

**Text and New Contexts:**

**Shwedagon and Kyaikhtiyoe today**

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Abstract

The paper discusses the use of texts in current renovation of pagodas in Myanmar, taking as examples aspects of work undertaken at the Shwedagon and Kyaikhtiyoe in the last two years. Different types of texts, from inscriptions and traditional accounts to contemporary technical reports, are used to illustrate the complex tradition found in the country today. These are presented in the context of past interaction including Mon influence and the Hsandawshin (Sacred Hair) heritage, as well as present links such as planetary aspects and the role of renovation in encouraging the sustenance of Theravada practice.

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**Introduction**

As has long been the custom, pagodas throughout Myanmar are currently being repaired and renovated. Work is being carried out with the advice of the Sa gha under the guidance and supervision of the government, one aspect of official policy supporting the sustenance and propagation of Theravada practice. The scale of renovations varies, from national shrines to regional programmes, illustrated here by the Shwedagon and Kyaikhtiyoe as well as other Hsandawshin zeidi in the Mon State. A series of ritually correct offerings and ceremonies consecrate the repair or

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renovation while inscriptions, reports and books record and commemorate the process.

The factors that initiate and then come together to see the renovation through to completion are also varied. Some are rooted in historical traditions. For instance, both the Shwedagon and Kyaikhtiyoe are seen as sacred prior to the birth of the Buddha Gotama and both pagodas are thought to have been consecrated with *Hsandawshin* (Sacred Hairs) during His lifetime. Eight *Hsandawshin* donated by the Buddha on the forty-ninth day after his Enlightenment are said to have conveyed by Taphussa and Bhallika and enshrined together with relics of the three previous Buddhas of this era on the Shwedagon Singuttara hill. In the eighth year after his Enlightenment, the Buddha is thought to have travelled to Suvannabhumi where he donated six Sacred Hairs, three of which are enshrined at Kyaikhtiyoe.

Other aspects stem from present day needs associated with each pagoda compound and the surrounding region. In the Mon State for instance, many infrastructure improvements such as upgrading of roads and educational facilities have accompanied *Hsandawshin* renovations.<sup>2</sup> At the Shwedagon, there is the continual task of managing not just the physical structures, but the constant participation of devotees and donors in maintaining the environment that exists on the whole of the Shwedagon hill.

Numerous renovations have been undertaken at both the Shwedagon and Kyaikhtiyoe in the last two years. At the Shwedagon, a new *Htidaw* was hoisted onto the summit from 4-6 April 1999 AD.<sup>3</sup> New images were consecrated in the U Ba Yi Tazaung in the northeast corner of the Shwedagon platform, on 9 November 2000 AD.<sup>4</sup> At Kyaikhtiyoe, new *Htapanar*, *Shwehtidaw*, *Hgnyetmyatnadaw* and *Seinbudaw* were offered to the pagoda in March 2001 AD.<sup>5</sup> The renovated Naungdawgyi Zeididaw in the northeast corner of the Shwedagon platform was consecrated on 28 January 2002 AD.<sup>6</sup> On the same morning, a ceremony marked completion of repair and renovation to the four *Aryongan Tazaung*, the devotional halls at the cardinal points of the *zeidi* base. Within these various settings, texts are structured and may be defined in many ways.

At both the Shwedagon and Kyaikhtiyoe, there are new inscriptions. For instance, an inscription is mounted on the new Shwedagon *Htidaw*, and on parts of the Kyaikhtiyoe *Shwehtidaw* canonical texts have been inscribed. In the Shwedagon's U Ba Yi Tazaung and on the Kyaikhtiyoe platform, Myanmar and English inscriptions have been installed. A technical analysis of Kyaikhtiyoe generated in the process of renovation provides new textual material on the boulder and *zeidi*. A graphic text is seen in the *Nakkhata* depicting links between the Shwedagon and Kyaikhtiyoe.

As described below, both letters and numbers are central to the effectiveness of the *Nakkhata*. Likewise, weights, measurements and numbers cited here are generally significant. Different dating systems are also given in this article, to emphasise the use of alternative concepts of time with which renovations are recorded.

Text as new content is transmitted in a more abstract manner to further consecrate the demarcated space. At the Shwedagon, this may be seen in the relationship between the new *Htidaw* to new and renovated *zeidi* and images on the pagoda platform. At

Kyaikhtiyoe, one meaning of the new *Htapanar*, *Shwehtidaw*, *Hgnyetmyatnadaw* and *Seinbudaw* is in the association of elements both within and between these sacred parts. These examples are included to illustrate the intricate process and consequent misreading that may arise from attempting to assign singular or literal meaning to particular aspects or the whole of the Shwedagon and Kyaikhtiyoe.

