

“The Encased Buddhist Monuments and Buddha Statues found in Myanmar”

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Introduction

Myanmar is the richest Buddhist monuments with the Buddha Statues in the world. There are a large number of Buddhist monuments inventoried by the Department of Archaeology and National Museum in Myanmar. All these monuments for the restoration and conservation works have been undertaken by the Department of Archaeology and National Museum, the Pagoda Trustees, and the Associations of Local Heritage Trust. A number of Buddhist Monuments have been conserved and preserved while a few of them need to be conserved and preserved in Myanmar.

Among the Buddhist monuments found in Myanmar, some of them are the encased Buddhist monuments. Most encased Buddhist monuments were recovered at Bagan, located in the central part of Myanmar. Bagan is the richest Buddhist monuments and the richest archaeological sites in Myanmar. There are over three thousand Buddhist monuments still standing at Bagan.¹ Among those monuments, there are around sixty encased Buddhist monuments at Bagan². Some of them were found at Tamote Region and the Ancient City of Myin Saing in Kyaukse District, Aebya Region in Sint Kaing Township, Tagaung Region in Thabeik Kyin Township, Shwe Intein Pagoda to the west of Inle Lake, Ahlotaw Pauk Pagoda in the Inle Lake, Mwedaw Kakku Region in Shan State, Pakhangyi and Ma Oo Region in Yesagyo Township, Anaint Region in Monywa District, the Ancient City of Mrauk Oo in Rakhine State, and Yangon in Myanmar. Sometimes not only the encased Buddhist monuments have been found in Myanmar but also the encased Buddha Statues that were recovered at Bagan and in the vicinity of Tamote Region. Most of them were the double encased monuments but a few of them were the third encased monuments recovered in the various parts of Myanmar.

Basically the encased Buddhist monuments may be classified into four types. They are the encased Buddhist Stupas, the encased Buddhist Temples, the Moathtaw Zedis (Stupas) with a circumambulatory corridor, and two or three small Stupas encased by a bigger Stupa on the same plinth³. According to the architectural typologies of the encased monuments found in Myanmar, some of the inner Stupas were built in Pyu period⁴ (1st to 9th Century AD) while the outer Stupas were built in Bagan period and post Bagan periods such as Pinya, Inwa, Nyaung Yan, and Konbaung period. In Myanmar, the earliest encased Buddhist monuments were found in Pyu period while some of the encased Buddhist monuments in Myanmar have been found till to 17th and 18th centuries AD. In Myanmar, most encased Buddhist monuments can not be found easily. When the outer stupas were collapsed by the natural disasters such as earthquake, rain water, flood, wind, and vandalism, the inner stupas can be seen from the outside. Normally we can not say exactly that is an

encased monument or not. Traditionally it was noted that it was an encased stupa and it was an encased temple for some encased monuments in Myanmar but some monuments had the strong inscriptional evidences although the inner stupa can not be viewed from the outside.

The Encased Buddhist Stupas

Normally, it was found that most of the inner stupas in Myanmar were encased by the outer stupas but a few of the inner monuments are the temples encased by the big outer stupas. Mostly the inner stupas were very low in height while the outer stupas were bigger and higher than the inner stupas.

Some chronicles mentioned that King Anawrahta built Shwezigon Pagoda at Bagan but he was to finish only the three terraces before he died. The chronicles say that it was built on the site named "Jeyabhumi" which means Land of Victory. Tradition has it that the collar-bone of the Buddha, frontlet relics of the Buddha obtained from Thayekhittaya near Pyay and tooth relic duplicate of the Buddha presented by the King of Sri Lanka are enshrined in the Shwezigon Pagoda.⁵ When it was earthquake in 1975, the upper part above the concentric rings of Shwezigon Pagoda had been damaged. At that time, when the outer finial which was made of the five metals alloyed was opened, the inner finial made of bronze⁶ can be seen on the outside. So some scholars and archaeologists considered that it is a double encased stupa. It was believed that the inner one was built by King Anawrahta in the early 11th Century AD and the outer one was built as cover by King Kyansittha.⁷ According to the architectural typology of Shwezigon Pagoda, I considered that the outer stupa was built by King Kyansittha in 11th Century AD. I suggest that the inner stupa of Shwezigon Pagoda would be similar to the shape of Lawkananda Pagoda built by King Anawrahta.

