

## Tourism Development and Cultural Heritage Management

San Shwe\*

Archaeology Department, University of Yangon

### Abstract

Myanmar is rich in its Cultural Heritage and Myanmar's Tourism is also based on the Cultural Heritage of Myanmar. Cultural Heritage Sites in Myanmar also need to become sustainable for the present and the future. The issue of natural disasters and human made ecological and other problems are part of life in the modern age and present challenges to preserving Cultural Heritage Sites. Cultural Heritage Sites need to experience economic advancement with minimal negative impacts, and this should be an essential objective for destination plans. So, Cultural Heritage knowledge needs to be familiar to all people in Myanmar and there needs to be effective long-term protection and preservation.

**Keywords:** cultural heritage sites, tourism, protection and preservation

### 1. Introduction

Tourism Industry is one of the biggest industries in the World and a major source of employment everywhere. Most of the countries likewise regard tourism as a source for long term businesses, employment for their citizens and a large income producer for the state and its people. They enjoy a variety of rich Cultural Heritage areas. Among them, Myanmar has many Cultural Heritage Sites that cover the numerous and distinct periods of its history. Cultural heritage such as monumental buildings, stupas, temples, and ancient cities, comprising numerous ethnic group regions and geographical terrains are more attractive than other destinations in Myanmar.

### 2. The Aim of this Study

The aim is to promote the Tourism Development and to sustain the Cultural Heritage Sites in Myanmar.

### 3. Myanmar's Cultural Heritage Sites

There are varieties of rich Cultural Heritage Sites in Myanmar from Prehistoric Period to Historical Period continuously. Pondaung area is the earliest Cultural Heritage area in Myanmar. It is about 40 million years old. So, geologists especially the Paleontologists were more interested in this site than the archaeologists. It is situated in the northwestern part of central Myanmar which consists of two ranges named Pondaung and Ponnyadaung of over 3,000 feet high, lying in a north-south direction. These two ranges are composed of the rocks of the Pondaung Formation. The formation is almost entirely composed of massive quartz sandstones, brown on the weathered surface, but of a greenish tint in fresh stream sections. Near the top of the series a fairly thick belt of reddish purple clays occurs. These beds are of special interest, since they contain vertebrate remains. Pondaungia and Amphipithecus primate fossils were collected in these beds. Scholars of worldwide assumed that Pondaungia and Amphipithecus mogaungensis are the earliest Anthropoids in the world and their origin is Pondaung of Myanmar.

Myanmar's Prehistoric Culture is generally divided into three phases: Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age. Stone Age is found in the whole of Myanmar, but Stone Age tools are more prevalent in Central and Upper Myanmar. Anyathian Culture is a well-known name

---

\*San Shwe, Archaeology Department, University of Yangon

of Myanmar's Palaeolithic Culture. Early Anyathian Culture began from Middle Pleistocene to Upper Pleistocene. The Early Anyathians were similar to the Java man and Peking man and the Late Anyathians were close to the Neanderthals.<sup>8</sup> They were hunter-gatherers and most of them lived along the banks of old Ayeyawady River and under the trees near the river. There are two kinds of stones, namely the fossil wood and silicified tuff that were used to make adzes, choppers and scrapers. The eighty percent of the tools found are adzes.

Rock Art or mural paintings can be seen at Badahlin Caves and its cultural deposits which were excavated from its finds, dated to the Upper Palaeolithic to Neolithic Period. The Badahlin Caves are situated in Ywangan Township in Taunggyi District, Southern Shan States. There are two caves, both facing south. Animal figures, human hands, a fish and a blazing sun were drawn with red ochre on the wall running southwest to northeast about twelve feet above the floor in Cave No.1. The technique was to fill in the outline with flat wash. According to the excavated stone tools, they can be classified into three main categories; pebble tools, flake tools and ground tools. They were subdivided into hammer stones, mullers, unifacial choppers, bifacial chopping tools and hand adzes. Almost all flake tools are scrapers. By a carbon 14 test, the animal bones unearthed from middens in these Caves were found to be 13,000 years BP. But some of them would be 6,570 old BP and charcoal pieces were of 7,740 years BP.<sup>†</sup>