### The Shwedagon

Several points relating to the present day are also seen in the 1485 AD Shwedagon inscription of King Dhammaceti. These include the renovation of *zeidi*, the propagation of the *Sāsana*, and the sustenance of the *Safgha*. The inscription also refers to the Mon heritage of Suvannabhumi.<sup>7</sup>

"With a break in the tradition of those knowing that the sacred hairs of the Lord Buddha were enshrined in the Shwedagon, men no longer worshipped there and the pagoda became overgrown with trees and shrubs. Two hundred and thirty-six years after the Parinibbana (Final Release) of the Lord Buddha (308 BC), the monks Sona and Uttara arrived in Suvvanabhumi Thaton to propagate the Religion. When the Religion was established and an Order of Monks set up, King Srimasoka requested the two Elders thus: 'O Venerable Monks, we have received the Dhamma (Law) and the Sangha (Order). Can you not provide us with the Buddha to worship?' The two Elders then showed the King the Shwedagon in which the sacred hairs of the Lord Buddha were enshrined. King Srimasoka cleared the overgrowth and built a pagoda and an enclosing pavilion with a tiered pyramidal roof. From that time onwards the people of the Mon country went to worship there."<sup>8</sup>

The Mon lands at that time included the area of present-day Yangon with the earliest recorded reconstruction at the Shwedagon being the 1372 AD work of King Banya Oo of Hanthawaddy.<sup>9</sup> Repairs and renovations have been carried out over the centuries and continue today. In recent years these have included refurbishment of the main four *Aryongan Tazaung* mentioned above, as well as other *tazaung* and images on the platform. There has also been refurbishment of staircases, and installation of lifts and escalators.

In the final waxing days of Tagu 1361ME before Thingyan, a new *Htidaw* was hoisted at the Shwedagon.<sup>10</sup> Although the *zeidi* height of 43 feet remains the same, the use of stainless steel for the tiers and supports made the new structure heavier, with a total weight of approximately 5 tons.<sup>11</sup> Of this, over half a ton is gold. An inscription is mounted on the *Htidaw* itself, with other inscribed donatory plaques placed on the *zeidi* bell below the band.<sup>12</sup> In the period surrounding the raising of new *Htidaw*, a Jade Image, a Gold Replica or likeness of the Shwedagon, and a *Htidaw zeidi* were installed on the platform.

The pure gold (*thansinshwe*) likeness of the Shwedagon is currently housed in a *tazaung* on the southeast (Tuesday) corner of the platform.<sup>13</sup> It is 45 inches high, with a gold weight of 90 pounds and decorated with 242 diamonds, 1895 rubies, 701 jades and 400 sapphires. The image of the Buddha made of jade (*Kyaukse*) was consecrated shortly before the hoisting of the new *Htidaw*. Carved from a single piece of stone, it is 30 inches high, simply presented with a gold band of 18 ticals (10 oz) decorated with 9 diamonds and 91 rubies. The Jade Image took nine years to carve

and weighs 750 kilograms.<sup>14</sup> It was installed in the Chinese Merited Association Tazaung on the southwest (Saturday) corner of the platform. The Jade Image faces east, so that while paying homage, one's back is never to the main stupa.<sup>15</sup>

The *Htidaw Zeidi* is the only new *zeidi* to be built on the platform in many years. It is located midway between the east (Monday) and northeast (Sunday) corners of the platform, close to the earlier *Htidaw Zeidi* of King Mindon and the 1775 AD *Htidaw* of King Hsinbyushin. In the new *Htidaw Zeidi*, King Mindon's *Hti* has been preserved in its ancient state, visible in the upper portions of the pagoda rather than enclosed, as is the case with the other two *Htidaw Zeidi*.

In a sense the *Htidaw Zeidi* set a precedent for the historical presentation in the renovated U Ba Yi Tazaung. Despite its auspicious location across from the Sunday (northeast) planetary post, an image had never been housed in this late 1920's pavilion.<sup>16</sup> A central *Maha Atula Yazathuka* image of the Buddha and figures of nine key Arahats in the sustenance of Theravada practice were consecrated on the 14<sup>th</sup> Waxing day of Tazaungmon 1362 ME (9 November 2000).<sup>17</sup> Two large freestanding carvings flank the image of the Buddha: a *Shwe Oo Daung Min* (royal peacock) and a *Hintha Min* (Brahminy duck).<sup>18</sup>

All the figures were conceived and made at the Hsandawshin Kyaikhtisaung Zeididaw of Kyaikhtisaung Sayadaw Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadaja Baddhanta Panñadipa.<sup>19</sup> In the U Ba Yi Tazaung, there are three inscriptions in Myanmar: a record of the consecration, nine points of guidance (*Ovada*) and wishes for loving-kindness (*Metta*) from Kyaikhtisaung Sayadaw. In addition, there are ten bilingual Myanmar and English inscriptions, one mounted above the central image and nine behind the images of the Arahats.

The inscription for the central "Raja Thuka" image identifies it as the Fourth Buddha. Three of the other figures date to the lifetime of the Buddha Gotama: Ashin Ananda who assisted Him; Ashin Anuruddha, said to have arrived in Thuwannabhumi (Thaton) to initiate the Hair Relic Thathana tradition, and Ashin Gawunpati who requested the Buddha to visit Thuwannabhumi and accompanied him on his journey.<sup>20</sup>

Chronologically, the next figure commemorates the start of the Pariyatti Sāsana by Maha Kassapa, convenor of the 1st Buddhist Synod in the year after the Buddha's demise.<sup>21</sup> There is then a gap until the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC with the depiction of images of Moggala Putta Tissa who convened the 3rd Buddhist Synod in 307 BC under the patronage of King Asoka as well as the figures of Ashin Sona and Uttara who traditionally came to Thuwannabhumi to restore and revitalise the Buddhist Sāsana.

