

Religious Beliefs of Shan-Gyi National Live in Ae-Nai Village, Lashio Township, Shan State in Myanmar

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Abstract

This study explored how to maintain Drum Ensemble (“*saing wain:*” in Myanmar) as Myanmar cultural heritage. The paper described especially relationship between spirit propitiation ceremony (“*nat pwe*” in Myanmar) and drum ensemble. Yangon Region is presumed to be the most developed place in the country that it could be very much liable to any infiltration of foreign culture and music. But fortunately, it was found that Big Drum Ensemble is still being used in some downtown areas and some adjacent area in Yangon region. Therefore, study sites were chosen some wards and villages of some Townships in Yangon Region to collect information and data regarding with the usage of drum ensemble. The three studied groups of the community were divided as follows: (1) The drum ensemble members of musicians whose livelihoods depend solely upon *Bamar* drum ensemble (2) appropriation ceremony (“*na’ kana:*” in Myanmar) professionals consisted of a woman or a sissy said to be chosen as consort by a spirit (spirit medium) (“*na’ gado*” in Myanmar), a leader of spirit medium (“*kana: si:*” in Myanmar), and other followers and (3) the audience. Then the audience comprised the doers and related persons, people who sponsored expenditure of ritual event (“*kana: pwe:*” in Myanmar) and people who come to watch entertainment. Again it could be classified two categories of audiences who came and watched drum ensemble entertainment. The first said to be the ones who are coming to watch according to their hobby who watch and listen with artistic ears and the remaining groups represent the ones who come and see just for fun. Field ethnography, focus group discussion (FGD), key informant interviews (KII), in-depth interview (IDI), informal conversation (IC) and direct observation (DO) were used for data collection. For qualitative data, information gathered by focus group discussion, key informant interviews, in-depth interview, informal conversation were transcribed and organized on the basis of emerging themes and subthemes. And then some people from village and wards in the study areas were general participated and using in drum ensemble (“*saing wain:*” in Myanmar) at auspicious and inauspicious ceremonies, direct observation was conducted with them. Observation was carried out at the ceremonies accompanied with drum ensemble, some data of *Bamar* traditional musical instruments especially, library of Department of Anthropology, Yangon University and Internet libraries. Moreover, data relating to *Bamar* traditional musical instruments were collected from newspapers, journals and magazines. Taking photographs and recording of music played with *Bamar* drum ensembles were conducted.

Key words: Drum Ensemble, *saing wain:*, *na’ pwe*, *na’ gado*, cultural heritage

Introduction

Myanmar is a country where over a hundred indigenous ethnic groups reside in peace and harmony. Unity among these races is promoted through awareness of each other’s customs and traditions. As there are certain features in the customs and traditions in accordance with their own ecological environment for the hill-dwellers, the same goes for those inhabiting the plains. There are eight prominent nationals in Myanmar: Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Chin, Bamar, Mon, Rakhine, and Shan. This study focuses on religious rituals and superstition and Shan-gyi national, Ae-nai village, Lashio Township, Shan State (North).

The Shan-gyi people of Ae-nai Village are pious people through generations. Being Buddhists since in the former times, they believe in the Kamma; if you do good deeds, you will enjoy the effects of good deeds, if you do bad deeds, bad effects will befall you. They believe the *Buddha*, the *Dhamma* and the *Sangha*, and keep the five Precepts. Moreover, according to the traditional customs, once a year, obeisance-paying ceremony for the Guardian Spirits of the village, fields is held. But, as it is observed, there is no ceremony of propitiating the *nats*, or spirits. There are also seasonal pagoda festivals. The aims of this paper are to describe the

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cultural phenomena concerning their religious beliefs and superstition and to highlight their rituals relating to social activities.

Methodology

Study Design

This paper is Descriptive study design.

Study Area

Ae-nai village, Lashio-Township, Shan State (North) were selected as study area.

