



SPEAKER 3: PROFESSOR DR SU SU

MUNICIPAL PLANNING AND HERITAGE: THE FUTURE OF CITIES IN MYANMAR

Prof. Dr. Su Su

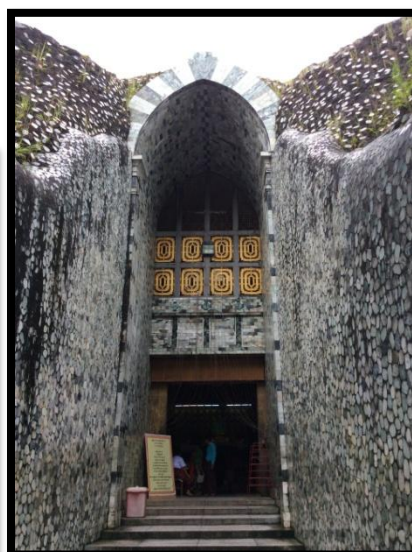
Professor and Head, Department of Architecture
Mandalay Technological University
Mandalay, Myanmar

E: pingulay27@gmail.com

Dr. Toe Aung

Director, Urban Planning Unit
Yangon City Development Committee
Yangon, Myanmar

E. toeaungteza16@gmail.com



Colonial and post-Independence architecture of Yangon

**WORKSHOP ON
THE HERITAGE OF ANCIENT AND URBAN SITES:
GIVING VOICE TO LOCAL PRIORITIES
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ABSTRACT

This paper highlights the needs of proper heritage management systems which respond very well to municipal planning systems and also urban planning legislations, planning and development ideologies and organizational structures which respond very well to urban heritage management systems of historic districts of cities as well as ancient sites in Myanmar. In the case of historic district of cities (mostly historic core areas of contemporary cities), historical, environmental, ethnic and cultural diversity are important factors related with tangible and intangible heritage of host communities which are asking for recognition of multiplicity of heritage items. Therefore, making detail master plans of cities by considering designated heritage conservation areas with diverse urban heritage is essential for both heritage management and socio-economic development to allow historic core areas to remain as historic districts of vibrant contemporary cities. Heritage conservation areas should be defined based on urban heritage inventories. Heritage conservation areas and master plans of cities and zoning regulations must respond very well to one another for balancing conservation and new developments.

BIODATA

Su Su was born in Yangon and was fascinated a lot by the historic buildings and areas of shared heritage. She got a Ph.D. from Yangon Technological University in 2006 by looking at urban management system of the "Historic Centre of Yangon" and did her post-doctoral research work on heritage management system of "Historic Centre Vienna and Budapest" at Vienna University of Technology in 2008 and 2009. Her interest for further research is on the issues concerning with the new initiative historic urban landscape (HUL) concept, especially on those reflecting on historic city centres of South East Asian Cities. She is now Professor and Head of Department of Architecture, Mandalay Technological University. She actively participated in preparation of "Management Parts of Nomination Dossier and Property Management Plan of Pyu Ancient Cities", participates in "Myanmar National Building Code" drafting project as a member of "Technical Working Group II Architecture and Urban Design" and "Yangon City Comprehensive Land Use, Zoning and Urban Design Review Working Committee".

Toe Aung is the Director of Urban Planning Division (UPD) of the Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC). UPD was established in 2011, as YCDC needs to provide better public services for the citizens and planning Yangon's urban and regional development. UPD has formulated the "Strategic Urban Development Plan of the Greater Yangon" in cooperation with JICA in 2013, cooperating with UN Habitat in slum upgrading projects, closely working together with professionals from various organizations for urban heritage conservation, zoning and land use planning of the city.

