

## **A Study of Prose Writing Style in “Bagan-Ze” by Saya Zawgyi**

Lwin Mar Oo

### **Abstract**

This paper studies the value of language and literature from the prose “Bangan-Ze” written by Saya Zawgyi. A piece of prose is a composition written in an artistic style, describing the combination of thought and writing, or matter and form, or mind and physical form to make the writer’s view obvious. In this paper, the prose written by Saya Zawgyi will be studied in lexical level and syntactic level from linguistic point of view. On the other hand, how advantages can be gained compared to life experience of the reader will be studied from literary point of view.

**Key words:** writing style, word, sentence

### **Introduction**

This paper presents the prose writing of Bagan Bazaar among Saya Zawgyi’s literary writings from the point of view of style. This study provides thoughts involving pieces of knowledge existing in surroundings that can be seen through awareness and goodwill, and the knowledge gained from experience that does not exist in literary texts. In order to arrive at such thoughts, conversational style and sentential style are focused on from among the contents of the prose writing in Bagan Bazaar.

### **Aim**

This study aims to help the reader to understand the link between the knowledge in life and life in literary writings, and to present the writing style well-composed by using language.

### **Data and Method**

Descriptive method is used to do research on the basis of Anthology of Saya Zawgyi’s literary writings (Volume I), and such reference books as “Theory and Practice in Prose”, “Crawling in the Literary Ocean”, “Speech by Males and Females”, “Lifelong Records and Thoughts”.

### **Summary of the Prose “Bagan Bazaar” by Saya Zawgyi**

In the prose writing of Bagan Bazaar, the author describes the mutual mocking between some Chinese merchants and some Bagan natives when meeting near the Shwezigon Pagoda, King Bagan’s challenge message for the competition of wisdom was sent through the merchants to the Chinese king. The merchants brought an issue on the “the one who lacks and has and the one who has and lacks” when they came back several months later. King Bagan made a request to the wise men in the royal court for their solution to the issue. No solution could be found from palm manuscripts so an announcement was made on the seventh day throughout Bagan for the answer. A young man appeared to request the king to seek it. Then he gave his solution to the issue in a pavilion. King Bagan rewarded the young man with the Chinese ambassador’s gift. When the wise young man was invited to China by the Chinese ambassador, the young man replied that he loved Bagan more than China.

### Choice of Words

Choice of words is the most basic in the study of a prose writing. It concerns how words are used in positions in sentences. This paper studies descriptive words and appraising words. Authors tend to use descriptive words to objectively describe what they wish to present. They tend to use appraising words to subjectively express their assessment, opinions and feelings.

The author in describing a picture writes as follows about the facial expression of a poor man holding a palm leaf and a stylus, and the people feeling happy on the background:

“ထေဉ် တုမူသု၊ မခါ ဆေသအာန္တ ညာအညာ( သိဆစ. သထတု တစ မှု ဣ ခြေ ဣ တုပုဉ်တုတု ဝ အဆစ. သ ဖ ဇ် ဇ် ခါ သတုနဲ ဝိ ဣ မအာန္တ ဆေသ စေ) ဆာဇု . လောတု . ဝ ဝ လာအာအာ ညု ဣ မူသု ခါ ဣဇ်စ( ဣ ဖ သထဆစ. သ)”

“He has a facial expression deeply in thought. He is holding a palm leaf and a stylus. On the background of the picture are people living happily under the tree of plenty they can pick endlessly.”<sup>1</sup>

This piece of prose writing provides such thoughts as the use of the descriptive adverb “deeply” and adjective “in thought” and the appraising adverb “happily”, which make vivid the manners of the people in the picture, the fact that man should be deep in thought about life, and he should be beneficial to his surroundings.

