

## Art and Architecture of Temple (No. 281) in Pakhangyi Ancient City

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### Abstract

Pakhangyi old City is situated 10 miles from Yesago and 20 miles from Pakokku. It is the western bank of the Chindwin river. In Pakhangyi, there are many old temples, stupas, and Thein (ordination hall). Temple (No.281) is Thein and called Lar Ba Kyaw Swar ordination hall in another way. It has two porches in east and south and also has a story. There has a meditation room in inner the west of the wall. The wall paintings can be found in the interior wall of Thein. Therefore can be seen art and architecture are konbaung period writing. This research paper can be see the wall painting show the ancient people's culture and living style.

Key word: traditional Myanmar art, religious, Konbaung period.

### Introduction

Pakhangyi is a one of the old cities in Myanmar. Pakhangyi old city is situated in Yesago Township, Pakokku district in Magwe region. It is located on the side of Pakokku-Mandalay motorway, 20 miles (32 kilometers) from Pakokku, 48 miles (77 kilometers) from Monywa and 108 miles (173 kilometers) from Mandalay. In Pakhangyi, the moat, city wall, and ancient things are found. Nowadays, Pakokku is the city of Pakokku district. Pakokku is a district headquartered city in Magway division. During the reign of Myanmar Kings Pakhangyi was big city and headquartered. The Pakhangyi old city was built by five Kings: King, Dhanusiha in BCE 508, Kings Sithu and Kyawswar in CE 738, King Tasishin Thihathu in CE 1305, King Swarsawke in CE 1380, and King Maha Dhammarajadipati in CE 1738.

Since Stone Age, people have lived in Pakhangyi, where uncovered stone tools were found. Moreover, there are many iron and bronze weapons, potsherds, etc. .. in Pakhangyi. According to these evidences, Stone Age, Iron Age and Bronze Age can be found in Pakhangyi. The name of Pakhangyi is derived from *kukhan-kuthan-pakhan* and finally becomes *Pakhan*.

### Art and Architecture of Temple (No. 281)

Larba Kyaw Swar ordination hall is located inside the compound of a monastery in Myay Khe' Taung village in King Makyi village tract which is about 4 miles west of Pakhangyi old city in Yezakyo township in Magwe division.

Larba Kyaw Swar ordination hall is a considerable size and is 34 feet in length, 27 feet in width and 20 feet in height. It is built on a square plinth (Fig. 1). Theyat Kin stairway (volute stairway) is on the east of entrance of the ordination hall (*Sim*). And there are also each entrance on the east and the south. The ceiling of central shrine is built with a sloping vault. Above the vault, spire is constructed on *Lalbaw* (intervening structure between successive roofs). Single spire-like roof is built over the central shrine. Flame-like epaulette pediments are ornament on corner of the sloping vault above the central shrine. Moreover, the east and south entrances seem to have two pediments, when we look outside, because additional flame-like epaulette pediments are decorated in cardinal points of the center of the central shrine (Fig. 2). There can be seen two perforated windows on the west wall of Thein and another one on the north. These windows are about 1 sq feet for lighting the Thein. The two windows on the west lighten the meditation room of interior west wall.

The front door is decorated with pointed arch and it is the original wooden door. The pediment of the front door is embellished with stucco art of arabesque, *Sain Baun* (decorative

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accent on arches in the form of a wild-ox's haunch), row of beads, frieze with pointed obovals and *Duyin* (flame like epaulette) in the middle. The pillar of the entrance is decorated with figure of lotus circle, and the base of the pillar looks like a *Kalasa* pot (Fig. 3). The north side of east entrance is also ornamented with stucco of the scrolls of arabesque dangling from *Kalasa* pot. The flame pediment on corner pillar over the cornice at the right side of east entrance is embellished with the stucco art of a monkey climbing up a tree inside a floral triangle.

