

## The Significant Features of Nga Myet Hna Paya at Oke Ship Pin

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### Abstract

*Nga Myet Hna Paya* is situated in 19 miles to the west of the Union Road near Ayarwaddy River, on the other bank of Pyay near Oke Ship Pin Township, Pyay Distract, Bago Division. GPS location is 95°03' 53.4"E and 18°41' 6.9"N. It is situated in 63m above the sea level. It has been assumed that Minister Siri Mottama built this Paya. The mountain was known as *Zalu Pabbata (Za Lon)* which means it was combined together with potteries and clays. The five-porches-temples are intended to worship the Arinmettaya Buddha and these temples are called *Nga Myet Hna Paya* -five-porches temples. The greatest aims of this paper are to reveal about Nga Myat Hna Stupa that base was built of earthenware pots and to present its historical context. The stupas built on earthenware pots are very rare in Myanmar archaeological context. This paper also deals with the study of potteries and bricks which are used to build Nga Myet Hna Stupa.

**Keywords:** *Zalu Pabbata, Nga Myet Hna, Potteries*

### Introduction

It is accepted that pottery is one of the characteristic features of Neolithic period. However, the art of making pottery had been existed since before the Neolithic period in some parts of the world. Domestication of plants and animals had played an important role in the long term. History of human had become the foundation of civilization. Because of the domestication of plants and animals, man attained the sedentary life style it assisted to flourish the art of making pottery. Gradually utilization of potteries becomes wider and wider. They were used for cooking, transporting and storing. Moreover, potteries are used as building material for erecting stupa. In Myanmar, Buddhism has flourished since Pyu period. From that time onwards, Buddhist religious monuments including stupas have been built in successive eras. Bricks are essential building materials to erect stupas. However, it is unusual Nga Myet Hna Paya in Oke Ship Pin is built of brick and potteries.

### The Significant Features of Nga Myet Hna Paya at Oke Ship Pin

King Asoka made a donation ceremony at Asoka Yon Majjhima monastery, Pataliputta in 235 BE. He offered four things to 60,000 monks and total costs for his donation were 96,000,000 prices. He built 84000 monasteries at that time. And then, he sent Buddhist missionaries to nine places. One of the nine places was Suvannabhūmi Region. Venerable Soṇa and Venerable Uttara

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arrived in Suvaṇṇabhūmi Region. (Htu Pa Win record, *The Nine Bibliophiles of Buddha*, p. 829) According to Kalayacni Inscription, King Asoka assigned Minister Vithakha and Minister Siri Deva to build Maha Zayti , Nga Myet Hna Paya was built by Siri Muttama. Minister of Siri Muttama, inscribed stone inscription to mention the history of Nga Myet Hna Paya. However, the inscription has been lost forever because of the natural disaster. Fortunately, Venerable Agga Samādhī retold the history of Nga Myet Hna Paya. According to Venerable Agga Samādhī, Nga Myet Hna Paya was built by Minister Siri Muttama with the assistance of his fellow four ministers. The names of these ministers are Siri Sanda, Supinda, Siri Suyā, and Dow Pyinyar Vara. Then he donated money to build the Paya by pouring ritual libation water with gold jar before the audiences.

Nga Myet Hna Paya is also known as Zalu Pabbata, literally Pot Hill. Later Minister Siri Muttama renovated the Paya and heightened the Paya by piling the earthenware pots upside down in which red clay was filled (See Figure- 2). There is no Paya that is built of pot in Myanmar and Nga Myet Hna Paya is the only Paya which is built of pots and bricks. (See Figure- 3)

Siri Muttama also donated the Paya by supporting the slaves from five villages. Local people believe that Lei village, Sone Kone village, Makyi Kone village, Kyo Kone village and Nga Myet Hna village which were donated by Minister Muttama to serve Nga Myet Hna Paya as Payas slave's villages (Reff: U Lu Pe Win, *Sri Ksetra*, p.32). The pot can be seen until now and they are in good state of preservation.

