

A Study of Bell Inscriptions on the Shwedagon Pagoda's Platform

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Abstract

It is a customary for Buddhist to hit the Bell and share their accumulated merits with all sentient beings after performing meritorious deeds. The ringing sound of the bell is very pleasant to every being including human being, deities, and *Brahmana* that it instigates to arise faithful and joyous feeling. It was a study and presentation of the bell inscriptions found on the platform of four cardinal side of the Shwedagon pagoda platform. There are also the thirty-one big bells hung on four cardinal sides. The names, addresses and the level of designations and positions of the donors, the weight and measurements of the bell were also described. The various aspirations and sharing of merits were also noted. The *Myanmar Pāli* compositions inscribed on the bells were studied and presented. From the bells inscription valuable detailed information about livelihoods, occupations, rank and addresses of the throughout the history can also be traced there.

The History of Bells

The Origins of Bells

In the history of China, the legendary king of “Kong Ti” gave an order to cast a bell in 2679 B.C. In the second volume of the encyclopedia, it is said that bells were started to be cast four hundred years before that period. Most Chinese bells were stuck by means of a wooden stick and there were no bangers inside. There are two types of bells found in Egypt both decorated on the rims with floral shapes of lilies. The evidence of bells from 8th B.C. supported the assumption that there were adaptations of bells from Egypt. They were made of copper or brass for Buddhist monasteries. However it is believed that the practice of making bells began from the iron-age. It was believed that iron is not agreeable for evil fairies and witches and, thus could protect people from them. The sounds of bells being struck were believed to banish the evil effects, replacing them with the good ones.

Kings Solomon who ruled Israel from 974 to 973 B.C. also had a golden bell made on the roof of his shrine for driving the birds away. Theocritus said that copper is a type of pure ablation and can transform all impurities into purities. It is said that copper has the pure energy. In many of the Latin evidences, the striking of copper items was believed to have the powers to ward off eclipses of the sun and the mood. P. Susman said that bells with pictorial decorations were found in the city of Pompeii.

A bell taken from Kabin shrine of Thebers is also displayed in British museum. Moreover, the use of bells can be found in Greece, Palestine, Assyria and Persia as warning against people. Greeks used bells for keeping away the grieving crowds. The main use was against the occurrence of diseases. They are also used to announce the opinion of markers as well as the duty of those on night watch. In non-far eastern countries, monks use them for calling up people for religious services. In Egypt, Palestine and Assyria, bells were used for summoning people Princesses of Arabia dangled bells from their gowns so as to warn people not to come to their places. And they were also used to warn people not to speak loudly while entering the courts. Horse bells are also believed to signify religiosity and carry the good news to faraway places.

The Use of Bells by Christians

The setting up of huge bells in the early days of Christendom was not an emulation of Greek and Roman cultures. In A.D 3rd century, bells were used as protection against evils rather than as instruments for calling to prayers. After 313 A.D, bells were used for offering

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prayers. Christians used bells mostly for blessing according to the Christian monk Gregory. In the days of St. Patrick, a sacred box of Christian bishops had a bell depicted with pictures. The bell was believed to have been used for order in a noisy crowd.

More evidence on the existence of bells came from Milan of Italy. In the funerals of Senior Staff members of Oxford University, a bell called Lych was struck as the funeral cortege passed. In the rule 67 of the Christian principles, it was recommended that bells be struck to warn people on duty. They were also used for driving away evil spirits and praying for the dead. During the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the use of bells for funerals becomes excessive. This led to the lower use of bells in religious ceremonies and introduction of passing bells. In these bells there were the striking of bells gently, according to age and sex. In the middle ages, bells were used mainly for driving evil spirits away as well as prevention against diseases. Bells were also hung on the road of Christian bishops. The belief that striking of bells can dispel lightning and stormy weather also became widespread.

Bells were given Christian names with large ceremonies to increase their powers and to protect the souls of the dead. English bells have harmonious chimes with the bells revolving.

The Use of Bells by Non-Christians

A few evidences were found on the use of bells in the Far East even before 8th century A.D. They were used in major ceremonies. In 677 B.C, bells were valued and used traditional ceremonies. The aim was to invite the spirits to come and enjoy the feast prepared for them.