The north entrance looks like a horse-shoe shape and the porch is decorated with *Hamsa* (Brahminy duck) figure. But the *Hamsa* decorated on *Sain Baun* has now been ruined. At the tail of two *Hamsa*, *Duyin* (flame like epaulette) is decorated with head of *Hamsa*. Moreover, a head of dragon (*Nagā*) can be seen on the west side of south entrance. On the east and west walls of south entrance that the stucco art of *Kalasa* pot, similar with the east entrance, is ruined. The east pillar of the southern face of Thein is based on two stacked lotus. And there can be found scrolls of arabesque over the two stacked lotus. An ivory figure ornamented between scrolls of two floral patterns can be found.

The cornice is elaborated with three types of floral designs. Curve lotus design on the lowest row of the cornice, lotus circles design included stamen in the middle on the second row, and the third row decorated with lotuses can be found. Some stucco art remains on the upper part of Thein. In the middle of the rectangle roof of Thein, there remains stucco art like a diamond figure. *Duyin* (flame like epaulette) on the sloping roof is embellished with scrolls of floral patterns (Fig. 4).

A Buddha image which faces to the east is enshrined inside Larba Kyaw Swar. There is a meditation chamber at the back of the Buddha image. The central shrine is 12 feet width and 14 feet 10 inches long. An intertwined floral design bordered by rectangle pattern can be found at the centre of ceiling. In the intertwined floral design, a scroll of arabesque in black color is painted. As the black arabesque design is based with white, the arabesque is obvious. And beside the intertwined floral design, a row of lotus rounded of rectangle pattern. The above design is rounded with another rectangle pattern like a flame (Fig. 5).

The chamber at the back of Buddha Image is 4 feet 9 inches in height and 2 feet 3 inches in width. One can see 2 perforated windows and 3 spaces for offering oil lamps. Furthermore, some of the remaining wall paintings can be found in this meditation chamber. The figure that a man holding umbrella and flower for worshipping the Buddha is painted on the wall ahead of the entrance of chamber. He has four wrinkles in his neck and wears headdress and earplug. A figure of two people holding white umbrella and *Nyaunggyay Tagon* (Pennant) to worship the Buddha is painted on the left wall of the chamber's entrance. The cloths and ornaments of the figure could hardly be distinguished male or female. They also have three wrinkles in their necks and nail color is red. A bracelet is worn on each hand. In addition, earplug and headdress is worn.

Mural paintings are decorated on the entire wall of Theinn under the colorful ceiling. Murals are drawn in six rows on each wall inside Thein. Out of these six rows, the lowest line is painted the figure of *Kalasa* pot (locally called *Pan Sike Aoo* [flower pot] or *Kyar Thut Aoo* [lotus pot]). The figure has no ink inscriptions caption. The rest 5 lines are depicted about Buddhist murals with their respective ink inscriptions captions. Under the row of floral pattern on ceiling, there are row of 28 Buddha figures with respective trees depicted about the enlightenment of Buddhas. It is supposed that, according to the drawing style of Buddha face, these murals are painted in the early Konbaung period. And the mural, the names of trees and Buddhas are written in black ink glosses that are round script, the style of early Konbaung period. The second row is painted about the scenes of *Waso* (sojourn during the Buddhist lent at a designated monastery). The year of Buddha sojourning lent, country and monastery is written in ink inscriptions under these murals.

The 10 Buddha figures out of 28 Buddha can be found on the north wall (Fig. 6). Some of these murals and ink inscriptions are now ruined. The remnants of ink inscriptions and murals are

]]oP\* & mpEü; yi füyü tawmrl [ ]]

"The Buddha Sanakgara attains enlightenment under a *Candaku*: tree"

]]r\* vmb& m; uefaumfi füyü tawmrl [ ]]

"The Buddha Mangala attains enlightenment under a *Kanko* tree"

]]olreb& m; uefaumfi füyü tawmrl [ ]]

"The Buddha Sumana attains enlightenment under a *Kanko* tree"

]]a, Owb& m; uefaumfi füyü tawmrl [ ]]

"The Buddha Yewata attains enlightenment under a *Kanko* tree"

]]aombwv& m; uefaumfi füyü tawmrl [ ]]

"The Buddha Sobhita Attains enlightenment under a *Kanko* tree"

]]raemrwowb& m; axmusefi füyü tawmrl [ ]]

"The Buddha *Anomatassi* attains enlightenment under a *Thokyan* tree".

