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The Concepts of Freedom and Existence in Albert Camus's "*the Rebel*"

Kyaw Zaw Tun¹

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to show why the real understanding of the concepts of freedom is crucially important to comprehend the concept of existence in social relationship. To clarify the concept of freedom, understand of the other two concepts such as justice and equality is also important. By understanding the concepts of freedom, justice and equality, every individual can fulfill their social responsibilities and cooperate with others to bring about necessary reforms for the establishment of a better society. To achieve the aim of this paper, the descriptive method is used to clarify the concepts of freedom, justice and equality and the evaluative method is used in the conclusion. These concepts in the work of Camus's "*The Rebel*" will be critically examined by the principle of reciprocity. This paper can contribute to reciprocal understanding of the concept of freedom and its association of the concept of existence which is crucially important for each individual in order to maintain the better society.

Key words: freedom, justice, equality, existence

Introduction

Existentialism is one of the prominent philosophical styles in the twentieth century. Existentialist thinking puts more emphasis on individual existence rather than the study of nature and other metaphysical problems. They are more interested in the actual feelings and emotions of individuals which are crucially important in all human beings. Actually, the feelings and emotions of pleasure and suffering are together made up in every individual existence. On the other hand, the power of reasoning contributed to develop both the intellect and standard of human beings. But it is not adequate to construct the authentic existence of human beings. According to most existentialists, human beings themselves determine their existence and meaning of life.

Existentialists hold that the individual existence possesses his or her own feelings and emotions such as anxiety, despair, distress, alienation, isolation and abandonment. These feelings and emotions will occur the spirits of the uncertainty, undecided, doubt and fear of death in the mind of human being. These feelings and emotions motivate a human being to understand his existence and meaning of life. Consequently, human beings became disappointed and weary upon their 'existence'. For the existentialists, the consciousness of freedom, decision making, and responsibility are the essential elements to become an authentic existence of human beings.

The development of science and technology can change the nature and status of human beings. Art, literature, culture, astrology, economics and politics are developed through the ability of human beings. For the existentialists, the existences of human beings possess not only reasons and intellect but also feelings and emotions. After the Second World War, social, ethical, religious, economic situation and expectations of life are gradually declined among the people. The War destroyed the people's life and properties and they faced the hopeless and helpless conditions. Their future is also gradually faded. So the power of reasoning became the problem of their life. In order to solve these problems, human beings will try to understand the meaning of 'the individual existence'.

The feelings of anxiety, distress, despair, uncertainty and indecision created sufferings for all human beings. These sufferings encouraged human beings to know the meaning of life

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and the nature of their existences. Consequently, human beings felt that life is absurd and the world is also absurd.

Today, the problem of justice, freedom and equality became an important issues around the world because some human being are gradually disappointed their present life. Although science and technology are rapidly advanced, the moral values are gradually declined and became disappointed for the people. These situations can change the norms of a society. Besides that, religious beliefs are not important for human beings and social values are complex among the people. So, the dignity and responsibility are very important moral characters to promote the concepts of freedom, justice and equality in human beings.

Some of the existentialists against the existence of God as a creator, for them, a human being must be a creator for his existence. So, human beings want to build their authentic existence by freedom of choice, decision making and responsibility. In this way, a human being is the most responsible person for his future life. Every person has to associate with the others in society but, sometime they want to live an isolated life. So among these unstable conditions, a human being always doubts to just in their living, believing, struggling and doing in life.

Existentialists want to revolt against the ordinary thinking and try to change the dogmatic and logical thinking. Actually their thinking is emphasizing the individual existence as well as the existence of a society. In fact, society is composed of different individual existence. So, their feelings, thinkings, characters and faith are different from one another in a society.

Existentialists can be divided into two kinds, namely theistic and atheistic existentialists. Atheistic existentialists denied the existence of god as a creator in their ideas. In addition, the individual existence will encounter the feelings of boredom, despair, distress, guilt and isolation before death. If a human being did not try to understand an authentic existence, then he or she will lose his justice, freedom and equality.

The aim of this paper is to know the concepts of freedom, justice and equality which will understand the authentic existence of human beings. An individual existence is essentially needed to construct the society and he is able to accept the responsible for the good and evil of a society. The individual existence is always encountered the past, present and future life. All human beings cannot escape from these three periods whether younger or old. Human beings cannot predict what will happen in their future life.

So, a human being is always threatened by the uncertainties and indecisions of life. The feelings of anxiety are never disappeared from the individual existence. Consequently human beings are always anxious between the reprisal and pardon, despair and expectation, distress and humors, savages and sympathy. Every person wants to live with the fame and win but he used to blame upon his existence when he encountered with the crisis of life. Every person is a stranger in this world because they came into the world without intention and knowing anything. The duration of human existence is whether short or long, his existence will be ended by suffering and death.

