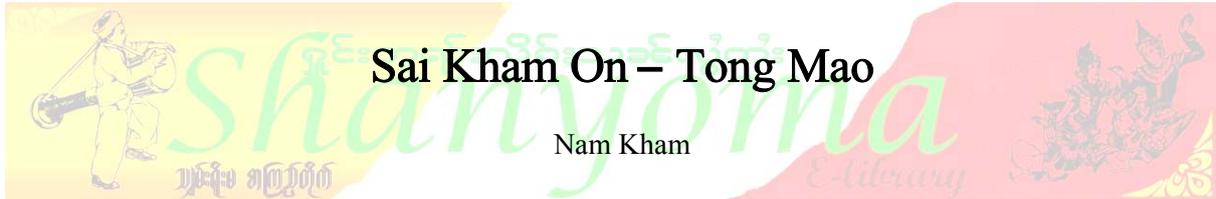


"Bamboo" In Daily Life Of "Simple Shan"



Extracted from book of papers presented at The Seminar on "The Cultural Heritage Of Tai(Shan) Ethnic Groups" (Tai New Year, Keng Tung 2012), p.233-237.

Book was printed by "Aye" Press, Yangon, August, 2013.

- * In daily life of "Simple Shan"...
 - Lies in a bamboo cradle as a newly-born baby...
 - Lies under "Kong Keng" [funeral decoration (parad sad)] as a dead body at terminal way.
 - From opening to closing eyes,
 - starting to finishing point,
 - cradle to grave,
 - inter relates with bamboo...
- * Often sayings: "The earlier to bed, the nearer to place (of latrine)"
 - "kitchen" to "latrine", "or going" to "taking rest",
 - Utilizes bamboo everywhere.

Almost, where's "Shan" villages, there're bamboo bushes...

"Bamboo" & "Shan", "Shan" & "Bamboo"

How long? and when had born together not known yet?

The Origin of Bamboo

-It's the symbol of the orients, found in China, over 5000 years ago.

- There are 1450 species.
- Takes (5)years to be mature, but timber likes "Oak" tree, takes (120)years.

Utilize Everywhere

- Roots, Shoots, Stem, branch, Leaves, Dry cover, etc... not only human but animals depend on it.
- Using bamboo only can build a single "Shan home" completely.
- Furniture, Kitchen, Latrine, Fuel
- Agriculture, Irrigation, Mining
- Bridge, Ferry, Transportation
- Tools of (Carpenter, Black/Silver/Gold smiths, Fishing Hunting)
- Scale, Measuring tools, Baskets
- Snack, Medicine (Traditional)
- Festival Celebration, Ceremony

- Musical instrument, Dancing, Theatre
- Marshal arts, Security up to Religious area

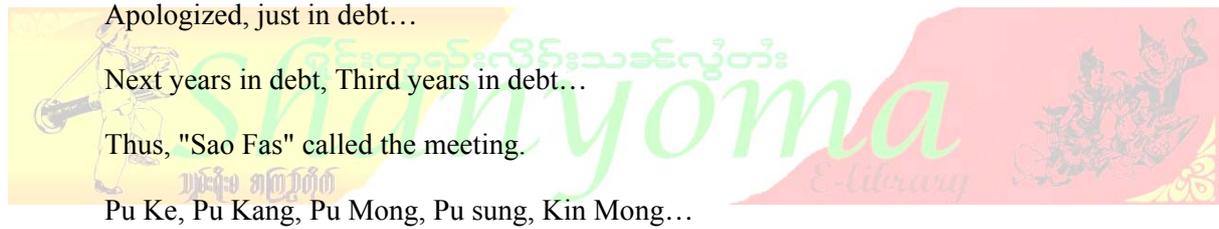
"Sao Fas" Regime (Shan Chiefs)

"The Bamboo matted wall, with highly thatch roofs". (home) no one must not build & stay! if not obey,

- "Upper the sword, under the neck". (death sentence)
- "Cut the jack-fruit round the thorn" even wrongly ordered, just says yes.
- Rides on the muddy buffallo! but can't say no to "Sao Fas".

Some Benefits

- Once in Tong Mao (Shweli valley)...
- Agriculture danged by draught, Farmers were in trouble.
- Farm tax & Human tax to be paid to "Sao Fas" staffs.
- No one could pay, No nothing.



all village chiefs attended.

The division of livelihood ordered out.

- Roof thatching – Man Nong(vil:),
- Wall matting – Kongala (vil:),
- Bamboo glue rice, Basket – Vaing Sad (vil:),
- Ring, Rounded shaped rice snack – Nam Tee (vil:),
- Clay pot – Man Hong (vil:), Bamboo & Rattan chair – Man Nar (vil:),
- Hat (Bamboo cover) – Nong Ma (vil:),
- Weighing scale – Ho Sai (vil:)
- Gold Smith, Black Smith – Se Hai, Man Kham (vil:),
- Soya bean – Kun Long (vil) etc. for livelihoods.

