

Urban Structure of Amarapura (1782-1858)

Khin Myint Swe*

Abstract

This paper describes how security was the central factor in the selection of the site for founding the capital. It describes the systematic layout of the palace building, administrative office buildings, residential quarters of royal servicemen and civilians, economic centers like markets, bazaars and brokers centers and religious buildings and monuments. It describes where lapers and poppers were quartered in the outskirts of the city and also where the Manipuris, Indians and Thais were placed in the suburban areas.

Introduction

The years from 1782 to 1858 were normally designed by Myanmar historians as Amarapura period. But politically the real golden of Amarapura covers the short period 1782-1819 i.e King Badon's reign. In the intervening of 13 years 1824-1887 Amarapura ceased to be the capital. In the entire Konbaung Period (1752-1885) that lasted for 133 years, new capitals were founded at seven places. Amarapura became capital twice and its life lasted 62 years over half a century and five kings ruled there. It was King Badon who founded and urbanized Amarapura.

The founding of the Capital "Amarapura" began in A.D. 1782. On 20, October A.D. 1782 King Badon despatched Minister Maha Sithu and Nay Myo Zeya Gamani to the place named "Hti Paung Ka" to build there a new palace city. They were provided with 3000 viss of silver issued from the royal treasury.⁴ They went there with a party of architects, carpenters and several construction workers. After consultation with the learned men, it was decided to build a new palace city on the even level site measuring 3000 tars to the east of Hti Paung Ka.⁵ On 30, December A.D. 1782 the ground breaking ceremony was held and scaffolding was set up.⁶

On the completion of the new palace, the capital was moved from Inwa to Amarapura on 12, May 1783 and the king took occupancy in the new palace.⁷ On 17, May 1783, official names "Amarapura" for the new capital and "MyaNan Bon San" for the new palace city and "Aung Nan San Ya" for the new palace were given and Mawgun Taing commemorative wooden posts bearing these names engraved on the

*Professor, Dr., Department of History, Yadanabon University

⁴Mahathihapura, Amarapura myo ti min ayetawpon (The Diary of the Founder of Amara pura) (1781-1784), Palm leaves MS, Khoau-jharh, 7 Dozen 1 leave, Amarapura, Taunglaylone Monastery, U Pyinnya Collection, 1784, p.go-verso (Henceforth: Mahathihapura, 1781-84) Pe MS, U Pyinnya Collection)

⁵(a) Mahathihapura, 1781-84, go-recto, Pe MS, U Pyinnya Collection

(b) Ko Pyinya, Nan Amara Nidan (The Foundation of Amarapura), Sitpyan (Vetera) Magazine, No.81,114

⁶Tikkha dhammarlinkarra, *Myanma Yetswe Thamaing* (The Chronology Order of Konbaung Dynasty), Mandalay, Bamakhit Sarpe, 1969, p.184 (Henceforth: Tikkha, 1969)

⁷Tikkha, 1969, 188

gilt wooden plate were hoisted at respective places.⁸ Hence since that date 1783 the new city Amarapura came into being as the capital as well as the centre of administration of royal domains.

At the first founding of Amarapura its urban area was much larger than today's township area. According to the map recorded in Amarapura *parabaik*⁹ (folding papers) the extent of its urban area is mentioned as follows:

"... to the east it reaches Zaung Kalaw Lake, to the south-east it reaches Taung Myint Village, to the south it reaches Taung Tha Man Lake, to the south west it reaches Shwe Kyet Yet Pagoda, to the west it reaches Tet They Inn Lake, to the north it reaches Mandalay Myin Wun Mingyi Monastery and to the north east it reaches Aung Pin Lei Lake".¹⁰

The shape of Amarapura at that time was an elongation from north-east to south-west sandwiched between the River Ayeyarwaddy and Taung Tha Man Lake forming like an island. Being surrounded with bodies of water around, Amarapura seemed as though its land area was restricted. But such a location probably was an advantage for the security of the Capital as well as for the palace. This security provided by natural barriers prevented easy access to the palace for internal and external rebels. Bodies of water serving as defence made easy escape of the internal rebels and easy invasion of the external rebels impossible. Some plain lands existed to the north of the Capital and on these plain lands were constructed religious monuments and monastic buildings. In that way the new palace was secured behind such religious structures. When a new king ascended to the throne, the longevity of his reign and security of his palace was most important therefore it is to be presumed that the security of the palace was the central factor in the selection of the site for founding the new Capital "Amarapura".

A new plan for the security of the capital Amarapura was launched by King Bagan who made Amarapura the capital for the third time. In the first Anglo-Myanmar war, Myanmar experienced and learnt the fighting ability of the British navy. When Taung Tha Man Lake to the south of the capital was brimful in the peak of monsoon, the British navy could easily come in from the Ayeyarwaddy River right into the Lake to attack the Capital. To prevent that possible danger, U Pein Bridge was built over the Lake in A.D 1840.¹¹ The Bridge spanned the Lake from the west bank to the east bank aligning towards the north-east direction. In the middle of the Bridge was a passage for the royal flotilla to pass through. The British painter C. Grant who accompanied the British Embassy that arrived in Amarapura in A.D. 1855¹² recorded in his paintings the

⁸5(a) Tikka, 1969, 189

(b) 1143 hma sa rui Dhumingala Thumingala ahmu to Ahto kauk matpon (KingBadon's Diary, 1781), Palmleaves MS, no-pu, 8 leaves, Amarapura, Taung laylone monastery, U Pyinnya-zawta Collection, noau-verso (Henceforth: Dumangala, Pe MS, U Pyinnya Collection)

⁹See Map (1)

¹⁰Shehaung sarpe thutethi tau (Tun Yee), Nan:mrui nay mre athwe thwe Parabaik (The Maps of Royal Cities in Parabaik MS), Yangon, Seinpan myaing Sarpe, n.d., Map No.4

¹¹Ashin Pyinnya Zawta, *Other Places of Historical Interest around the Taungthaman Lake*, Yangon, Department of Religious Affairs, 1982, p.41 (Henceforth: Pyinnya Zawta, 1982)

¹²Henry Yule, *A Narrative of the Mission to the Court of Ava in 1855*, London Oxford University Press, 1968, p.132 (Henceforth: Henry Rule, 1968)

scene he eyewitnessed the King's servicemen in the flotilla doing naval exercise in the Lake to the north of the Bridge. The advantages of building this Bridge were, firstly the barrier against the naval attack by the British, secondly communication between the capital and villages on the other side of the Lake; and thirdly providing natural beauty to enjoy while crossing the Bridge.