Buddhist emphasized the use of bells in their religious ceremonies. The bells were used to praise the glory of Lord Buddha in praying sessions. Many bells were hung all around pagodas and they started ringing when there were any wind movements. The continuous clinking and clanging of bells were believed to have the powers to protect against diseases and drive away evil spirits. Buddhist beliefs are similar to that of Brahmins. Bells became symbols of Buddhist ceremonies according to various Tibetan books. Many Lamas in Lhasa wear bells in their crowns. They sit cross-legged and touch their heads with the bells in reverence. They strike the bells to pray for the sick and accept them as holy items to be placed on the Altars.

Brahmins believe that there are two essential things, the offering of lights and a bell for waking up and calling to prayers. The striking of the bells drive away the spirits who are passing by, Spirit mediums and hermits of Mirgapur always carry an iron bell around everywhere they go.

Bells are also found in the western part of Africa. Apart from Massai and similar tribes, there is little use of bells. Bells are used for hanging from the necks of animals. The use of bells, in this case, is practical rather than cultural. There is no use of bells or other sound-making apparatus in New Zealand. On the islands of Tanga and Fiji, hollowed wooden bells are found. The bells are given different names. They are used mainly for gathering religious people.

Children from all over the world are also adorned with bells of various sizes and shapes for the simple purpose of warding off diseases. Only people from Turkey are observed not to like the sounds of bells. Mohammedans do not use bells because they are involved with Christians. Punabis believe that by striking bells, the dead are disturbed and that it signifies the doomsday when all the dead are waken up to be judged by God.

The Bells of America

Even before Columbus discovered America, people from some religions made use of metal bells. Bells gradually develop from clay, shells and gourd skins to those made of metal. According to Holmes metal bells are made use of extensively everywhere. Bells were not used

in areas to the north of Rio Grande and in other ancient heritage sites. Even before the arrival of the whites, copper bells were found in the southeastern part of America. Some bells reached via cultural exchanges and trades. Metal bells are found in the Catanarcan state of Argentina. Bells made of non-metal substances such as clay were widespread among aboriginal tribes

The Bells of Myanmar

In Myanmar and other Buddhist countries, bells are found in such religious buildings as pagoda, stupas, monasteries and rest houses. The practice of making bells is believed to have originated since the Pyu era. According to archaeological evidences, Pyu founded the city of Beikthano around 1st century A.D. The city of Thayekhitara was founded in the 3rd century A.D. Hanlin Pyu race established towns for permanent residence and only after 3rd century A.D, and prospered from 4th to 9th century A.D. Hence, it can be seen that the culture of Pyu thrived from 1st to 9th century A.D. for more than 800 years. According to evidences, Pyu are believed to have been the adherents of *Thera Vāda* Buddhism. Among the artifacts excavated from the old city of Thayekhitara, there are images made of gold, silver, earthen wares with or without letters, boxes of sacred relics and Buddhist scriptures on golden plates⁴.

Rakhine people residing in the western part of Myanmar also practiced *Buddhism* since Lord Buddha's lifetime beginning from 5th century B.C. The evidence of such an early practicing of Buddhism can be found in the forms of stone inscriptions, inscriptions on bells and coins made early Rakhine people. Based on these evidence, it is possible to reveal the culture of early Rakhine people.

Bells have been used in Myanmar since the Pyu era (from 1st to 5th century A.D). This has been proved by the discovery of evidence of bells excavated by the Department of Archaeology in 1966-67 near Mawza Phayama Pagoda of Pyay Township. Inside the bell were the figurines of four Pyu dancers. Judging by the artistic way the bell and the figurine are cast, it is evident that Pyu people had mastered the craft of casting copper⁵.

At "Apaung Daw Pagoda" to the south of Thalawady village near the old city walls of Rakhine Wesali, an inscribed bell had been found. The time of casting is estimated to the A.D. 5th century. The bells of Pyu and early Rakhine are found to be small. Massive bells were cast donated in the Bagan era. From 10th to 13th century A.D the culture of Pyu had been adopted in Bagan. The practice of making and donating bells in Bagan was recorded in the stone inscription of "Min Amat Nyana Bisee." The grandeur of bells in Bagan was recorded in great chronicle by U Kala and Hman Nan chronicle. In the Volume 1, it is stated that King Hti Haling Shin; Kyan Sittha(1084-1113) donated bells after the completion of the construction of Shwe Si Gon and Ananda Pagoda. However the said donated bells can no longer be found. However, two rock pillars for supporting a bell found to the southeast of Thabbiñnyu Pagoda of Bagan serves as a testimony to the casting of massive bells in the Bagan era⁶.