The Minister Siri Muttama built a palace with spiral stairs in 2338(316 BCE)(See Figure- 4). One can reach to the top by walking along the spiral stairs (See Figure- 5). Bricks were laid vertically and horizontally. Solid shaped square structure of bricks was found on the ground. Measurement of brick is 13"×7"×3".

### **Won Kataw Paya**

Won Kataw Paya (See Figure- 6) is a stupa structure and located on the East of Nan Oo Palace (Reff: U Lu Pe Win, SriKsetra, p.33). The stupa is built on brick platform. There are three terraces on which the bell shaped dome of the stupa is erected. (Reff: U Win Aung (Dhamma Sarira), *The Universe*, Volume I&II, p.57) Only the lower terraces are still remaining. The name of the Minister's wife is Won Kadaw and the stupa is well known as Won Kadaw Ceti.

### **Background history of Pottery**

The art of making pottery has been started since prehistoric time. In 15,000 years ago, the small hunter-gatherer communities lived in cave or rock shelters of Southern China .The excavation at Dayan caves in Guangxi province, Southern China revealed that the first fired ceramic had been used in those communities .In Japan, The earliest true pottery was found in

Fukui cave site on the southern Japanese island of Kyushu. It is dated to 13000 years ago. The earliest pottery of Japan is known as Jomon pottery, literally 'cord pattern' because these vessels were decorated with cord- Pattern' because these vessels were decorated with cord – impression. Potteries of high and distinct quality with beautiful design have been found associated with the sites of the Indus Valley civilization of the 3000 BCE. The excavated Badalin Cave include stone tools, hundreds of bone fragments, molar and canine teeth of mammalian animals, a large quantity of charcoal pieces, shell of land mollusks of probably deer, a few fragment of tortoise shells, and pieces of soft hematite (red ocher). According to the radiocarbon dates, the cave appears to have been occupied during four periods between 13,000 and 7,000 years ago. (Reff: U Aung Thaw, the Neolithic culture of Badalin caves, pp.10-11). When people knew the domestication of plants and animals, they became settling and the role of pottery were more prominent. They were used for storage, preparation and serving of food. (Reff: Dr. Than Tun, *Myanmar Terracottas*, p.4)

Generally, pottery production centers used to locate along streams and rivers courses and near lakes, where clay and water can get easily. Ancient people made potteries Shwe Hlaung Inn (Season Lake) named after the place where a prince's boat capsized. (Reff: U Lu Pe Win, SriKsetra, p.32)

Other lakes are located near Shwe Hlanng Inn and their names are also associated with history. One of the lake is Thout Taw Kan, literally the lake where king drunk water and another one is Tha Gyi Inn, where head of village drunk water.

### Conclusion

The original lip of the pot is very thick. In the original of the pot, there is no decoration and it is polished. The pot looks similar to the Taungthaman Pot. The function of the pot is to store the salt. Since, it is built with the bricks. It is very strange. There are three classified pots,

- (1)A pot made of rock,
- (2)A pot made of clay,
- (3)A pot made of glaze. The pot made of earthenware is used by many people around the world.

In this region, almost everything is made with pots because mostly pots take up more places so people built with the pots instead of clay. In this region, most people are culturally sensitive towards other people in Myanmar. In conclusion, Myanmar people made their best of what they have to use it. Throughout history, people have built Nga Myet Hna Paya with pots. This is the most interesting and the only one Paya built by potteries in Myanmar. Typological analysis of potteries from Nga Myet Hna Stupa has been made and radiocarbon dating method was applied to known the absolute date of the stupa. According to the radiocarbon dating, the stupa was belonged to Innwa period.