Another encased stupa is Tantkyitaung Pagoda which is located on Tantkyi Hill across the Ayeyarwady River in Pakokku District, Magway Region. Tradition said that it is one of the Moathtaw Zedis (stupas) built by the King Asoka in 3rd Century AD.⁸ Some chronicles mentioned that it was built by King Anawrahta in the early 11th Century AD but there was no concrete inscriptional evidence for this stupa. When it was earthquake in 1975, there were the big cracks appeared on it. The inner stupa can be seen from the outside. Besides, a number of terracotta votive tablets made and donated by King Anawrahta have been found in the inner stupa of Tankyitaung Pagoda. Some local peoples said that they found three stupas from the big cracks after the earthquake had occurred in 1975. They also reported to the Department of Archaeology of the Bagan Branch Office. So the most inner one might have been built by the King Asoka while the middle one was built by the King Anawrahta and the outer one was covered by the King Narapatisithu in the 12th Century AD.⁹ King Anawrahta was a strong religious zeal as well as one great power. His clay votive tablets, made to acquire merit, are found widely in Myanmar from Katha in the north to Twante in the south.¹⁰ These terracotta votive tablets usually have, on the obverse, a seated Buddha image in the earth-touching attitude, with two lines underneath which express the essence of the creed. On the reverse would be prayer: "In order to desire that he may be freed from samsara the Great Prosperous King Aniruddha himself made this Buddha image."¹¹ Some archaeologists and historians suggested that Tantkyitaung Pagoda is a third encased stupa in Myanmar. According to the sculptural evidence recovered at the inner stupa in 1975, it was proved that Tantkyitaung Pagoda was built by the King Anawrahta.

Among the encased Buddhist monuments found in the vicinity of Bagan, after the removal of the outer monuments, the inner monuments had been recovered. Those monuments were called Pawdawmu Phaya from the Department of Archaeology and local peoples. Most of the inner stupas covered by the outer stupas still remain the original architectural typologies with the original stucco carvings due to protect and preserve from the natural disasters and vandalism. So it was known that the various kinds of art and architecture in successive periods can be viewed from those monuments.

Mr. Sakovel, an Executive Engineer from the Pakokku Construction Co-operation during the colonial times, conserved one encased stupa situated to the north of Inn stupa at Bagan. After the removal of the outer stupa which had been collapsed, the inner stupa which still left 60% of the original stucco carvings in the early 11th Century AD, was recovered. In later times, this stupa was called Sakovel Pawdawmu stupa in Bagan.¹²

Another Pawdawmu encased stupa is situated to the southwest of Nagayon Temple at Bagan. It is a unique form and well preserved stupa. While most finials are conical and ringed, this one is pyramidal and smooth and terminates in double lotus from which emerges a small cone. During the colonial period, after the removal of the outer stupa, the inner one with the original stucco carvings can be viewed. Pawdawmu stupa is an interesting example of an encased stupa-peculiar in shape, because it belongs to Pyu period which is earlier than Bagan period.¹³

There are two Pawdawmu stupas situated to the northwest of Upalithein Ordination Hall at Bagan. Both of them are the encased stupas. The outer stupa have been removed to appear the small inner one during the colonial times while another bigger outer stupa was removed to uncover the inner one from the Department of Archaeology in 1968.

Kyauk Myat Maw Stupa situated to the west of Soemingyi Pagoda is one of the big double encased stupas in Bagan. The outer stupa with the rectangular base is very similar to Lawkananda Pagoda built by the King Anawrahta while the inner stupa with the octagonal base belongs to the Pyu period. It is a very beautiful encased stupa with the extraordinary features. In this stupa, they used the finger-marked bricks, the unique concentric rings, which are 1.5 feet in height each, and constructing an inner stupa with bulbous in shape. They did not fully use the brick masonry works between inner and outer stupas but they only used the brick buttresses measuring 3-feet in length and 9-feet in height between the two stupas so that the outer stupa had been damaged earlier. There were the patterns of diamond shapes (rhombus shape) on the outer stupa with the elongated bell shape which are very similar to the early stupa types in Bagan period.¹⁴

Monument No. 1469 is located to the northeast of Lawkaoakshaung Temple. In this stupa, the inner one can be viewed from the treasure hole on the western terrace. The glazed plaques with eight lotus petals and the stucco carvings with four lotus petals decorated on the inner stupa can be observed. There is a nat (spirit) sitting decorously in Namaskara Mudra at the corner of northeast terrace of the inner stupa. This figure ornamented with the earrings, armlets, and bracelets is the original stucco carvings contemporary with the inner stupa.