Moreover, regarding the donation of bells by King Alaung Sithu (1113 -1167) it was recorded that "King Alaung Sithu built the Thabinnyu Pagoda and had two bells made of pure brass 5000 viss in weight larger in size than five bells donated by King Kyandittha. It is learnt that each of the bells was donated at Thabbinnyu pagoda and Shwe Gugyi Pagoda⁷.

There is no evidence of bell donating in the Pinya era. During the Innwa dynasty, the donations of bells emerged once more particularly bells donated by Mon king to pagodas built by Mons. The bell weighting 18000 viss donated by Mon king Dhamma Cet1 is famous. The Portuguese De Brito (known in Myanmar as Nga Zinka) took the bell from Shwedagon pagoda and lost it during transportation by waterway. Up to the present day, recovery of the bell is still impossible. According to the record, Dhamma Cetī bell is presumable the world's largest bell⁸.

During the reign of King Bayint Naung in the Taungoo dynasty, bells were used not only for religious affairs but also in people justice system. King Bayint Naung used it as a means of communication between the king and his people. The bell of Shwestigon Pagoda in Nyaung U gives plenty of information on the history of the mid-sixteenth Myanmar history. It was cast and donated by the order of King Bayint Naung in 173 Myanmar era. (A.D 1557)

Out of the bell inscriptions during the Nyaung Yan dynasty the most ancient one is the northern bell out of the two bells located to the east of the northern entrance of Pakhan Sithu Shin Pagoda in Yeaegyo Township. This bell was cast on Saturday, the full moon day of Nyaon. The donor was Shin Chit Son, the son-in-law of Nga Mya Min Pakhan Gyi.⁹

Other well-known bells of the Nyaung Yan Era are the bell located to the right of the eastern entrance (cast on the 10th waxing moon of Thbodwe). The donors were laypeople supervised by Rev. Ashin Thera Dhamma and Rev. Ashin Pyainnya Ghambhi of Minkin. The total brass weight of the bell is 300 viss. The other bell has the inscription “the donation of Gun master of Shwe Kyet Yet” and it was cast on the 11th waning moon of Tabaung. The remaining bells include Dipinkara bell of Pakhukku 1646(1008 M.E) the bell at the northeastern corner Thiho Shin Pagoda 1707(1071 M.E) the bell on the platform of Phowin Taung Pagoda 1728(1090 ME) and the bell at Shwe Myin Tin Pagoda of Myaing township 1739(1101 ME) which was also the last bell to be cast in the Nyaung Yan era.¹⁰

Many bells were cast and donated in the Konbaung era, including many of the kings in the dynasty. The artifacts of the Konbaung era can be found on the bells on the platform of Shwe Dagon pagoda including inscriptions on the small bells donated by King Mindon Singu Min bell Thayawady Min bell, Mingun bell as well as on the small bells attached to the old Htidaw of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda Bells donated by kings and their descendents can be found widespread in Shwebo, Saging Amarapura Tada U and Pakhan Gyi.

Bell Inscriptions

Bell inscriptions are those alphabets written on the body of bells ancient Myanmar people used to donate bells to religious buildings. The aim was to preserve their good deeds for the knowledge of generations to come. There are two types of bell inscriptions. One is the original inscription and the other is secondary inscription. An original inscription was written encircling the bells in rows at the time when the bell was first cast and located. A secondary inscription is one which was inscribed by those people who renovated the bells in a later period. On some bells, original inscriptions and secondary inscriptions are found side by side¹¹.

The Ornament of Myanmar Bells

Myanmar Bells are adorned with various Myanmar arts and crafts. Researchers believe that the craft of decoration with pictures came from central India. On the upper and lower loops of the bells are figurines of lion, king Indra, Kinnari, Kinnara, Dragon (Naga) Zawgyi (alchemist) tiger, monkey Pyinsa Rupa (a mythical figure with body parts of five creatures) up turned lotus down lotus Naya, Manu Thiha (a cross between man and lion) golden duck (Hamsa) a flying man Tonaya as well as other floral patterns. Bells can be found in various sizes in and around the religious precincts of Myanmar. The tolling or ringing of the bells gives one a sense of peace and calm. Bells can preserve the history of the bygone eras. Therefore bells are regarded to be artifacts which can raise the dignity of Myanmar as they are held in high esteem by the nations of the world.¹²

The Aspiration on (30) Bells found on the Platform of Shwedagon Pagoda

The Aspiration found on the Bells donated by the Sayadaw

The aspirations for being born in noble lineage endowed with wisdom, endowed with big and small limbs, conquest over the enemies bravely, and becoming on *Arachat* in his leaf existence was found on the bell donated by *Lonhtway Sayadaw*.