The ink inscriptions are written under the 5 Buddha sojourning lent in the second row.

These are

]]r\*' gOefawmüOgq tawmrl [ ]]

"sojourns lent in *Migadawan* forest"

]]' kvd ? wwd ? pwpv; Eßajrmuf & mZl\* ðynbZwOefausmi f; ü oWogq [ ]  
wplq, kvpEßajrmulü wOg? Eßiq, ðajrmulü wOg? qDi awmrl [ ]]

"The second, third and fourth lent sojourn at *Jetawan* monastery in *Rajagyau*, the eleventh and twelfth lent sojourn"

]]i g; Eßajrmulü aOomv ðyn? r [ mO tawm tepkvpréclé& aom p& yüüOgq tawmrl [ ]]

"The fifth lent sojourns at *Jayat* (rest house) with tired rood in *Mahawu* forest in *Vesali* kingdom"

]]ajcmuEßajrmulü rukvawmi wü Ogq tawmrl [ ]]

"The sixth lent sojourns *Makula* mountain"

]]cEßajrmulüvmOomü Ogq tawmrl [ ]]

"the seventh lent sojourns in *Tawati's sa*"

The scene of taking delight with female attendants and royal services in *Vesali* is painted in the third line. On the east wall, the scene of the king *Kosambhi Pyan Man* enjoying wit female attendants and royal services is painted. The figures of 3 bachelors and 3 maids of honor are drawn in the north wall. Upon the maiden figures, the peacock represented the sun and, next to the maiden figures, a door watchman looking at the poalace is drawn in order. Two men offering the Buddha with *Nyaungyay* pennant and *Pauk Pauk* (pop-corn) are depicted beside the above figure. And then

]]rukvawmi füvlewüwvpmi [ ]]

"succors to human and celestial beings at *Makula* mountain"

]]wmOwübmür, tawmirewüom; wütm; w& m; a [ mí qif; vm [ ]]

"descends from *Tawati'sa* after preaching male Nat, former life mother"

]]oCló e\* ðynfo ðynfo; a, mush; ? net; r qüf; oif; ykw/nmi fa& wüclé qüf; xü yet; ayguüayguüwüzi hyaZmüus [ ]]

"The people of *Sanghassanago* kingdom offer with food, *Nyaungyay* pennant, light, umbrella and *pauk pauk* (pop corn)"

]]wmOwübmü oCló e\* ðynfo qif; vmawmrlbnfülléwüJA [ @taygi f; wüylaZmf [ ]]

"*Nats* and *Brahmas* worship while Buddha is descending from *Tawati'sa* to *Sanghassanago* kingdom" are written.

This painting is the scene that the Buddha descends to human realm from ruby stairway, the middle one, out of three stairways created by *Sakka* at the full moon day of *Thadingyut* after having preached *Abhidhama* to Nats, Brahmas from ten thousand universes and *Santusita* male *Nat* (former life mother) for three months. The figure is that the people of *Singhassanagor* kingdom welcome and worship the Buddha descending back from *Tawatimsa* surrounding by two celestial beings holding two golden umbrellas and four celestial beings holding four white umbrellas over the Buddha's head (Fig. 7).

The Mount *Meru* is painted on the east of the third row in north wall. The ink inscriptions written under the figures of Seven *Sita* (seven rivers which flow around the Mount *Meru*), Seven *Tonsan* (the seven mountains ringing Mount *Meru*) Mount *Meru*-

"A *Sata, Sita, Vinussata, Sita, Nemindara, Sita, Sudassana, Sita, Karawika, Sita, Kussindra, Sita, Yugamtho, Sita, Mount Meru*" (Fig. 8).