Moekaung stupa (Monument NO.1250) is situated near Phyatsa Shwegu Temple to the west of Myinkaba Village at Bagan. It is a Sinhalese type stupa with the octagonal base. The inner finial can

be viewed from the treasure hole at the eastern side of the outer stupa. According to the architectural typology with the original stucco carvings on the bell shape dome, this outer stupa belongs to early 11th Century AD and I suppose that the inner stupa belong to the Pyu period.

Monument No. 1003 is situated to the north of Saytanagyi Pagoda. It is a double encased stupa with the bulbous shape, also located in the vicinity of Kyauksagar Palace Site. The inner stupa can be viewed from the treasure hole before the outer stupa had been restored. It might belong to the Pyu period.¹⁵

Monument No. 1626 which is also a double encased stupa as well as an extraordinary stupa, is located to the northwest of Bagan Archaeological Museum in the southwestern part of the Ancient City Wall of Bagan. The outer stupa belongs to 11th Century AD while the inner one might belong to Pyu period. Both of them still remain around 6-feet in height.

Another beautiful encased stupa is Monument No.1905, situated to the northeast of Minochantha Pagoda. When the great earthquake occurred in 1975, a half portion of the outer stupa had been collapsed. The inner stupa with the original stucco carvings can be clearly seen from the outside. Some archaeologists said that the original lime-wash layer had been found on the inner stupa as soon as it took place. In this stupa, the thickness of the outer stupa is around 1-foot to 1.5-foot. According to the finding of the encased stupa, it was known that how to apply the lime-wash and how to decorate the stucco carvings and their architectural elements had been undertaken in successive periods.¹⁶

Shwezigon Pagoda is situated at the Ancient City of Tagaung in Upper Myanmar. A number of terracotta votive tablets belonging to 11th Century AD have been recovered at Shwezigon Pagoda. It is a prominent encased stupa. Tradition has it that the inner one was built by the King Dazayazar while the outer one was built by the King Anawrahta. Some local peoples said that when an original outer stupa was removed to be conserved in 1980, the original inner stupa, which is very similar to Sanchi stupa in India had been found after the excavation of this stupa. There are two encased stupas at the ancient City of Tagaung. Another one at Tagaung is located to the west of Shwezigon Pagoda.

Shwe Yaung Taw stupa which is located at Aebya Village, Sint Kaing Township, Kyaukse District, Mandalay Region, is one of the encased stupas in Pinya period (14th Century AD). There is a stone inscription regarding the history of this stupa. It was mentioned that the secondary donor would like to build bigger than inner one built by the first donor. The outer stupa had been restored in later times so that the inner stupa can not be viewed from the outside.¹⁷

Nan Oo Pagoda is located at the Ancient City of Myin Saing, Kyaukse District, Mandalay Region. It is a famous and huge encased stupa in this Region. There is a stone inscription donated by the King Uzana. According to the stone inscription mentioned that the outer stupa was built and encased by the King Uzana in order to be bigger than the smaller one built by King Ahthin Khaya, uncle of Uzana in 14th Century AD. The inner stupa can be clearly seen from the northwest side. Around the terraces of the outer stupa, there are, set in panels, glazed plaques illustrating the scenes from the previous lives of the Buddha.¹⁸

There are three encased stupas found in the southern Shan State but after the research in detail, I suppose that there might be more than three encased stupas in the southern Shan State. They are Mwedaw Kakku Pagoda Complex, Shwe Intein Pagoda located to the west of Inle Lake, and Ahlodaw Pauk Pagoda in the Inle Lake.

Mwedaw Kakku Pagoda Complex is situated in Mwedaw Village, Kakku Village-Tract, Taunggyi Township, Taunggyi District. There are two large pagodas flanked by 2548 smaller stupas in this complex. Tradition said that those stupas are included in 84,000 stupas built by the King Asoka and Phaungdaw Side stupa in the complex was built by the King Alongsithu in Bagan period. This place lies a border post and it was so called Kakku Pagoda. It was also said that the Pagoda was so named as it was dedicated to Kakkusandha who first attained the enlightenment in the present world. There are also two old bells with the inscriptions donated in 1793 and 1893 Century AD. According to the bell inscriptions, it was called Shwegugyi Pagoda in those periods. Tradition has it that most of them were built by the chiefs of Shan Sawbwa. Some of them have been conserved and restored while a few them were encased by the successive chiefs of Shan Sawbwa but no encased stupas can be viewed from the outside because all monuments have been renovated in later times. According to the architectural typologies, most of them were built in the 17 Century AD while some were built in the 18th Century AD.¹⁹

