Among them, Spur pottery is one of the interesting types to the whole pottery assemblage of the Metal Age Cultural Context in the prehistoric landscapes of the region.

#### **Typological investigation of spur pottery Culture from Upper Myanmar Sites**

In stylistic form, the spur pottery is generally fashioned by spurs on the body, sometimes also on the base - usually with 3 or 4 productions. They are found in various sizes of large, medium and small, and in various types of rounded pottery, carinated pottery and cylindrical pottery. This pottery type has been evidenced from the Metal Age cultural sites, particularly falling into 4 main river valleys of Upper Myanmar such as of Chindwin, Samon, Myitnge, and Mu. (See Map.1)

In the Chindwin Valley, Nyaunggan Site in Budalin Township represents to the early Bronze Age site. This site reveals human skeletal remains, animal bones, stone rings, bronze spear head and arrow head, bronze halberd, various beads, and various types of pottery. By the studying of pottery types, there are found about 12 pottery types including spur pottery. The spur pottery from Nyaunggan was found to be two forms; one with spurs at the body and at bottom and the next with spur at the

body and with pedestal at bottom. The measurement of spur pottery from this site is 13 in maximum and 11.7 in minimum. (See Fig.1)

Another site from Chindwin river valley, Monhtoo also in Budalin Township, represents to Bronze Age. The excavated findings from the site are human skeletal remains, pieces of stone rings, stone tool, core of stone ring, animal teeth, beads, bronze implements; axe, spear head, ring, rattle, and various types of pottery. The spur pottery is identified by the bottom flat pottery while the spur had attached at under the neck. The bottom is narrow than the rim and body. By mean of, it is narrow from the bottom to the top while the neck is concave to inner but the rim again wide. This type of pottery is a little found in this site. The dimension of this type has 2in height, 2.4 in rim wide, 0.15 of spur length, and 2.3 in of body. (See Fig.2)

In the Samon Valley, spur pottery come from (5) main sites: In-de, Myin-Oo-Hle, Kokkokhahla, Ywahtin and Kanthitkone, and Mrauk-Le. In-de site in Taungthar Township shows up the human skeletons, bronze implements: axe and spear, stone implements: mainly chopping tools, beads: bone beads, terracotta beads, and shell beads, and many types of potteries. Potteries which found in this site include spur pottery. The form of this pottery type is medium size of carinated pot attached the spur at the ridge and the neck is slowly narrow inner side with wide rim. The rim has small holes. These holes are straight with the holes from the spur. The bottom is shaped in round but had made with pedestal at bottom. The measurement is 4.2 in and 3.6 in of rim wide and 4.9 of body. (See Fig.4)

Myin-Oo-Hle'in Mahlaing Township had yield Human skeleton remains, beads: bone beads, stone beads, and carnelian beads, vessels: potteries and earthen wares, bronze implements: spear head in various size, and grubbing hoes, iron implements: knife, grubbing hoe, Molds, shells, bronze spindles had unearthed from

the excavation. Among the associated finds, Spur pottery is different type of it. It is shaped that had spurs and pedestal at bottom of a simple rounded bottom with neck. According to the measurement of the body, its high is about 4.2in and the rim wide is 3.6in and the body wide is 4.9in (See Fig.7)

Kokkokhahla site in Windwin Township is contained human skeletons, beads: stone beads, bone beads, shell beads, bronze implements: spear heads, rattles, and bronze axe, and stone artifacts, Megalithic tomb and potteries. Spur pottery is shaped in rounded bottom type with spur at the body, and pedestal. The base of the pedestal is very wide and tapering to the upper and then the join place with the body the narrow. The pedestal has three holes and these holes are straight line with the hole of the spurs. The high of it is about 9", rim is 4.2", the body wide is 9.1" and the spur length is 0.6". (See Fig.3)

Ywahtin site in Pyawbwe Township unearth Human skeletons and its associated things are small river stone, beads with various colors, Iron objects, carbon, socketed bronze tool, stone implement, and necklaces and pottery. Spur pottery from this site had unearthed two types: one is normal type that found in other site but the next type is Beer cup. The high of it has 1.2 and rim of 1 in and 1.5 in body wide.