Study Period

It lasted from 2010 October to 2011 May.

Methods

Qualitative research method is applied to collect data. Two sessions of Focus Group Interviews (FGIs) were conducted. In first session, men who had experience in many rituals and traditional festivals involved and there were **two** FGIs were conducted. In second session, women who had experience in many rituals and traditional festivals involved and there were **two** FGDs were conducted. There were seven or eight persons in each FGI.

Key Informant Interviews (KII) were also used to get data. Twelve men and eight woman who have been living through both past and present in that village were involved. They are head of village from Ae-nai village, a village administrative secretary and three members of village administrative committee, abbot from monastery, five elder knowledgeable persons, a man who is a leader of boys, a woman who is a leader of girls, seven middle-age knowledgeable persons.

Direct and indirect observation in their rituals especially lighting festival, initiation ceremonies was done although the language barrier was so much of a problem. Direct and indirect observation was done in

Findings

Shan gyi nationals residing in Ae-nai village are Buddhists. They are pious people as regards religion. Even the poor, regardless of their poverty would have a well-kept shrine or alter adorned with fresh flower. The rich would have their huge altars with marble, bronze or gilded wooden statues encased in mosaic glass cases. In former day, some would have their altars outside the house. Such settings can be observed even to the present day.

In Ae-nai Village, there is a famous pagoda named Radana Laba-Muni Sutaung-pye Pagoda, which is locates to the north east of the village, on the north of Lashio-Namatu Union highway. According to the interview of a 64 year old man, it was built in supposedly in the reign of King Asoka. The ultimate aim of building a pagoda was to propagate the height of the Buddhist in the local area and enable the local people to promote the Buddhist. Then, since the time the ten Shan-gyi families began to build the Ae-nai village, the pagoda was gradually given maintenance. In the pagoda compound are a small Ceti, a seated Buddha image, a Guardian spirit altar, and a monastery, where one abbot makes his residence. The guardian spirit is placed for paying obeisance. On both sides of the spirit altar, there are two statues of tiger. A trusteeship council is organized to perform the religious affairs of the pagoda; the chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary, members and respected local people. Where there arises a case for maintaining the pagoda, donation cash is received from the Ae-nai village and its neighboring villages. The annual pagoda festival does not used to held but they only take place pagoda fire warm ceremony in full moon day of *Tazaungmone* (November).

There is a monastery in Ae-nai Village, which is located in the south east of the village, to the south of the Lashio-Nanmatu Union highway. The monastery was named after the Elder Daughter: Ae-Nai Lon Kyang Taik. It has a two storey monastery for the Sabbaths keepers and the student monks, one dining hall, for monks, one dining hall for the Sabbath keepers and the villagers, two halls for the visitor monks for a short stay, (5 halls in total) .In the monastery, there reside one abbot, 2 assistant monks, and 3 novices (6 in total). Alms, medicine, yellow robes and residence affairs are provided by the villagers. Villagers from other villages, as well as local people, come on the full moon Day, the moonless Day and the Sabbath day for keeping Sabbath. In the monastery compound, the shinpyu ceremony is often held. In the month of Thadingyut, dances of Toe-nayah (mythical dragon), keinnayi-keinnayar (mythical birds), as well as stage shows, are performed. It was observed that most of the Shan gyi are value and respectful on monastery.

Seasonal Festivals

The Shan-gyi people of Ae-nai village usually hold the seasonal festivals according to the tradition and customs. The famous festivals are the Thingyan festival in Tagu; the lighting festival in Thadingyut, Pagoda fire warm ceremony in Tazamone, and the New Year Festival and the harvest feasting festival in Nadaw.