Shwe Intein Pagoda Complex lies to the west of Inle Lake, Nyaung Shwe Township in the southern Shan State. There are ten thousand fifty small stupas found in the same complex. Most of them were built in 17th Century AD while a few of them were built in 15-16th Century AD. There is a stone inscription donated by the King Bodaw Phaya in 18th Century AD. According to the stone inscription, it was known that a few monuments were the encased stupas but no stupas can be viewed from the outside as most of them have been renovated by the successive periods.

There are around five encased monuments recovered at the Ancient City of Mrauk-U in Rakhine State. A prominent encased stupa is a satellite stupa in the eastern side of Sakya Manaung Pagodas in 17th Century AD. In this satellite stupa, the inner stupa can be clearly viewed from the outside. It may belong to 17th Century AD. The Sakya Manaung Pagoda was built in 1629 by the King Thirithudhammayaza. The Yadana Manaung Pagoda was built by the King Sandathudhammayaza in 1658. The Zina Manaung Pagoda was built by the King Sandathudhammayaza in 1658. The Lawka Manaung Pagoda was built by the King Sandathudhammayaza in 1658. The Mingala Manaung was built by the King Sandathudhammayaza's son Uggā Bala in 1685.²⁰ It was known that the date of the encased stupa can be compared with those monuments found in the complex.

Tamote Shinpin Shwegugyi Temple is situated at the Ancient City of Tamote, Kyaukse District, Mandalay Region. Tradition said that there was a stupa built by the King Asoka in 3rd Century AD and it was encased by the King Anawrahta in 11th Century AD as one storeyed building. In the 12nd Century, King Narapatisithu renovated and built the two storeyed temple decorated with the beautiful stucco carvings. There are some extraordinary stucco works which are the unique workmanships still left in this temple. The inner temple which was renovated and built by the successive Kings in Bagan period, was encased by the King Uzana in 14th Century (Pinya period). The outer monument is a huge stupa type which is similar to the Shwezigon Pagoda at Bagan. In 1915, the small stupa which is 21 feet in height was built by U San Htwā on a ruined stupa during colonial

times. In 1993, the northern entrance of the inner two storeyed temple in Bagan period was recovered by the monk named U Sandawbatha. After the removal of the outer stupa in Pinya period, the inner temple with the artistic and excellent stucco carvings belonging to Bagan period, appeared in 2009. Many valuable artifacts such as a dolomite plaque, the terracotta votive tablets, the encased Buddha statues, the inscriptions on stucco plaques, a number of stucco figurines and five fifty jataka plaques illustrating the scenes from the previous lives of Buddha in stucco have been uncovered at a unique site of Tamote Shwegugyi Temple in Myanmar.²¹

After his conquest of Lower Myanmar in 1755 King Alaungphaya renamed the small old town of dagon as Yangon (end of strife) and founded a new city on the old site. The history of Yangon is closely associated with that of the Shwedagon Pagoda. The place was known as Okkala some five hundred years before the Christian era. According the legend Taphussa and Bhallika from Okkala went to India on a trading venture. They met the Buddha under the sacred Lin-Lum tree and offered Him honey cakes. The Buddha bestowed on them eight sacred hairs from His head. Arriving at Okkala they were greeted by King Okkalapa who held a great festival in honour of the sacred relics. With the help of Indra, King of gods, a site on the Theinguttara Hill was selected to lay the foundation of a pagoda for enshrining the relics. On excavation of the site, relics of the three preceding of the Buddhas, namely the staff, the water-dipper and the lower garment were recovered. These were buried again with the sacred hairs brought by the two brothers. When the relics are examined before placing in the vault the casket was miraculously found to contain the original number of eight hairs. Over the relic chamber was erected a golden pagoda enclosed in a silver one which in turn was enclosed by a series of tin, copper, lead, marble and iron pagodas. Finally the whole series of smaller pagodas were encased by a brick pagoda. This pagoda built by the King Okkalapa was only twenty-seven feet high. King Byinnya-U of Hanthawaddy raised it to a height of sixty-six feet in 1364 AD. It was encased, enlarged, repaired and gilded by the several kings in Myanmar History. When Shinsawbu (1453-72 AD) came to the throne at Bago, She built to encase over it a still higher pagoda assuming more or less the present shape. She also gilded Shwedagon Pagoda from bottom to top for which she offered gold by her weight. Dhammaceti, also a pious ruler, gilded the pagoda with gold four times and set up an inscription telling the legend of the Shwedagon Pagoda in Myanmar, Mon and Pali. In 1774 AD, when Hsinbyushin of Inwa put a new hti (Umbrella) the pagoda attained its present height. The Shwedagon pagoda today is 326 feet high, with a square plinth. The base is surrounded by 64 small pagodas with four larger ones in the centre of each side. According to the history of Shwedagon Pagoda, It was known that it was encased by the successive Myanmar kings.²²

