

# Myanmar Traditional Egg-Tapping Game in Ayemyawady Quarter, Sagaing

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## Abstract

Myanmar has a long history of art, literature and music. Cultural festivals are held throughout the year in various places in various seasons. This paper presents the information of the festival of Egg-Tapping Game that has been held every year at Zinamanaung Bronze Buddha in Ayemyawady Quarter, Sagaing. Through the studies of traditional festivals, the culture of Myanmar can be seen. This festival makes friendship, unity, equality of gives and takes, and happiness for them. This paper also intends to encourage the new generations to maintain the tradition of cultural festivals. Studies for this paper are done using reference books and also through field research.

**Key words:** Egg-Tapping Game, Ayemyawady , Sagaing.

## Introduction

*Sagaing* Township is located within latitudes 21°13'N and 21°15'N and between longitudes 95°3' E and 96°36' E. It falls within the dry zone. It is situated in north of Yangon, 373 miles by road and 398 miles by rail 586 miles by water. *Sagaing* Township stands 228.009 feet above sea level.

*Sagaing* Township is bounded by Mandalay Township on the east, Tada-U Township on the south, *Myinmu* Township on the west and *Wetlet* Township on the north.

On the east and west the *Ayeyarwady* River forms a natural boundary of *Sagaing* Township and the *Mu* River forms a natural boundary on the west. On the north is the land boundary between *Sagaing* and *Wetlet* townships. The area of *Sagaing* Township is 485.16 square miles.

The residential quarters in the urban area of the *Sagaing* town are:

1. *Pabetan*,
2. *Seingon*,
3. *Tagaung*,
4. *Minlan*,
5. *Moeza*,
6. *Ayemyawady*,
7. *Potan*,
8. *Nandawin*,
9. *Daweizay*,

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10. *Myothit*,
11. *Ywahtaung*,
12. *Htonbo*,
13. *Thawtapan*,
14. *Parami*,
15. *Nilar*,
16. *Pattamya*,
17. *Shweminwun*,
18. *Zeyar*,
19. *Miyahtar*,
20. *Pyukan*,
21. *Kyauksit*,
22. *Magyisin*,
23. *Magyigon*,
24. *Tintate*, and
25. *Sitee*.

The quarters in *Sagaing* are known by the industry they are occupied with. The quarters are known by the trade because these trades or traditional crafts have been in existence since years ago. The crafts have been handed down generation after generation, although people may have moved to other places, the traditional crafts remain in operation in the same quarter. That is why the quarters are known in connection with the crafts they are engaged in.

*Seingon* quarter is known for hand-loom weaving and *Dawei* quarter for goldsmith work. *Ywahtaung* quarter is noted for several traditional crafts namely pottery, thin bamboo paper making, silverware work, bronze work, goldsmith work, stone carving and rattan works, Among them *Ywahtaung* is famed for its silverware works.

## **Egg-tapping game**

Sagaing (Jeyyapura) was founded by King Athinkhaya Saw Yun (677–684) in 1315 (677 M.E.) in 2015 (1377 M.E.) the city has completed its 700<sup>th</sup> year of age and 700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of founding Sagaing City was celebrated with grand ceremonies. In 2020 (1382 M.E.), Sagaing is 705 years old.

Since Sagaing is a centre of Buddha Sasana, there are many religious buildings – pagodas, temples, monasteries and nunneries. It is also a centre of ancient art, architecture, wall paintings, and monasteries with many wood carvings. The tradition of ancient time continues to exist in the area. Here, the egg-tapping game that is played by public at the pagoda festival of Zina-man-aung Loka-chan-tha Bronze Buddha in Aye-mya-wady Quarter in Sagaing will be studied and presented.

## **History of Zina-man-aung Loka-chan-tha Bronze Buddha Statue**

The project of casting Zina-man-aung Loka-chan-tha Bronze Buddha statue began on 9<sup>th</sup> day of the waning moon in the second Waso in 1266 M.E. led by Min Kyaung Sayadaw U Thiri. They started casting the statue on 11<sup>th</sup> day of the waning moon in Ta-saung-mon using 700 viss of bronze, 300 kyats of silver and 30 kyats of gold. The project was completed on the full moon day of Kason in 1267, and a celebration of Anaykazar-tin was held on the occasion.

The pagoda festivals are held every year on the full moon day of Tapodwe and the day after it. According to a historical record of the pagoda and the interview with the members of the pagoda trustee, the number of the pagoda festivals held will be 115 times in 2020 (1382 M.E.) At the pagoda festivals, egg-taping games are organized.

Zina-man-aung Loka-chan-tha Bronze Buddha is located in Aye-mya-wady Quarter (formerly known as Asay-khan Quarter) by the Ayeyawady River. Egg-taping games have been played every year inside the compound of Pe-nin-gyi Pagoda which is located in the east of the Bronze Buddha Pagoda.

## **History of egg-tapping game**

A history of egg-tapping game says that during the reign of King Mindon (1214–1244), the boat men have their base at Asaykhan Fort in Sagaing. At the pagoda festivals, Montee and Monhinnga (both were different kinds of rice noodles usually eaten for breakfast) were sold. People usually ate the noodles with boiled eggs. When pagoda festivals were held while the soldiers were camping, the soldiers played egg-tapping games and they bet on the games. There was a fort where the elephants were kept and trained in Innwa, the other side of the river from Sagaing. The soldiers from that fort also came to the festival and enjoyed themselves at the pagoda festivals.