Thingyan Festival: During Tagu month, the Shan-gyi holds the Thingyan festival from eve of Thingyan to the first New Year Day. At that time, the local people make offering of water cleansing of the Buddha images and offering of water to the *Sanghas* for bathing and washing their faces, as well as bathing the elderly people and washing their hairs. In that month, whether the people keep Sabbath or not nearly all the villager go o the monastery, with offerings of pickled tea, rice, onion, oil, flowers, etc. while those who come to take Sabbath at the monastery are given a treat of traditional snacks, fruits and packets of rice. Since those meats and snacks are believed the medicinal, they welcome such a treat. Then elderly people keep Sabbath while young people and children play water-throwing in the village, in a polite manner, just like brothers and sisters.

Lights Festival: On the full moon night of Thadingyut, the lights festival is held. It is held with the leadership of the local more and young people. Its purpose is to commemorate the day when the Buddha, after delivering sermons of *Abidhammc* to the Mother Deity in Taveteinsa Celestial Abode, returned to the Human Abode. It is called in Shan-gyi language as Pwes-phara-lon-mein. On the full moon night, as it is believed, all creatures, man and deity would dance happily and one could see each other. One or two days before the full moon Day of Thadingyut, the Shan-gyi built a dais called Thin-poke sin in front of their house of in the monastery compound. On the evening of the waxing day of Thadingyut, offerings of fruits, flowers and snacks are placed on the dais. Such offering is dine to commemorate the descending of Buddha from the Human Abode from the Taveteinsa Celestial Abode at the daybreak of the Full Moon Day of the Thadingyut, as said by one member of the trusteeship council of the pagoda.

Then, on the full moon day, starting from 12:00 noon till 4:00 p.m, the Shan-gyi men play the traditional musical instruments while women dance in the accompaniment of the sprightly music. Then, dancing Toe-naya dance, Keinnari-Keinnare dances, all the villagers, lining up in an orderly manner. Go round the village. After that, they return to the monastery, and so round the monastery building clock-wise three times. Every round must be done three times, so the total rounds number nine. During the night, as stage shows, young people and children of the village dance the traditional Shan dance, singing Shan songs for the villagers of the neighboring villages have been invited, and they also come and give entertainments with their traditional songs and dances. During the festival, food stalls and fancy shops are also

opened. Then, the fun fairs are held till the daybreak. As soon as it is declared that the Thadingyut festival has successfully come to an end, fireworks are shot into the morning sky, as said by 20-year Ma Nan Shwe Li Oo.

New Year Festival and Harvest Feasting Festival: The New Year Festival is usually held on first waxing day of Nadaw. Preparations are made on 14th and 15th waning days of Thazaunmon. They wait for the coming of the New Year: young people sing songs; monks deliver sermons, and grandmothers tell the stories and histories of the heroes of the past, etc. When the day passes 12:00 midnight on 15th waning day of Thazaungmon, the time comes to ring in the New Year. Then, fireworks are shot and long drums and assembles are played, and local people dance happily, giving a warm welcome to the New Year. The purpose of holding the New Year Festival is to have the tasks to be performed the whole year to run smoothly, so they, as they believe, they can successfully do their tasks with no difficulty. From the New Year Day to the end of the month, they so door to door, and say prayers as mai-Hson “May you be blessed with all kinds of auspiciousness”. Young people also join the prayer group. Then, the traditional snacks of New Year are sent to the monastery, elderly people and friends and acquaintances, and those who receive the snacks pray for the well-fare of them.

Similarly, the Harvest Feast Festival is held in the month of Nadaw, the harvest time. The festival is held as follows: the harvested paddy is piled in the field and the Nat-propitiation is held, with an offering of flowers, incense sticks, eggs, glutinous rice snack fries called mont-hnit-kyaw, sweets, drinks and cakes, etc. The recently harvested paddy is ground, and the first new rice is offered to the Buddha, and then to the grandparents and parents and elderly people and friends and acquaintances, and those who receive the snacks pray for the well-fare of them.