The Encased Buddhist Temples

A large number of the encased Buddhist stupas have been mostly recovered in Myanmar while a few number of the encased Buddhist temples are very rare to be seen in Myanmar but mostly they were found at Bagan in the central part of Myanmar.

Monument No. 1612 lies to the west of Mimalaung Kyaung Temple nearby Bagan Archaeological Museum which is a biggest Archaeological Museum in Myanmar. This temple is an encased Buddhist temple in Bagan as well as the encased Buddha statues can be seen in it. According to the architectural typology, it is a type of the image house which means to house only for the Buddha

image. In 1968, the debris from the outer temple have been removed by the Department of Archaeology, the inner temple can be prominently viewed from the outside. A part of the vestibule from the outer temple still remained in front of the inner temple. There were the original stucco carvings and a few mural paintings still remaining on the inner temple.

Monument No. 996 lies to the north of Thiri Gubyauk Temple at Bagan. It is an encased Buddhist

Temple, which is located in the Lawkananda Garden. The inner stupa with the original stucco carvings can be observed from the treasure hole at the eastern niche of the northern wall. There are a number of the finger marked bricks and the bricks with the numerals in Pyu period, which have been found around the outer stupa. I suppose that the inner stupa might have been a Pyu stupa. The terracotta votive tablets made by the King Sawlu and the Buddha Images in stucco have been recovered in the niches of the outer temple. So I considered that the outer one was built by the King Sawlu in 11th Century AD but the upper portion of the outer temple had been totally collapsed.²³

Monument No. 289 which lies to the south of Wetkyiin Gubyauk Nge Temple, is one of the beautiful encased Buddhist temples in Bagan. It has a bulbous shaped dome, the plain conical spires and a few original stucco carvings still remaining on the inner stupa. According to the architectural typology, the inner stupa belongs to Pyu period. I suppose that the outer temple which still remains a few stucco decorations belongs to early Bagan period.

Monument No.1638 which is located in the enclosure wall of Atwinzigon Pagoda is an encased temple. Tradition said that it was called Ahmyattaw Pyay Temple which was built by the King Kyansittha in 11th Century AD. The inner temple surmounted with the Sikhara can be viewed from the treasure hole before the blocking of the hole on the outer temple. The outer temple might have been built in the early Bagan period.

Monument No.1182 is situated to the southeast of Nagayon Temple. This is an extraordinary and beautiful encased temple in Bagan. There is a circumambulatory corridor between inner and outer temples. If you look from the outside, it seems that the inner temple was enclosed by its precinct. Actually it was found that the inner one was encased by the outer one. There are many niches to house Buddha images on the exterior wall of the inner temple and on the interior wall of the outer temple but no Buddha images have not been found in the niches. The original perforated stone windows and the original stucco decorations can be observed in this temple.

Monument No.1796, which lies to the southwest of Htilominlo Temple and is situated beside the Anawrahta road, is one of the encased Buddhist temples in Bagan. Before the restoration of this temple, the average height of the inner one is 3 feet in height while the average height of the outer one is 1.5 feet in height. A few parts of the northern and southern walls from the outer temple still left while its remaining parts had been totally collapsed.

The Moathtaw Zedis (Stupas) with a circumambulatory corridor

There are only four Moathtaw Zedi with a circumambulatory corridor which had been found in the vicinity of Bagan. They are Monument No.919 (Shwe Moathtaw Zedi) to the west of Thissawadi Temple in the monastic complex of Thamahti, Phwasaw Village, Monument No.1956 (Shwe

Moathtaw Zedi) near Taing Chut Temple to the east of Sarabha Gate, Monument No.194 (Shwe Moathtaw Zedi) to south of Nyaung Oo, and Monument No.1225 to the south of Manuha Monastery, Myinkaba Village, Bagan.