The urban plan of the capital shows that the town planning followed the topography of the site. It is important to note that the Palace was built simultaneously with the building of the seven auspicious structures¹³ at seven places of the capital.¹⁴ The Palace stood at the centre of the capital as well as at the "hub" of the entire kingdom. The golden palace(Shwe Nandaw)assumed the most significant position for the development of Buddha Sasana, for the security of the King and for efficient administration of the royal domains.

The palace city (Nan Myo-daw) covered an area of 2000 tars. At every tar¹⁵ distance there were two merlons (Thu-ye-Kho), totalling 4000 merlons. The height of the city wall was 18 cubits and 2 mites. On each side of the square palace city were three city gates, totalling 12 city gates on all four sides. Altogether 30 millions baked bricks were used in constructing the city walls. The palace city was 120 tars north to south and 137 tars east to west covering an area of 514 tars. On the palace platform were spacings — from the steps leading to the principal building called "Myay Nan" to the east where the Dagani (Red Door) was a spacing of 18 tars. From there to Yway Taw Yu door was a spacing of 24 tars and from the city wall to Thit-tat (wooden defence) was the spacing of 6 Tars, totalling 48 tars. Outside the Thit Tat was the moat 10 tars wide and ten cubits deep encircling the city.¹⁶ For the security of the Palace city the brick walls, Thit Tat and the moat were built. For the security of the capital there was an earthen wall to the east of the Capital.¹⁷ In the lay-out of the Capital the location of the palace city was most important.

Next to the palace in terms of importance was the location of the residences for the monks who were in the service of Buddha Sasana. In A.D. 1786 there were 4462 monks¹⁸ and novices in Amarapura. They were housed in 43 monasteries an average of over 100 in every monastery. There were 12 monasteries to the north, 23 to the east, and 7 to the west of the palace city. Location of more monasteries to the east and north of the palace city was in accordance with the precedent as well as the traditional rite and the important priority given to Buddha Sasana. The reason why only 7 monasteries were built to the west of the palace city was the unique topography of that place which

¹³ The Royal Palace, The Capital, The Moat, The Cave, The monastery, The Library (Pitaka Taik), The Lake

¹⁴ *Konbaungzet Mahayazawundawgyi* (The Great Chronicle of Konbaung Dynasty) edited by U Maung Maung Tin, Vol. II, Yangon, Laydimandaing Press, 1968, Third edition, p.592 (Henceforth: *Konbaungzet, 1968*)

¹⁵ 1 tar = 7 taung, 10 feet 6 inches

¹⁶ Mahathihathura, 1784, gam-verso

¹⁷ See Map (2)

¹⁸(a) Mahathihathura, 1784, jhe-rector

(b) Ni Tut, History of Buddhism in Myanmar (1782-1858) , Mandalay, Art & Science University, Department of History, M.A. Thesis, 1982, p.44 (Henceforth: Ni Tut, 1982)

faced Taung Tha Man Lake, thus making the place most pleasant and quiet, befitting the recluses who were always involved in the practice of the Dhamma. Judging by the number of monasteries in these three directions, north, east and west, it could be estimated that there were 1200 monks and novices residing in northern monasteries, 2300 in the eastern monasteries and 700 in the western monasteries. Location of more monasteries to the north of the palace city may have been motivated partly by reason of security. In the urban planning of Amarapura it is to be noted that the location of monasteries had three objectives. Firstly peaceful and quiet atmosphere suitable for the practice of Dhamma, secondly aloofness from the lay living quarters and thirdly the desire to keep more monasteries to the east of the palace city. As for the monasteries in other directions, the sites most suitable for the practice of the Dhamma were chosen. For example facing Taung Tha Man Lake were U Yin Taik, Moan Taw Taik, and Kyaw Aung San Hta Taik monastic complexes were built. In urban planning of a city systematic location of residential quarters and buildings was also important from architectural point of view.

Topographically speaking the site of the Capital Amarapura was restricted and narrow. Within the capital, it is noticed, that long residential quarters according to the profession and trade and religious monuments and monasteries were mixed up. In moving his Capital from Inwa to Amarapura, King Badon also moved monasteries, lay residential quarters and bazaars. Ethnic groups in lay residential quarters were prisoners of war (POWs) brought to the Capital by King Myey Du (Hsin Byu Shin) and King Badon (Bodawpaya). Additional POW settlements at the Capital in the time of King Badon took place only after the founding of the new capital Amarapura. There were residential quarters formed on the basis of same profession or trade. The names of the residential quarters bespeak the type of profession or trade of the residents of the quarters. For example artisans who produced smoking pipes, knives, grain storage baskets, lamps, mirrors, fans, elongated drums etc, gold smith, black smith, footwear makers, sewers and tailors, grocerors, pop-corn and roasted bean makers,¹⁹ etc. In the suburban areas were quartered Manipuris, Indians, Thais (Yodiyas) etc. Manipuris were employed in armed forces - gunnery, artillery, cavalry, and flotilla as well as in the service of royal children and ministers. There were two kinds of Indian residents - Pathi Indians lived in the outskirts of the Capital. They were either employed in the King's service or they were free traders, Thosaung Indians (Probably Portuguese half cast) were employed in artillery guarding the palace. To the west of the capital was a separate residential quarters for the Chinese known as Tayoke Tan. Thais (Yodiyas) lived in Yodiya Yat and Yodiya bazaar.²⁰

After Amarapura was founded King Badon systematically carried out the programme of urbanisation by forming Su, Yat, and Tan for residential quarters on the basis of profession and trade. Twenty Su's were founded on the suitable sites around the Palace, and 32 Yats and 21 Tans were founded in the Capital. Besides, villages, islands, and recluses which already existed within the boundary of Amarapura area before the capital was founded continued to exist. Although urbanisation seemed well planned and systematic, residents were mixed up.