Similarly, the Harvest Feast Festival is held in the month of Nadaw, the harvest time. The festival is held as follows: the harvested paddy is ground, and the first new rice is offered to the Buddha, and then to the grandparents and parents and elderly people. These are meant for raising the paddy yield and keep the paddy plants from insects. Then, rice distributed among the acquaintances, who say prayers for the higher yield of paddy and for a chance of holding the A-lhu or Donation Ceremony.

Shinpyu Ceremony

In the month of Tabaung, peasant is free from their farm work. Then they usually hold religious festivals out of the money they saved. If there is no son in the family, novitiation is done to their adopted son or out of a request to the parents who have a son. Those who cannot afford to do novitiation to their son, find the sponsor father and mother, and place their son at their feet for the novitiation. The sponsor father and mother are a young maid and a bachelor.

When a son reaches 5 to 10 years old, novitiation is done to him. Novitiation can be done individually or in groups. But novitiation in groups is more common, in which the expenses are shared equal. In order to hold a novitiation ceremony, respected local people and parents hold discussions for choosing the opportune time and date and venue, etc. Then plans are drawn to make invitations.

In inviting to a Shinpyu ceremony, in former times, few popcorns are placed and packed in a local made paper called Hmai-khai paper, and the packet means inviting one to a Shinpyu ceremony. Today, a small towel is given as a symbol of invitation. It was observed that invitation cards are sent to those acquaintances and friends who live far away.

In holding a novitiation ceremony, it is not held at he's house compound, but only in the monastery compound. The ceremony is held for five days. Before the day of the ceremony, a temporary pavilion is built on a plain ground in the monastery compound. In the centre of the pavilion, a Buddha image is placed reverently with come offerings beautifully and

decoratively. Below the Buddhist altar, one dais is built for the seat of the movies-to-be, or Shin-Laung.

Then on the first day of the novitiation ceremony, a get-together feast is given to those acquaintances and friends who have come from a far. On the second day, the yellow robes and other essentials of monk, as well as offerings, are sent to the monastery with dance and music. On the third day, the ceremony of the Shin-Laung Parade is held. Before the ceremony starts, the heads of the novices-to-be are shaven. Then, the young maids and young men put make-up on the children, and dress then in a dress resembling the regalia of king of the olden times. Then the lineup is taken: at the head of the queue is the group holding the signal banner signaling to move on or wait, then, the palanquin carrying the Buddha image comes along; it is then followed by the palanquins of the novices-to-be, then their parents, the bearer of the betel casket called Kun-taung-kai, the bearers of the flower casket called Pan-taung-kai, who are the young maids or belle of the village, then the Shan drum music troupe or Duh-but music troupe, relatives and villagers.

The palanquins of the novices-to-be are carried by the young men on their shoulders. The queues go round the monastery building clock-wise three times. One time takes three rounds. The first round is done between 9 am and 10 am; the second round, between 12:00 noon and 1 pm and the third round, between 3 pm. Then the queues go round the village. On the fourth day, the Shin-Laungs are to wear the yellow robes. But if the two Shin-Laungs are brothers, the yellow robes are given first to the elder brother as a symbol of respect. Then, between 12:00 noon and 1 pm, the younger brother, without being accompanied by his elder brother, has to go round. Then, between 3:00 pm and 4:00 pm, the younger brother is to wear the yellow robes. On the day, the round home, is not in the village, but only in the monastery compound. Moreover, as it was observed, the boisterous young men called Kalathar may hide a Shin-Laung for fun. If it is done so, the parents have to do anything that the boisterous young people ask them to. The purpose of novitiation is out of the belief that the Shin-Laung has grown up both physically and in power.

On the third day of the Ah-Lu or Shin-pyu ceremony, the guests are given a feast in treat, and at night, there are performances of the Myanmar orchestra and the Anyeint dance. Today, not only such performances but also stage-shows entertain the audience. The guests also give presents and cash as far as they could afford.