In describing another picture, the author writes as below about the brave look on a poor man’s face, and the finely-dressed people bullying the poorly-dressed ones:

“( ဣ ဣ လီ တိပ. ခါ ဆေသအာန္တ ညာအညာ( သိဆစ. သဖ ဇ် ဇ် ခါ သတုနဲပ. ဣ ဣ သုထတုမူသုပ. ဣ ဝ သဆသထညာမေစ. ဣ မူသုပ. ဣ ဝ သဆသထညာလောအာ ဣ ဣ ဣ ထစ. = ပ ဣ ဆေသု ခါ ဝ ဣဇ်စ( ဣ ဖ သထဆစ. သ)”

“He has a facial look which is brave and gritting his teeth. On the background of the picture are the gorgeously-dressed people driving the poorly-dressed ones like cows or oxen fastened to the cart.”<sup>2</sup>

This piece of prose writing uses the descriptive adjective “brave and gritting his teeth”, and the appraising adverbs “gorgeously” and “poorly”, which make more vivid the manners of the people in the picture. It gives such thoughts that man should be brave with upright mentalism, he must not bully others, he must have sympathy towards others, the two social layers are contrasted, and one must take lessons through reasoning as to the fact that despite being wealthy, some have lower or mean mentalism.

### Style of Writing Sentences

In the field of prose composition, the sentence plays a very important role among the four stages as words, sentences, paragraphs and passages. In the study of style, therefore, the stage of the sentence is included. As to the importance of the sentence, Sayagyi Shwe U Down said:

“If the sentence structure is loose, weak and unstable although effective words may contribute to strong writing, the effectiveness of words may not affect the reader’s brain and heart although it may affect his ears.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Zawgyi, 1993: 216  
<sup>2</sup> Zawgyi, 1993: 216

Therefore, sentences with the same patterns, well-balanced sentences and spoken sentences are studied in this prose.

**Style of Writing Sentences with the Same Patterns**

The author in this prose is found to use the sentences with the same patterns in order to clarify his intention. He depicts as follows the fact that some Bagan natives mock at the Chinese merchants:

“ရှု့ပျံ့ဆာစေ့ခ (နွဲ့ကူဖ်အေ ချဲ့နကူဖ်အေတီဏ်ဆာခ ပပပပပဆေ့ထေ့ဝါ့ခါ့ပုလဲးဝဲ တကဲ့မစေ့တီဆာခခ ( ညနကူပပဆေ့ထေ့ဝါ့ခါ့ပုလဲးဝဲ ပပပပပဆေ့ထေ့ဝါ့ခါ့ပုလဲးဝဲ ”

“You **only tend to** wear clothes embroidered in gold and silver.  
You **only tend to** sell the goods put on bullock-carts.  
You **only tend to** eat the good food.”<sup>2</sup>

In these patterns, the author uses the same particles.

The reader can have some knowledge of the Chinese merchants wearing fine clothes, their ways of making money, and eating good food, and the relations between Chinese and Myanmar that have existed since former times.

The author also writes as follows about the response made by the Chinese merchants to the mocking of the Bagan natives:

“ရှု့ပျံ့ဆာစေ့ (ဣက္ခယူနာမ စေ့တီဆာခပပပပပဆေ့ထေ့ဝါ့ခါ့ပုလဲးဝဲ ပပပပပဆေ့ထေ့ဝါ့ခါ့ပုလဲးဝဲ ပပပပပဆေ့ထေ့ဝါ့ခါ့ပုလဲးဝဲ ”

“You **only tend to** wear cotton clothes.  
You **only tend to** buy the goods sold by others.  
You **only tend to** eat the poor food.”<sup>3</sup>

In these patterns, too, the author uses the same particles.

The reader can then have some knowledge of the Bagan natives’ ways of wearing clothes, making money, and eating food, and their content mentalism as to what they have.

The author uses the above-mentioned sentences with the same patterns in order to state the mutual mocking between the Bagan natives and the Chinese merchants. Words of opposite meaning are found to be used to describe their competition in words. The figurative use of the following words of opposite meaning makes more vivid the author’s description:

- Clothes embroidered in gold and silver ≠ Cotton clothes
- Sell ≠ Buy
- Good food ≠ Poor food

As to the sentences with the same patterns, Saya Maung Khin Min (Danubyu) says:

“The reader, when he sees the sentences with the same patterns well written by the author who creates them through his good will in order to focus on the same or opposite facts, easily gets hooked in his memory by the

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<sup>1</sup> Shwe U Down, 1968: 543  
<sup>2</sup> Zawgyi, 1993: 216  
<sup>3</sup> Zawgyi, 1993: 216

significance of the same parallel patterns and the facts depicted in such patterns.”<sup>1</sup>

These sentence patterns are well-balanced with facts and forms, making effective the intention of the author. Due to the balance of grammatical elements in sentences, and the same patterns used to describe the same facts, such sentence patterns can be said to be effective and artistic parallel-patterned ones.