¹⁹Toe Hla, *Myanma Naingngan during the reign of King Badon, Mandalay*, Art & Science University, Department of History, M.A. Thesis, 1970, ni (Henceforth: Toe Hla, 1970)

²⁰Toe Hla, 1970,

Amarapura was founded on the site of original 18 villages. Therefore residential populace increased. According to the 1783 census there were 3585 traders, 11472 service men, totalling 15457,²¹ by the then standards, the biggest population for a Capital. But the town "Alone" at that time had much greater population — 7734 traders, and 9684 servicemen totalling 17418²² exceeding the population of Amarapura by over 2000. The reasons why Alone town had a greater population were firstly it was the fief of King Badon, secondly it was economically prosperous and developed and thirdly lands were granted to service men to live on and to grow crop for food supply.

There were bazaars in the Capital for the selling and buying of public needs. The four main bazaars were (1) Tagun Taing Zey bazaar to the south east coner (2) Hsin Kyone Zey bazaar to the north east coner (3) Nyaung Bin Zey bazaar (Yodaya Zey) to the south near the Ayeyarwaddy River and (4) Kathe Zey bazaar to the south west of the Capital(today south of the hospital).

Inspectors and informants were appointed to check weight, measurement etc of the goods in accordance with the standards set by the royal order. They were on duty day and night by turn. Current prices of the goods at the river ports and brokerage centers were reported monthly to the bazaar office. Ta Gun Taing Zey bazaar continues to exist till today, but Hsin Kyone Zey bazaar ceased to exist. Yodaya Zey bazaar has disappeared not long ago, whereas Kathe Zey bazaar now evolves into Kathe residential quarters. These bazaars were located at the places either close to the Ayeyawaddy River or on four sides of the Capital. There was no big market in Amarapura of those days. The four zey bazaars were meant for the convenience of the nearly 150000 residents and the sellers and buyers from far and near.²³ It is to be noted that names of the zey bazaars took after the name of the locality or the ethnic group. These zey bazaars were the centres of distribution of the daily needs of the urban population.

The total number of houses in the capital tended to decrease rather than increase. In the time of King Badon, the 1795 Census showed that there were 70000 houses within the Capital. In 1838 in the reign of King Thayawaddy only 40000 remained in the Capital. In King Mindon's reign when the capital was about to move to Mandalay the number of houses in Amarapura was conspicuously reduced to 20000.²⁴

Nevertheless we may say that of the capitals in the Konbaung dynasty, Amarapura lasted, as Capital. From the founding date of 17, May A.D. 1783 to 16, March 1824, Amarapura as Capital lasted 41 years. When it again became Capital from 29, November 1839 to 16 June 1858 it lasted 19 years.²⁵ Therefore its age as

²¹Frank N. Trager & William J. Koenig: *Burmese Sittan 1764-1826*, Records of Rural life and Administration, U.S.A, The University of Arizona Press, 1979, p.405 (Henceforth: Trager, 1979)

²²Trager, 1979, 401

²³(a) Dr. Than Tun, *The Royal Order of Burma, part.iv (A.D. 1782-1787)*, Kyoto, The Centre for Southeast Asia Studies, Kyoto University, 1986, pp.416-417 (Henceforth: Than Tun, 1986 a)

(b) Ni Tut, 1982, 45

²⁴U Tin, *Myanmar min oakchokepon sardan hnit Bodaw Phaya ei Yazathat khaw so law Ameintaw tangyi* (Administration under the Myanmar Kings and King Badawhpaya's royal order called Yazathat), Vol. II, Yangon, Central Press, 1965, p. 127 (Henceforth: Tin, 1965)

²⁵Tikkha, 1969, 189, 359, 570, 766

Capital was 60 years in total. After 1858 Amarapura was relegated to Southern town (Taung Myo) or old city (Myo Haung) and it was amalgamated into the boundary of new capital Ratanapon Mandalay.²⁶ Therefore we notice that Amarapuraas Capital lasted longer than other capitals of Konbaung period such as Shwebo, Sagaing, Inwa and Mandalay.

Urban conditions of Amarapura may be gleaned from royal orders by the kings who reigned in Amarapura. On the night of 4 February 1788, a big fire broke out in the Capital. Whereupon King Badon issued the following royal order to prevent the recurrence of such disaster as follows:

"To put out the fire before dawn, Ministers, Junior Ministers, governors, clerks, superintendents of jails, organize men and women from residential quarters, Su, Yat, etc and open Mok U Gate and Lay Nyan Gate and make them take water from the moat and put out the fire".²⁷

Four days after the issue of the above order, another fire outbreak took place on 8, February A.D. 1788. The King issued the second royal order thus:

"Headmen of the residential quarters where fire broke out, are held responsible for their failure to put out the fire when it started, therefore it spread. By beating gongs of notification, let these headmen go round every nook and earner to prohibit the use of bamboo roofing and mat walling in houses. Let houses in the Lanes and on the main streets obey this order. Do not let them extend their dwellings for opening shops. Let the headmen of the residential quarters effectively execute their duties regarding fire outbreak preventive measures. *Myo Wuns* (town governors), enforce fire fighting measures, order every house to keep hook, pole etc to kill fire and pots filled with water to fight fire. Headmen of residential quarters, be warned that there be no more cases of fire hazard. Should fire hazard be reported, *Myo Wuns* (town governors) would receive due punishment".²⁸

The above royal order tells us how King Badon personally took concern and responsibility regarding fire hazard and disaster by enforcing penalties for failure or negligence of duties and by taking preventive and protective measures in urban administration.