Some six hundred years later, in the 4<sup>th</sup> C AD, is the image of Ashin Buddhagosa who brought the three Piṭakas to Myanmar. Lastly, in the 11<sup>th</sup> C AD, is the figure of Ashin Araham who began his propagation of Theravada Buddhism in Bagan in 1056 AD. Thus the images span a time period of more than 1500 years from the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC to the 11<sup>th</sup> century AD. They include not only those associated with the

commencement of Theravada teachings in the Mon State but the transmission of these teachings from the southern to the central part of the country, from the Mon State to the later capital of Bagan.

As cited in the endnotes and mentioned below for Kyaikhtiyoe, there are some differences in the Myanmar and English inscriptions in the use of dating eras and names. However, the main reasons for describing them are to note the wide range of traditional, historical and celestial figures cited, the alternative concepts of time mentioned earlier, and to record the utilisation of both Myanmar and English inscriptions as part of current renovation.

### **Suvannabhumi *Hsandawshin* and Kyaikhtiyoe**

As seen above, one of the images installed in the U Ba Yi Tazaung depicts Ashin Gawampati. His name is likened 'the living mass of earth', with 'gawam' coming from 'gawun' or laterite.<sup>22</sup> Gawampati is said to have invited the Buddha Gotama to Suvannabhumi following his own journey to the region to see relatives from prior existences.<sup>23</sup> Gawampati's visit is described in both Mon Chronicles and in the late 11th century AD inscriptions of the Bagan King Kyanzittha.<sup>24</sup>

At the request of Gawampati, the Buddha, accompanied by 500 Mahatheras, came to Suvannabhumi during His eighth *Vassa*.<sup>25</sup> The Buddha delivered sermons and gave *Hsandawshin* to Siha Yatheit, Keylatha Yatheit and Tissa Yatheit.<sup>26</sup> Tissa Yatheit, the hermit of Kyaikhtiyoe kept two strands in his hair-knot. On the demise of the hermit from Keylatha, Tissa hermit received one more Hair from him. When Tissa hermit became old and ill, his brother the Siha hermit begged him to enshrine the Buddha's Hairs. Tissa hermit agreed, requesting that they be placed within a boulder having the shape of his head. On his fifth try Thagyarmin found a boulder 17 feet in height and 52 feet in circumference. According to traditional accounts, he lifted the boulder into place without touching the surface of the mountain edge. With his four-edged sacred dagger, Thagyarmin made a hole in the boulder, three feet deep and six inches wide. A casket with *Hsandawshin* was enshrined in the hole and in 118 ME (756 AD) a three-foot high stupa was built.<sup>27</sup>

On March 19, 2001 AD, a *Htidawtin* ceremony was held at Kyaikhtiyoe in the Mon State of Lower Myanmar. During the ceremony, relics were enshrined and sacred objects ceremonially installed onto the summit of the pagoda by Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council, Lt-Gen Khin Nyunt. These re-consecrated the ancient *Zeididaw*.<sup>28</sup>

Some twenty years previously an assessment was made of the Kyaikhtiyoe boulder. It was found to be inclined at an angle of 20 percent, to revolve around an axis of plus or minus 3 degrees with the ancient hole for the *panlehdaing* at the centre of gravity. With a weight of 600+ tons, theoretically it should not remain in place.<sup>29</sup> For the 2001 AD renovations, a technical report was prepared, including assessment of the weight and stability criteria of the boulder.<sup>30</sup>

Several parts of this report are included, for two reasons. First, to emphasise how new texts include technical research as well as inscriptions mounted on structures. Secondly, to highlight how new sources, here a set of detailed measurements and calculations, are being used in collaboration with much older traditional accounts and customs.

Earlier estimates of the weight and contact were evaluated using precision surveying equipment.<sup>31</sup> The total weight of the rock was found to be 611.45 tons or 630.90 tons including the *zeidi*, with a contact surface area between boulder and base rock of 7.69 sq.ft. The study considered the boulder, the stupa, the combined boulder and stupa, and the contact area between the boulder and the lower rock surface. The centroid of the combined boulder and stupa is 13.68 feet above the critical axis of rotation in the vertical direction. The allowable maximum force that can be applied at the centroid is 46.6 tons in a direction perpendicular to the critical axis of rotation. The mass centroid of stupa and boulder as a unit is not the same as the mass centroid of the stupa alone. In other words, the stability criteria were determined with awareness of and in conjunction with the mass of the boulder and the gravity point of the boulder's balance.

There is a very strong spiritual tradition of adhering to the initial location of the *panlehdaing*, the *zeidi* post, no matter how large the stupa becomes. Thus the finding of the technical report is notable. The stupa has been enlarged from the 3-foot height of the 756 AD to its present height of just over 22 feet, but a new cavity has never been dug. An undertaking of this nature would have been recorded in some form. Thus the location where Thagyarmin is said to have placed the *panlehdaing* can be seen as 'correct' in the sense of knowing the exact place where the post and *zeidi* must be placed in relation to the delicate balance of the boulder.<sup>32</sup>