On the fifth day, as a symbol of having the Ah-lu ceremony successfully comes to an end, the monks are invited reverently to the pavilion, and given alms and offerings in the morning. Then the libation ceremony is held, in which the merit of the meritorious deed is shared to all, and the Ah-lu ceremony successfully comes to an end. On that day, all those, including the cooks, who have made contribution to the ceremony dance and play music and pray for the donors, who, in return, give them a treat and cash as prizes, as it was learnt from the interview with a 45-years old woman.

Traditional Worship

The Shan-gyi nationals being Buddhists, there is a Buddhist altar in every home, but no Guardian Spirit shrine (Kyauk-Swe-Lone-Home-Pha nat). But, according to the tradition, the Guardian Spirit shrine is built at the head of the village. Paying obeisance to the Guardian Spirit is done once a year: offerings of flowers, candles, Mount-phet-htoke (traditional kind of glutinous rice snack), and meat of chicken, pork, beef and mutton are made. There is another Guardian spirit shrine which is at the centre of the village, where offerings of various fruits, packets of pickled tea and mont-phet-htoke are made, but no meat at all once a month. While men and women are allowed to enter the Guardian Spirit shrine at the head of the villages, no

women are allowed to enter the Guardian Spirit shrine in the centre of the village. Because they believe that the guardian spirit shrine which situated in the centre of village is more important and main place for spirit. When the Shinpyu Ceremonies are held, the novices-to-be called Shin-laung are taken there to pay respect and get recognition.

Superstition on Taboo and Mana

The study of the traditions and customs of the Shan-gyi to follow, or do's, reveal that in the harrowing season, if the weather conditions are not favorable, the local people do pulling the tug-of-war and propitiating the traditional spirit. In order to get things go smoothly in harrowing or transplanting, and have a good harvest, proper dates are chosen for such rituals. After the harvest of paddy, in order to have more of the baskets of paddy, the peasants make an offering of incense sticks and candles, and say prayers. In the month of Nadaw, they draw the plans for the whole so that their plans will be a success.

On every 1st waxing day of each month, the bread winner of the family received hair-washing with soap shampoo. This is done by his wife or his mother or his elder sister so that, it is believed, it will bring good luck and smoothness in the work and repelling of bad things.

Concerning funeral rituals, a coin or gold or silver is stuck into the mouth of the deceased person. Then, in burying the remain, Shan bag, a packet of rice wrapped in banana leaf, as well as a jar of water, and some snacks that the departed person used to have with pleasure, are placed besides the body, before its burial. Thus, it is believed, this would enable the person in the afterlife to make a wealthier living. Then, on return the ceremony, one has to bathe from head to foot and wash one's hands and legs, and changes the dress. This, as it is believed, would raise one's luck from low to high.

The study of the don't reveal that the Shan-gyi must not kill any tiger because the head of the tiger is the sacred object for them. If one has killed a tiger, it is believed that a catastrophe would befall one. In travelling one must avoid leaving one's home on 2nd waxing and 4th waxing day. Moreover, on the full moon day and on the moonless day, one must avoid from washing clothes, travelling and going to the farm, etc. On such days, one just stays indoors without doing any affairs. If one does anything during these days, nothing could run smoothly. In travelling on business, if one comes across a snake coming down from a high place or if a branch breaks and falls on one's way, one does not usually go on, because one could encounter bad men and inconveniences, etc. The Shan-gyi does not like being patted on the head in teasing because one's head is believed to be the noblest part of the body. The head of the house which is specially devoted to the host of the house must not be seated by anyone without being granted permission, because it is assumed that one can match the power of the host of the family. Moreover, the women are not allowed to take a seat in the places devoted for the grandfather and the grandmother in the head of the family and in the place above the kitchen. If a woman has done so, she would be criticized for lacking respect or tear. If one enters a house, one has to take off one's slippers, or one would be considered as being rude. In transplanting, it is not done after the month of Tawthalin, or it would bring low harvest. In the childbirth, no man is allowed to enter the delivery room or he would suffer from the degrading of his power.