The first Bronze Age excavated site is called Nyaunggan, situated one and half miles to the north-west of Ywatha village in Nyaunggan village tract of Budalin Township, Monywa District, Sagaing Region. There are no earlier historical records indicating prior excavation of this region. The excavation site is located on sloping ground on a small hillock measuring 180 m by 75 m. East of the site is an extinct volcano. It is a burial site. Archaeological objects of that site are human skeletal remains, various kinds of potteries, socketed bronze axes, spear-heads and arrow-head, polished stone rings, shell, stone and terracotta beads and animals bones. The major finds from the Nyaunggan site were skeletal remains and potteries. Bronze tools were probably buried together with them at the time of their death. Moreover, the other interesting finds at Nyaunggan excavation are the polished stone rings. Almost all the stone rings were found on the wrist of the skeletons. According to the result of the excavation, we suggested that the Nyaunggan site is about from 2500 years BP to 3000 years BP.<sup>‡</sup>

The earliest dated appearance of iron in Upper Myanmar is Taungthaman Site. The site is located just west of the junction of the Myit Nge and the Ayeyawady south of Mandalay. It was along the edge of a large seasonal lake, the Taungthaman-In. The excavation unearthed skeletal remains, stone implements, ring stones, pottery, iron artifacts and semiprecious beads. Carbon rice husks were also found with terracotta earth at Taungthaman. There are no radiocarbon dates. Thermo luminescence tests on pottery from the site yielded dates between 900 BC and 300 BC. An iron fishhook found on the chest of a

<sup>8</sup>Hellmut De Terra and Haliem L. Movius, Jr: *Research o Early Man in Burma*, Philadelphia, The American Philosophical Society, 1943, 374-378. (De Terra and Movius: *Early Man in Burma*)

<sup>†</sup>Aung Thaw: "The Neolithic culture of the Padah-lin caves", *Asian Perspectives*, Vol. 14, 1971,133.(Aung Thaw: "Padah-lin caves")

<sup>‡</sup>(a) Pamela Gutman and Bob Hudson: "The Archaeology of Burma (Myanmar) from the Neolithic to Pagan", *Southeast Asia from prehistory to history*, Edited by Ian Glover and Peter Bellowood, London, Routledge Curzon, 2004, 154-155. (Gutman and Hudson: "The Archaeology of Burma")

(b) Elizabeth Moore and Pauk Pauk: " Nyaung-gan: A Preliminary Note on a Bronze Age Cemetery near Mandalay, Myanmar (Burma)", *Asian Perspectives*, Vol. 40, 2001, 35-36, 40-43. (Moore and Pauk Pauk: " Nyaung-gan")

skeleton in the burial from which the  $460 \pm 220$  thermo luminescence date came has been used to suggest local iron exploitation at this time. According to Stargardt, Taungthaman represented at about 500 BC<sup>\*</sup> the very last and most sophisticated stage of stone technology co-existing with the beginnings of an initially crude, iron-working metallurgy.

Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age mixed Burial Sites are found at Samon Valley area, around Pyawbwe, south of Mandalay in Central Myanmar. These sites are also called transition period remains, dated to eras from Bronze to Iron Age Sites. Among them, the famous archaeological sites are Kokkokhahla, Bulu-gon, Ywahtin-gon, Beinnaka, Myaukmigon, MyinOoHle, Hnawgan, Myohla and on hmin.<sup>†</sup> The orientations of the dead persons were uncovered in the east and north mostly. There are various kinds of Pottery, Bronze and Iron artifacts (bronze coffin decorations, bronze wire packets, bronze bracelets and bronze mother goddess). Stone tools, various kinds of beads and animal bones were also unearthed together with the skeletal remains. Pottery with rice husk inclusions is part of the Late Prehistoric mortuary assemblages of the Samon area, indicating rice agriculture. The increasing wealth in the Samon valley can be credited to the successful exploitation of natural resources such as agricultural land and minerals and the dominance of trade routes. The expanding variety of grave goods seems to relate to social differentiation. The phase in which new artifacts appear in the Samon valley is not reflective of a Bronze Age culture despite the prevalence of bronze among the metal grave goods. From around 500 BC, after iron came into use in Myanmar, it is more a matter of "iron for hoe, bronze for show". The adoption of iron for tools and weapons means increasing economic growth. According to the excavated finds, the scholars assumed that the date of the Samon valley area is about from 500 BC to AD 400.