As part of the Kyaikhtiyoe renovations, inscriptions were mounted on the platform in both Myanmar and English. The English version refers to the Celestial Deva and the Emperor, whereas the Myanmar more specifically cites Min Magha and Nayathanin. There have been previous rulers of *Tavati* (Tavaṭṭīpa) although Min Magha is the present Thagyarmin. Nayathanin rules over *Satumaharit* (Catumahārājika), the celestial plane of the four guardian deities.<sup>33</sup>

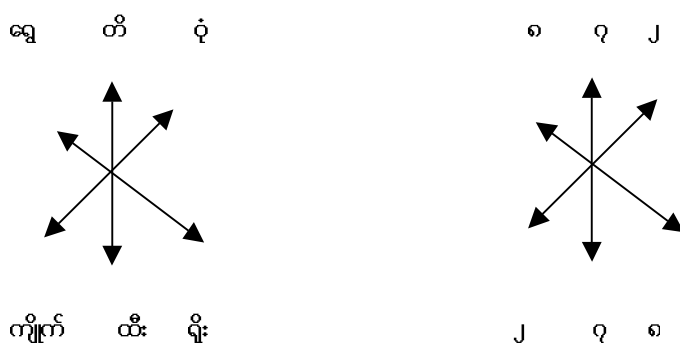
In another section, the English inscription wishes that Satulokapala Deva and Lokabyuha Devas and Brahmas will rejoice in the undertaking, while the Myanmar speaks of the Lokanat and the Thathana (Sāsana) Saung Nat Min. Satulokapala Deva refers to the four (*satu*) guardians of the world (*lokapala*). Lokanat, 'world nat', implies but does not directly refer to the four guardians of the world. Lokabyuha Devas and Brahmas forewarn creatures of the impending end of the world while Thathana Saung Nat Min is the guardian of the *Safgha*.<sup>34</sup>

A further type of text, reflected in the day chosen for the Kyaikhtiyoe *Htidawtin*, is a *Nakkhata* diagram linking Kyaikhtiyoe and the Shwedagon.<sup>35</sup> The *Shwehtidaw* was hoisted on the 11th Waning day of Tabaung, 1362 ME. Taking the day (1+1) plus the Myanmar month (1+2) plus the year (1+3+6+2), the total is 17.<sup>36</sup> In accordance with planetary influences governing the eight days of the Myanmar week, the first syllable of the Shwedagon matches the last one of Kyaikhtiyoe (၈ and ၈). Both are associated with Wednesday evening, governed by the planet Rahu, and the number 8. The middle part is the number 7, Saturday, governed by Saturn (၈ and ၈). The last part of

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Shwedagon and the first part of Kyaikhtiyoe are 2, Monday, governed by the Moon (ခုံ and ကျိုက်).<sup>37</sup> This becomes 8+7+2 for the Shwedagon and is reversed to 2+7+8 for Kyaikhtiyoe, both adding up to 17, as shown below.



### The Kyaikhtiyoe relics, umbrella, vane and diamond bud

The technical report prepared for the new *Htidaw* pointed out the need to lay new cement and offer new gold plates and *Shwethingan*, gold leaf, to the pagoda.<sup>38</sup> The addition of reinforced concrete increased the height of the pagoda by some nine feet from 13'8" to 22'5". The old gold was removed from the 'skin' of the pagoda at the suggestion of Kyaikhtisaung Sayadaw. This was refined into 64 gold bars, which then were cast into 26-gauge gold plates. Additional gold was purchased through donations. The gold plates were then used to gild the new stainless steel *Htidaw* frame.

As the *zeidi* height was altered, new *Htapanar* were placed at the *Oakmyit* and *Hti* level.<sup>39</sup> The *Htapanar* included ten images, two sets of the same figures.<sup>40</sup> The images are pure gold, *thansinshwe*, and pure silver, each one measuring some five inches in height. They depict Gotama Buddha, Arimettaya Buddha, Tissa Yatheit, Shin Thiwali and Shin Uppakoe.<sup>41</sup>

There are nine tiers or *bon* making up the pure gold *Shwehtidaw*. The upper seven layers are in Bamar style, the second lowest layer is Shan, and the first tier is Mon. While the combination of Mon and Bamar has previously been used, the inclusion of the Shan layer between the Mon and Bamar is unique.<sup>42</sup> Another innovation is the use of inscriptions and figural scenes along with the usual floral motifs.

For example, the main part of the Mon tier bears eight lotus flowers with the twenty-four *Paṭṭhāna* conditional relations inscribed on the lotus petals. Four *Shwe Oo Daung Min* and four *Hintha Min* are on the lower rim of the tier. Around the bottom edge are eight ovoid plaques inscribed in Myanmar with the precepts of the Noble Eightfold Path.<sup>43</sup> On both its upper and lower sections, the Shan tier depicts the last ten lives of the Buddha Gotama, the *Mahanipata*. The scenes on the seven Bamar tiers include the seven places the Buddha Gotama meditated in the seven days after his Enlightenment, episodes from the *Mahanipata*, the four Buddhas of this era, Buddha

Gotama protected by the *Mucalinda naga* and depictions of two hermits receiving *Hsandawshin* from Buddha Gotama.