Many Shwe Moathtaw Zedis have been uncovered in the various parts of Myanmar. A book titled the nine Moathtaw Stupas at Pakokku District written by Dr. Thet Lwin, mentioned that the distance between each Moathtaw Stupa is 16 miles in length. It was noted that they are Tantkyitaung Moathtaw Stupa, Shwe Paung Laung Moathtaw Stupa, Gawdama Moathtaw Stupa, Shwe Ohn Dauk Moathtaw Stupa, Buddha Kon Moathtaw Stupa, Shinmataung Moathtaw Stupa, Yesagyo Moathtaw Stupa, Myaing Shwe Myin Tin Moathtaw Stupa, and Ma Oo Shwe Moathtaw Stupa. They all are located at three different townships in the Pakokku District. A number of stone inscriptions written in successive periods mentioned regarding the Shwe Moathtaw Zedis that all of them were built by the King Asoka in the 3rd Century BC.²⁴ Thetkyamuni Temple is situated at Chaukphala to the east of Nyaung Oo, and appears to have been built in the 12nd Century AD. In this temple, it was mentioned that King Asoka donated 84,000 stupas, 84,000 wells, and 84,000 lakes at the same times in the 3rd Century BC.²⁵ It was believed that our country was one of the places where he built and donated stupas, wells and lakes. Some of them have a circumambulatory corridor between the inner and outer stupas while some have no corridor between the two stupas. Most of the Moathtaw Zedis in Myanmar were directly encased by the bigger stupas without corridor in later periods. The Moathtaw Zedis with a circumambulatory corridor are very rare to be seen in Myanmar.

Monument No. 919 located in the monastic complex of Thamahti has a circumambulatory corridor between two of them. The inner stupa is 10 feet in diameter and 8 feet in height while the outer temple is 42 feet on each side. The breadth of the corridor is 5 feet in width. The plan of the inner one is circular in shape while the plan of the outer one for the interior wall also is a circular in shape. The outer temple facing east has one entrance with three perforated windows for the ventilation. There are the brick plinth and the devotional hall in front of the temple.

Another Shwe Moathtaw stupa which belongs to Bagan period, lies near Taing Chut Temple to the east of Sarabha Gate. The inner stupa is 8.5 feet in diameter and 6 feet in height while the outer temple is 25 feet on each side. The plans of the outer temple for the exterior and interior walls are rectangular in shape while the breadth of the corridor is 2.25 feet in width. There is a corridor between two of them to be walked and worshipped in this temple. The outer temple facing west consists of an entrance, three windows, and a wooden devotional hall.

Monument No.194 which was called Shwe Moathtaw zedi lies to the south of Nyaung Oo Region. Tradition said that the inner stupa was built by the King Asoka in the 3rd Century BC. It is an extraordinary Sinhalese type temple with the circular base as well as an encased monument in Bagan. There is a circumambulatory corridor measuring 3 feet in width between the inner stupa and the outer temple. The plan of the outer temple and the inner shrine are circular in shape. The inner stupa is 5 feet in diameter and 5.5 feet in height. The plan of the outer temple is 17.5 feet in diameter while the inner shrine is 10.3 feet in diameter.

Temple No. 1225 which is situated to the south of Manuha Temple, is very similar to a type of the image house. Actually it is one of the encased monuments in Bagan. The inner stupa is similar to the

Moathtaw Zedi built by the King Asoka. According to the architectural typology, I suppose that the inner one might have been built in Pyu period. The secondary donor had a purpose that he would like to encase the inner stupa to last 5000 religious years, to prevent from the natural disasters, and to be worshipped and meditated. So he had same idea look like a secondary donor of the Moathtaw Zedi.

Another Moathtaw Zedi is Ahlotaw Pauk Stupa which lies in the Inle Lake at Nampan Village, Nyaung Shwe Township in the southern Shan State. Tradition said that it was one of the Moathtaw Zedi or 84,000 Stupas built by the King Asoka. King Anawrahta, King Alaungsithu, and King Narapatisithu rebuilt and renovated this stupa. Some peoples said that King Sawmonnit gilded the stupa from bottom to top and named it Ahlotaw Pauk Stupa. There is a circumambulatory corridor between two stupas to be worshipped and meditated in front of the inner stupa.²⁶

Two or three small Stupas encased by a bigger Stupa on the same plinth

There was a traditional custom in Bagan period that two or three small stupas encased by a bigger stupa on the same plinth can be found in the vicinity of Bagan Region. Tradition said that the first donor and the secondary donor are mostly ancestors as well as relatives.