The aspiration for fulfillment with perfections for knowledge of a disciple in the Dispensation of *Arimettya Buddha* who would appear as the last Buddha in Badda world-cycle and at the same time gaining *Magga* and *Phala nanas* being able to make offerings continuously with unshakable faith, morality, generosity and wisdom although he might fare many turns in the round *samsarā* before he met with *Arimettteyya Buddha*, was found on the bell donate *Samytta Sayadaw*. The aspiration for endowment with mindfulness and effort and blameless mundane benefits and prosperity was found on the bell of *Venerale Nandamala*.

On the bell of *Parakkama Sayadaw* it was found that he did not make any special mundane and supramundane aspiration unlike other persons. It was found that he just made special aspiration for the long existence of his offering of the bell. He prayed that his bell might always last without being broken throughout the whole word-cycle just like the four wonders of the world, namely, the *Bodhisatta King Rabbit* being cool and unaffected although he was using closely surrounded by fire, being avoided by fire of *Bodhisatta King Quail* in the (16) units of land measure 9one unit being equivalent to 1.75 acres), the absence of made on the reed tress in the area of *Boddhisatta King Moneky* and the house of *gehatikāya* not being wetted by rain, etc, of (4) *Kappathitis* which lasted as long as the world existed lastly *Sayadaw* prayed that the might attain undisturbed Omniscience and that he might able to quench the thirst of the humans and *devas* for the cool water of the *Dhamma*. On the bell donated by *Hmankin Sayadaw* he first stated the whole lat of donations to the Shwedagon Pagoda and wished for the attainment of Omniscience by virtue of his donation. No aspiration was started on the bells of *Ohntet* and *Nanada Sayadaw*.

The Aspirations inscribed on the Bells donated by Lay Devotees

There were (15) bells on which aspirations were inscribed and (8) bells on which no aspirations was inscribed were found among the (23) bells donated by lay persons. It was also found that the aspirations on the above bells were mainly made for the attainment of *Nibbāna* only two bells were found on which the brief and clear aspirations for the attainment of *Nibbāna* was inscribed. Some prayed for the closure of the gate of miserable realm and faring in the human and *deva* worlds and lastly for the crossing over the *Nibbāna* they also prayed for being born in happy realms. On two bells they made aspiration for the attainment of *Nibbāna* only after being able to rightly distinguish between what is right and what is wrong and faring in the human and *deva* worlds with great pomp and power. They wished for the attainment of *Nibbāna* without being cast into miserable realms at all and after practicing mediation steadfastly and firmly according to the Teaching of the Buddha. In making aspiration for wisdom also they wished for becoming as long as they fared in *samsāra* just like *Mahosadha*.

In aspirations for both the mundane and supramundane benefits they prayed for the fulfillment of (10) perfections, freedom from sufferings as long as they fared in the world, not being veiled by the mist of foolishness, being blessed with noble sons and daughters, longevity, beauty, increase of uncountable crosses of wealth and properties. It was also found that they also prayed for freedom from suffering in *samsāra*, being treasured sons and daughters who could carry out interests of the race, religion and *Sāsanā*. Some Korean prayed on the bells they donated that all the inhabitants of the world might gain peace.

The Aspirations of King Singu and King Thayawaddy

On the bell of *Singu* it was found that he wished for the attainment of the mundane and supramundane benefits, he prayed that he might become human and *deva* kings in happy realms as long as he fared in the higher and lower existences; that he might be blessed with the melodious voice of a *Karavika* bird in comforting beloved human and *deva* being and with an authoritative voice of King *Kusa*, Prince *Punnaka* and *Orge Alavaka* in frightening others: that they might be fulfilled with the things they desired of and wished for and not to meet with of hear the benefits that they did not desire of and wished for even once in a while; that he wished to hear the prophesy during the lifetime of *Arimettayya* Buddha that he would become the Most Purified *Deva* (*Visuddhi Deva*) who is the noblest among the humans; *devas* and brahmas; that he might be endowed with the perfection of wisdom by attaining Omniscience; that he could fulfill *Buddhattha cariya* and *Lokattha cariya* whenever he wished for after having mastered in fulfilling perfections.

On the bell of King *Thayawaddy* he prayed that he might be endowed with innate wisdom (attained by Buddha) and able save and deliver the humans *devas* and brahmas from ignorance; that he might be really superior to others as long as he fared in many existences; that he might be accomplished in following the path of *sammāsambuddha* successfully. Thus he prayed for both the mundane and supramundane benefits briefly.