On 15, February A.D. 1788 the following royal order was issued regarding the rehabilitation of the fire-affected quarters:

"The houses in the Tan quarters in the capital destroyed by fire must be rebuilt with brick: Regarding the bamboo houses, the roof, the wall and the floor must be thickly covered with earth plaster".²⁹

In spite of these royal orders to prevent fire disaster, another fire outbreak took place on 24 , March A.D. 1810, as evidenced by the following royal order dated 29 , March A.D. 1810.

"With the exception of nocturnal palace guards' quarter in Thit Tat to the west of the Palace, all houses and huts must be demolished completely. All buildings in the yards of ministers, princes, princesses in which the retainers and employees were housed within 210 tars' distance from the palace must be moved out".³⁰

²⁶Candi sitke Minhiinyarzar, *Great Chronological in the Ratanarbon period*, Mandalay, Telnelin Press, 1969, p. 15 (Henceforth: Minhtinyarzar, 1969)

²⁷Than Tun, *The Royal Order of Burma, part, v (AD. 1788-1806)*, Kyoto, The Centre for Southeast Asia Studies, Kyoto University, 1986, p.364 (Henceforth: Than Tun, 1986b)

²⁸Than Tun, 1986b, 365

²⁹Than Tun, 1986b, 376

³⁰Than Tun, 1986b, 701

The above order was a clean-up measure to address urban congestion and to enforce discipline of a town life. Another royal order dated 30, March A.D. 1810 dealt with the religious properties at the fire-damaged religious monuments and buildings. It is as follows:

"The properties affected by the fire outbreak must be taken care of and kept in safe custody".³¹

On 31, March A.D. 1810 another royal order was issued dealing with the relief measures for the fire victims. Dry ration especially paddy was distributed free to them:-

"Out of the paddy taken from the granaries in the compounds of the houses of Wundauks (Junior Ministers) a year supply for the servants must be kept and retained and the rest to be donated as royal dana (giving) to fire Victims of the Wun Saye Asu (clerks' residential quarter). See if every victim received his or her share. For the servicemen who were entitled to paddy supply, a year's supply must be kept apart and the rest must be distributed to fire victims of public. Servicemen under Crown Prince must donate all paddy in the Crown Prince's granaries to fire victims. The reason why paddy from the granaries of Wundauk and Crown Prince was the destruction by fire of royal granaries."³²

To rehabilitate fire victims, to rebuild houses on the sites of fire destruction, to compile inventory regarding the fire-destroyed monasteries and to support and donate monks and novices who fell victim to fire, another royal order was issued on 5, April 1810. It reads as follows:

"Gates and turrets of the Palace city which were destroyed by fire must be replaced by new ones which must be made at Mingun and must be brought to the palace city and be installed properly at their respective places".³³

"Monks and novices whose monasteries were destroyed by fire must be allowed to move to other suitable places. Princes "Hmudaws and Mattaws who resided near Mingun Shwe Settaw Pagoda must build monasteries for them and provide them with needy supports. Submit reports on lists of the names of donors, supports, types of donation and supports, and names of recipient monks and novices. Submit reports with lists on the names and number of monasteries destroyed by fire, the number and names of monks and novices in each fire destroyed monastery, names and number of religious literature, scriptures Tipitaka in each of the fire destroyed monasteries".³⁴

On 11, April A.D. 1806 another fire incident broke out. A royal order was issued to punish those servicemen who did not appear to fight fire and too rescue the victims. The order was as follows:

"Punish according to traditional precedent, those who did not come to the Palace Interior, Hluttaw and Yon daw when fire broke out destroying the monastery built by Dawei Bo to the east of the Palace city. Those who were sentenced to the punishment of being pressed with logs and being burnt in hot sun shine because of their absence on the scene at the time of fire outbreak at Zibyu Kon Taung must be set free from these punishments".³⁵

Because of frequent fire outbreaks in the Capital Amarapura in the time of King Badon, his successor, King Sagaing (A.D. 1819-1837) decided to leave

³¹Than Tun, 1986b, 702

³²Than Tun, 1986b, 704

³³Than Tun, 1986b, 707

³⁴Than Tun, 1986b, 708

³⁵Than Tun, 1956b, 853

Amarapura and move the Capital and Palace to Inwa. On 25, April A.D. 1821 another fire outbreak took place in Kan Thaya quarter to the south of the Palace. The fire destroyed the buildings around the palace, including houses on the main road, Minister's house, Win Hmu's house, the *Hluttaw*, Tooth Relic Tower, Clock Drum Tower, and north Gate of the palace city.³⁶

Although there were bodies of water around the Capital, it was the city exposed to the eventuality of fire outbreak. Especially the two months in the peak of summer, March and April are extremely hot during which fire outbreak occurs. The main causes of fire disaster were (1) the intensity of heat in summer months (2) highly flameable materials used in house building (3) narrow and restricted site of the Capital and (4) Public carelessness regarding fire. Although the king imposed precautionary and preventive measures and severe punishment for carelessness and negligence of duty, fire accident did not disappear but it frequented. Therefore urban planning, preventive measures, location of dug water wells for public consumption and law enforcement were ineffective to address fire disaster.

The Capital Amarapura was the centre of the administration of the entire kingdom. Five *Hlutyone* offices controlled the administration.³⁷ The king took the principal role in administration. In the urban administration of the Capital, there was a bureaucracy of servicemen in a vertical order with the king as the highest authority. But the King also exercised direct control. He appointed directly officers of East *yonedaw*. For town administration there were four governors of the Capital, four superintendents of jail, four town clerks, four jail clerks, twelve army officers in charge of city gates were directly appointed by the king. The following is the royal order appointing town governors.