The study of superstition and interpreting signs of omen reveals that if a deer enters a village, it would bring a fire-outbreak in the village or death of a local person. Concerning dreams, if one dreams of clear water, it would bring good luck, if one dreams of dirty, stagnant water, one would meet bad luck. Moreover, if one dreams of having a haircut, one's father's side would fall sick or die; if one's lower tooth breaks, one relation one's mother side would fall sick or die. Moreover, if a four-legged animal climbs up the roof of the house, if one's

fencing has damaged by a four-legged animal climbs up the roof of the house, if one's fencing has damaged part must be repaired, and the duration must be made.

In a child-birth, if twins are born, the first born child is considered as a younger one; and the second born child, an elder one because it is believed that the elder one has given priority to the younger one to get out of the mother's womb first while a daughter is giving birth. If the first child is a Saturday, born, he or she would be so called sold to another parent so that, as it is believed, he or she would be fit and healthy. Moreover, a superstition has it that a flood comes in Ae-nai village very three year or five year because it is believed that it would be the time when the three legendary princesses would come to pay obeisance to the pagoda of Ae-nai village.

There are many taboos in Shan-gyi tradition. Some are already obsolete but many are still practiced. Some of these taboos are complied and presented. On the day the head of the house sets out on a trip, no household member is supposed to wash hair. The wife is not to go to weddings while the husband is on a trip unless she has already obtained permission from the husband to do so.

The husband's face towels, handkerchiefs and headdress should never come into contact with women's longyis, or any piece of clothing. They should be hung on a line or a hanger. They should never be put on the floor. However a man may put his headdress on the floor in a pile while he is worshipping or listening to sermons. Shans do not like to have their heads touched, tapped or patted even as a joke. People are not supposed to use their legs or feet to point at a certain thing, or playfully kick or even make a gesture to do so. They are not supposed to place their legs on that of other people. Should one accidentally hit another person's head, that person would be so angry that he would not forgive the insult until the person in question apologizes. However, they are ready to forgive the minute he does so.

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The wife is not to touch the husband's head without his permission. Should pets in the house be male, women of the household are not to cross over them, kick them, or place their legs on them. Women should have the flaps of the longyis, opening to the left only. A longyi flap opening to the right would indicate disrespect for the husband. Expecting mothers are not to go to weddings, visit others early in the morning, or greet visitors coming into the village. As soon as one sees a pregnant woman, one has to greet first. Expectant mothers are not allowed to go to the nat shrine either. It is believed to be unlucky to meet a pregnant woman when one is on a trip or journey. If a pregnant woman comes shopping early in the morning

and buys from a shop, the sales person has to agree to her bargaining. Then the sale person has to make a wish saying, "As you have prosper so let me be"

Visitor is not to ask whether the host family has had their meal at mealtimes. The hosts are supposed to provide a meal for the visitor with what they have and the visitor has to contend with that. If there is no meal ready, the host family will have to cook for the visitor immediately. While serving the meal the hosts will have to say that they are providing the meal so that they will have meritorious blessing. Servings are done on their knees to show respect. No one is to blow their nose, cough or say a pleasant thing while a visitor is eating.

A visitor is not to be given mushroom or oyster dishes. A person who eats mushroom will bear a grievance and one who has eaten oyster will fail to succeed with his plans. If they chance to eat peacock meat, all the bones are to be collected and buried in a pit. Should they fail to do so, they may never see each other again for a long time. When pouring water into a glass, or pouring tea into a cup, the hand that pours should not be in the reverse position. Drinking water is not supposed to be used for washing the face or for bathing.

At bedtime, a couple is not to discuss matters regarding relatives, economy, or their social matters of the village. If they want to do that they have to get out of bed and do so. Discussing these things while lying down would end in failures such as, financial failures such as, financial failures, failure with plans, and delays. It would lead to poverty as well. Visitors should not speak to the hosts lying down, once they have got into bed. If they want to do so they will have to get out from bed and talk while sitting down. Fetching water should not be done on the same trip as firewood collecting. Breaking o this tradition would end up with an attack by a tiger.