The early urban sites are also found in Central Myanmar. They are called Pyu sites: Pinle, Beikthano, Waddi, Halin and Sri Ksetra. The archaeological evidence at Beikthano makes it an early site that began to change the secondary burial practice or burial urn system. Beikthano lies on the northwest of Taungdwingyi in Magwe Region. The excavations reveal that the cultural equipment of the site is essentially Pyu in character. It has a wall only on three sides. It has no trace of a moat that usually surrounded a city wall as was the case in other Pyu sites. The citadel area of Beikthano is situated just at the north-west of the city. The excavated gates (KKG 13, KKG 15, and BTO 22) at Beikthano, like those at Dhanyawadi, Vesali, S'ri ksetra and Halin, are curved inward. The masonry structures with massive walls constructed of large-sized bricks, uninsurable silver coins bearing symbols of prosperity and good-luck, burial urns of plain and exquisite designs, beads of clay and semi-precious stones, decorated domestic pottery, iron nails and bosses, stone objects, terracotta objects and Bronze objects are among the finds which reveal convincing cultural links among Beikthano and the established Pyu sites of Pinle, Halin, Waddi and Sri Ksetra.<sup>‡</sup> Beikthano's architects laid a compact layer of yellow clay on the ground before laying down the structures' foundation. The second stage was to build the construction on top of that debris. Most of the buildings lacked foundations. No bonding method was used to lay the bricks. The

\* Janice Stargards: *The Ancient Pyu of Burma*, Vol one, Singapore, PACSEA CAMBRIDGE, The Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1990, 13-29 ( Stargards: *The Ancient Pyu of Burma*)

† Jean-Pierre Pautreau, Anne-Sophie Coupey and Aung Aung Kyaw: *Excavations in the Samon Valley*, Chiang Mai, SIAM RATANA LTD., PART., 2010, 14, 331-338. (Pautreau, Anne-Sophie and Aung Aung Kyaw: *Excavations in the Samon Valley*)

‡ (a) San Shwe: *The Culture of Vishnu Old City*, M.Res (Thesis), Department of Archaeology, University of Yangon, 2002, 1, 50-52. (San Shwe: *Vishnu Old City*)

(b) Gutman and Hudson: "The Archaeology of Burma", 158.

longer lasting buildings and walls employed big bricks and were thickly made. Cement was made by grinding mussels and used as lime. The significant absences of Pyu inscriptions lend support to the assumption that Beikthano culture belongs to an earlier stage of Pyu chronology. It was located on trade routes between India and China, and sustained trade relations with South and North India, Yunan, Funan and Lower Myanmar. Beikthano remained a significant site in the early first millennium AD.\*

Halin lies in the Wetlet Township in Shwebo District in Sagaing Region. It is in the form of a rectangle roughly two miles long and one mile wide. As in Beikthano and the inner citadel of Sri Ksetra, the north-south axis of the fort plan is slightly inclined to the west. Many brick structures were found in Halin. Most of the structures are rectangular in their plan and they were uncovered on outside and inside of the city wall. The result of the archaeological excavations included some charred human, skeletal remains, personal ornaments in gold, different colour and different material of beads, symbolical coins, iron objects (knives, chisels, adzes, tweezers, spoke-shave, door sockets, spades linked chain, nails), bronze artefacts (mirrors) and variety of pottery types with decorations. All these were found at that site. Pyu stone inscriptions were also found at Halin.<sup>†</sup> On the whole it is observed that the people of Halin were a literate people with a high standard civilization. They knew architecture, town-planning, art and some other technologies. Their inscriptions, pottery types and architectural styles definitely suggest that they had close intercourse with the people of Pinle, Beikthano and Sri Ksetra. Their roulette pottery, bronze mirrors and structural layouts indicate that they might have established relations with southern and northern India. The civilization flourished in Halin from the second to ninth centuries AD.