Stupa No. 1631 and Stupa No. 1632 are situated to the northwest of Gawdawpalin Temple at the Ancient City of Bagan. They are located on the same plinth measuring 34.25 feet in length and 15.5 feet in breadth. Traditionally, No.1631 was called Shinpin Pwinsa Phaya which is very similar to Bu Phaya stupa built by the King Pyusawhti in the 3rd Century AD while No. 1632 was called Pawdawmu Phaya which is similar to Lawkananda Stupa built by the King Anawrahta but its top portion using the plain conical spires looks like a Pyu stupa. I suggest that both of them belong to the Pyu period. The distance between the two stupas is 11.66 feet in length. It was known that after the removal of the outer big stupa in the colonial period, these two small stupas have been uncovered on the same plinth.

Stupa No.1855 is situated to southwest of Eainyar Kyaing Nga Myet Hna Temple in Bagan. In this stupa, there are three small stupas encased by a big stupa with the rectangular terrace on the same plinth. Before the restoration of a big stupa from the Department of Archaeology and National Museum, three small stupas can be viewed from the outside. After the restoration, the southern small inner stupa can only be seen while the rest two inner stupas which had been encased can not be observed.

Stupa No.1870 lies to the northeast of Ywahaunggyi Temple at the Ancient City of Bagan. There are two small stupas encased by a big stupa surmounted with the bell shape and the rectangular terrace.

An inner stupa was built on the northwest corner of the plinth while another one was built on the southwest corner of the plinth. The original stucco carvings still remaining on the bell shaped dome and the concentric rings of the small stupas can be viewed. The inner small stupas are 15 feet in height while the outer big stupa is 30 feet in height.

There are five small stupas built on the same plinth located to the east of Taungbi Village in the vicinity of Bagan. In 1998, after the removal of the debris over the monuments to be restored, five small stupas have been uncovered underneath the debris. I suppose that originally there might have been a big outer stupa to be encased.

There are three Pawdawmu small stupas located at Sintgu Village 16 miles to the south of Bagan, Nyaung Oo District. Local peoples said that after the removal of the collapsed bigger stupa, three small stupas were uncovered in 1960. Tradition said that these three stupas were built by three sisters and before the removal of the outer stupa, the big outer stupa was called Phaya Thonzu (three stupas) by the local peoples. It was said that this was a wonderful thing for their villagers. Tradition said that according to the dream of the monk named U Kaythaya at Sintgu Monastery, the outer stupa had been removed. Among the three stupas, the northern stupa is a square base in shape while the southern two stupas are the circular base in shape. Each stupa is 10 feet in diameter and the distance between each stupa only 2 feet in length. All of them are the original shapes still remaining on the same plinth.

The Encased Buddha Statues

A few number of the encased Buddha statues have been recovered in Myanmar. There are three Temples in Bagan, one in Tamote Shwegugyi Temple, Kyaukse Township, and one in Shinpin Shwe Sutthwa Temple in Kyaukse Township. If we further research in detail all over the country, I hope that the encased Buddha statues might have been uncovered in Myanmar. Although the double encased Buddha statues have been found at Bagan, the third encased Buddha statues and the fifth encased Buddha statues have been uncovered in the vicinity of Kyaukse Region.

There are three double encased Buddha statues which have been found at Bagan Temples. They are Temple No.1612 to the west of Mimalaung Kyaung Temple, Temple No.235 (Thakya Pone temple) to the west of Wetkyiin Village, and Temple No.1390 to the north of Shinye Tahtaung Monastery at Myinkaba Village.

In the Temple No.1612, the inner one can be viewed from the treasure hole over the outer Buddha image. The proportions between two Buddha images are not so different in size. According to the iconography of the Buddha Images in Bagan period, the inner one belongs to early 11th Century AD while the outer one belongs to late 11th Century AD.

There is an encased Buddha statue found at Thakya Pone Temple (Temple No.235). The inner Buddha statue can be seen from the outside. The size of the inner one is equal to a half proportion of the outer image. I suppose that the inner statue belongs to 11th Century AD and the outer one belongs to 13th Century AD.