A person resting under a tree should not break branches of that tree, pick up leaves, cut or mark the roots or the trunk because it shows that the person who does this is ungrateful and is despised by all. During the lent period, no one is supposed to pound rice, do taung-yar, wash clothes, wash hair, fell trees or cut branches. Doing this would indicate disturbing the Nats. An evergreen plant called Gantgaw is not to be planted at home. A woman should not marry her servant. One is not supposed to go under the pole to which cattle are tied luck fails. An owl is a symbol of bad omen for them. Therefore neither owl nor toy-owl is to be brought into the house.

One should not live at the beginning or end of the road except for families with old people. Young people should not stay at the entrance of the village or ill luck will fall on the village. When a buffalo slashes at the fencing, fencing pole, or at the walls of the house, it is regarded as unlucky. They believe that it brings ill luck to the owner. The person who is responsible for the damage has to repair the fencing, cart or car. After that, a monk is invited to an offertory meal and there should be chanting of safeguard verses by the monk. Holy water or soap acacia solution is sprinkled onto the new fence or whatever had been damaged and repaired.

It is unlucky to see either a barking deer or a seller of the barking deer meat on a trip. It is lucky to see a funeral while one is on a trip. However, such cases are rare. If bees hive in a home, there would be calculations from the name or the horoscope of the head of that family. If the calculations prove to suit the head of the family, it is believed to be good and if it doesn't, it is taken as unlucky. When a person dies away from home he may not be brought back into the house. When a corpse is carried out of the house, it should not go headfirst. Doing so would bring bad luck to the family.

Errors in burial procedures are harmful to the village. Coffin carriers should not rest on the way to the grave. There should be no music or drum beating on the way to the graveyard.

Once a grave had been dug, the burial should not be shifted to another place. That would imply that there would be the death of another person. The activities like visiting to the monastery and village common spirit shine, portray the great unity of the Shan national. Besides, they do not see peoples as the poor or the rich one. People in different levels of economy donate and participate the social activities as possible as they can. Nowadays, the Shan national are still embracing their traditional activities by innovating some of them in suitable with modern situation.

Tattooing

The Shan-gyi is skilled in tattooing. For this purpose, a man would go to a tattoo master or he and his friends would take turns to do tattooing for one another. In former times, the Shan-gyi men had their bad, from head to foot, tattooed, but today, young Shan-gyi men would receive few tattooing on the elbows and on the legs only. Mostly, the colors of the tattoo are red and black. Tattooing is done in order to make oneself appear namely and keep oneself fit and strong. Some got themselves tattooed for the sake of amulet that would keep them unharmed by the strike of rod or sword or for the sake of charm, as learned from 56-years-old man.

Discussion and Conclusion

Most of the Shan-gyi nationals are Buddhists and almost all natives participate in their ritual activities such as seasonal festivals, novitiation ceremony. In urban area of Myanmar, there are many ritual ceremonies and festivals are used to take place. But almost all urban people cannot participate in all ceremonies because life style is quite different in rural and urban society.

In Kayin national living in Hpa-an Township, the concept of Buddha are different such as Leke cult, beliefs in Du Wai spirit, observe in Kyaik Kawi cult. So their ritual activities were found that there are many differences especially in seasonal festival, Shinpyu ceremony and social affairs related to religion. In Shan-gyi national, as their participation in rituals their social unity based on religion is concrete.

As in conclusion, most of Shan-gyi national are pious in Buddhism and still strong in ritual activities. And they also believe in guardian spirit (traditional worship). They are superstitious in their customs (Taboo and Manna). It was observed that Shan-gyi national is value on their rituals and social solidarity would become as religion.