Sharing the Merit

The majority of the populace in Myanmar are Buddhist and all of them young and old follow the Buddhist teachings seriously. Generous-natured, they are always willing to do merits for the benefit of this life and the next existence. These meritorious deeds fall into ten categories.

1	<i>dāna</i>	charity
2	<i>sīla</i>	observance of precepts
3	<i>bhavanā</i>	developing mental insights contemplation
4	<i>apacayana</i>	the giving of respect to the worthy such as the Triple Gems, the teachers and the parents
5	<i>veyyāvacca</i>	rendering personal attention and service to the worthy
6	<i>pattidāna</i>	sharing other's merit-making
7	<i>pattamodana</i>	praising other's merit-making
8	<i>dhammassavana</i>	listening to sermons
9	<i>dhammadesanā</i>	preaching or exposition of the doctrines
10	<i>ditthijukamma</i>	rectitude of outlook

A Myanmar who gives charity (*dāna*) usually does the sharing of his/ her merit with other person (*pattidāna*). This sharing (*pattidāna*) does not take anything from the merit but increases it and the same amount of merit goes to those who rejoice in merit-making. If, for example, a *Peta* being happens to hear a person's sharing of merit and praises it, then this being can escape from its present miserable life and, as a consequence of the shared merit, it goes to a better existence. With view to these effects, the dedicators of pagoda bells include their sharing of merit in the inscriptions on those bells.

The Bells on the Shwedagon Pagoda Platform

Out of the 30 bells from the pagoda platform, 18 bells have inscriptions with the sharing of merit. On the bell donated by Lon-htwe Sayadaw, merit is shared with parents, teachers, relatives and beings from 31 planes of existence. Samyut Sayadaw shared his merit, on his bell, like this:

ကာမရူပ အရူပဘုံများတွင် ရှိနေသော အမိအဖ ဆွေမျိုး၊ ဝေနေယျသတ္တဝါ
အားလုံးအား ပတ္တိဒါန ပေးဝေသတည်း။

[I share my merit with parents, relatives and the worthy beings from the sensual realms and the realms of material and immaterial Brahma beings.]

On Sayaday U *Nandamata*'s bell is inscribed the following merit-sharing.

သဒ္ဓါဒါနတည်းဟူသော ခေါင်းလောင်းကို ပြုလုပ်သွန်းလောင်းလှူတန်းရသော ကောင်းမှု အဖို့ကို
အလှူဒါနစာရင်းကို သိကြားနတ်မင်းအား လူ့ပြည်နတ်ရွာမှ အလှူဒါနစာရင်းကို
သိကြားနတ်မင်းအား ဆက်သွင်းပို့ဆောင်ပေးကြသော စတုမဟာ ရာဇနတ်မင်း (၄)ပါး၊
ပဉ္စသင်္ခတသား၊ မာတလိနတ်သား၊ သာသနာစောင့်နတ်သား၊ မေခလာနတ်သမီး (၄)ခင်း၊
သမုဒ္ဒရာ (၅)ရာ၊ မြစ်ငါးသွယ်မြစ်ကြီးစီးဝင်သမျှ စောင့်ကြရသော ရေစောင့်နတ်၊ မြေစောင့်နတ်၊
တောင်စောင့်နတ်၊ မြို့စောင့်နတ်၊ အိမ်စောင့်နတ်၊ ကိုယ်စောင့်နတ်၊ အရပ်
ထက်ဝန်းကျင်ကိုစောင့်သော နတ်များအပေါင်းတို့အား၊ မကျွမ်းမကျန်ရ၊ ငါးဝသောမာန် ဖြင့်
မှန်အောင်ပေးစိစစ်တတ်သော ယမမင်းတို့အားလည်းကောင်း၊ အဆုံးမရှိအတိုင်း အရှည်မသိ
များလှစွာသော စင်္ကြာဝဠာအနန္တတို့၌ ကြင်လည်သွားလာကုန်သော ခပ်သိမ်း သောသုခသတ္တဝါ၊
ဒုက္ခိတသတ္တဝါအပေါင်းတို့အား မိမိနှင့်ထပ်တူ အမျှရကြပါစေ။

[I share my accumulated merit of casting this bell or 'donating the sound' with my ancestors and relatives, those who report the list of donors from the human and celestial realms-the Four Great Celestial Kings, *deva Pancasinkha*, *deva Matali*, the Guardian *deva* of the Buddha's Teachings, four *Mekhalā* female *deva*, the Guardian *deva* of the Earth, the Guardian *deva* of the forests, the Guardian *deva* of the towns, the Guardian *deva* of the households, the guardian angels and the guardian *devas* of the cardinals- the *Yama* who ask all relevant questions with five kinds of 'mama', and all the pleasurable and miserable beings who are wandering in the infinite number of universes.]