CONFERENCE PAPER

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Prof. Dr. Su Su
Professor and Head, Department of Architecture
Mandalay Technological University
Mandalay, Myanmar
E: pingulay27@gmail.com
Dr. Toe Aung
Director, Urban Planning Unit
Yangon City Development Committee
Yangon, Myanmar
E. toeaungteza16@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper highlights the needs of proper heritage management systems which respond very well to municipal planning systems and also urban planning legislations, planning and development ideologies and organizational structures which respond very well to urban heritage management systems of historic districts of cities as well as ancient sites in Myanmar. In the case of historic district of cities (mostly historic core areas of contemporary cities), historical, environmental, ethnic and cultural diversity are important factors related with tangible and intangible heritage of host communities which are asking for recognition of multiplicity of heritage items. Therefore, making detail master plans of cities by considering designated heritage conservation areas with diverse urban heritage is essential for both heritage management and socio-economic development to allow historic core areas to remain as historic districts of vibrant contemporary cities. Heritage conservation areas should be defined based on urban heritage inventories. Heritage conservation areas, master plans of cities and zoning regulations must respond very well to one another for balancing conservation and new developments.

Introduction

For safeguarding the city's unique cultural heritage and natural landscape, it is very important to encourage the long-term sustainable heritage led development that can find a balance between development and heritage conservation. In Myanmar, it is very important to address carefully for big and small cities with historic cores like Yangon, Mandalay and Pyin Oo Lwin, Pyay, etc. and cities adjacent to ancient cities like Pyay, etc.

For cities adjacent to ancient cities like Pyay or towns inside an ancient site like Nyaung Oo, it is essential to integrate the vision of the heritage management plan and objectives into local development planning of these cities. This needs to take place in tandem with making detail zoning plans of the ancient sites. Detailed zoning plans of the property at Sri Ksetra Pyu Ancient Cities is shown below as an example in Figure 1.

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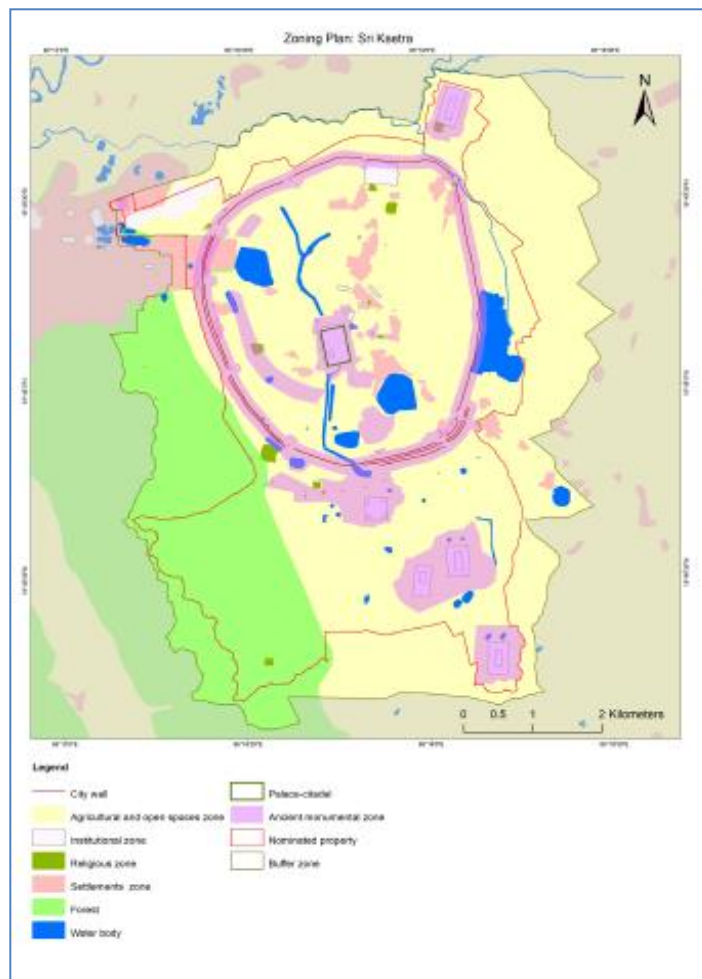


Figure 1 – Zoning Plan of Sri Ksetra Property (Ministry of Culture, 2013)

For the largest city, Yangon, in 2014, the “Strategic Urban Development Plan of The Greater Yangon” (YCDC, conducted by JICA in 2013) has been adopted by the regional authorities. The JICA’s Greater Yangon Strategic Plan calls for action on ‘heritage and urban landscape’ in five specific areas such as: (1) recording of historical and cultural heritage, (2) establishment of the guidelines for urban regeneration plan utilising heritage buildings, (3) establishment of a management plan for the implementation of conservation, (4) cultivation of human resources and (5) expertise for heritage related construction and implementation to renovate heritage buildings and urban landscape.