The inventions of human beings are endless advanced in the world. These are useful in the life of human beings, but sometimes they harmful to them. The philosophical thinking of existentialism is more practical rather than imagination. They try to analyze the actual existence of human beings by the concepts of freedom, decision making and responsibility.

The contribution of this paper is not only to understand the concepts of freedom, justice and equality but also to construct the social and ethical existence of human beings. By reciprocal understanding between the individual existence and the existence of a society, it can

promote the freedom, justice and equality among human beings. In this way, the concepts of freedom, responsibility and decision making can provide to build the good society which will prevent the problems of human beings.

The Concept of Existence in Society

The term “existence” comes from the Latin word “ex-istence” which means stand out or emerges. To “exist” is to have a place and time in the real world. Jean-Paul Sartre, the great existentialist, presented his famous motto “existence precedes essence”.¹ So, existentialists accepted the individual existence is one of the realities of every-things. Human beings are always suffered the pleasant feelings as well as the unpleasant feelings such as anxiety, distress, despair, dread, alienation and guilt. But on the other hand, freedom of choice, decision making and responsibility are upgraded the dignity of human beings. For existentialist, the individual existence is really existed in a living being that is not an abstract or imagination.

In the usage of Jaspers, he defined existence in the *Existentialism* by John Macquarie as follows;

“...expression Dasein or existence simply to refer to the fact that we find ourselves in the world.”²

According to Jaspers, human beings are self-reflecting animals and they have the ability to understand his existence in the world. A human being is existed as a being in the real world but at the same time he encounters the changing process of life. The natures of human beings are radically the same as a “being” but their essence are different by various ways. For existentialists, if there is no existence, then there is no essence. If human beings cannot be existed in this world, then there is no need to build their essence. Camus holds that life is absurd or meaningless. The society is composed of individual existence and it has complex with their various problems.

According to existentialists, there are two kinds of existence in society. They are authentic existence and inauthentic existence. But authentic existence can be understood by individual human being. The norms of social, ethical, cultural, traditional and customs are really created by society. The individual existence can disappear in one day but the other existence will come out in this world. The essence of a human being comes from his existence but it will change according to the nature of existence in society.

The Danish existentialists, Kierkegaard illustrated the existence in *Existentialism* by as follows;

“...existence does mean primarily the unique concrete being of the individual human person. The existent then contingent, the particular that which refuses to fit into some system constructed by rational thought.”³

According to Kierkegaard, existence is mainly concerned with the exceptional strong being which is concern with individual existence. His existence cannot be constructed by the systems of rational thought. For them, the decisions of individual existence have freedom of choice but he can be able to accept for his decision.

For existentialists decision making and responsibility are directly connected with the society. The effects of decision making are with the individual as well as the society.

The existences of human beings are important to build a society and conversely, the society will also understand the feelings and emotions of individual existence. So, the essence of doctor, engineer, architecture, teacher and business man are regarded as the names which are concerned with the individual existence. A human being must accept his own existence

which is poor or wealth, educated or uneducated, innocent or guilty, egoistic or altruistic, good or evil and sympathetic or savage. In this ways, a society will be peacefully developed by reciprocal understanding between the individual existence and the existence of a society.

The Concept of Existence in Society

The Rebel was written by Albert Camus in 1952. It is mainly concerned with the philosophy of politics.

He presented the crisis between the existences of the slave (follower) and master (leader) in society. These two classes are always against one another since ancient times. From this crisis, the revolution theories are evolved and the great incidents of rebellion and revolution spread all over the world. This problem is occurred among the rational human beings. Rebellion is based upon personal feelings and emotions but revolution means the reformation of social and ethical conditions for the people.

A rebel insisted to get the three rights need in human beings such as freedom, justice and equality. A rebel always tries to confront an order which declines upon him. So, a rebel as a slave lost his patient and refused to obey the humiliating orders of his master. At that time, the slave decided to revolt his master and he became a rebel. He is also an enemy of his master. It consist the passion to demand an absolute right that is "freedom". This passion is the driving force to his master or leader.

The famous existentialists Friedrich Nietzsche explained the two extremes result of a rebel in *The Fundamental of Philosophy*, by H.Gene Blocker as follow,

"...unsuccessful rebel are called 'murderers' and terrorists, while successful ones are hailed as liberators."⁶

A rebel stands between the success or failure conditions of his rebellion. This distinction can change the existence of a rebel. The successful rebels will become heroes or liberators but the unsuccessful one is accused as a murder and terrorist. A rebel must encounter the unexpected condition that is death or alive.