"In the four jurisdictional areas of the town governors, the governors concerned must keep constant watch and inspection for the tight security within and outside the capital and Palace city. Traders, merchants, shop keepers who come by land and water to trade centres and bazaars must use the standardised weights and measurements with royal trade marks. There must be no overcharges in toll, tax collection and other customs duties and transportation fare. At the twelve city gates, the guards must keep tight security day and night and check the entry or exit of strangers. There must be no cases of theft robbery or fire accident in the residential quarters - yat su, kwet su, etc within and outside the palace city. No strangers from other places who had never been to the Capital must not be allowed to stay at the Capital. Inspect and check very carefully and thoroughly. There must be no bullying nor persecution of the poor, commoners. If strangers, hooligans and bad men were caught, they must be thoroughly examined and given due punishment. Trials and punishment be reported in detail. The Wuns (governors) must use the precedents and customary laws in the exercise of their jurisdictional power and submit report".³⁸

The following was an excerpt from the record of question and answer session between the king and ministers regarding the law enforcement administration and jurisdiction.

³⁶Tikkha, 1969, 336

³⁷U Tin, *Myanmar min Oakchoke pan sardan hnit Bodaw phaya ei Yazathat khaw so thaw Ameint daw tangyi* (Administration under the Myanmar Kings and King Badawhpaya's royal order called Yazathat), Vol.IV, Yangon, Department of Culture, 1976, pp.1-45 (Henceforth: Tin, 1976)

³⁸Tin, 1976, 28-29

"King Badon —" How are paddy rice, pressed salted fish and salt sold and bought? What are their prices?"

"Myo Wun (Town governor) Nay Myo Gamani - "of the goods brought by traders and merchants from eight directions, these are normal prices- 100 baskets of paddy kyats 10/- 100 viss of pressed salted fish kyats 2.2/- and 100 viss of salt kyat 1.1".³⁹

That shows the urban administration was placed in the hands of town governors. But the following royal order proves the involvement of the king's direct control. It was issued on 24 February A.D. 1782 dealing with such crimes as robbery and armed attack rampant in the city:-

"It is learnt that from within and outside the capital to villages there is rampant robbery and armed assault to loot property and wealth "causing instability and breakdown of law and order. Royal order has been issued dated 12 waxing Tabaung night Sakarit year'1143 to maintain law and order. But my royal order was not enforced and carried out effectively. That is why the property and wealth of Kalas were robbed by Nga Aung Myin and Nga Lun Bwe. Were Wuns unaware of this robbery? Capture the robbers, to expose them to public by the beating of gong and taking them along within and outside the capital to nine city gates. Let the public see them. In future if such a crime is reported, no excuse."⁴⁰

Another royal order dated 6, February A.D. 1782 deals with the prevention of fire accident.

"Wild wind has arisen. Inspect and check the areas around the Palace within and outside far and near of the Capital, residential quarters, Yat, Su, Kwet Su, etc to see there is no fire hazard. Tighten check and inspection to see every house keep hook, pointed pole, bamboo flap and water pots filled with water to put out fire. Old bamboo walls, doors widows be replaced by new ones. Check there be no single piece of garbage. Tightly and thoroughly inspect and check".⁴¹

Because it was learnt that town governors, superintendents of jail and town clerks did not execute their duties diligently and that they were taking presents and bribes, another royal order was issued by King Badon on 19 March A.D. 1783.-

"In accordance with the precedents and customary laws of royal ancestors, criminal cases such as theft, robbery that occurs within and outside the capital, residential quarters, yat-su, kwet su etc must be brought to law, examined and punished. Town governors and superintendents of jail, and town clerks were appointed. But they ignored, neglected and did not care and were "not afraid of the consequences of their guilt. They did not investigate and did not take action against law breakers. Thieves and robbers are rampant in residential quarters such as yat su, kwet su, etc. When headmen of residential quarters arrested these criminals and took them to the authorities concerned, no due punishment was given to them. Because of bribery and corruption criminals were let free. The King was fully informed of such cases. Did not Ministers hear such cases? In future, should such cases recur, no excuse and no explanation be accepted. Harshly reprimand town governors and superintendents of jail. Order them to execute their duties diligently and seriously. Chief of superintendents of jail Min ye, Take tight security measures, investigate and arrest all malcontents so that there be no recurrence of theft and robbery".⁴²

In the palace, only the King, Queen, lesser queens members of royal family, princes, princesses, royal children, royal relatives , ministers and their household

³⁹Tin, 1976, 28-29

⁴⁰Than Tun, 1986a, 222

⁴¹Than Tun, 1986a, 244

⁴²Than Tun, 1986 a, 247

servants and retainer. On four sides, outside the palace city were located royal servicemen and non-servicemen and their families. Of them there were two classes; those who deserved to live in a big house with a vast yard or compound and those who did not deserve to live in a big house with a vast yard or compound. A royal order dated 11, July A.D. 1783 was issued pertaining to the specific type of residential design for these two classes.

"It is reported to His Majesty that due to the occupancy of houses with vast yards by those who do not deserve and are not entitled to such privilege, such as junior officers, clerks and minor staff, many commoners have not enough land to live on. With a reference map the royal order has been issued to show places where those who deserve and are entitled to live in a house with a vast yard should be allocated. But this order was not carried out accordingly. People just occupied places regardless of the royal order, leaving no room or space for commoners. Therefore, carry out the royal orders. Let those who deserve and are entitled to live in a house with a vast yard live according to the tradition and customs. Move out those who do not deserve and are not entitled to such a privilege. Those who deserve to live within the palace city must be settled within the palace city. Settle properly and appropriately those who deserve and are entitled to live in a house with a vast yard".⁴³

From the above royal order we learn that a clear cut line of division of social classes on the basis of rank and office of royal servicemen was followed in the urban settlement of the Capital Amrapura.