As the ministry responsible for urban planning of the cities in Myanmar, Ministry of Construction is assisting YCDC in drafting “Zoning Plan” (YCDC, draft 2014) of Yangon. Yangon Heritage Trust (YHT), Mandalay Technological University and Association of Myanmar Architects, and others joined in together for making the zoning plan (YCDC draft 2014). Zoning plan of downtown Yangon is as shown in figure below.

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Figure 2 – Zoning Plan of Downtown Yangon (YCDC, draft 2014)

In general, two types of ‘urban upgrading’ can be observed in downtown Yangon: demolition of old buildings for new construction and upgrading of historic properties. Both need to be handled carefully within the “Proposed Heritage Conservation Area” which is only the middle part, excluding far east and far west of downtown Yangon.

However, within Proposed Downtown Conservation Area, authorities need to come up with a “Heritage Conservation Renovation and Regeneration Framework” which includes specific zoning parameters reflecting the maximum range of allowable heights, heritage designation and control framework, and other aspects. However, at present, there is not enough legal provision or clear administrative structures to address these conservation issues in Yangon.

Many international charters including the Washington Charter referred to development over time. As there is physical degradation because of the impact of urban development, the conservation of these areas should include their ‘development and harmonious adaption to contemporary life’ (UNESCO 1987).

Legislation

“The Protection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage Regions Law” (Ministry of Culture, 1998, amended 2009) as well as ‘The Protection and Preservation of Ancient Monuments Law’ (2015) are limited to ancient monuments and sites which are more than a hundred years old. In addition, urban heritage categories such as street patterns, etc are not included in the laws.

As there is no sufficient legal background for all categories of urban heritage at the national level, the “Proposed Yangon Urban Heritage Conservation Law” (Proposed by YHT, 2013) was submitted to the Regional Government. However, it has not yet been enacted.

The reasons for the lack of maintenance of housing stock in downtown Yangon are partly due to the “The Rent Control Act” (Ministry of Construction, 1947). The land owner can easily make profit out of his/her land is by reconstructing something higher than the recent building. That’s why, in most of the cases, the land owners are reluctant to safeguard the historic buildings.

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The 'Myanmar National Building Code Development Planning' Project was signed between UN-habitat and the national professional body, the Myanmar Engineering Society (MES) in 2011. This project is endorsed by the Ministry of Construction, Department of Urban and Housing Development (DUHD). There are altogether seven Technical Working Groups and in Technical Working Group II, Architecture and Urban Design, there is a chapter titled "Regulations for Historical buildings (Historical Building Chapter, HBC)" that is now being used as a provisional regulation (Ministry of Construction, provisional 2015). This says that authorities can designate areas of significant historical, social, cultural, architectural and scientific values to protect the nature and character of the urban heritage conservation areas. Developers are required to submit a heritage impact assessment or/and a conservation management plan whenever they are requested.

Organizational structures and stakeholders

For ancient sites adjacent to contemporary city or historic core areas, organizational mechanisms which usually include in the management plan are necessary to focus on establishing a coordinating committee with site-specific working groups. The aim of establishing a coordinating committee is to:

1. Ensure the coordinated protection and management of the nominated property or national heritage.
2. Include site-specific working groups within the committee if necessary (especially for serial sites)
3. Include in its membership: district representatives of General Administration Department, Myanmar Police Force; Departments of Rural Development (Cities Development Committees for big cities); Settlement and Land Records; Religious Affairs; Public Construction Works; Forestry; Officers in charge of the respective towns, villages, wards, and others.
4. Devolve direct management authority to the local level, within the limits set by the laws, regulations, and notifications for the protection of national cultural regions, monuments, and antiquities.
5. Allow situational flexibility in management actions through a participatory approach involving all stakeholders including the *sangha* (monk body) and the local community through heritage trusts.