Sri Ksetra is situated to the east of Pyay in Bago Region. A higher level of development of Pyu civilization is seen at Sri Ksetra. The city is unusual in shape, not square or rectangular, but circular in shape. Sri Ksetra has a diversity and wealth of material greater than Beikthano. The most visible of these are the temples and stupas, not ruined or destroyed like Beikthano's, but still standing. The two stupas, Payagyi and Payamar, are a conical dome type and only one stupa, Bawbawgyi, is a cylinder type with a conical top. The temples (Bebe, Lemyethna, Yahanta, West Zaygu and East Zaygu) of Sri Ksetra are assumed to have been the prototypes of early Bagan temple. They have a simple square plan with an entrance and a porch and an inner sanctum. Some temples used the voussoir arch. The stone slabs sculpted in relief with Hindu and Buddhist themes, and terracotta votive tablets, were unearthed at the sites.<sup>‡</sup> The Buddhist texts also recovered at Sri Ksetra provide a better understanding of Buddhism. There are also evidences that Mahayana Buddhism was present here. Large stone burial urns were discovered at Sri Ksetra. Each of these bears a brief epigraph inscribed in Pyu. The inscriptions reveal that S'ri Ksetra was ruled by a succession of kings bearing the dynastic name of Vikrama. The architectural, sculptural, epigraphic and artistic remains shed ample light on the cultural and religious aspects of the Sri Ksetra civilization. According to the Chinese evidence, Sri Ksetra was invaded by Nan-Chao in 9<sup>th</sup> century AD.

\*San Shwe: *Vishnu Old Cit*, 53-56.

<sup>†</sup> (a) Gutman and Hudson: "The Archaeology of Burma", 158-160.

(b) Elizabeth H. Moore: *Early Landscapes of Myanmar*, Bangkok, River Books Co., Ltd. 2007. 181, 184-186. (Moore: *Early Landscapes of Myanmar*)

<sup>‡</sup> (a) Gutman and Hudson: "The Archaeology of Burma", 160-161,

(b) Moore: *Early Landscapes of Myanmar*, 167, 169-171.

Pinle is located in Myittha Township, Kyaukse District, Mandalay Region, southeast of Kume, close to a bend in the Panlaung River. It has three walls. The outer wall is a slightly circular in shape. Inside the rounded outer wall is a quadrangular wall and at the centre is a rounded wall. Most of the structures are rectangular with circular core in their plan and they were uncovered on outside and inside of the city wall. The result of the archaeological excavations included some pottery, beads, iron objects and coins. Its structure plans and pottery types are very similar to the other Pyu cities.

Bagan lies on the east bank of Ayeyawady in the Nyaung Oo Township in Mandalay Region. It is the most important Cultural Heritage site of Myanmar. It was the capital for two and a half centuries when the Myanmar Empire reached the zenith of its power. The ruins of Bagan cover an area of about sixteen square miles. Among the monuments which are largely of brick and stucco three sides of the square city wall with the Sarabha Gate are the only remnants of secular architecture.\* All the edifices numbering over three thousand were devoted to Buddhism. These religious buildings mainly consist of stupas, temples, monasteries and other structures. Some of these buildings have wall paintings as interior decoration and plinth mouldings and stucco carvings as exterior decoration.

#### 4. Cultural Heritage Management

Some archaeological sites in Myanmar need four activities: The first one is a Quality of Research and this is to include:

- (a) Quality of planning
- (b) Quality of excavation
- (c) Quality of identity and classification and
- (d) Quality of interpretation and report

The Second is the Conservation. Conservation Acts are needed to protect the site and its surrounding area (Buffer Zone). The third is the Marketing and Promotion. The main purpose of the promotion is to encourage public awareness of the value of Culture and make them understand all the important issues of conservation and protection. The public includes three groups: students and local villagers, Myanmar tourists and tourists from elsewhere. A careful planning against tourist polluted outcomes therefore is very important. The last one is the Quality of service. The Cultural development also comprises matters of landscaping development, tourists' facilities and hospitality.