Camus expressed the inequality of human beings in his novel, "*The Rebel*",

"The spirit of rebellion can exist only in a society where a theoretical equality conceals great factual inequalities."⁷

Freedom, equality and justice can motivate to know the rights of human beings. Camus portrayed the positive values of rebellion in "The Rebel." It concerned with personal values and integrity of a human being. He pointed out every person must get equal freedom because individual existence must have equal chance to protect his or her own integrity and value. Actually, rebellion is mainly concerned with the master (leader) and slave (follower) to get the rights as a human being in a society.

Camus states the importance of dignity in his *The Rebel*, as follows;

"Better to die on one's feet than to live in one's knees."⁸

It is one of an existence who tries to maintain the dignity of human beings. If a rebel made surrender before the enemy on knees, he will become a slave to his master. A rebel demands equal position from his master and he face his master to get freedom. In fact, it is the view of Camus that the individual existence will sacrifice him for the good of masses. So, a rebel is ready to give up his existence for other people.

The term "justice" is also very important in every society. "*The Rebel*" considered that the unjust activities are not accepted and denied. For a rebel, resentment is the bitterness and

dissatisfied upon injustice matters. The Rebel expresses the existence of a slave or oppressed class who deprived of their rights in the community. So, rebellion is based upon human unity for rights and justice. A person who has enslaved freedom is the most precious thing in his or her life. Life without freedom has no value in his or her life. Life without freedom has no meaning; death is therefore preferable to a life of slavery (follower).

Epicurus explained the death and human existence in Camus's novel *The Rebel* as follows:

“Epicurus banishes death from human existence. Death has no meaning for us, for what is indefinable is incapable of feeling has no meaning for us.”⁹

According to Epicurus, death will be exiled from human existence. Feelings have no capacity to explain the cause of death and the incapable feelings have no meaning for human beings. So, death cannot be defined by feelings and emotions of human beings. Epicurus metaphor the nature of existence is as a stone. It has no pain. It has no feelings and it has not sensibility. In order to escape from destiny, human beings must try to destroy sensibility and hope. In metaphysical rebellion, right, value, death and sensibility are important in rebellion. In addition, the historical rebellion begins with the motivation word “freedom”. Besides that revolution can make transition from one government to another. Revolution has seasonable results, of discovering the absolute truth of rebellion. Revolution is attempted to get equal chance for every existence of a society. It demands the new forms of government to construct the new existence of a society. Rebellion is limited but it is shaped new injection ideas of individual existence.

All of the rebellions demanded the equality as human beings. For example, Spartacus demanded that he wants to be a master in his turn. It is an example of a rebel who suffered unlimited oppression under his master. At that time, justice is very important to get equal chance between master (leader) and slave (follower).

Hegel tries to explain the existence of a human being which can be found in Camus's novel *The Rebel*;

“It was at this point that the terrorists were born who decided that it was necessary to kill and die in order to exist, because mankind and history could achieve their creation only by sacrifice and murder.”¹⁰

The terrorists were the enemy of society because they destroyed the human world for their purposes. They decided for their existence by killing or dying in the revolution. So, the existences of terrorists were needed to decide to kill or to die. They tried to create mankind and history by sacrifice and murder.

Camus expressed the connection between a rebel and his existence in “*The Rebel*”;

“I rebel, therefore, we exist; said the slave. Metaphysical rebellion then added. ‘We are done, by which we still live today. But if we are alone beneath the empty heavens; if we must die, forever, how we can really exist?’”¹¹

For Camus, a slave said that he was existed because he was a rebel. Camus doubted upon God and heaven but he wants to achieve truth and justice. He creates an altruistic rebel because he wishes to sacrifice for the effects of the people.

Freedom, justice and equality are very important concepts because these are needed to get every person in a society. These concepts are crucial important not only in individual

existence but also in the existence of a society. A rebel is also needed the integrity and dignity for his own existence. A rebel always tries to free from a slave condition. He wants to get the freedom, justice and equality which are essentially to promote the social and ethical norms in society.

The political thinking of Camus is founded the revolution for justice, equality and freedom. But, in an individual existence, these concepts are contributed to become an authentic existence.

The revolution of human beings can change the social, ethical, economic, culture and traditional values and norms. Although everything is changing in this world, the existence of a human being remained as a reality.

Conclusion

Existentialism contributed human beings to understand the concept of existence is very important in every society and every age. The concepts of freedom and responsibility are the main themes to become an authentic existence of human being. Every person wants to be free in their life. Actually, a human being knows the value of freedom when they were not free in life. So, every person will prefer the value freedom to live as a human being. In order to promote the existence of human beings, it will need the basic concepts such as freedom, justice and equality in society. These basic concepts are connected not only to create an authentic existence of human beings but also to develop the society. In every society, justice is meaningful when freedom is existed in society and equality will also be valued when justice is firmly existed in society.