Concerning with conservation of historic urban areas, Hoi An Protocol (UNESCO Beijing 2003, 35) addressed these area as follows:

'Unlike discrete monuments or archaeological sites, living urban assemblages often have no institutional custodian. It is therefore important that an administrative and decision-making body be formed which combines local government, business and community representation with professional conservation and planning expertise. The function of this body is to plan long-term integrated conservation and urban improvement'.

Stakeholders in downtown Yangon are government and non-government organizations, associations, residents, people come to and go back from downtown during daytime for job and other requirements, developers, investors, contractors, business men, land owners, shop owners, street hawkers and others, etc. To some extent, there is a national consciousness of the country's religious ancient sites, but urban heritage is not always appreciated fully by the developers, contractors and land owners of the buildings or recognized fully by concerned authorities. It is also very important to put more efforts into

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collaboration between concerned government departments, organizations and associations in Yangon and other cities for urban heritage conservation.

‘Conservation integrates into local development only if the set of values that regulates the urban management process is able to incorporate heritage values into development. This can only be achieved by widening the institutional spaces for public participation and the existence of a social process that guarantees the non-adherence of the public administration to projects involving the most powerful economic actors in the local development policy arena(City of Vienna 2005, 26)’.

YCDC has formed the Urban Planning Division (UPD) in November 2011 for the future development of Yangon. UPD formed an “Urban Heritage Conservation Section” to develop guidelines for heritage area and serve for other heritage related functions . For the capacity improvement of the newly formed UPD which lacked planning capabilities, EU provided two year project from 2013 to 2015 for Capacity Building. This project assists UPD in strengthening institutional and operational capacities.

Municipal planning and heritage

Proper heritage management which responds very well to planning and development ideologies

Urban planning mechanisms which include in the management plan for areas within the ancient sites/historic urban areas and contemporary cities adjacent to ancient sites include creating zoning maps within the ancient sites/historic urban areas and integrating the property’s management vision and objectives into local development planning of contemporary cities.

Creating zoning maps (further to develop as heritage conservation area plans) within the ancient cities/historic urban areas:

- Zoning maps should be referred in conjunction with guidelines which can be divided into all zones within the site/historic urban area such as ancient monumental zones, religious zones, agricultural and open spaces, institutional zones, settlement zones, etc and those for buffer zones which protects the immediate setting of the site/historic urban area, specifically the panoramic agricultural landscape/historic urban landscape as a support to the site's protection.
- General guidelines should be applied to all zones within the site/historic urban area such as ancient monumental zones, religious zones, agricultural and open spaces, institutional zones, settlement zones, etc. In addition to general guidelines for the whole site/historic urban area mentioned above, sub-zones of the site/historic urban area should have the following specific regulations. Specific guidelines for each sub-zone are as follows – Ancient Monumental Zone(s) (MZ), Agricultural and Open Spaces, Religious Zone(s), Settlement Zones, Institutional Zones, Buffer Zone = Protected and Preserved Zone, PZ, etc. The purpose of the Buffer zone is to effectively protect the site/historic urban area, which includes the immediate setting of the site, specifically the panoramic agricultural landscape/historic urban landscape as a support to the site/historic urban area and its protection.

Conference draft. Please consult the author when citing.

As one of the efforts to integrate the vision of the property management plan of Pyu Ancient City Sri Ksetra into the local development planning of adjacent Pyay City, a brief report for Pyay urban development planning was prepared by the Ministry of Construction in January, 2014.