#### 5. The Role of Local Government

Local government is a very important in tourism sector. Local government can manage the cultural resources that tourism relies on, provides core infrastructure, attractions and facilities, and often funds regional marketing and visitor information. Local governments should become more heavily involved in tourism management matters:

1. Local government is responsible for the planning and management of Myanmar's cultural resources.

---

\*Bob Hudson, Nyein Lwin, and Win Maung(Tanpawady): "The Origins of Bagan: New Dates and Old Inhabitants", *Asian Perspectives*, Vol. 40, 2001, 48-49. (Bob, Nyein Iwin and Win Maung: "The Origins of Bagan")

2. Local government also needs to provide the core utilities and infrastructure on which the tourism industry is based. This includes district and city roads, lighting, water and sewerage, public transport systems, signs, airports and ports. Local government operates attractions such as museums, art galleries, sports stadia, convention centers, parks and other amenities. This entire means that local government is perhaps the largest tourism operator in the country.

3. Local government enables regional marketing and provides visitors information by being the primary source of funding for regional tourism organizations and Visitor Information Network.

4. Local government should establish links and promote cooperation between local communities, national and international tour agencies in order to heighten the role of the local community and involve them fully in the employment opportunities and income-generating activities that tourism can bring. And then local government should do activities that include training local tour guides, producing high-quality craft items and the vocational training after the peak season. All this would greatly contribute to educating people on how to maintain sustainable cultural heritage sites.

## **6. Negative Impacts**

### **The natural destructive factors**

The natural destructive factors of wind, temperature, rain, plants and rodents are causing damage to the Archaeological Heritage Monuments and Sites.

### **Man-made destructive factors**

The four main threatening factors for Archaeological Heritage are (i) urbanization and development projects, (ii) crossing roads and vehicles (iii) vandalism (iv) reconstruction and restoration deficiency.

### **Lack of infrastructure and tourism superstructure**

Infrastructure and tourism superstructure are fundamental in developing the tourism industry. One reason for this is that when there is a lack of growth in facilities such as lodging and transportation venues, tourism stagnates and places become unattractive to visitors.

### **Lack of interpretive infrastructure**

Guides or responsible persons are needed to explain missing features at archaeological sites and provide a context for visitors in which they can interact with the visited archaeological site and construct an insightful interpretive experience. They need to be able to communicate effectively, involve their auditors in the interpretive experience, improve public behaviour and develop a care ethic. They are required to provide a positive and memorable experience.

### **Directive signage and on-site interpretive panels**

In visiting the selected sites, it was possible to come up with at least six problems concerning the road signs at archaeological sites which are: (i) non-existence (ii) insufficient (iii) indistinguishable from other signs (iv) removed (v) vandalized (vi) misspells. Moreover, archaeological sites signs were not distinguished from other road signs. Additionally, the

researcher noticed that there are no on-site guiding signs to prevent visitors from walking or driving on archaeological ruins.

On-site interpretive panels are imperative in building eco-friendly tourism and a sustainable hospitality industry. Field visits confirmed that only informative warning panels are available at all of the selected sites. The researcher noticed that these warning panels are (i) inefficient (ii) insufficient (iii) damaged (iv) removed (v) misplaced or inaccurately located. Archaeological sites were vandalized by some people repeatedly misplacing or taking off on-site warning panels.

### **Accessibility**

Some scholars said that low accessibility is a good indicator of underdevelopment situation in a particular tourist destination. In fact, access is a critical factor and a major potential barrier to travel. Some archaeological sites lack physical and intellectual accessibility to and within archaeological sites. There are generally four main problems with these sites (i) remoteness and physical difficulty (ii) lack of guiding information (iii) official pre-permission (iv) safety.\*

### **7. Conclusion**

Cultural Heritage Tourism is a very big industry in Myanmar. So, we need to protect and preserve Cultural Heritage sites by raising consciousness and awareness, mainly through education. Archaeologists, educational sectors and other professionals can provide the archaeological knowledge and management skills to the Myanmar people and the tourists. The tourists who visit Cultural heritage sites usually do not wish to damage or steal the resources, but their lack of knowledge can result in behaviour that is destructive. Interpretive messages help the visitors understand the resource and their roles in protecting it. Cultural Heritage sites will survive as important tourism resources if our management practices are sustainable. Awareness of education makes an important contribution by influencing people to be better stewards of the cultural and natural resources that provide the foundation for Cultural heritage tourism.