Beside the figure, the figures of *Naga*, *Garuda*, *Bilu* (ogre), and the fish *Ananda* guarding and ringing the Mount *Meru* can be found. Furthermore, the peacock representing the sun and the rabbit representing the moon are depicted. In the next, row the ink inscriptions that-

"The king and queen of *Sanghassanagho* kingdom go out and enjoy with male attendants and royal services" is found on the west side of the north wall. But the figure cannot be visible clearly. The ink inscriptions under the figures aesthetically drawn *Chuin: Wuin:* (Myanmar orchestra), *Kyay Wuin:* (Myanmar brass going circle), *Baum To* (shout drum), *Nha* (oboe), *Can:* (timing bell), *Wa:* (timeing clapper) two dancers and audience can be seen. The ink inscriptions are-

"Enjoy festivity with *Chuin:*, dancer, a man who climbs a post, a man who somersaults and a man who walks on a tight rope." (Fig. 9)

The members of Myanmar orchestra wear similar hair knot, white pointed turban and vest with no sleeve. It is assumed that the two dancers are *Man: Sa:* and *Man: Sa Mi:* (leading male and female performer of stage or screen) but male dancer is, on the other hand, supposed to be a female dancer if he does not wear a pointed turban. The female dancer wears *Htain Mathein:* (hip-length jacket) and long *Thabhi* (woman's skirt like a sargon) and a hair tied in losse knot. Male dancer wears pointed turban and holds a tail of peacock shape like a *San Lyak* (four edged dagger).

The painting depicted on the fifth row of north wall is *vesantara Jataka*. Each of the *Jataka* has their own ink inscriptions described about *Jataka*.(Fig. 10)

The ink inscriptions of painting of the third row is found that "... human and Nat venerate at the forest". The ink inscriptions of next paintings are "the king *Kosamhiparan* enjoy with female attendants and royal services." This mural is depicted as the king and queen enjoying with five maidens of honor at the north side and three bachelors at the south side. The bachelors wear pointed turbans and upper portion of the body is naked. The maidens wear *Thabhi* (lower garment) up to upper part of abdominal cavity (wear *Thabhi Ranlya;*) Moreover, they wear bracelets and ear plugs, and have wrinkles on the throat.

Ink inscriptions of the next murals are "*Palala'* elephant offers food with alms bowl at *Paliya* forest" and "worship at *Tala Ponna's* village." That "the king *Veranijara* enjoys with female attendants and royal services" figure is drawn beside the above mural. The next figures are depicted about "*Punna* procures ruby at the summit of *Vepula* Mountain" and "the 500 ogres guarding the ruby are afraid of *Punna* and flee away."

### Conclusion

Temple (No. 281) is a kind of large Thein. It was built on a square plith. All wall paintings of in this ordination hall are large and clear. The ink inscriptions of Konbaung period are easy to decipher because they are round scripts like today scripts. The painting of the 10 *Jataka* are not

only for decoration but also for educating for those who believe in Buddhism. Thus the 10 Jatakas extracted from Pitaka have influenced on Myanmar culture and tradition as well as Myanmar paintings. According to the mural painting, art and architecture of Temple (No. 281) may be created in Konbaung period.