Parakkama Sayadaw, *Hmankin Sayadaw*, *Ontet Sayadaw* and *U Nanda Sayadaw* did not include the statements of sharing merit on their bells' inscriptions.

Among the bells donated by lay people, nine are with statements of sharing merit, the five just give the brief statements နတ်လူသာဓုခေါ်စေသော် [Let it be the cause *sādhu* (praise) by divine and human beings] while the other two states "Let all the beings have the same share of merit with me." The bell of Wun-htau-min U Ba Khin and wife Ma Ma Thin shares merit with parents and relatives, all the beings who have to wander in the 31 planes of existence and the guardian god of the *Shwedagon* Pagoda. A bell dedicated by a couple who preferred anonymity shares merits with all the beings, 'keeping the god of Earth as witness the merit'. Kings *Singu*'s bell, one of the two bells donated by their majesties two Konbaung kings, states:

‘မင်းကြီး၏ မယ်တော်မိဖုရား၊ ခမည်းတော်ဆင်ဖြူရှင်မင်းတရား၊ ဘိုးတော်အလောင်းမင်း တရား၊
ဘကြီးတော်ဘုရား၊ ဇနီးဘွားတော်အမိဘုရား၊ သားတော်၊ သမီးတော်မင်းညီ မင်းသား
ဆွေမျိုးတော်၊ မောင်းမမိသံ မူးမတ်ဗိုလ်ပါဆရာသူမြတ် ပရိတ်သတ်တို့အား အမျှရကြသည်
ဖြစ်စေသော် သာသနာတော်စောင့်နတ်၊ မြို့စောင့်နတ်၊ ရွာစောင့်နတ်၊ ထီးချက်စောင့်နတ်၊
ရွှေတိဂုံဘုန်းတော်ကိုစောင့်လျက်သာ တောင်စောင့်နတ်၊ အာကာသစိုးမိုးစောင့်နတ်၊ ရေစောင့်နတ်၊
သဗ္ဗေသတ္တဝါသတ္တဝါမကျန်၊ အနန္တစင်္ကြာဝဠာ ဘိလာထုတ်ခြင်း၊ မကြွင်းစေရ အမျှဝေ၏။
သာဓုကောင်းချီးပြု၍ အောင်ဆုယူစေကုန်သတည်း။’

[The king shares his merit Queen Mother, father King *Sinphyushin*, grandfather King *Naugtawgyi*, Chief Queen, grandmother Queen, sons, daughters, royal relatives, consorts, retinues and teachers. He also shares his merit with the

guardian god of the Buddha's Dispensation, the guardian gods of the towns, those of the villages, the guardian god of the royal parasol, that of the *Shwedagon* hillock, that of the sky, that of the waters, and all the beings in the infinite number of universes. Let his merit be the cause of s *sādhū* (praise) by them.]

King Thayawaddy's bell states:

‘ကျေးဇူးအထူးကြီးမားလှသောမည်တော်၊ မယ်တော်မိဖုရား၊ ဘေးတော်ရတနာသိင်္ခမြို့ တည်
အလောင်းမင်းတရားကြီး၊ ဘကြီးတော်ဇေယျပူရမြို့တည်မင်းတရား၊ ဘိုးတော် ရတနာပူရ
မြို့တည်မင်းတရား၊ ဘွားတော်မိဖုရားသားတော်သမီးတော်၊ မင်းညီမင်းသား ဆွေတော်မျိုးတော်၊
မင်းမိဖုရား မောင်းမမိသံ ခြွေရံပရိသတ်၊ မူးမတ်ဗိုလ်ပါ ဆရာသူမြတ် မြို့စောင့်နတ်၊
နန်းတော်စောင့်နတ်၊ တိုင်းခရိုင် နိုင်ငံတော်စောင့်နတ်၊ ရွှေတိဂုံ တဗ္ဗရုတ္တ တောင်စောင့်နတ်၊
ဆံတော်ရှင် စေတီတော်စောင့်နတ်၊ သာသနာစောင့်နတ်၊ အာကာသစိုး၊ ရုက္ခစိုး၊ ဘုမ္မစိုးနတ်၊
သုံးဘုံဘဝတွင် ကျင်လည်သမျှ သတ္တဝါတို့အား အမျှဝေသည့် ဝသုန္ဓရနတ်လည်း
သက်သေတည်သည့် နတ်လူသာဓုခေါ်စေသော၊ ကောင်းချီးပြုအောင် ဆုယူကြကုန်စေသော’