### Procedure of Egg-Tapping Game

It is interesting to see this egg-tapping game. A vendor has boiled eggs in a basket. There is another basket with boiled eggs, and this basket is called Khwe-taung or htan-shaw-taung. The eggs inside the Khwe-taung are covered with a round bamboo tray. When two people come to play the game, the vendor gives them two eggs. The vendor has some lamps or candles to make the place visible well. The lamps usually used kerosene or diesel. When the eggs have been tapped, they can be checked, whether they are broken or not, placing the eggs above the lamp and making them painted with fumes.

Two people choose an egg each. One of them holds his egg and places it on a surface. The other hits that egg with his egg. The two tops of the eggs are hit in this way. The egg below is sometimes cracked and the egg which hits it is sometimes cracked. The person whose egg is cracked loses the game. It is not possible to say who will win in advance. Sometimes, both eggs are cracked. In this case, the person who holds the egg on the surface wins.

Those two people take turn to hold the egg below. The winner gets the egg from the other. The egg that was chosen by the winner is taken back by the vendor. The times of winning and losing is marked with grains of beans or tamarind seeds.

The players can play the games as long as they want. They also add some more bet on the game. The bet can be five or ten eggs that have been cracked. And they can quit the game at any time.

When the game is stopped, they count the seeds that they used to mark their games. They have to pay the money to the egg-vendor according to the number of the seeds. One player loses and one player wins, but the egg-vendor always gets the money for selling the eggs.

The winner has to pay the money to the vendor, too, but since he wins, he also gets some money from the one who loses. This egg-tapping game has existed for hundreds of years.

There can be sixty to seventy egg-vendors at the pagoda festivals every year. The eggs sold at these festivals are more expensive than normal. These days, an egg costs 300 kyats, and a vendor may sell 400 eggs per night.

People who are good at this game are mostly from Ayemyawady Quarter. They usually collect the eggs that are especially chosen one week before the festival. They call the eggs with two names: Byauk-chaw and Byauk-kyan. A Byauk-chaw egg has a good shape, is bright, white, light and is hard. A Byauk-kyan egg does not have a good shape, has the color like moss, relatively heavy and not hard enough. Usually Byauk-chaw eggs

win the games. They have methods to make their eggs harder. They boil the eggs in the water mixed with Pe-seing-sar-u (climber cultivated for its edible, succulent, tuberous roots), watermelons and winged beans.

People make offerings of food to the Buddha statue, and they also offer boil eggs that were painted to look like tumbling Kellies (Pyit-Taing-Htaung)

### **Conclusion**

During the pagoda festivals, the events were led by Dhammarakkhita Social Association that offer food to the visitors. People believe that eating the eggs after offering them to the Buddha statue can heal the diseases and is good for health.

This tradition of egg-tapping games has existed for very long. Nowadays, this pagoda festival is well-known. This pagoda festival is held three days every year on the day before the full moon day of Tapoedwe, the full moon day and the day after the full moon day. The festival is held in those three days day and night. Not only people from Sagaing, but people from other places near and far come to join the festivals. This egg-tapping game is Myanmar traditional games for Myanmar people. This festival makes friendship, unity, equality of gives and takes, and happiness for them. Therefore this pagoda festival will surely continue to exist for a long time in the future.

### **Acknowledgement**

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Rector Dr Maung Maung Naing, Pro-Rector Dr Si Si Khin and Dr Tint Moe Thuzar, Yadanabon University for their kind permission to carry out this research paper. I am very much thankful to Professor Dr Tin Tin Nwet, Head of Oriental Studies Department Yadanabon University, Dr Thin Thin Aye, Professor of Oriental Studies Department Yadanabon University, for their suggestion and encouragement in this work.

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### **Interviewee**

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Ma Yin, Residence, vendor, Ayemyawady Quarter, Sagaing.  
Ma Phyu, Residence, vendor, Ayemyawady Quarter, Sagaing.



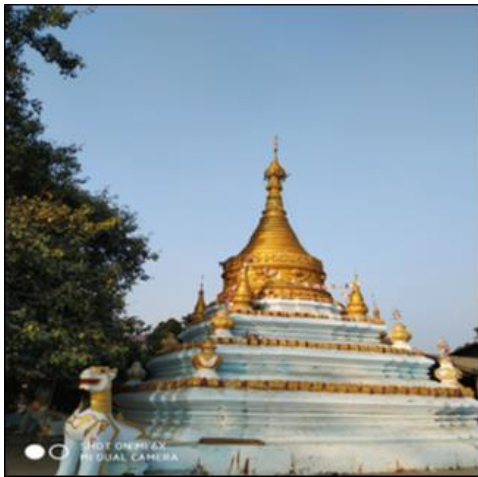
Source: Department of Agricultural Land and Management and Statistic in Sagaing Township.



Sagaing city



Jinamanaung Lokachanthar Bronze Buddha



Penningyi Pagoda



Penningyi Pagoda



Donate duck eggs to the pagoda



Procedure of Egg-Tapping Game



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