All human beings can use intellect and they are rational animals. So, human beings must understand concept of justice in their life. So, justice is placed one of the virtues in human society. Human beings can be able to think and feel. So, they always want to free and justice to get equality among the people.

A rebel tries to get the real existence of a human being by revolution. The passion of a slave (follower) is to free from the oppression and to get freedom.

All human beings possess their own existences. An intellect person knows his rights to free from his masters. Injustice, inequality and wanted to free are the main things to become revolution. In this situation, a slave felt he is differentiated in the social, ethical, economic and education. They felt that they lost their dignity, value, integrity and happiness.

In the human history, the industry revolution became in eighteenth century and it encouraged the slave system all over the world. They searched colonies to extend their interests. They created the new slave system. As a result, the revolutionary (spirit) is infected in the mind of human beings and they became the rebels.

Actually, human beings have an instinct how to liberate from their inequality condition. Every revolution can occur the unstable conditions among the peoples. Rebellion in itself is moderation, and it demands, defends and re-creates throughout the history. They lived under the controlled of their master and they lost their own values. So, freedom, justice and equality are essential concepts to build the authentic existence of human beings and to promote the concept of existence in society.

The aim of this paper is to know the important concepts such as freedom, justice and equality. All revolutions are founded upon inhumanity, savages, break the other rights, oppression and devoid of natural rights.

The contribution of this research paper is to develop the concept of existence in society. Moral, social, customs, traditions and every area of human affairs must be equally shared by every person.

Human being need to understand the value of the concepts of freedom, justice and equality because they are threatened by the feelings of anxiety, anguish, alienation, absurdity and despair. On the other hand, the feelings of freedom, justice and equality can promote the satisfactions of human desires and needs.

Today, the use of the terms “master” and “slave” are disappeared from every society and every culture. Instead of these terms, people used the leader and the followers to build a good, advanced, peace and tranquility and develop in society. So, the values of freedom, justice and equality are needed to share between the leaders and followers of a society. These concepts are virtuous concepts which are related with every person in a society. These concepts encouraged human beings to practice humanity, fair, friendly and pleasurable to reciprocal understanding among the people. Actually, knowledge is the most basic concept of these virtues. When knowledge is good or bad, right or wrong and cause or effect can be critically examined by the virtuous concept of knowledge.

Notes

- ¹ John Macquarrie (1973). *Existentialism*, New York: Pelican Books, P.40.
- ² Ibid., P. 47.
- ³ Ibid., P. 245.
- ⁴ Ernst Breiach, (1962). *Introduction to Modern Existentialism*, New York: Grove Press, Inc, P. 100.
- ⁵ Will Durand, (1966). *The Story of Philosophy*, New York: Washington Square Press, Inc, P. 328.
- ⁶ H.Gene Blocker, (1968). *Fundamental of Philosophy*, New York: Macmillan Company.
- ⁷ Albert Camus, (1956). *The Rebel*, New York: Random House, INC, P. 20.
- ⁸ Ibid., P. 15.
- ⁹ Ibid., P. 29.
- ¹⁰ Ibid., P. 144.
- ¹¹ Ibid., P. 250.

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Traditional Festival in Myanmar

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Abstract

This problem of this paper is why the traditional festival is celebrated in Myanmar. The solution is that traditional festival is an occasion of enjoyment and celebration. It brings gaiety and mirth thereby strengthening our bond of relationship and friendship. These festivals also promote social interaction and harmony. The descriptive method and evaluative method will be used. The principle of this research is the principle of unity. The findings of this research show us that festivals have contributed in the development of cultural tourism. Festivals attract culture tourists to local community events to promote enriching exchanges between tourists and resident. These celebrations bring peace and joy to the humanity, and break the monotony of life.

Key words: unity, culture, traditional festival

Introduction

Myanmar traditional festivals are based on the traditional Burmese calendar and dates are largely determined by the moon's phase. Myanmar culture is most evident in villages where local festivals are held throughout the year, the most important being the pagoda festival. Many festivals have religious origins and entwine cultural and religious significance in traditional activities.

Myanmar is a land of festivals: in every month there is a festival. Most of the Myanmar festivals are based on culture and religion, reflecting the country's deep spirituality as well as important social events. Many festivals are related to pagoda festivals. During the pagoda festivals, there are local entertainment groups performing for the visitors, food stalls, and other shops selling various products.