### Style of Writing Spoken Sentences

Maung Khin Min (Danubyu) states:

“ Sayagyi Shwe Oo Down once said, as to the nature of writing and spoken styles, the latter is assumed to be light and swift, but the former static and formal, and he adopted the spoken forms embedded in writing as it is light and swift in doing so.”<sup>2</sup>

The author writes as follows by embedding the spoken sentences in this prose about the fact that the issue posed by the wise men:

“ ဝေဠု . ဤအာဇာနည်အိပ်ပျော်စွာ  
 လန့်တုခပျော်စွာ  
 ဝေဠု . ဤအာဇာနည်”

“ နတ် ( အာဇာနည်အိပ်ပျော်စွာ  
 မှ စုစု နတ် သံလေတင်အား နတ် အရာ  
 တစ်ထဲ-မတစ်ထဲအာဇာနည်”

“ ဝေဠု . နတ်-ထွန်းအောင် သံပ . ဝေဠု  
 တွေ့ . နတ် သံလေ . လူငွေတံခါး သံပ အေးစ သတ္တ . ဝေဠု  
 နတ် . ထွန်းအောင် သံပ . ဝေဠု”

“How can we have a think, wise men?  
 It’s such a problem!  
 How can we have a think?  
 Why difficult, You, wise man,  
 This is such rubbish!  
 Like baby talk!  
 We just have to do it as ordered by our king  
 I think we’re just degrading ourselves  
 By seeking the solution to it.”<sup>3</sup>

In this style of writing spoken sentences, the author describes in some detail the unhappy mood of a wise man as he could not find the solution to the problem, another one considering it to be ordinary and seeking it only through the king’s order, and his feeling that such an act was just degrading their wisdom.

In these sentences, the tone of the first wise man is depressed, and that of another is angry. The author thus states the different attitudes towards the problem, makes vivid the difference between their personalities.

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<sup>1</sup> Khin Min, Maung, Danubyu, 1997: 93  
<sup>2</sup> Khin Min, Maung, Danubyu, 2007: 85  
<sup>3</sup> Zawgyi, 1993: 214

**Discussion**

As to the writing style of Saya Zawgyi, Min Yu Wai said:

“One can be aware in his writing of the lack of greed and arrogance, and his nature of proper thinking with his cool head.”<sup>1</sup>

In this prose writing, words and sentences are found to be used in their proper positions to match with what is stated, through the author’s smooth composition, meanings that are not in confusion, his vivid presentation, and his intention precisely stated. Therefore, this prose can be said to be one created through good style of writing with smoothness, vividness, precision, matchability, and economy.

**Conclusion**

In this prose, the author’s view of life and the world focusing on mankind and his world can be seen. As writing style is based on the author’s feelings, thoughts and attitudes, the author’s patriotism can be vividly sensed in this prose. In addition, his efficiency in using grammatical elements that systematically bridge the gap between literature and language can also be adorably found.

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**References**

န . ဒု . အေအညာ့ အကျွမ်းဉာဏ် : ၉+အစောပေသမုဒ္ဒရာ၌လက်ပစ်ကူးခြင်းအလာအဆင့် ဆမုမာခေသ

န . ဒု . အေအညာ့ အကျွမ်းဉာဏ် ၂၂၆+အစကားပြေသဘောတရား၊ စကားပြေအတတ်ပညာအမပ စွလီတံဒုအစ  
 . `ဉာစ. နအာမာခေသ

န . ဒု . အေအညာ့ အကျွမ်းဉာဏ် ၂၂၉+အမိန်းမယောက်ျားထိုစကားအဖေ အလီတံဒုအစ( ပါ ) ခမာခေသ

ခေဉ်းအကူး : ၅+အဆရာဇော်ဂျီ စာပေါင်းချုပ်အဖေ အကျွမ်းဉာဏ်အစောအစွန်အစွန်ပံာစာ

ခေဉ်း(၉) င. အကူး ဂါ +အတစ်သက်တာမှတ်တမ်းနှင့်အတွေးအခေါ်များ(၇) တံာ့ ဖွ ယဲအဆမာခေသ

<sup>1</sup> Min Yu Wai,1993 : 14