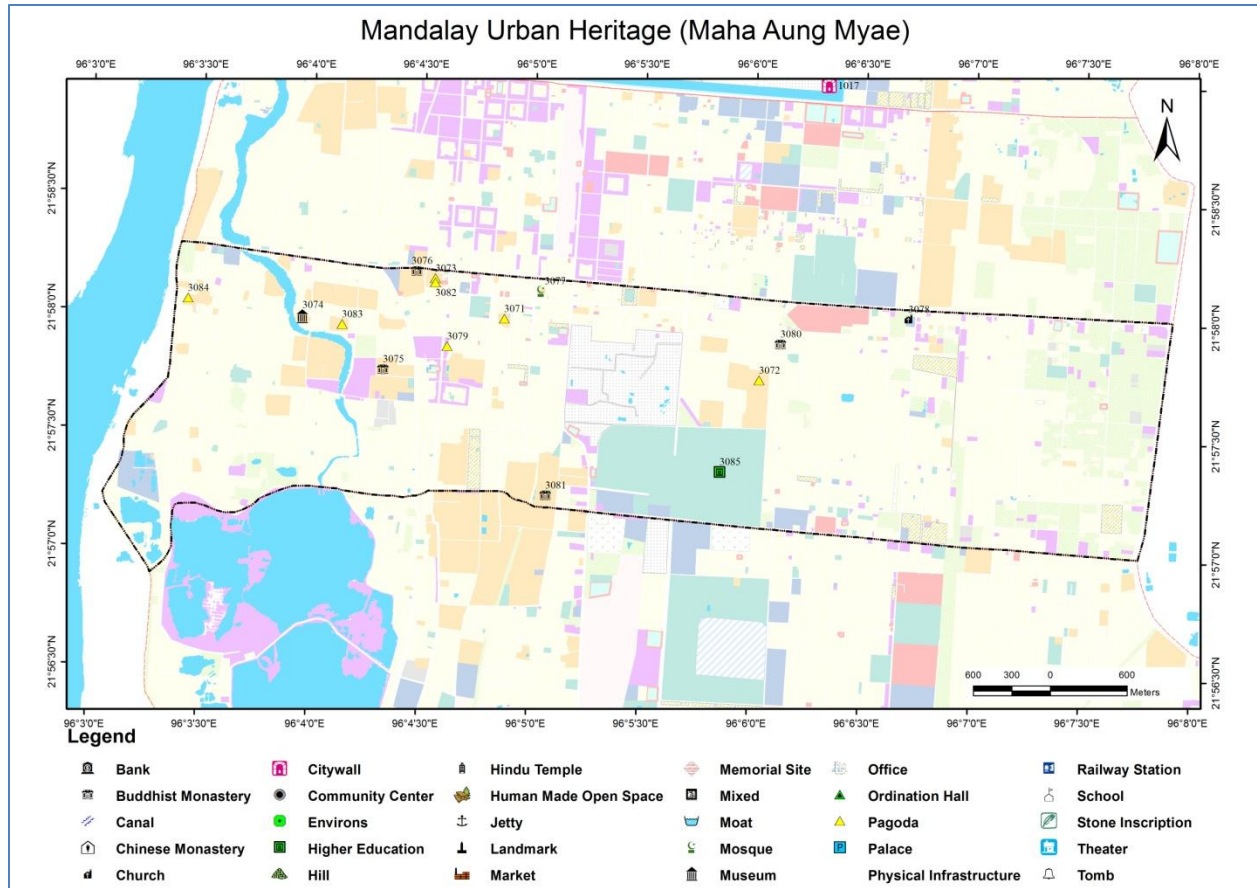
Municipal planning and heritage for better future of contemporary cities with historic cores

For better future of cities in Myanmar, a better relationship between municipal planning and heritage is essential. Important actions include -

- (1) Defining conservation areas base on urban heritage inventories
- (2) Making detail master plans of cities by considering designated heritage conservation areas
- (3) Heritage conservation area plans to develop in accordance with above mentioned master plans of cities, zoning maps and regulations

Heritage conservation areas to define base on urban heritage inventories

First generations of urban heritage inventories have been prepared for Mandalay, Pyin Oo Lwin and settlement zones in Bagan as joint research projects of the Department of Architecture, Mandalay Technological University and Department of Urban and Housing Development, Ministry of Construction. They are intended to document the extent and the wealth of urban and architectural heritage of cities. The information has been collected through direct observation and mapping by means of survey sheets and organized into a database to be continuously updated during the management and planning process. Thus inventories have been designed so as to construct a GIS that could be used by the department at the national level planning department and would support in the future for the preparation and the evaluation of heritage places/properties and areas to designate as national, regional and local importance and enacted more complex and articulated conservation policies. Hopefully, it will be exploited to increase awareness among authorities, technical bodies and the general public about the need to develop and implement consistent urban heritage inventories. They are very first steps towards urban heritage inventories and designating historic places/properties/areas as national, regional and local levels. Continuous research works need to be done in coming year along with seminars and workshops so that we would have final lists of heritage inventories for these areas in the near future.