### Acknowledgements

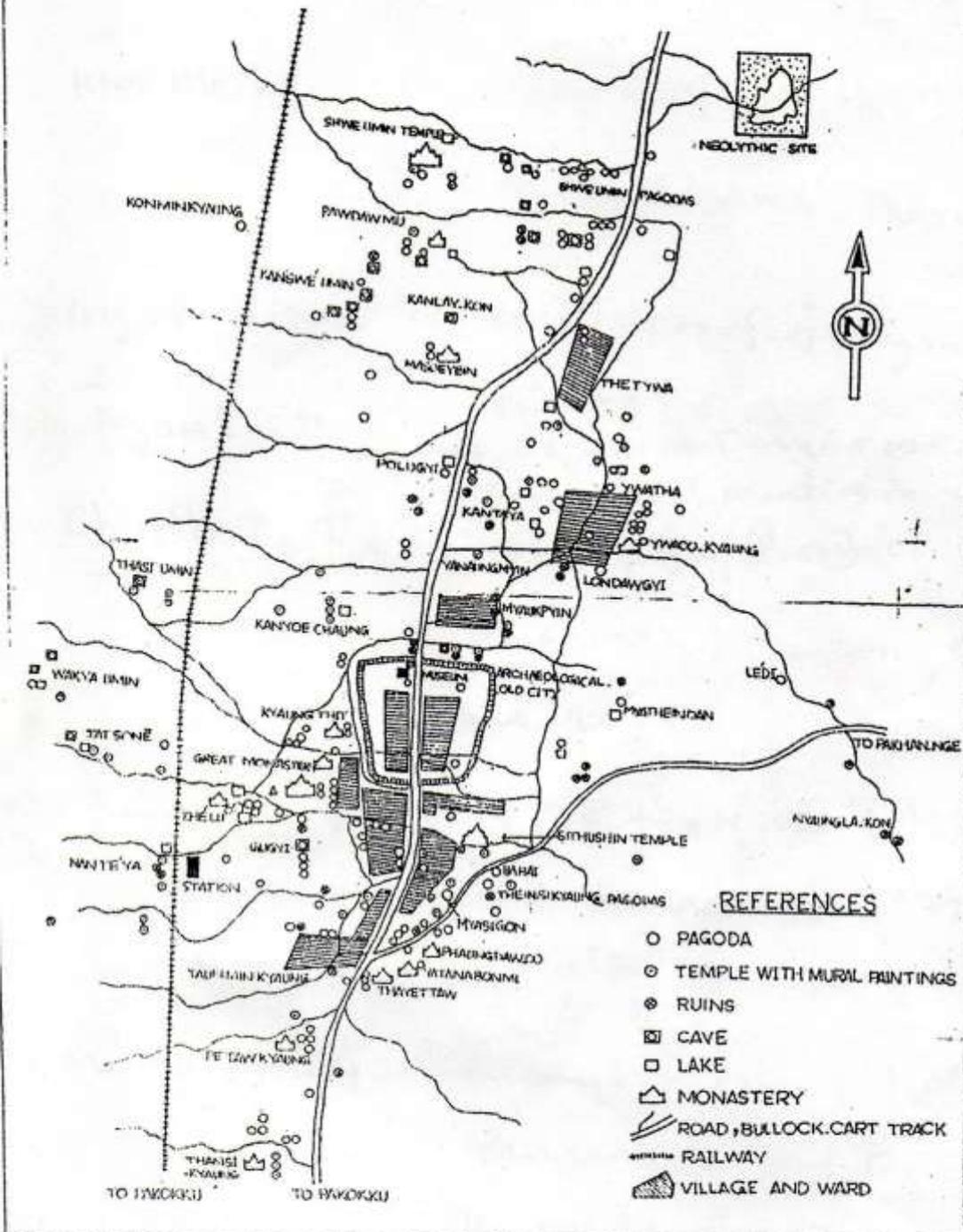
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PAKHANGYI IN PAKOKKU DISTRICT  
 ENVIRONS OF THE OLD BUILDINGS, ARCHAEOLOGICAL MAP