Most festivals are held during the fair weather; i.e. after the rains when the harvest has been done by the villages and they are free from their daily fieldwork. There are also other festivals celebrated by many ethnic groups in our country connected with either New Year or harvest according to their own calendars. The festivals symbolize the vibrant life and rich culture of Myanmar. Myanmar is a land of colorful festivals. There is at least one festival for every month of the year. Festivals are joyous events for local people which reflect Myanmar's religious and cultural roots since ancient times. Majority of festivals are celebrated nation-wide while some are regional events. One of the largest festivals that present Burmese customs at their very best is Thingyan.

This is the New Year that's celebrated in April and is characterized by the entire country taking part in a huge water fight. Anyone who's travelled to Thailand and experienced Songkran will know what this event is all about. The Burmese New Year follows the lunar calendar and the dates are slightly different each year. Celebrations usually begin after a day of observing strict Buddhist practices and making offerings during daylight hours on the first day. This is then followed by four days of partying, drinking, and spraying water at each other. Phaung Daw Oo is another large festival that's held at Inle Lake. Four large golden images of Buddha are paraded around the lake on boats with people coming from all around the country to attend and give their respects. This ties in strongly with the conservative Buddhism Myanmar beliefs that are dominant around the country. The Festival of Light (known locally as Thadingyut) begins soon after Phaung Daw Oo. Locals light candles, lamps, and lanterns and

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use them as decorations in religious buildings to celebrate the return of Buddha back to earth. Both are great festivals to attend to get more of an idea into the local way of life and culture.

12 Monthly Myanmar Festivals

The Tagu Festival (Burmese month of Tagu (usually 13th to 16th, April): Tagu is the first month of the Myanmar calendar and usually it falls in March and April on the Gregorian calendar. “Thingyan”- Myanmar New Year Festival is held in Tagu, generally it falls about 13th April or environs. Thingyan was held since the Targaung Period but it became more prominent in the Era of Bagan Dynasty. As water symbolizes coolness, clearness and cleansing of dirt and grime, by pouring or throwing water on one another is regarded that cleanness one and all of the dirt and grime of the old year and bring coolness and pacify the minds of the people for the New Year. The most significant characteristics about Tagu is a merry making festival not only for Myanmar but also for any person who also wish to take part can enjoy the happiness just like Myanmar. Another aspect in connection with Tagu is commencing from the olden days up to the present time is during this period old and aged persons hair were washed and manicured with typical Myanmar shampoo called “Tayaw” .



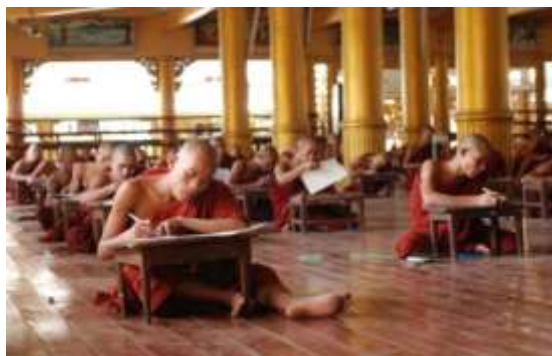
Figures 1 and 2 (Thingyan Water Festival)

The Kason Festival (April/ May): Kason is the second Myanmar month and comes in April-May. It is also a sacred month for Myanmar Buddhists. The full-moon of Kason is a day of threefold significance: -Firstly, is the day that Buddha was born, secondly Buddha attained Enlightenment on this very day, and thirdly this is the day of his Demise. Therefore, this day is commemorated as Buddha Day by Buddhists. Kason is the last period of scorching summer season, so it is very hot. The main activity on this festival day is pouring water at the Bodhi Tree. Pouring clean and cool water on the Bodhi Tree is done as a symbol of veneration to the Buddha who attained Enlightenment by meditating under the Bodhi Tree. Kason festival is celebrated to announce the auspicious birth of Buddha. This is one of the most exciting festivals of Myanmar.



Figures 3 and 4 (Kason Watering Festival)

The Nayon Festival (May/June): Nayon is the third month in the Myanmar calendar, in summer, and fall in May-June. With the aims of propagation the Buddhism, especially PariyattiSasana the practice of holding examinations in religious scriptures in Nayon was held in the second Innwa period, when King Thalun reigned. Nowadays, the State sponsored Examination was held every year for Pahtamabyan, DhammaCariya, Abhidhama, VisudiMagga and Tipitaka. Titles and Certificates for the flourishing of the Theravada Buddhism presentations of prizes and certificates are conferred on the Sayadaw, revered monks and nuns every year. Moreover, in commemoration of Lord Buddha's preaching of MahaSamayaSutta to celestial beings from ten thousand solar systems, MahaSayama Day was also observed in this month.