Kanthitkone in Tharze township included human skeletons, shell and animal' bones, Various types of beads beads, bronze objects: bronze spear, arrow, spindles, and bronze discs , Iron things: socketed spear heads, and various type of potteries. Spur pottery that found in this site is not different with the other sites. (See Fig.5)

Mrauk Le site in Mahlaing Township reveal human skeleton and animal's remains, beads with various shape and colors, bronze objects: spear head, spindles, bracelet, rattle, and Iron implemens: blade, socketed tools, stone tool, spindle wheel

or whorl. In this site, spur pottery is very big and had even the cover. Its measurement is 39" high, 31 " of rim, 36 of body wide and 1" of spur length. (See Fig.6)

In Mu valley group in Wetlat township, many archaeological sites from Halin Area have been excavated by Ministry of Culture. Among these sites, some represented to Stone Age, some are Bronze Age, some are Iron Age and some are pyu sites. In these sites, the spur pottery was found HL-26 that regarded as an Iron Age site. Some of spur potteries are painted pots with spur and it is higher and bigger than the pottery that found in bronze and Iron Age sites. (See Fig.8 & 9)

In Myitnge valley group, Taungthaman site near Taungthaman Inn include stone tools, charcoal pieces and hearth containing husk marks, and house foundation feature of pits, Pottery, Stone implements: tools and rings, Terracotta objects, other finds of iron objects and remains of animal bones and shells. Various types of spur pottery can be found in this site. The measurements of these potteries are between 7"-3" height, 4.3"-3.2" rim, the body is 9.4"-4.3", and pottery's spur 1"-1.9". (See Fig.10 & 11)

Prehistoric archaeological sites have been found by these above four river groups. Spur pottery was seen at Nyaunggan and Monhtoo in Chindwin river, HL-26,28,29 in Mu river valley and Ywathin, In-de, Myin-oo-hle, Khokkokhala, Myauk-le, and Kanthitkon in Samon river valley and Taunthaman site in Myint-nge valley. The places which found the spur pottery are mostly represented to the Bronze Age, except Taungthaman site and HL-26.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the finding of Spur pottery in these sites have been found by three types in basically; spur pottery with pedestal and spur pottery with the point at the bottom. They are as follow:

- (1) Pot with spurs on the body and the bottom with perforated holes

- (2) Pot with spurs with perforated holes on the body with pedestal
- (3) Pot with spurs on body and flat bottom

Among these types of potteries, Type (1) have been found in Nyaunggan, Kanthitkon site, Type (2) was found In-de, Myin-Oo-Hle', Kokkokhahla, Ywa-htin, Mrauk Le, Halin, Taungthaman sites, Type (3) had been seen at Monhtoo site.

The sites that found spur potteries have 10 sites; Nyaunggan, Mon-htoo, and In-de of Bronze age site and Myin-Oo-Hle', Kokkokhahla, Ywa-htin, Kanthitkone, Mrauk Le, Halin, Taungthaman are Iron Age sites. This fact pointed to that spur pottery using may be begun in the Bronze Age and continually, when the Iron Age reached, the spur pottery was more widely used by the human beings. According to these measurements, the smallest was found in Ywahtin site and the largest size came from Mrauk-le.

The spurs pottery at the bottom that found in Nyaunggan and Kanthitkon site of Chindwin and Samon valley was very easy to broken. So, the people invented the pottery to make with pedestal at bottom of the pot. When the age changes from Bronze Age to Iron, potteries making technique may be more developed from the former stage.

The spur pottery is found only in the regional context but also external context. The spur pottery type was found in the Neolithic Age of Europe, for example, the Goodland site in Ireland country was found the carinated bowl pottery with spur, especially in the late Neolithic (3100-2500 BC), a ceramic innovation coming from Britain, to be followed in the final Neolithic / Early Bronze Age. In regional context, the spur pottery was found in Metal age but the distinctive fact is not found in the following cultural status such as Pyu.

**Table.1 The sites that found the Spur pottery**

No	Site Name	Age	Valley	Lat (N)	long (E)
1	Nyaunggan	Bronze Age	Chindwin Valley	22.4308° N	95.0695° E
2	Monhtoo	Bronze Age	Chindwin Valley	09.5° N	63.2° E
3	Myin-Oo-Hle'	Iron Age	Samon Valley	63.5° N	93.6° E
4	Kokkokhala	Iron Age	Samon Valley	21.12° N and	95.51° E
5	Ywahtin	Iron Age	Samon Valley	20.34° N	95.56° E
6	Kanthitkon	Iron Age	Samon Valley	22.55° N	96.02° E
7	Mrauk-Le	Iron Age	Samon Valley	-	-
8	In-de	Bronze Age	Samon Valley	21.2709° N	95.383° E
9	Taungthaman	Iron Age	Myitnge Valley	21.8927° N	96.0679° E
10	Halin(HL-26)	Age	Mu Valley	22.889° N	96.0679° E