Another royal order issued on 3, March A.D. 1784 dealt with the assignment of duties of night guards. It runs as follows:

"It has been reported to His Majesty that" "in the assignment of the duties of night guards at four Windows, the Hluttaw is using its authority. If so, security work be endangered and crimes would crop up. Do not assign them to such duties at four Windows. Let them be on duty where they are stationed."⁴⁴

Another royal order concerns the use of standardized silver as the medium of exchange and the action to be taken against the use of debased silver for the medium of exchange. It was issued on 16, October A.D. 1783: -

"Previously different types of silver were minted for medium of exchange. Therefore a royal order has been issued that only three standardized types of silver - Ywet so, Ywet they and Ywet Ni must be minted for medium of exchange."⁴⁵

The above royal orders show us that in the urban administration of Amrapura there were two systems — (1) through town governors and their associates by directives and (2) direct administration by the king by occasionally issuing royal orders.

The matters which fell under the second system ie. direct control by royal orders are (1) Prevention of fire outbreak (2) cleaning and beautification of the Capital (3) reckless horse-riding in the streets and lanes of the capital (4) suppression of criminals in the Capital (5) habilitation of servicemen and commoners in the capital and (6) in the use of silver for medium of exchange, prescription of standardized silver "Ywet Ni" silver.

Amrapura also became the centre of Buddha Sasana. Many religious buildings were constructed by royal order. Prominent pagodas built by King Badon were four

⁴³Than Tun, 1986a, 264

⁴⁴Than Tun, 1986a, 313

⁴⁵Than Tun, 1986a, 286

pagodas, each at one corner of the Palace city⁴⁶ and Sanda Muni Iron Buddha Image enshrined in a Temple known as Amarapura Pahto dawgyi. Other religious monuments dedicated by his successor kings were Loka Mani Cula at Ngwe-daw-Kyi-gon) built by king Thayawaddy, and Taung Tha Man Kyauk Taw Gyi Temple by the side of Taung Tha Man Lake by King Bagan Today in Amarapura there are forty nine pagodas, forty nine monasteries, ninety nine rest houses (zayat).⁴⁷ These religious monuments and buildings occupy 1/5 of the area of Amarapura. In the mural paintings of Taung Tha Man Kyauk Taw Gyi Temple built by King Bagan are found pictures of renovated pagodas, ordination halls, monasteries and rest house within, around and in the distance of the Capital. We can gain a glimpse of social life of Amarapura in urban surrounding of those days.⁴⁸

These are pictorial records of religious monuments - pagodas, Tazaungs, monasteries, rest houses, lay dwellings in the time of Myanmar Kings. In A.D. 1855 during the reign of King Mindon, an English embassy headed by Major Arther Phayre arrived in Amarapura. In his party were a photographer Tright and an artist Grant. The former made a photographic record of pagodas, and monasteries of Amarapura, the latter painted 106 sceneries of the Ayeyawaddy River starting from Yangon to Amarapura.⁴⁹ In Grant's pictures were ariel views of vista vision of Amarapura taken from eight directions. We may sketch a rough idea of the urban plan of Amarapura and the system of the allocation of public dwellings.

King Mindon founded Mandalay in A.D. 1858. Since then Amarapura was amalgamated within the "golden" boundary (Shwe Kyo That Nei Myey) of new Capital Mandalay. One of the major causes of moving the palace city and the capital to Mandalay was the defeat in the second Anglo-Myanmar War of 1852. There were monk Sayadaws who did not approve but opposed the transfer of the Capital to Mandalay. But King Mindon founded Mandalay and he assumed the title of "the founder of a new Capital Mandalay and relegated Amarapura to a town within the

⁴⁶Four pagodas, each at one corner of the Palace City

1. Corner of Northeast - Shwekunok
2. Corner of Southeast - Shwe sagar
3. Corner of Southwest - Shwe linpin
4. Corner of Northwest - Shingyo Shwecgu

⁴⁷(a) Amarapura Gazetteer, Amarapura, Party Unit, 1982, p.20 (Henceforth: Amarapura Gazetteer, 1982)

(b) Win Kyi (Amarapura), "The brief history of Amarapura from the Old monastery", Hanthawaddy newspaper, 17 December 1972, ga

⁴⁸U Myint Aung and U Khin Maung Phyu "Study of mural paintings and architecture of Taungthaman Kyauktawgyi pagoda in Amarapura", University Research Journal, Vol.1, part, ii, Yangon, Universities Press, 1980, pp.25-74 (Henceforth: Myint Aung, 1980)