The new Kyaikhtiyoe *Hgnyetmyatnadaw* or vane is innovative in the use of motifs and in the differing front and back faces. In addition to floral designs, the front face has depictions of the Shwedagon and Kyaikhtiyoe, the *Shwe Oo Daung Min* and *Hintha Min*.<sup>44</sup> On the reverse there are images of the Shwedagon, a large emerald-studded image of the Buddha, the *Shwe Oo Daung Min* and the *Hintha Min*. There is no image of Kyaikhtiyoe on this face, and the decoration is somewhat less elaborate than on the front. Images of Tissa Yatheit and Thagyarmin guard the rear upright edge of the vane.

The placement of the four Buddhas of this era on the lower part of the *Seinbudaw*, each sheltered by a *moke*, emulates the design of the Shwedagon platform.<sup>45</sup> At the summit of the *Seinbudaw* is a gold figure of Arimettaya facing towards Keylatha Mountain. During the visit of the Buddha Gotama, Keylatha is said to be the first place where He donated Sacred Hairs. Below Arimettaya is a jade cylindrical 'mountain', from which several *Dhatu* or relics are hung. This recalls the mountain of the *Tavati*  $\diamond$   $\Sigma$  *a* celestial abode where all Buddhas wait prior to being born.

The use of jade may also be seen as another reminder of the Buddha Gotama's journey to the region. On His way to Keylatha, the Buddha was given an emerald alms bowl (*mya thabeik*) by the Mae Daw Gyi of Mya Thabeik Mountain. This is thought to be enshrined at Mya Thabeik Zeidi on the slope of Keylatha Mountain.<sup>46</sup>

As seen in these examples, parts of the *Shwehtidaw* cite the *Dhamma*. Figural elements based on canonical and traditional texts are seen in the *Htapanar*, and on the *Shwehtidaw*, *Hgnyetmyatnadaw* and *Seinbudaw*. Images of the Shwedagon and Kyaikhtiyoe are interspersed with visual reference to the *Hsandawshin* heritage of Suvannabhumi. The designs and their display express a particular conviction and perception of time, the establishment of the Buddha's teachings, traditions arising from these, and their continued sustenance.

## Conclusion

The Shwedagon and Kyaikhtiyoe are changing in a country where Theravada practice has been sustained for some two thousand years. Deep-rooted traditions have informed, although not constrained, recent renovation of these pagodas. The physical aspects noted here illustrate the incremental and cumulative effect of innovation throughout this period of time. Despite or perhaps because of the existence of many longstanding precedents, the design and placement of forms varies greatly as each new context is created.

The Shwedagon and Kyaikhtiyoe are two of Myanmar's most venerated *zeidi*. They are not just sites where forms of legendary origin have been changed with periodic renovation. If Theravada practice was not an integral part of present day Myanmar



culture, the Shwedagon and Kyaikhtiyoe might be considered solely as ancient monuments of national importance. This is not the case, however. People grow up hearing the teachings of the Buddha and in various ways the principles of the *Dhamma* are part of a way of life. One tangible aspect of this way of life is spaces where homage may be publicly or privately undertaken.

Much has been written about the history of pagodas and images in Myanmar but little about the details of current renovation. Longevity has resulted in a rich and unique heritage that includes the present. Awareness of this constant process of change forms a vital part of understanding the practice prevailing today.

### **Acknowledgements**

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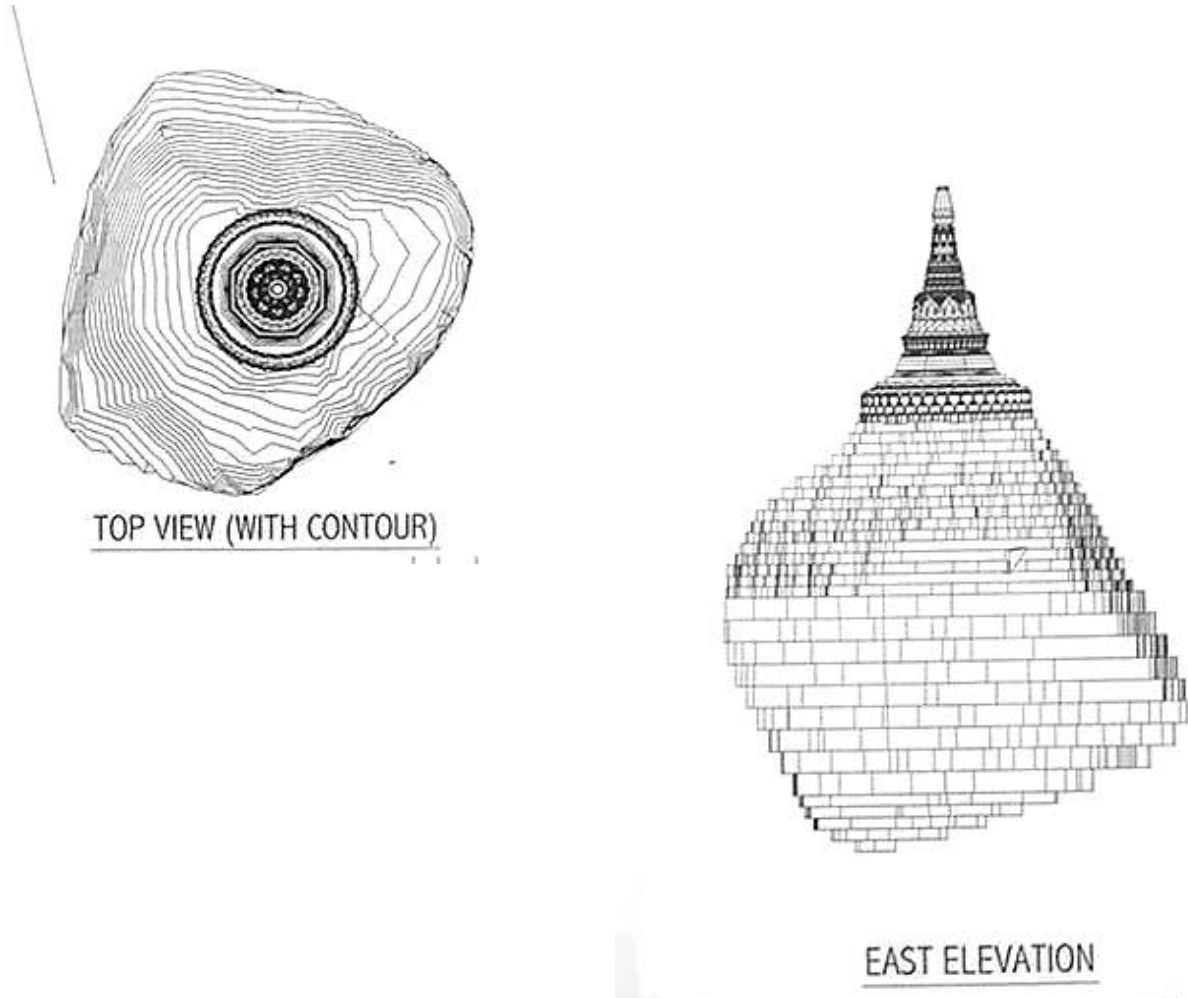
Figure 1. Northeast corner of the Shwedagon platform, showing Htidaw Zeidi (right, with dark glass inserts to see the 19th C AD Htidaw of King Mindon preserved inside) and U Ba Yi Tazaung (left, with concrete arches and balusters)