**Table.2 The Dimension of Spur pottery**

No	Site Name	High	Rim Wide	Body wide	Spur Length	Remak
1	Nyaunggan	11.7-13"	"	"	1.9"	
2	Monhtoo	2"	2.4"	"	0.15"	
3	Myin-Oo-Hle'	4.2"	3.6"	4.9"	"	
4	Kokkokhala	9"	4.2"	9.1"	0.6"	
5	Ywahtin	1.2"	1"	1.5"	0.1"	
6	Kanthitkon	-	-	-	-	
7	Mrauk-Le	39"	31"	36"	1"	Cover
8	In-de	"	"	"	"	
9	Taungthaman	7"-3"	4.3"-3.2"	9.4"-4.3"	1"-1.9"	
10	Halin(HL-26)	-	-	-	-	

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**Map-1 The Map of Upper Myanmar Metal Age sites' distribution pattern group**

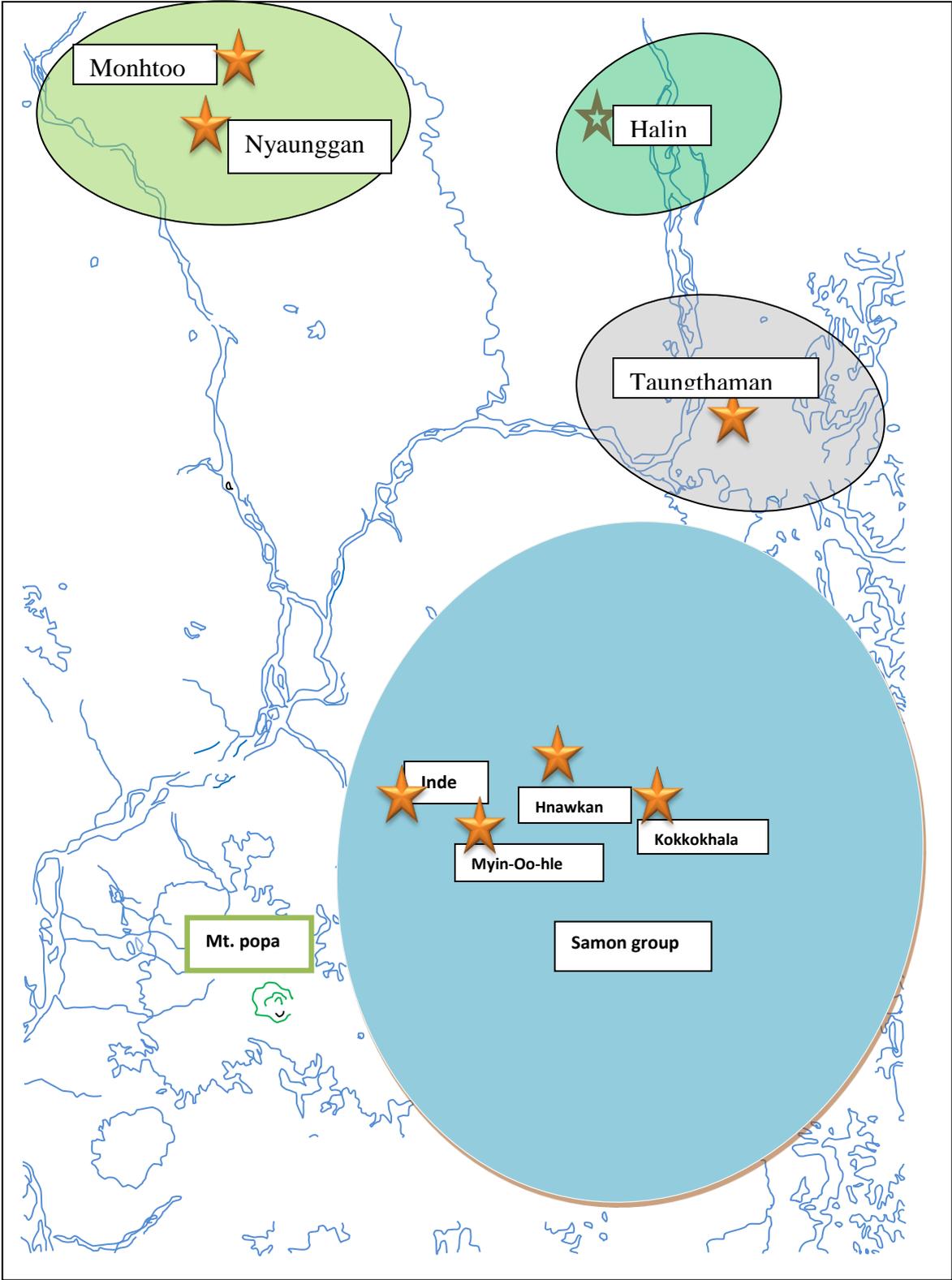




Fig.1 Spur pottery from Nyaunggan Site

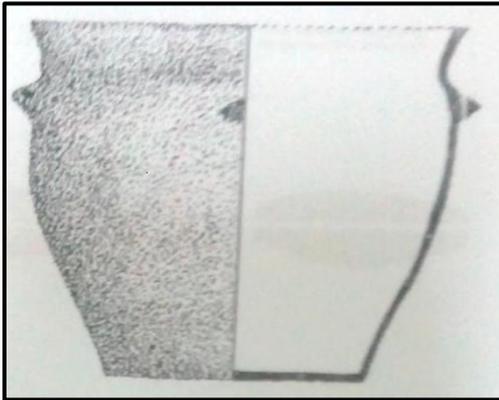


Fig.2 Monhtoo spur pottery  
(Source from Monhtoo Report)