SCALE, 5 INCHES : 1 MILE



Map – 1 Map of Pakhangyi Old City



Fig. 1 Larba Kyaw Swar Ordination Hall



Fig. 2 The entrance seems to have two pediments



Fig. 3 The eastern porch

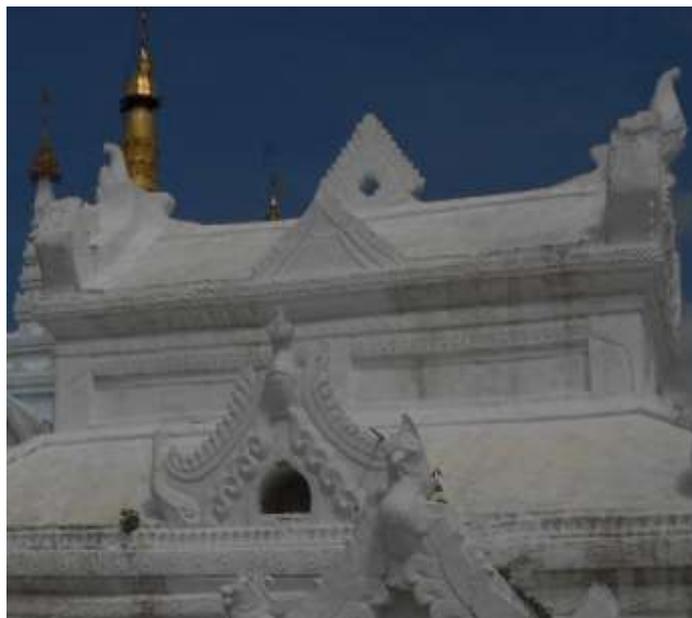


Fig. 4 The sloping roof of Larba Kyaw Swar



Fig. 5 The ceiling painting of the central shrine



Fig. 6 The 28 Buddha



Fig. 7 The Buddha descending back from *Tāvātimsā*

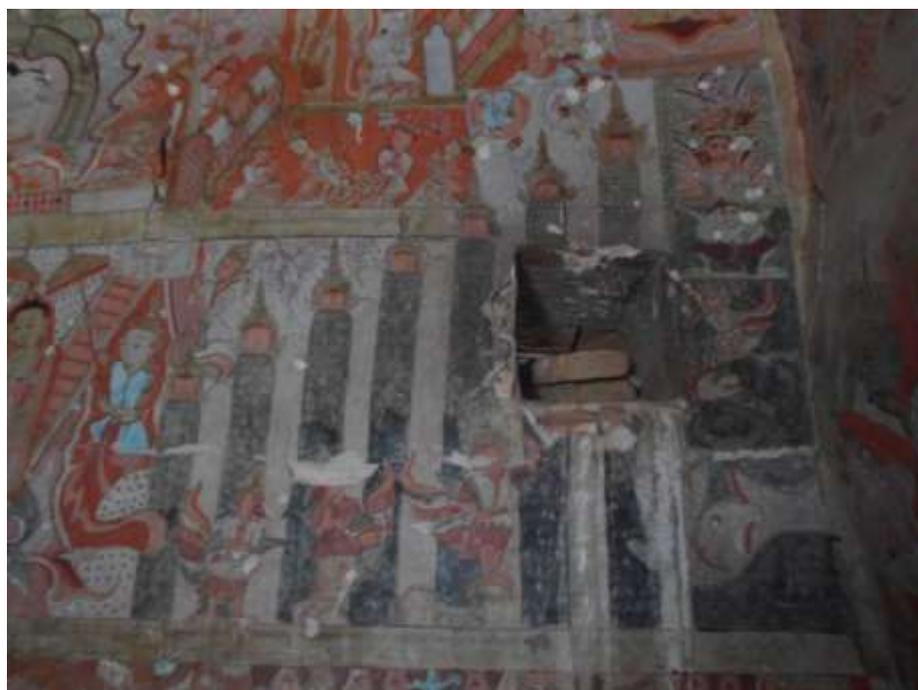


Fig. 8 The Mount *Meru*



Fig. 9 Enjoy festivity painting from Thein



Fig. 10 *Vesantarā Jataka*