Figure 1a. (left) Mural painting of the traditional visit of the Buddha to Suvannabhumi, showing offering of alms upon His arrival. Painting from Mya Thabeik Zeidi, Bilin Township, Mon State. (right) U Ba Yi Tazaung interior showing standing laterite image of Ashin Gawampati along with other Ashin seated figures and bilingual inscription plaques.





Figure 3a,b. Kyaikhtiyoe, showing Top View with contour of boulder and zeidi and East elevation of boulder and zeidi.  
 From 'A Study of Hsandawshin Kyaikhtiyoe Stupa and the Boulder from technical aspects' 2001. Courtesy Prof. Nyi Hla Nge



<sup>1</sup> Repair and renovation continues at the Hsandawshin Shwedagon Zeididaw under the auspices of the Leading Committee for Perpetual All-round Renovation and the Shwedagon Pagoda Board of Trustees. Likewise the Working Committee for All-round Renovation of Hsandawshin Kyaikhtiyoe Pagoda and the Kyaikhtiyoe Pagoda Board of Trustees supervised the 2001 AD renovation and oversee ongoing work at Hsandawshin Kyaikhtiyoe Zeididaw.

<sup>2</sup> e.g. New Light of Myanmar 20 March, 5 June 2001

<sup>3</sup> The new *Htidaw* was raised with advice of the Sangha Maha Nayaka Sayadaws and the Ovādācariya Sayadaws, under the guidance of Senior General Than Shwe, Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council and the close supervision of Lt-Gen Khin Nyunt, Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council. Donations by organisations and many individuals included gold, cash and jewellery. (Moore 2000a: 165, courtesy Shwedagon Trustees, July 1999; Moore 2000b: 288.)

<sup>4</sup> The New Light of Myanmar 10 November 2002

<sup>5</sup> The ceremony was undertaken with the blessing of Abhidhammaratthaguru Abhidhaja-aggamaha Saddhadhamajotika Bhaddanta Sobhita, Chairman of the State Sanghamaha Saddhadhamajotikadhaja Bhaddanta Pannadipa and Kyaikhtiyoe Sayadaw Mahasaddhamajotikadhaja Bhaddanta Pannaver. It was carried out under the guidance of Senior General Than Shwe, Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council, and the close supervision of Lt-Gen Khin Nyunt, Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council.

<sup>6</sup> Myanmar Alin and New Light of Myanmar, 29 January 2002.

<sup>7</sup> The region includes the present townships of Kyaikhto, Bilin, Thaton, and Paung. (Maung Cetana 1997b: 2). The 19th *C Hman Nan* Chronicle and the *Sasanvamsa* argue that the Thaton region was Suvannabhumi. (Tet Htoot 1963:54, Than Tun 1978:51)

<sup>8</sup> Tun Aung Chain & Thein Hlaing 1996:3

<sup>9</sup> Diary of Shwedagon Pagoda events, courtesy U Khin Maung Myint, Shwedagon Trustees, 1999

<sup>10</sup> The *Seinbudaw* and *Hngetmyatnadaw* were renovated.