*Figure 3 – Urban Heritage of Maha Aung Myae Township, Mandalay
(Ministry of Construction and Department of Architecture,
Mandalay Technological University, 2015)*

Making detail master plans of cities by considering designated heritage conservation areas with diversify urban heritage

In detailed master plans of cities, historic districts which are usually cores within contemporary cities are treated as special areas. These have special mixed land use patterns of development which are different from other areas. These areas, which cannot be developed on the basis of normal planning policies and controls, have been given the status of special areas. These areas are needed to be treated in a different manner, with the historical heritage conserved; some areas should be designated as heritage conservation areas by referring to urban heritage inventories.

Concerning the preparation of detailed city plans and infrastructure master plans, the Ministry of Construction has been preparing detailed city plans and overall infrastructure master plans to guide, promote and control the development of cities. However, the amount of work load required for each and every city is relatively high for the department to cope with within a very short time.

Conference draft. Please consult the author when citing.

Heritage conservation area plans to develop in accordance with above mentioned master plans of cities and zoning regulations

In the case of historic core areas, it is a very interesting issue to look into how we can reflect and reinterpret the diversified urban heritage to represent identity of cities in Myanmar. It is necessary to consider carefully for local practitioners to understand, treasure and conserve our own urban heritage in local contexts as the cultural and social backgrounds are based on spiritual values and beliefs. Therefore, detailed master plans of cities by considering urban heritage inventories are essential for both heritage management and socio-economic development historic districts of cities. For historic cities remaining as current historic districts, historic areas should be defined according to these inventories and the historic area plans would need to be developed in accordance with and the above mentioned master plans of cities and the zoning regulations.

The Way Forward

The Ministry of Construction is currently drafting the “Urban and Regional Development Planning Law (draft 2016)” to fulfill the gap in city planning and urban development law and related guidelines. This law would be a comprehensive law covering aspects related to the use, development and conservation of land and buildings for effective municipal planning.

At the regional/local level, the following requirements should be done for heritage-led systematic planning system of cities in Myanmar. Every city’s planning system should be based on city planning and management regulation. Comprehensive legislation like “The Town Planning Act”, if hasn’t existed yet, of each big city should be enacted for improvements of cities. Cities’ development has to be based on spatial plans. It is also essential for the preparation of detail master plans of cities with special areas for sustainable socio-economic development. Special areas should be divided into the area needed to be controlled such as heritage conservation area; waterfront area and religious area and area need to be developed for tall buildings and recreation areas.

Detailed city plans should include land use zoning and building controls, as well as infrastructure plans covering key aspects of roads and urban transportation, urban drainage, waste water treatment and solid waste disposal. Urban development and planning controls comprised of zoning regulations need to be part of a planning process and of building by-laws/codes as part of a municipal regulatory process of each and every city with historic sites/ares.

The strategic urban development plan and detailed master plans of cities should be adopted by the regional authorities. The plans would set out the development vision for cities and determine development priorities, in which cultural heritage is explicitly mentioned.

The achievements of urban heritage conservation in Yangon have been quite impressive. Through the strong advocacy work of Yangon Heritage Trust and support from UPD, the number of valuable buildings receiving demolition permits has been reduced. However, there is still a strong need to make sure that historic urban landscape ideologies are embedded firmly in urban planning policies and practices.

Conference draft. Please consult the author when citing.

For example, in Yangon's case, all stakeholders need to move forward to the goal by working closely together for enacting the zoning plan of downtown Yangon where "Proposed Downtown Conservation Area" exists with special considerations for the area and preparation of the Special Development Plan (currently drafting in 2015 by YHT) and forming legal background to implement and enforce these plans probably through the Urban Planning Law (currently preparing in 2015 by Ministry of Construction). These steps should be followed by other cities in Myanmar as the development pressure is high enough in coming years to badly impact on our prominent natural and cultural heritage features in and around historic cities.

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