Figures 5 and 6 (Monastic Examination Festival)

The Waso Festival (June/July): Waso is the fourth month in Myanmar calendar falling between June and July which is partially summer and partially rainy seasons. The full-moon day of Waso is very significant, because this is the day Buddha was conceived, the day that He renounced the worldly pleasure, and the very day that He preached the first sermon of DhammaCakka and the day that He performed the miracles of super natural powers. The day also marks the beginning of the Buddhist lent of three months when members of Sangha go into the rains retreat. A significant and meritorious deed of Buddhists in Waso is offering robes to members of the Sangha for use during the lent, and so these robes are called Waso robes. Moreover, there is a practice of young men and women going on outings of gathering flowers to be offered at Buddha images at pagodas and at homes.



Figure 7 (Ordination Festival in the Month of Waso)

The Wagaung Festival (July/August): It is the fifth Myanmar month. It is in July-August, wet days of torrential rains, when rivers are in space. In the time of Buddha, when the lord was staying at Weluwun Monastery in Yazagyo, some disciples supplicated to him the matter of individual disciples having some difficulty to donate meals and alms for all the Sangha at the monastery at the same time, whereupon Buddha laid down a way of disciples drawing lots to determine which monk to offer meals and alms. **Yadana Gu Spirit Festival**

(From the 1st to 8th of Wagaung) (Amarapura, Mandalay city). The purpose of the festival is to honor the pantheon of animist spirits called Nats. Thousands of Burmese people gather in the town of Amarapura in Mandalay city to honor the pantheon of animist spirits (also known as Nats). Traditionally, participants in the festival make offering of food, money to the Nats; ritual dances and songs accompanied by a traditional Burmese orchestra are performed by the spirit mediums.



Figure 8 and 9 (Yadana Gu Spirit Festival)

Taungbyone Nat Festival (8th of Wagaung month): The festival is celebrated to honor the TaungPyone Brother Lords. TaungPyone where two brothers served for a Bagan king in XI century were executed. After death, they become very powerful gods. The festival has thousands of followers and priests, offering Palmyra water, wine, baked rabbit, fried chicken. The followers and priests dance to please the gods. Although the majority of Burmese people believe in Buddhism, there is still a significant population that believes in Nats. Nats are said to be terrestrial spirits that influence human activity. Taungbyone Nat Festival is held in celebration of these spirits and is usually held around July and August. People will see people drinking and dancing during this lively festival. Nat believers offer beer, fried chicken, and money to the Nat Gadaws, who are like shamans that embody the spirits and act as their vessel. Nat Gadaws perform and dance in different costumes depending on the spirit they embody.

The Tawthalin Festival (August/September): Tawthalin is the sixth month in Myanmar calendar (August- September). Tawthalin being around September, the sun's path is approaching the equator so that it one of the times when the location of the country places its on the belt nearest to the sun. Therefore the dark, weeping clouds are often swept away to be overtaken by bright and clear skies reflected in the smooth vast expanse of the flooded fields and rivers, accented by stately Palmyra showing off serried ranks of sun-ripened shiny jet-black fruits. Sometimes continuous days of sunshine warm the water in the paddy fields so much that another saying connected with this month says "The sun in Tawthalin kills off land crabs ". As there is no rain and not windy, the surfaces of water in the rivers are very still and smooth, it is figuratively compared as smooth as the mats used in Myanmar houses. Thus, in ancient times, during the reign of Myanmar kings it has been a tradition to hold regatta festivals due to favorable weather conditions. While the regatta was in procession, the king surrounded by his entourage watched the event from his royal barge called "PyiGyi Mon Barge". Regattas were held not only for fun but also as a test for improving the skills of the Royal Marines. The flower of the month is the fragrant "Yin Mar", blooming in sprays of pale yellow blossoms with red -tinged stalks on the tree *Chukrassiatubularis*, the tawny golden hardwood from which is ideal for carving and turnery.

Manuha Pagoda Festival (14th and 15th of Tawthalin month): On the first day of the festival, the parades of beautiful girls with trays of fruit, sweets to offer to the temple. In the afternoon, the young men parades in the streets with the effigies of the heroes, gods, and the

animals. At night, people will dance and sing together. And the next morning, they offer food to the Buddha and the monks in the pagoda. Farmers from nearby areas get to the Myinkaba village to go deep into the festival by ox-drawn carts with their products. They will sell these products, and use the amount of profits to donate the Manuha Pagoda.

Phaung Daw Oo Pagoda is one of the most famous temples in the region with 5 Buddha statues. The temple is located in the middle of Inle Lake and is one of the popular scenic spots of the lake. In the festival time, thousands of people living around the lake and the surrounding mountains will bring flowers and fruits packed on the lacquered trays to celebrate and offer to the pagoda. The sailing team of the famous fishing village will participate in the annual boat race with traditional one leg rowing. The festival is the time for pilgrims from all over the country come to this festival to pay homage to the four Buddha images and gain merit and enjoy the festive atmosphere of the event.