### **Acknowledgement**

The receipt of research funding for this research from the Asia Research Centre, University of Yangon is gratefully acknowledged.

---

\* (a) Abdullah Al-Busaidi: *Public Interpretation of Archaeological Heritage*, 178-181, 184-190.

(b) Khin Maung Nyunt: "Cultural heritage in Myanmar", 162-164.

## References

- Abduallah** Al-Busaidi Ya'qoob Salim, 2008. *Public Interpretation of Archaeological Heritage and Archaeotourism in the Sultanate of Oman*. PhD diss., Cardiff School of Management.
- Aung** Thaw, 1971. "The Neolithic culture of the Padah-lin caves", *Asian Perspectives*, Vol. 14, 123-133.
- Aung** Twin, Michael 2001. "Origins and Development of the Field of Prehistory in Burma", *Asian Perspectives*, Vol. 40, 6-34.
- De Terra**, Hellmut and Movius, Haliam L. Jr, 1943. *Research o Early Man in Burma*, Philadelphia, The American Philosophical Society.
- Gutman**, Pamela and Hudson, Bob, 2004. "The Archaeology of Burma (Myanmar) from the Neolithic to Pagan", *Southeast Asia from prehistory to history*, Edited by Ian Glover and Peter Bellwood, London, Routledge Curzon, 149-176.
- Hoffman**, Teresa L., Kwas, Mary L. and Silverman, Helaine, 2002. "Heritage Tourism and Public Archaeology", *The SAA Archaeological Record*, Society for American Archaeology, 30-32.
- Hudson**, Bob, Nyein Lwin, and Win Maung(Tanpawady), 2001. "The Origins of Bagan: New Dates and Old Inhabitants", *Asian Perspectives*, Vol. 40, 48-74.
- Khin** Maung Nyunt, Dr, 2003. "Conservation, Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage in Myanmar", *An anthology of Conference Papers*, Department of History, University of Yangon, 148-168.
- Merriman**, Tim, 2005. "Heritage Interpretation: Tourism Cake, Not Icing," *The SAA Archaeological Record*, Society for American Archaeology, Vol. 5, No.3, 36-8.
- Moore**, Elizabeth and Pauk Pauk, 2001. "Nyaung-gan: A Preliminary Note on a Bronze Age Cemetery near Mandalay, Myanmar (Burma)", *Asian Perspectives*, Vol. 40, 35-47.
- Moore**, Elizabeth H, 2007. *Early Landscapes of Myanmar*, Bangkok, River Books Co., Ltd.
- Nickel**, Robert, 2011. "What is Archaeotourism?" 25 Feb 2011, (<http://www.allyouneedtotravel.com/what-is-archaeotourism>)
- Pautreau**, Jean-Pierre , Coupey, Anne-Sophie and Aung Aung Kyaw, 2010. *Excavations in the Samon Valley*, Chiang Mai, SIAM RATANA LTD., PART.
- San** Shwe 2002, *The Culture of Vishnu Old City*, M.Res (Thesis), Department of Archaeology, University of Yangon.
- Stargards**, Janice, 1990. *The Ancient Pyu of Burma*, Vol one, Singapore, PACSEA CAMBRIDGE, The Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- Thomas** W. Cuddy, 2005. "African American Archaeology in Annapolis", *The SAA Archaeological Record*, Society for American Archaeology, Vol.5, No.2, 6-9.
- [http:// www. Archaeology for the Public.com](http://www.ArchaeologyforthePublic.com)  
[http:// www. Informal Education.com](http://www.InformalEducation.com)  
[http:// www. Field Trip School Programme.com](http://www.FieldTripSchoolProgramme.com)