[His majesty the King shares his merit with father King Bagan, Queen Mother, great grandfather King *Alaungpaya* who was the founder of *Konbaung* Dynasty, uncle King *Bagyidaw* who was the founder of *Jeyyapura* (Sagaing), grandfather King *Bodawpaya* who was the founder of *Amerapura*, grandmother Queen, sons and daughters, royal family members, queens major and minor, nobilities and retainers, teachers, the guardian gods of the towns, the guardian god of the palace, that of the province, that of the kingdom, that of the *Shwedagon* Hillock, that of the Hair-Relic Chamber Pagoda, that of the Buddha's Dispensation, that of the Kingdom, that of the sky, the guardian gods of the trees and the god of Earth, and all the beings who have to wander through the 31 planes of existence. Let *Vesundare* the god of Earth be witness of this meritorious act, and the merit be the cause of *sadhu* by all beings. Let them enjoy the blessings of the merit.]

From the statement of sharing merit on these dedicated bells, it is found that some donors shared their merit with all the being in 31 planes of existence, regardless of their social status, while some donors only shared with human *deva* and *brahma* beings who are from the higher states but not with the beings of the lower stated.

The bell dedicators in the days of Myanmar Kings from King *Sinphyushin* through King *Sagaing* to King *Mindon*-shared their merit, which were recorded in detail and beautifully in the bell inscriptions.

Conclusion

As a religious symbol, bells are utilized in every religion. Buddhists hit the bell for one of the following three purposes: To assemble all monks inhabited in a monastery, to share one's accumulated merit with all sentient beings, and to make a donation of sound. Interestingly, bell inscription are found to be invaluable records like *Kyauksar*, (stone inscription), *paysar* (palm leaf manuscript), *parabaiksar*, (inscription on writing tablet made of paper), *hminsar*, (ink inscription on stucco), *singwinsar*, (terracotta plaque inscription), and *outkhwesar*, (clay tablet inscription).

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Donors of Thirty Bells

Categories of donors	Quantity
Two Konboug Kings (King Singu and King Thayawaddy)	2
Buddhist monks in Konbaung dynasty	7
Sons and daughters of those who are honoured by the king in Konbaung dynasty as knight	1
Korean Company	1
Commoner	17
unknown donor	2
Total	30

The bells donated by King Singu and King Thayawady in Konboug Dynasty

No.	Bell Name	Date of cating & dedication		Historic Period	Reigns of Kings/ Governor	Weight (Viss)	Height	Circumference	Donor	Locative
		Myanmar Year	Christian Year							
1	Mahaghada Singunin bell	1140	1779	Early Konbaung	Singumin	155555 Vises	13' 3"	25' 5"	Singumin	North West Corner
2	Mahatisadda Ghanda or Sayawadimin bell	1204	1843	Karly Konbaung	Thaya Wadymin	25940 Visses	13' 11"	25' 5"	Thaya Wadymin	North East Corner

The bells donated by Buddhist monks in Konbaung Dynasty

No.	Bell Name	Date of cating & dedication		Historic Period	Reigns of Kings/ governor	Weight Viss	Height	Circumference	Donor	Locative
		Myanmar Year	Christian year							
1	Abhima Haghand	1233	1871	Late Konbaung	MinDon Min	450 Vises	9' 10"	8' 3"	U Nandamala	North East Corner
2	Parakka Masayadaw	1244	1882	Late Konbaung	MinDon Min	274 Visses 20ks	2' 10"	7' 8"	Parakka Masayadaw	North East Corner
3	Gumatissa or Hmankin Sayadaw	1245	1884	Late Konbaung	MinDon Min	274 Visses 20ks	2' 8"	6' 8"	Hmankin Sayadaw	Southern
4	Lum Htwe Sayada	1250	1888	British Colony	Period	115 Visses	1' 10"	5' 2"	Lum Htwe Sayadaw	South East Corner
5	Mahaghantha	1257	1895	British Colony	Period	263 Visses 20ks	2' 4.8"	7' 5"	San Yoke Sayadaw	North East Corner
6	Kwun Sayadaw	1277	1915	British Colony	Period	Not Mention	3'	9'	Kwun Sayadaw	South West Corner
7	Htwe Sayadaew	1281	1919	British Colony	Colony Period	Not Mention			Htwe Sayadaw	South West Corner