Figures 10 and 11 (Myanmar Traditional Aquatic Festival in the Month of Tawthalin)

The Thadingyut Festival (September/October): Thadingyut is the seventh Myanmar month in (September- October) towards the end of rainy season. Lord Gautama Buddha preached The Abhidamma to His reincarnated mother in Tavatimsa , abode of celestial beings for three Lenten months and returned to the abode of men on the full- moon day of Thadingyut. The King of the celestials created three stairways, gold, silver and ruby for him. Buddha took the middle ruby stairways radiating six hues of aura. The celestials came along by the right gold stairways and the Brahmas by the left silver stairways. On account of that, Myanmar Buddhists celebrate Tavatimsa Festival on the full-moon day of Thadingyut by lighting multi-coloured illuminations. For the Sangha it is the time known as Pawayana, which means inviting, entreating, urging. In practice, since the times of the Buddha, it is to beg on other monks for forgiveness of any deed that might have displeased any other among Sangha. Likewise, there is also the practice among the laity of paying obeisance to parents and elders.



Figure 12 (Lighting Festival)

Kyaukse is located just about 44km away from Mandalay, and every year around October, people from upper Myanmar usually come to Kyaukse during the festival to enjoy the elephant dance. There are usually two people who enter inside the paper-elephant to dance. These dancers must completely be in sync when it comes to rhythm and timing for the dance to be successful. This festival is held to pay homage to the Shwe ThaLyaung Pagoda in Kyaukse.

The Thazaungmone Festival (October/November): It is the eighth Myanmar month (in October-November) time for offering of Kathina, MathoThingan , Panthagu offering , lotus offering and lighting . Kathina monk's robes are offered at this particular time of the year. It is held most communally . In connection with the offerings of monk's robes for a Buddhist, the donation of this kathina robe at this particular time is regarded as the most meritorious, as the monk who received this robe was chosen in accordance with the unanimous decision of Sangha after the plenary session of Sangha were held. There is also a practice of eating salads of Mezali leaves with the belief that it is medicinal if it was taken at this special time (i.e. at midnight) on the full-moon day of Tazaungmon. Shwezigone Pagoda Festival is held in Tazaungmone month in Myanmar calendar. In the full-moon day, the people offer the food to monks and novices. The most popular festival held in the Shan State is the Taunggyi Tazaungdaing, also known as the Festival of Lights, which usually happens around November. During the festival, people can see many hot air balloons of varying shapes and sizes that are launched to the sky as an offering to the heavens, and to fight off evil spirits. The festival is quite popular among the locals because it's similar to music festivals where there are loud music and lots of beer and food.



Figure 13 (TheTazaungdaing Festival)

The Nadaw Festival (November/December): It is the ninth month in Myanmar calendar at the onset of the cool season, with misty mornings in November-December. In ancient times, the seasonal festival was offerings of Nats, but this tradition had vanished in 1885. In the year 1944, a special kind of festival emerged, i.e. a celebration in honour of the literati (Sarsodaw). In the history of Myanmar literature, a day which is dedicated to U Pon Nya, who was a very famous, prominent and renowned writer, poet and playwright in Konbaung Dynasty was held annually in this month. So, the present Sarsodaw or literati day has some connections with this past event. At the present day, it is the time for presentation of National Awards by the State for the writers, poets and translators in various fields for their talented and superb tasks.

Mt. Popa being considered most important Nat worshipping center, thousands of country folks and town people in their joyous, light-hearted and merrymaking in this particular festival. Spirit procession and overall drunken ecstasy are part of the celebration.



Figures 14 and 15 (Popa Nat Spirit Festival in the Month of Nadaw)

The Pyatho Festival (December/January): It is the tenth month in Myanmar calendar during the cool season (December-January). Pyatho, formerly was a time when Myanmar royalty displayed its strength with military parades. Nowadays, however, this particular period is reserved mostly for local pagoda festivals. During the reign of Myanmar kings it was the month for the equestrian festival held for virtually the whole month. Indeed, this festival is closely related with military affairs or martial arts, because various kinds of competitions in horsemanship, sword fighting, lancing, bowman-ship and maneuvering with elephants are involved. A few major paya-pwes (pagoda festival) are held in Pyatho. The famous Ananda Temple festival of Bagan falls at this time.

Ananda Pagoda Festival (from full moon day to the end of Pyatho month) is held for social gathering, reunification, propagation and perpetuation of the Buddhism. This is one of the most famous festivals in Bagan – one of the most attractive and richest archaeological sites in Asia. This festival is believed to have originated from the first period of Bagan kingdom. Throughout history, people from the villages around Bagan usually came to the festival by ox-cart and set up camp during the festival. So far, some people still use this traditional way to get to festivals.