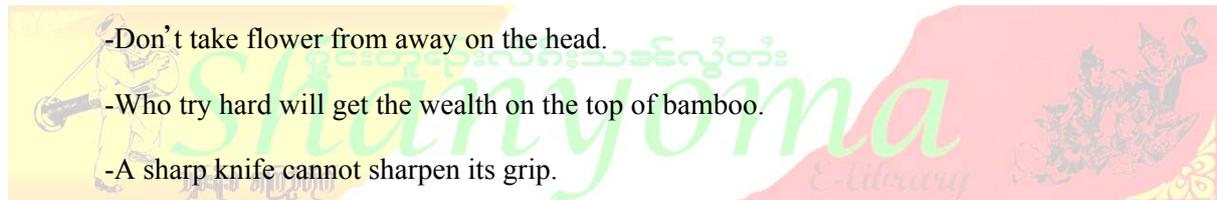
It's still sustainable up to nowadays.

Bachelors often says-

- A maid of soya bean - Kun Lon(vil.)
- A maid of Shan bag - Ho Pong(vil.)
- A maid of an elephant - Nam Tee(vil.) (carrying big baskets)
- A long legs maid - Ngwan In(vil.) (walking to & fro)
- A moring & Turning maid - Man Nar(vil.) (making chairs)
- A thatch maid - Man Nong(vil.) etc.

Sayings, Proverbs

- Lady as dam, Gent as river.
- A bamboo cannot be forest, a person cannot become village.
- A bamboo cannot stir the water muddy.
- After staying its shade, don't break its leaves.
- Don't take the bamboo from makes ropes.



- Don't take flower from away on the head.
- Who try hard will get the wealth on the top of bamboo.
- A sharp knife cannot sharpen its grip.
- A boat pull a "pay", a "pay" pull a boat. (pay=a bamboo made boat, raft)
- A knife, sharp within its basket, a gong, ringing within its box.
- After out of bamboo, a curled dog tail just curl again. (as ever)
- Not omit its eye in splitting bamboo.

Literature

- "Oo Pame" and "Sam Law", the 2 stars meets 3 years in once, far from 3 joints of a yoke. (In classic tragedy of Sao Kang Se)
- "Pe Leng Awk Ywat", (A pole blooming bud)
- A traditional religious book (by Sao Sang Long Kyoung Nauk, Man Ai, Tong Mao), etc. was well known in "Shan" Communities.

Quiz

- The bamboo has 9 joints and 9 Meng Pu Par (a kind of insect) can go in. (answer-a bamboo ladder)
- Dines in childhood, lies in old age. (answer-bamboo shoots and bamboo rug)

Games (bachelors and maids)

- Whispering bamboo (tel.) (play in new year festival)
- Playing bamboo "Mark Neem" (Play in new year festival)
- Bamboo twisting (play in new year festival)
- Climbing Oily Pole (play in new year festival)
- Pillow Striking On Bamboo Bar (play in new year festival)
- Tug-of-war (play in new year festival)

Childhood Games

- "Taw Ke" (beating a piece of stick)
- Skipping ropes
- Worm, Stick, Tiger, Cock (worm pecks stick bamboo), stick beats tiger, tiger bites cock eats worm)

Children's rhyme

- 
- Cradling, Cradling
 - Ties with rope
 - Hangs on bamboo
 - Trains a horse
 - Ties a horse with rope
 - Ties a swine with "Gar" (rectangular bamboo)
 - On elephant carries goods
 - Climbing mountain happily
 - Shoots of "mai sang" bamboo
 - A jack-fruit falls
 - A mango rips
 - A fish feels dry
 - A fish cries
 - A bird's egg
 - Swinging, swinging
 - ding! dong! ding dong!

In Beliefs and Religion

- Ancient temples and monastries were bamboo, mostly bamboo statue, cedi's ladders.
- Religious flags, alms rack, traditional rocket tower.
- Monks funeral (pulling cart, pulling cradles)

"Meng Zalang"

- A bamboo matted centipede, hangs on the pole in Novice celebration, alms, Donation ceremony.
- Believes it can protect from "Kun Song" (Saturn)'s fights.
- Bamboo elephant, Horse, Toe, Kinnara(bird) are auspicious symbols in the great festival.
- Protects strom, fire, flood, erosion, balances eco-system.
- Shoots are food for human and animals, sources of potassium and low calorie.
- Cheap, easily gets and alternatively used.

The Deepest Hatred

- Scolded, threatened at bamboo gates, (check points)
- Beaten by war-ogre's bamboo sticks
- Set to prison of bamboo, underground jail unfairly
- Flight with package in migrating life
- Bloody flowing along the way as a porter of war-lord, etc.

Deeply hatred & heartily hurt in the past.

Ending

- "Bamboo and Shan" like "Head" and "Tail" of a coin.
- Utilizing bamboo, the elders had done.
- Setting pole, rounding face, digging farm, founding dam.
- Building house, forming village... and other heritages.
- "Helps who nearly slips, helps who nearly fall".
- "Dine together is delicious, carry together is light, fight together will win".
- Don't forget the sayings, "Unity is strength"

Thank you.