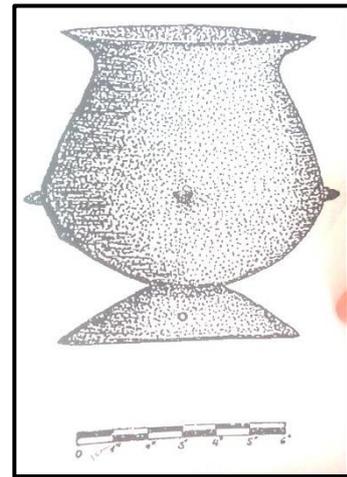


Fig.3 Spur pottery from Kokkokhahla site  
(Source from U Sann Win)



Fig.4 In-De Spur Pottery



Fig.5 Kanthitkone Spur Pottery

(Source From U Sann Win)

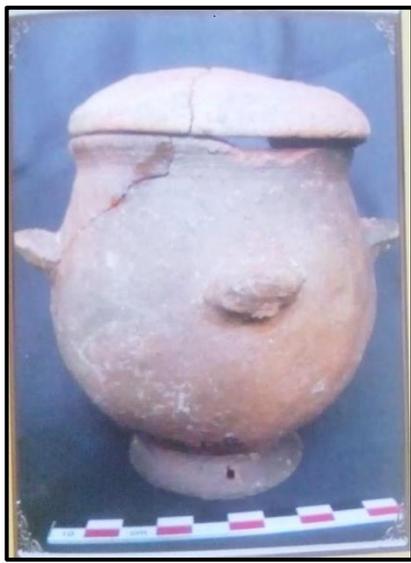


Fig.6 Mrauk-Le Spur Pottery  
(Source from U Sann Win)

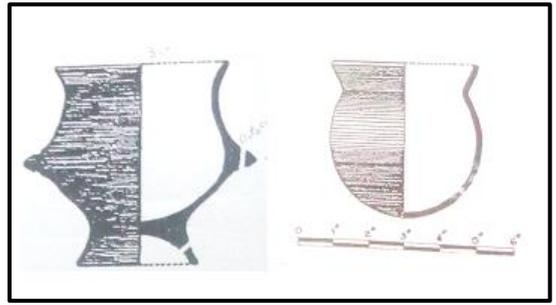


Fig.7 Myin-Oo-Hle' Spur Pottery  
(Source from report)



Fig.8 Halin (U Na Gha monastery museum)



Fig.9 Halin Spur Pottery (HL)



Fig.10 Taungthaman spur pottery





Fig. 11 Taunghaman spur pottery

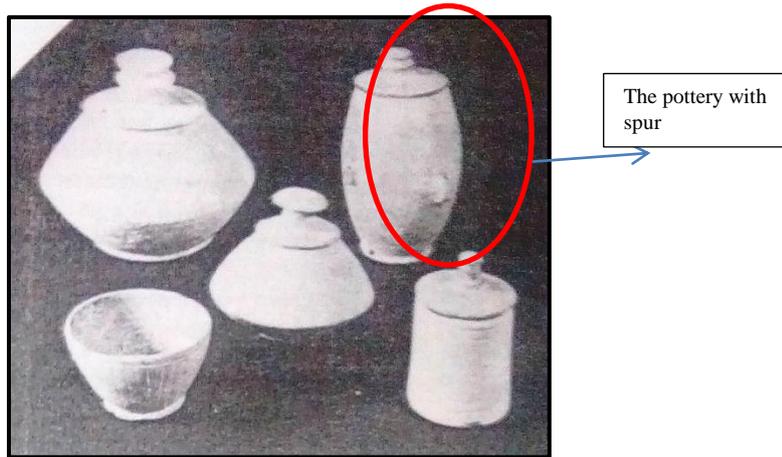


Fig. 12 Chlorite Vessels from Graves at Sar, Arabian Gulf

Chart.1 The sites that found the Spur pottery