<sup>11</sup> This height includes the *Seinbudaw* (Diamond bud, although the Shwedagon is a 22-inch high orb), *Hngetmyatnadaw* (Vane, 2'5" high, or 3'10" including the attached section of the *panlehdaing*) and other parts of the sacred superstructure. There are 83,850 pieces of jewellery on the *Htidaw* alone. (Shwedagon Trustees, 2001; Shwedagon Zeidi All-Round Perpetual Renovation Committee 1999c)

<sup>12</sup> The tradition of inscribing on precious metal reaches back to the early 1st millennium AD, illustrated by the gold plaques found at Thayekhittaya (Srikshestra) inscribed with extracts from all three books of the *Tripitaka*. (See Ludu Daw Ahme, 1974)

<sup>13</sup> A *tazaung* closer to the *zeidi is* being renovated to house the Gold Replica. Both the Gold Replica and the Jade Image are protected within enclosures due to their high value, in the case of the Jade Image particularly the gold headband with its diamonds and rubies.

Small 'replicas' of Kyaikhtiyoe are popular with pilgrims but only a few small *zeidi* in the likeness of the Shwedagon may be found at shops around the pagoda. This is in contrast to the many images of the Buddha purchased by devotees. There are many photographs of highly venerated images, but these are not exactly copied in small images. The same is true of large-scale likenesses. For example, new *zeidis* honour the Shwedagon in being similar but do not try to replicate it.

<sup>14</sup> Shwedagon Trustees, 2001

<sup>15</sup> U Khin Maung Myint, Shwedagon Trustee, personal communication, May 2001

<sup>16</sup> The pavilion is midway between the Bo Bo Aung Hsutaungpyeh Hpaya Tazaung, the Htidaw Zeidi and the Bo Bo Aung Buddha Yutbwadaw Tazaung. (U Khin Maung Myint, Shwedagon Trustee Committee, personal communication, 18 December 2000)

<sup>17</sup> On the same day, the cornerstone laying ceremony was held for the Sāsana 5000 Yaungdawphwint Kyaikhtisaung Htidipan Dhammayon near the western stairway. The Dhammayon was consecrated on 29 July 2001 AD (the 9<sup>th</sup> Waxing day of Second Waso 1363 ME).

<sup>18</sup> All the images are of laterite, the first at the Shwedagon. The *Hintha Min* is the symbol of the Mon State. The *Shwe Oo Daung Min* refers to the swiftness of the peacock in the Jatakas, and may also recall the speed of Gawampati's flight to Suvannabhumi. It is also possible to see the pairing as mother and father. (Kyaikhtisaung Sayadaw, personal communication, November 2000)

<sup>19</sup> The Kyaikhtisaung Zeididaw is located in Bilin Township, Mon State. The main donor for the U Ba Yi renovations was Agga Maha Siri Sudhamma Manijotadhara Dr. Khin Shwe (Zaykabar Co.Ltd.). See U Pan Hmwe 2001.

<sup>20</sup> While the English cites 105 of the Maha Era, the Myanmar version is more specific, citing the Maha Sakarit [Thakkarat] Era, the era preceding the Buddhist Era. This is in the English text for Maha Kassapa. For Gawampati, the English inscription cites the Buddhist Era while the Myanmar version cites the Maha Sakarit Era.

<sup>21</sup> The English text cites the year 148 of the Maha [Sakarit] Era, recording it likewise as the Anjana Era (624 BC to the time of the Maha Parinibbana, the passing away of the Lord Buddha, 544 BC).

<sup>22</sup> Maung Cetana 1997a: 29, 32; Shwedagon U Ba Yi Tazaung. Shorto refers to the "cult of Gavampati and the powerful *nat* of Zingyaik hill" (1963:576)

<sup>23</sup> Tun Aung Chain 2000:134.

<sup>24</sup> Maung Cetana 1997a: 28, 32. It has been postulated that Gawunpati's origins are in the Rāmañña guardian deity. Locational parallels are drawn to the setting of Mount Popa southeast of Bagan, as well as the southeast housepost position of the Mon male ancestral spirits, *kalok*, and the *einsaung nat* Min Mahagiri. (Shorto 1967:132-5)

<sup>25</sup> The text is taken from a history delivered in Myanmar by Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Khin Nyunt at the consecration ceremony and translated into English in The New Light of Myanmar, 20 March 2001.

<sup>26</sup> Kyaikhtiyoe Pagoda Trustees, 1997:64-5

<sup>27</sup> The Kyaikhtiyoe Pagoda Trustee (1997) history does not explicitly mention whether only one or all three of the strands were enshrined at Kyaikhtiyoe. The pagoda was called 'Kyaikhtiyoe' in Myanmar and 'Kyaiknathiyo' in Mon. *Kyaik* is the Mon term for pagoda. *Yoe* can be translated as 'bones' but here is the Mon word for the pillar, the *Panlehdaing* (*Mandaing*) post of the pagoda.

<sup>28</sup> In 917 ME (1555 AD), King Bayintnaung of Hanthawaddy in Bago donated a new umbrella to the pagoda. Three kings of the Inwa dynasty, King Pyay, King Minye and King Sanemin also donated *Htidaw* in 1031ME, 1040 ME and 1062 ME respectively. In 1265 ME (1903 AD), renovations were carried out following the forming of the Pagoda Board of Trustees.