The Bell donated by children of those who parents are honoured by the King in Konbaung Dynasty and Knight

No.	Bell Name	Date of cating And dedication		Historic Period	Reigns of Kings/ governor	Weight Viss	Height	Curcum-ference	Donor	Locative
		Myanmar Year	Christian year							
1	Wun Htauk Min U Ba Khin	1291	1929	British Colony	Period	Not Mention	2' 2.2"	6	Wun Htauk Min U Ba Khin + Daw Ma Ma Thin	Southern

The bell donated by Korea Company

Sr. No.	Bell No.	Date of cating And dedication		Historic Period	Reigns of Kings/ governor	Weight Viss	Height	Curcum-ference	Donor	Locative
		Myanmar Year	Christian year							
1	Korean Company		2006	Independence	Period	5Km	2' 5"	Upper 4' Lower 5' 6.5"	Sung Jongsu Seoul Co. Ltd	South East Corner

The Bells donated by those who did not mention their name

Sr. No.	Bell No.	Date of cating And dedication		Historic Period	Reigns of Kings/ governor	Weight Viss	Height	Curcum-ference	Donor	Locative
		Myanmar Year	Christian year							
1	Mahaturi Yagana raja	1232	1870	Early Konbaung	MinDon Min	190	2' 1"	6' 5"	Not Mentioned	Eastern
2	Nameless	1240	1878	Late Konbaung	MinDon Min		4'	7' 4"	Not Mentioned	South West Corner

The Bells donated by Ordinary People

Sr. No.	Bell No.	Date of cating And dedication		Historic Period	Reigns of Kings/ governor	Weight Viss	Height	Curcum-ferece	Donor	Locative
		Myanmar Year	Christian year							
1	U Toke Gyi	1240	1878	Late Konbaung	Min Don Min	100 Visses	1' 11"	5' 6"	U Toke Gyi	South East Corner
2	U Tun Oo	1240	1878	Late Konbaung	Min Don Min	235 Visses 50Ks	2' 3"	6' 3"	U Tun Oo	North East Corner
3	U Kyar Zan	1243	1880	Late Konbaung	Min Don Min	603 Visses	1' 6.8"	4' 10"	U Kyar Zan	South East Corner
4	U Tha Oo	1245	1883	Late Konbaung	Min Don Min					North East Corner
5	U Kar	1245	1883	Late Konbaung	Min Don Min	57 Visses 25Ks	1' 1.5"	3'	U Kar	South East Corner
6	U Pho+Daw Paing	1247	1885	Late Konbaung	Min Don Min	290 Visses	2' 6"	6' 9"	U Pho+Daw Paing	North East Corner
7	U Young	1248	1886	British Colony	Period	85 Visses	1' 7.5"	4' 10.5"	U Young Daw Lunn	Southern
8	U Shwe Tha	1249	1887	British Colony	Period	100 Visses	1' 6.5"	4' 9"	U Shwe Tha	North West Corner
9	Daw Nik	1251	1889	British Colony	Period	100 Visses	2'	5' 8"	Daw Nik with his daughter Daw Kyauk	North West Corner
10	Daw Me Saing	1252	1890	British Colony	Period	702 Visses 50Ks	1' 6.5"	4' 7"	Daw Me Saing	North East Corner
11	U Pho Lwe	1253	1891	British Colony	Period	236 Visses	1' 8.8"	7'	U Pho Lwe	North East Corner
12	U Tu + Daw Lay Gyi	1255	1893	British Colony	Period	125 Visses	1' 9"	5' 7"	U Tu + Daw Lay Gyi	Eastern
13	U Myat Tha Oo	1255	1893	British Colony	Period	Not Mention	2' 4.8"	5' 6.5"	U Myat Tha Oo	Eastern
14	Bo Min Si	1280	1918	British Colony	Period	Not Mention	1' 7.5"	4' 9.5"	Bo Min Si	South West Corner
15	Daw That Gyi	1288	1926	British Colony	Period	Not Mention			Daw That Gyi	North West Corner
16	U Bo Sein and Daw Toke	1299	1937	British Colony	Period	Not Mention	1' 7"	3'	U Bo Sein and Daw Toke	North West Corner
17	U Aung Maw	1362	2001	British Colony	Period	Not Mention	2'	5' 7.5"	U Aung Maw and Daw Htay Htay	North East Corner