Another encased Buddha statue had been found at Temple No.1390 located to the north of Myinkaba Village. The inner Buddha statue can be seen from the outside. The size of the inner image is equal to a half proportion of the outer image. I suppose that the inner statue belongs to 11th Century AD and the outer one belongs to 12th Century AD.

According to my opinion, if there was an encased Buddha statue, originally there would be an encased temple or an encased stupa. Mostly the inner stupas are very small in size so that there would be a smaller temple regarding the inner Buddha image, built by the first donor. When the secondary donor would like to build a bigger one to be encased in this place, he has to remove the inner stupa or the inner temple. In those days, most of the donors are the pious Buddhists so that they did not want to remove the inner Buddha images. Although they have removed the inner monuments, most of the inner images were encased by the bigger Buddha images.

There was a third encased Buddha statue uncovered at Tamote Shwegugyi Temple in the Ancient City of Tamote, Kyaukse District, Mandalay Region. The excavated finds and the archaeological remains proved that Tamote Shwegugyi Temple had been repaired and renovated many times in successive Myanmar kings in Bagan period and Pinya period. According to the iconography of Buddha Image in Bagan period, it was known that the first inner Buddha image belongs to early 11th Century AD and the secondary Buddha image belongs to late 11th century AD while the third one belongs to 13th Century AD.²⁷

Shinpin Shwe Sutthwa Pagoda lies near Nyaung Shwe Village, 5 miles to the west of Kyaukse District, Mandalay Region. Tradition said that it is an encased monument in Myanmar and it is one of the Moathtaw Zedis built by the King Asoka. This Moathtaw stupa was encased by a bigger stupa built by the Myanmar Kings so that there was a fifth encased Buddha statue in this temple. The most inner one belongs to Bagan period while the rest Buddha images were encased by the successive donors in post Bagan period such as Pinya, Inwa, Nyaungyan, and Konbaung period. They did not want to remove the previous Buddha images so that all of them were encased by each donor.²⁸

Conclusion

The encased Buddhist monuments and the encased Buddha statues have been found in the various parts of Myanmar. Normally they can not be easily found anywhere. When they were experienced by the natural disasters and the vandalism they can be unexpectedly found from the outside. When the inner stupas, inner temples have been uncovered, the original artistic works such as the stucco carvings, the glazed decorations, the mural paintings, the brick masonry works, and the architectural typologies and elements can be observed at the inner monuments.

When the inner Buddha statues have been recovered at the inner monuments, the iconography of the Buddha images regarding the successive periods can be researched and compared with those found at other sites in Myanmar and other countries. I suggest that the purposes of the encased Buddha monuments built by the second donors are to last five thousand religious years, to make bigger and more elaborate than the previous donors, to be a new builder or donor, to protect from the natural disasters and vandalism, to enshrine getting the meritorious deeds for the inner monuments donated by the primary donors. The purposes of the outer stupas with a circumambulatory corridor built by the secondary donors are to be worshipped and to be meditated in front of the inner Moathtaw stupas built by the King Asoka in the 3rd Century BC.

A number of stone inscriptions mentioned that the cursing and the praying are always written underneath the writings of the donation on it. It was mentioned that someone who take care my meritorious deeds, those will acquire merit, to be reborn in the celestial realms, to come into the

presence of Maitteyya, the next Buddha, and finally to attain nibbana.²⁹Someone who destroyed my meritorious deeds, those will be going to hell. Sometimes they mentioned the detailed names of the hells on the stone inscriptions.

I argue that the inner Stupas built by the first donor were covered with the outer Stupas built by the secondary donors who wanted to enshrine the first one in order to last 5000 religious years. There are a few inscriptional evidences regarding the encased monuments in Myanmar. According to the stone inscriptional evidences, the secondary donors would like to build their religious monuments bigger and more elaborate than the inner one donated by the first donors. According to my researches on the encased Buddhist monuments in Myanmar, most of the donors of the inner Stupas were their ancestors and relatives so that they are the secondary donors such as brother, uncle, father, grandfather, and great grandfather. I consider that the traditional custom of the encased Buddhist monuments in Myanmar came directly from India. I found many encased Buddhist monuments built in Mauryan period and Gupta period in India.³⁰

I believed that the secondary donors would not like to remove and destroy the inner Buddhist monuments and the inner Buddha statues built by the primary donors. So a number of the encased monuments can be found in various parts of Myanmar. I hope that if I research in detail for the encased Buddhist monuments and the Buddha statues all over the country in Myanmar, many of them can be uncovered in Myanmar in the future.

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