- <sup>29</sup> The survey was in 1980, by a research team from the Geology Department. *Hsandawshin Kyaikhtiyoe Thamaing*. New Light of Dhamma, 1980:116. (Courtesy U Khin Maung Myint, Shwedagon Trustee, March 2001)
- <sup>30</sup> The report was prepared by the Deputy Minister for Science and Technology, Prof. Nyi Hla Nge and a team of civil engineers and geologists from Yangon Technological University (Nyi Hla Nge 2001)
- <sup>31</sup> Equipment used included a Topcon Pulse Laser Total Station GPT 1002 (Concordia Int. Ltd. Topcon Auto Level ATG3). Drawings were prepared using Civil CAD (5.5) and Auto CAD (2000). (Nyi Hla Nge 2001:1)
- <sup>32</sup> This use of technological reports together with legendary texts also characterised the making and installation of the new Shwedagon *Htidaw*. (e.g. Moore 2000a: 162-7, Moore 2000b:287-8.)
- <sup>33</sup> "31 Planes of Existence", courtesy U Khin Maung Myint, Shwedagon Trustee, June 2001.
- <sup>34</sup> Nayathanin assesses the balance of *Kusala* and *Akusala* from previous existences when a new life form comes to exist. The Myanmar equivalent of the English terms is လောကပါလနတ်မင်းကြီး (၄)ပါး and လောကဗျူဟာနတ် while the Myanmar version uses မင်း ဓာယာနုရသနင်း လောကနတ် and သာသနာစောင့်နတ်မင်း
- <sup>35</sup> *Nakkhata yaungkhyehmaggazin* (နက္ခတ္တ ရောင်ခြည်မဂ္ဂဇင်း) express the rays or influences of the planets. (U Khin Maung Myint, Trustee, Shwedagon Trustee Committee, April 2001)
- <sup>36</sup> U Zay Thiha (Zaykabar Co.Ltd.), 18 March 2001
- <sup>37</sup> The numbers are Sunday (1, northeast, Sun အ ဥ), Monday (2, east, Moon, က ခ ဝ ယ င), Tuesday (3, southeast, Mars စ ဆ ဇ ရ ည), Wednesday morning (4, south, Mercury လ ဝ), Thursday (5, west, Jupiter ဝ ဇ ဗ ဘ မ), Friday (6, north, Venus သ တ), Saturday (7, southwest, Saturn တ ထ ဒ မ န), Wednesday evening (8, northwest, Rahu ရ ဝ).
- <sup>38</sup> Nyi Hla Nge 2001
- <sup>39</sup> *Htapanar taik* can take place two or three times during the construction or renovation of a pagoda: when new ground is broken (*Pannet*), when the building starts (the brick foundation, *Oakmyit*) and at the level of the *Htidaw*. When a new *Hti* is raised on an ancient *zeidi*, new *Htapanar* are not always enshrined. For example, new relics were not enshrined during the 1999 AD hoisting of a new *Htidaw* at the Shwedagon, for although the Shwedagon was regilded, the size was not altered, as was the case at Kyaikhtiyoe. The last time the height of the Shwedagon *Htidaw* was increased was by King Hsinbyushin in 1768 AD, following a strong earthquake. This raised the height twenty-four feet, from the 302-foot height of Queen Shin Saw Bu's 1436 AD donations, to the present 326 feet. (Shwedagon Board of Trustees 2001, Moore 2000a:178)
- <sup>40</sup> For the *Shwehtidaw*, *Hgnyetmyatnadaw*, *Seinbudaw*, and *Htapanar*, individuals offered many contributions and jewellery. These were complemented with numerous benefactions by Zaykabar Co.Ltd.
- <sup>41</sup> A brass image from Cambodia was included with the gold images. It depicted a seated image of the Buddha with five Arahats standing before Him.

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<sup>42</sup> From about the 15th C AD, particularly in central Myanmar, both Mon and Bamar styles were used in crowning a pagoda. Each remained different as they marked authority over an area. The two forms can be seen at the Shwesandaw pagoda in Pyay (Prome) where there are two *Hti*, the Bamar one above the Mon. (Moore 2000a:156-7, Moore 2000b:286)

<sup>43</sup> The English equivalent is Right Understanding, *Sammādiṭṭi*; Right Thinking, *Sammāsaṅkappa*; Right Speech, *Sammāvācā*; Right Action, *Sammākammanta*; Right Livelihood, *Sammāvajja*; Right Effort, *Sammāvāyāma*; Right Mindfulness, *Sammāsati*; Right Concentration, *Sammāsamādhi* (Ba Khin 1951; Ministry of Religious Affairs 2000)

<sup>44</sup> The *Hgnyetmyatnadaw* is literally the ‘bird resting place’, traditionally for the four auspicious birds: the hintha or duck, *lehmyisweh*, the ashy drongo *Dicrurus leucophaeus* that can speak, the *kyeh* or parrot, and the *kyet* or rooster. (Moore 2000a:158)

<sup>45</sup> An arch-shaped recess (၈၁) forming a cave-like shelter for the image. At the Shwedagon images of Kakuthan (Kakussanda), Konnagon (Konagamana), Katthapa (Kassapa) and Gautama (Gotama) are on the east, south, west and north respectively. (Moore 2000a: 159; Moore 2000b: 286-7; Tun Aung Chain and Thein Hlaing 1996: 22; Yangon City Development Committee & Shwedagon Trustees. 1997)

<sup>46</sup> Maung Cetana 1997b: 1