New Year Festival of the Kachin (Manaw) (the first week of January):The Kachin, one of the main ethnic groups of Myanmar celebrate their new year festival with a lot of people both local Kachin and abroad Kachin from other country in the world back to Myanmar in this occasion to meet and dance each other in the festival. The performances of Manaw dance in the festival derived from worship rituals to the gods from the ancient period. The outstanding feature of the festival is the traditional Manaw poles, decorated in colorful Kachin motifs and placed in the middle of the festival ground. Participants in the festival wear their best traditional costume and dance around the erected Manaw poles, quite similar to the totem poles of North American Indians.



Figure 16 (New Year Festival of the Kachin in the Month of Pyatho)

The Tabodwe Festival (January/February): Tabodwe is the eleventh month of the Myanmar calendar, as this is the last period of cool season it is very cold, in January and February. The month of Tabodwe is the harvest festival, all the products of the farm and garden go in to make "htamane" a concoction of glutinous rice, sesame seeds, peanuts, shredded coconut, flavoured with ginger and mixed with cook oil. Htamane feast is either celebrated communally or done just in the private circle of family and friends. The nature of the feast is such that, in whatever way the feast is celebrated, it means a big gathering because many hands are needed. In a communal feast people come around with contributions of glutinous rice and other ingredients. It is an option though; one can just give his service, if not anything else.

Shwe Mann Settaw Pagoda Festival is held for pilgrims participate in merit-making rituals and worship the Buddhist shrine which keeps a pair of golden footprints. This is the area with two temples offering Buddhist footprint, located on the waterfront Mann. During the festival, the people usually create many bamboo huts for local people to have fun, swimming in the hot dry season of Myanmar. The monks will lead prayer rituals for the thousands of participants that make the pilgrimage in colorfully adorned native costumes. In addition, two sides of Mann River's bank are decorated by merchant stores selling handcrafted goods and delicacies.



Figure 17 (Shwe Mann Settaw Pagoda Festival in the Month of Tabodwe)

According to legend, Mahamuni Buddha statue is made right in front of the Buddha, therefore the face of the Buddha statue is revered by pilgrims. The statue is gilded with 15 cm of gold. February is the coldest month in Myanmar, Mahamuni Pagoda organizes fire festival celebrating. People cook the sticky rice with ginger, coconut, and sesame to make offerings to the monks. Monks perform reading of a Buddhist text. In the evening, there are various performances of traditional dances, music, and plays. Besides, a variety of incense sticks are burnt in the pagoda dedicated to the Buddha.

Htamane Sticky Rice Festival (full moon day of Tabodwe month): The people cook sticky rice to make offerings to the Buddha in the morning of the 15th day of the month. Guests enjoyed watching performances, cook sticky rice competitions. And after offering rice ritual, sticky rice will be distributed to everyone. Finally, the winning team will receive the awards for winners. Firstly, the sticky rice is dipped into the water overnight. The next day, start frying the small pieces of coconuts and other ingredients. Then pour in the soaked sticky rice into the pan. There are two strong men to stir the rice until it is cooked. Then Htamane is offered to the Buddha and is given away for free to all the visitors to the pagodas.



Figures 18 and 19 (Htamane Sticky Rice Festival in the Month of Tabodwe)

As described, Myanmar culture covers a wide range of areas, from festivals, religion, food, clothing, music, dances, tradition, customs, superstitions, and numerous ways of doing things.

Conclusion

It is a well-known fact that Myanmar has a penchant for theatre and festivals. Most festivals called pwe in Myanmar are related to religion and quite often, they are carried out under the patronage of a pagoda or a pagoda trustee committee. Since long time ago, most of the famous pagodas in Myanmar had their pagoda-festivals during winter and usually most are celebrated in the month of Tabaung . Pagoda festivals are literally glittering affairs.

During these festival entire towns and village; take part in these events, people from all walks of life from neighboring districts set up temporary stalls to sell the wares from their hometown and local foods. As is typical of folk events, they are usually very noisy and crowded. Most of these festivals last a week or so, but the Ananda Temple Festival in Bagan is feted for one month. Besides the pagoda festivals in some places there are spirit-festivals out of these, Taung Pyone (near Mandalay) is the most eminent and believers in Nats, especially mediums from various parts of the country congregate at Taung Pyone. Full moon day of each month of Myanmar calendar has its own festive occasion.

Myanmar is a land of never ending festivities. It is almost impossible to visit and not experience one of hundreds festivals of Myanmar that are celebrated across the country throughout the year. Most festivals are cultural and religious and are nationwide celebrated, while a few are distinctly regional. The date of festivals and special events are determined by *traditional Burmese calendar*.

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