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No	Direction	Location	Measurement
1	Eastern	Length of the Foundation	52"
		High of the Foundation	3'6"
2	Western	Length of the Foundation	51"
		High of the Foundation	4'6"
3	Southern	Length of the Foundation	51"
		High of the Foundation	5"
4	Northern	Length of the Foundation	54"
		Height of the Foundation	4'10"

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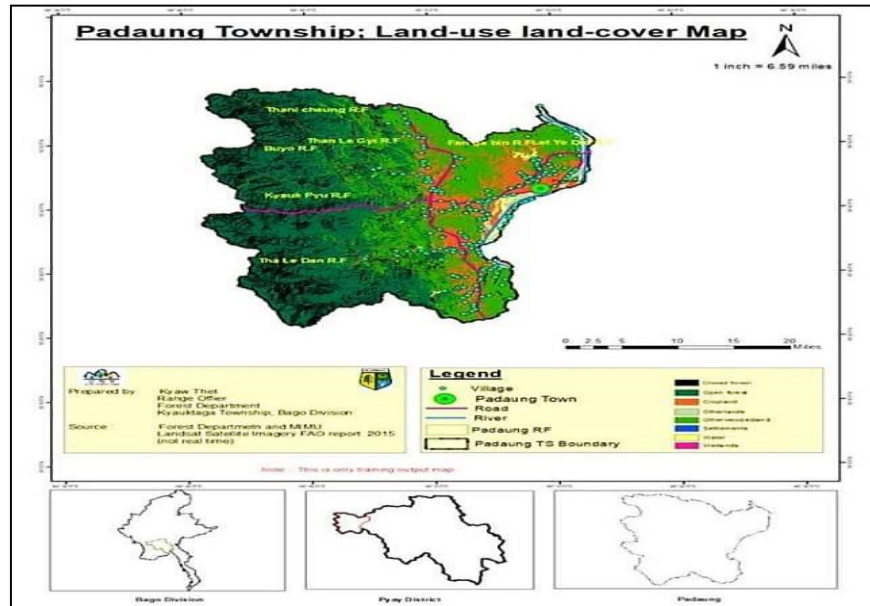
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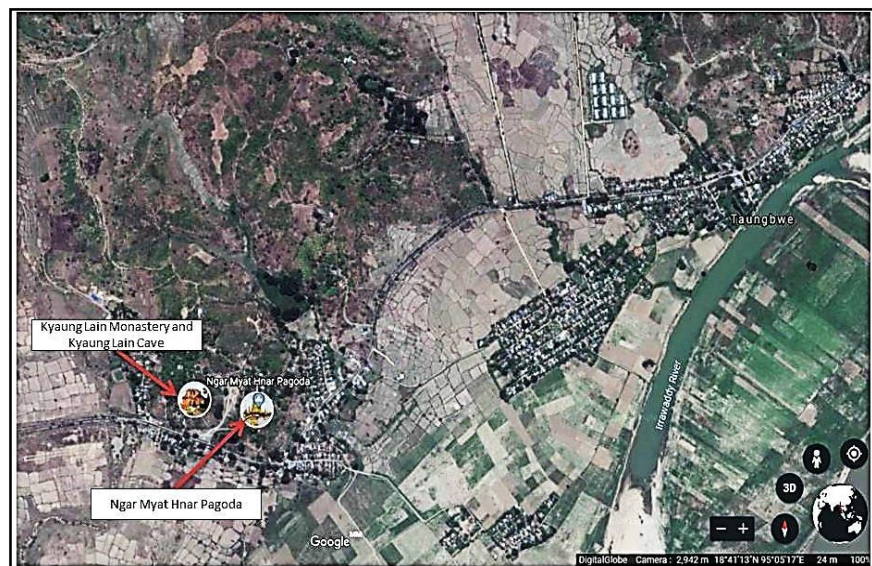
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(Map-1) Location of Padaung Township



(Map-2) Location of Nga Myet Hna Paya and Kyaung Lain Palace



(Map-2) Sources from Google



Fig-1 Nga Myet Hna Paya



Fig- 2 Potteries and Bricks which are based on the Foundation



Fig-3 Bricks and Potteries which are based on the Foundation of Nga Myet Hna Paya



Fig-4 Kyaung Lain Palace



Fig-5 Stairway of Kyaung Lain Monastery and Cave



Fig-6 Interior view of Kyaung Lain Palace



Fig-6 Won Kadaw Ceti