⁴⁹(a) C. Grant, 1956

(b) Henry Yule, 1968, 130-167

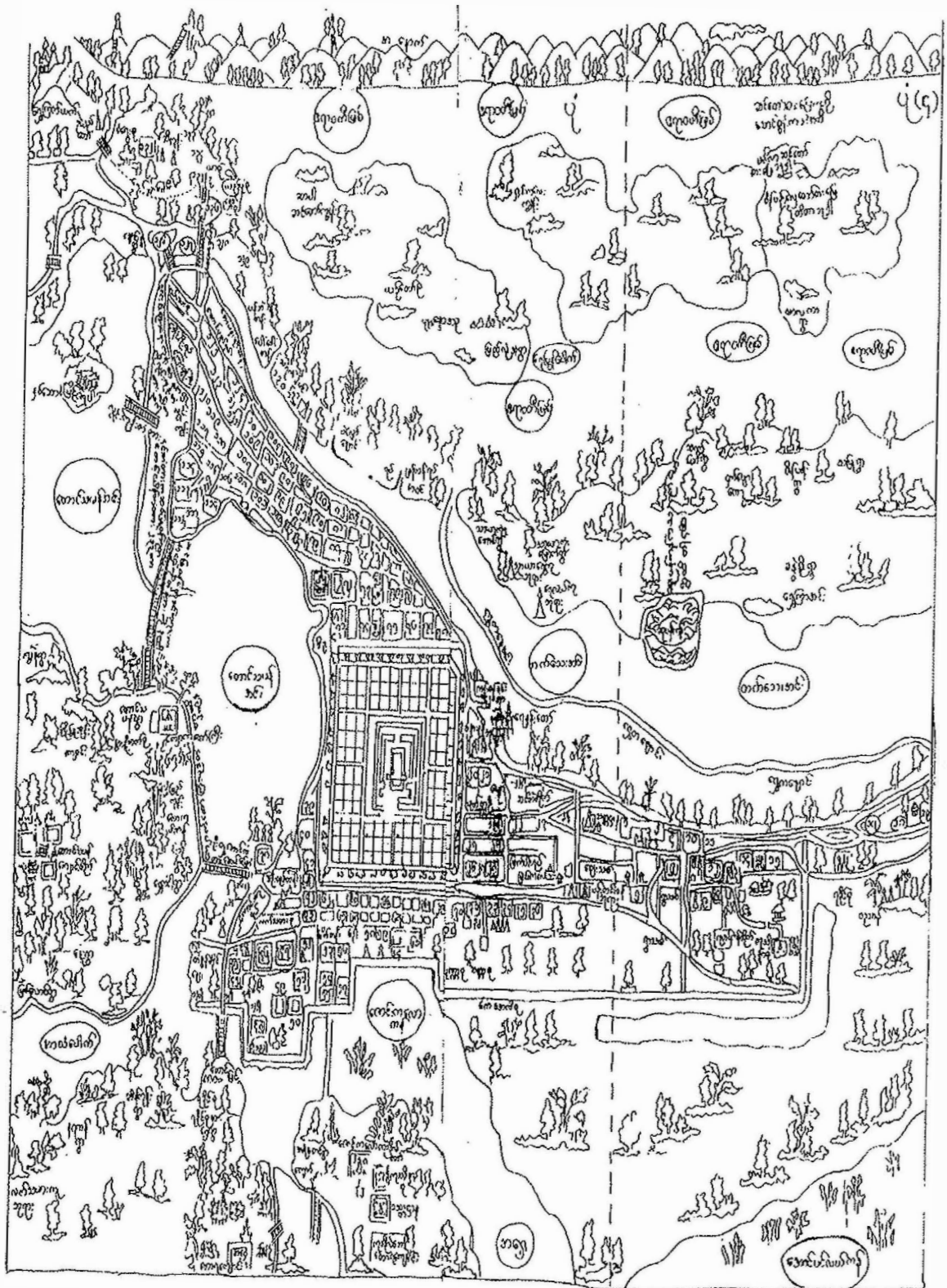
"golden boundary of Mandalay. Since then Amarapura ceased to be the capital and continued to exist as a town governed by a *Myowun*.⁵⁰

Conclusion

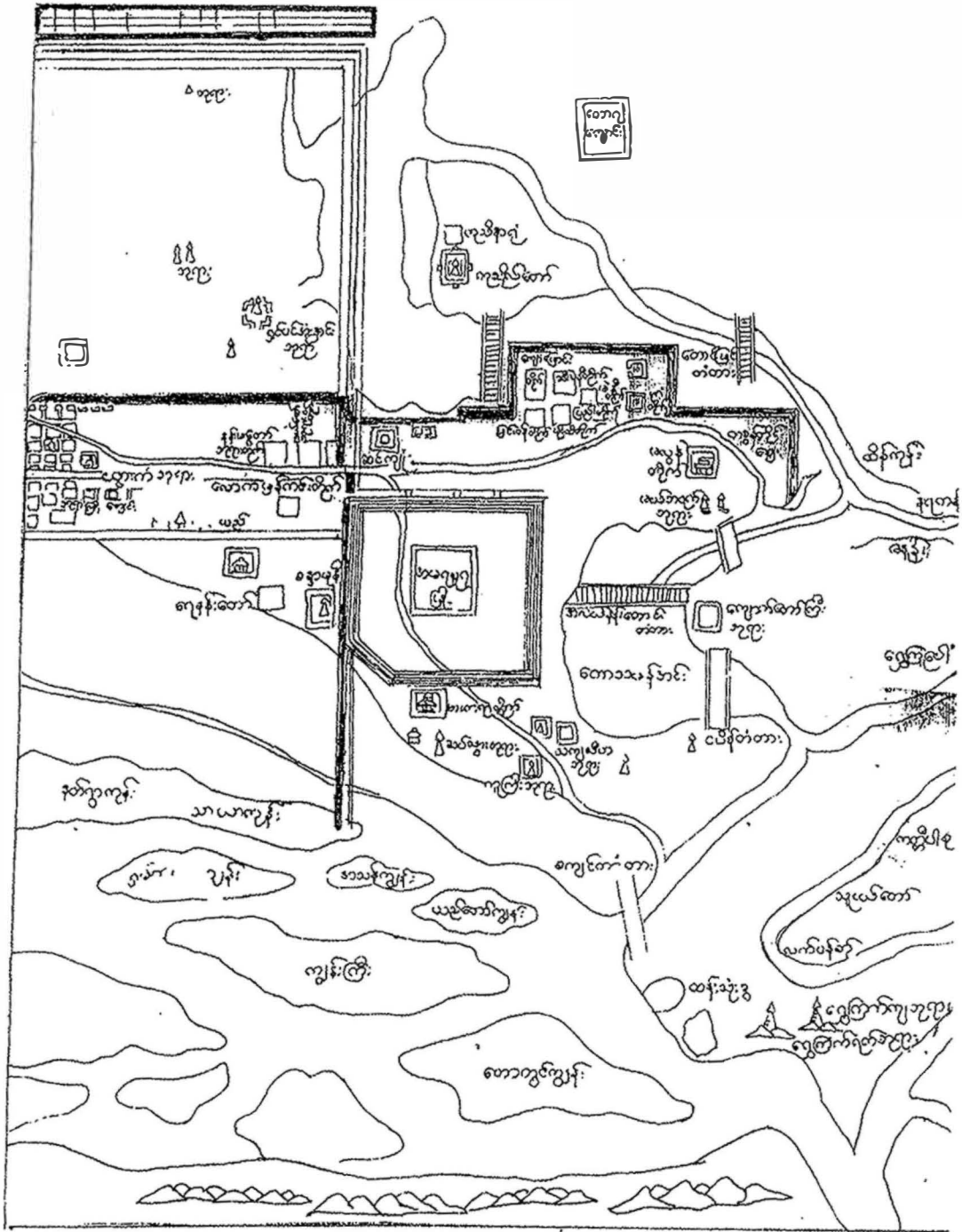
In sum, this paper in a modest study of the origin, development and the rise and fall of urban structure and urban society of Amarapura. It analyzes the causes of Urban Amarapura reaching its height of glory and greatness and its decline and final downfall. Amarapura today still retains many of its original urban features but its urban society had already disappeared since 1858.

⁵⁰Than Tun, Dr., *Nai-hlai Yazawin* (A peripatetic History), Vol.11, Yangon, Nanthar Press, 1968, p.48
(Henceforth: Than Tun, 1968)

Map (1)



Map (2)



References

၁၁၄၃ ခုကစ၍ ဒုမင်္ဂလ၊ သုမင်္ဂလအမှုတို့ အတိုကောက်မှတ်ပုံ၊ ပေမူ၊ အမရပူရ၊ တောင်လေးလုံး ကျောင်း၊ ဦးပညာဇောတစာစု။

ရှေးဟောင်းစာပေ သုတေသီတစ်ဦးတင်ပြ၊ နန်းမြို့နယ်မြေ အထွေထွေပုရပိုက်ပုံများ၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ စိန်ပန်းမြိုင်စာပေတိုက်။

အရှင်ပညာဇောတ၊ တောင်သမန်ဝန်းကျင်မှ သမိုင်းဝင်ဌာနများနှင့် တောင်သမန် ကျောက်တော်ကြီး တုရားသမိုင်းအကျဉ်း၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ သာသနာရေးဦးစီးဌာန။

Frank, N. Trager & William J. Koeining: Burmese Sitan 1764-1826, Records of Rural life and Administration, U.S.A., The University of Arizona Press

နီတွတ်၊ အမရပူရခေတ် ဗုဒ္ဓသာသနာဝင်(၁၇၈၂-၁၈၅၈)၊ မန္တလေးတက္ကသိုလ်၊ သမိုင်းဌာန၊ မဟာဝိဇ္ဇာကျမ်း။

ရှေးဟောင်းစာပေ သုတေသီတစ်ဦး တင်ပြ၊ နန်းမြို့၊ နန်းရာအဆင်တန်ဆာနှင့် သိမှတ်ဖွယ်ရာများ၊ အပိုင်း(၁)၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ စိန်ပန်းမြိုင်စာပေတိုက်။

ကန့်မြို့စစ်ကဲ မင်းထင်ရာစာ၊ မန္တလေးရတနာပုံ မဟာရာဇဝင်တော်ကြီး။

Than Tun, Dr., *The Royal Orders of Burma (Myanmar)*, part iv (AD 1782-1787), Kyoto, The Centre for Southeast Asia Studies, Kyoto University, 1986

Than Tun, Dr., *The Royal Orders of Burma (Myanmar)*, part v (AD 1788-1806), Kyoto, The Centre for Southeast Asia Studies, Kyoto University, 1986

Than Tun, Dr., *The Royal Orders of Burma (Myanmar)*, part vi (AD 1807-1810), Kyoto, The Centre for Southeast Asia Studies, Kyoto University, 1987

Than Tun, Dr., *The Royal Orders of Burma (Myanmar)*, part vii (AD 1811-1819), Kyoto, The Centre for Southeast Asia Studies, Kyoto University, 1988

Than Tun, Dr., *The Royal Orders of Burma (Myanmar)*, part viii (AD 1819-1853), Kyoto, The Centre for Southeast Asia Studies, Kyoto University, 1988

ဦးမောင်မောင်တင်၊ ကုန်းဘောင်ဆက်မဟာရာဇဝင်တော်ကြီး ၃ တွဲ၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ရာပြည့်စာအုပ် တိုက်၊ ၂၀၀၄။

ဦးတင်၊ မြန်မာမင်းအုပ်ချုပ်ပုံစာတမ်းနှင့် ဘိုးတော်ဘုရား၏ ရာဇသတ်ခေါ်သော အမိန့်တော်တမ်းကြီး၊ ဒုတိယပိုင်း၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ယဉ်ကျေးမှုမိမိမာန်ဦးစီးဌာန၊ ၁၉၆၅။

ဦးတင်၊ မြန်မာမင်းအုပ်ချုပ်ပုံစာတမ်းနှင့် ဘိုးတော်ဘုရား၏ ရာဇသတ်ခေါ်သော အမိန့်တော်တမ်းကြီး၊ စတုတ္ထပိုင်း၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ယဉ်ကျေးမှုမိမိမာန်ဦးစီးဌာန၊ ၁၉၇၆။

တိက္ခမဗ္ဗလင်္ကာရ၊ မြန်မာ့ရက်စွဲသမိုင်း၊ မန္တလေး၊ ဗမာ့ခေတ်စာပေ၊ ၁၉၆၉။

အမရပူရမြို့နယ်အတွင်းရှိ သူကြီး၊ တပ်မှူး၊ ရွာအုပ်စာရင်းဘုရား၊ ပုရပိုက်မူ၊ တိုက်ပိုင်အမှတ် ၄၃၁၊ သမိုင်းပါမောက္ခ ဒေါက်တာသန်းထွန်းစာစု

ဦးမြင့်အောင်နှင့် ဦးခင်မောင်ဖြူ 'အမရပူရမြို့၊ တောင်သမန်ကျောက်တော်ကြီးပူဘုရားရှိ မိသုကာ လက်ရာနှင့် ဆေးရေးများလေ့လာချက်၊ တက္ကသိုလ်သုတေသနစာစောင်၊ အတွဲ(၁)၊ အပိုင်း(၂)၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ အထက်တန်းပညာဦးစီးဌာန၊ ၁၉၈၀။

ဒေါက်တာသန်းထွန်း၊ နယ်လှည့်ရာဇဝင်(၂)၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ နံ့သာတိုက်၊ ၁၉၆၈။