



**SPEAKER 2: MR SOE WIN NAING & MR NAING SOE & MR SAW TUN LYNN
THE ROLE OF THE MYANMAR ARCHAEOLOGY ASSOCIATION (MAA):
WHY THE 'GRASSROOTS' LEVEL**

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MAA Activity at Bagan, 2014

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

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ABSTRACT

Conference draft. Please consult the authors when citing.

Alumni students of archaeology in Myanmar established the Myanmar Archaeology Association (MAA) in 2013 as an independent non-governmental organization for the wider public now and for generations in the future. The MAA aims to promote heritage awareness with young people and the elderly in the many villages and the cities of Myanmar. We hope to show how archaeological resources are valuable among familiar things like livelihood, and part of our culture and economy. MAA reaches out to beginners and ordinary people, many of whom had not been able to devote themselves to a higher formal education. The independent organization of MAA provides all people with public participatory programmes and capacity building activities. We encourage archaeological participation among the ordinary people and prepare for the future challenges of preservation of cultural resources through public participation. We are open to all and hope to contribute to grassroots levels, and all cultural and academic institutions working to safeguard our cultural heritage.

Keywords: MAA, Cultural Resources, Grassroots, Informal Archaeology, Public Awareness, Public participation

BIODATA

Soe Win Naing, Naing Soe and Saw Tun Lynn are all members of the Myanmar Archaeology Association (MAA). Soe Win Naing, President of MAA (b. Yangon, 1980) has an MA (Archaeology, 2010). He is also an expert traditional glass mosaics, having learned this art from his father. Naing Soe (b. 1986, Palaw Township between Dawei and Myeik) has a Postgraduate Diploma in Archaeology and is currently researching ancient and contemporary monasteries. Saw Tun Lynn (b. 1988, Yangon) is a Tutor in the Department of Archaeology, Dagon University, has an MA in Archaeology from Yangon University and is currently completing his MA in History of Art and Archaeology at SOAS, University of London as an Alphawood Scholar.

CONFERENCE PAPER

THE ROLE OF MYANMAR ARCHAEOLOGY ASSOCIATION (MAA): WHY THE 'THE GRASSROOTS' LEVEL

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Introduction

The Myanmar Archaeology Association (MAA) was founded by a group of Alumni students of Archaeology (Diploma, MA and Phd) degrees from Myanmar Universities on the 11th December 2013. We aim to promote awareness of cultural heritage as a non-renewable, non-repeatable and a priceless property of our nation. We believe in international protection, preservation and collaboration for cultural properties of the world. The focus of the MAA is on the grassroots level to encourage local communities to value and preserve their traditional resources. In Myanmar, 70% of the population is engaged in rural occupations, so that a village level, many people are fully engaged with making a living rather than checking their ploughed fields for ancient pot sherds.

Activities 2013-2015

Since our founding, we have undertaken various types of activities.

1. Firstly, we took a field trip to Pyay near the Pyu Ancient City of Sri Ksetra thanks to an invitation from the Sri Ksetra Heritage Trust. We gave a lecture in Pyay, followed by talks in high school students and also in 7 of the 13 villages of Sri Ksetra.
2. MAA carried out field work with current Archaeology students from University of Yangon and Dagon University by surveying and exploring the areas of ancient pottery and ceramic kilns in Bago, the Ancient Pyu Cities: (Sri Ksetra and Halin) and Bagan in Upper Myanmar. In Lower Myanmar, we carried out surface surveys in Thaton, Mawlamying and several 'Suvannabhumi' sites (e.g. Zoktone, Winka and Kyaikkata). We also surveyed the extensive looted area of Mupon with its high early glass production.
3. MAA also joined other association of our common cultural heritage community such as the Sri Ksetra Heritage Trust (SHT), the Pyu Heritage Trust, the Bagan Heritage trust (BHT), the Myanmar Tourist Guide Association (MTGA), the Myanmar Ceramic Association, the Mrauk-U Heritage Trust, and the Field School of Archaeology Pyay.
4. MAA also joined and attended the meetings of UNESCO at Bagan in 2014-5 about the water management of Bagan, the festivals of Bagan and the increasing of Hotels in the Bagan Ancient Zone.
5. MAA hosted a workshop: 'Cultural Heritage in Myanmar Public and Social Challenges' in 2014 with presentations by participants in many fields on archaeological problems, historical events, early urbanization and archaeological tourism.
6. MAA gave a presentation to the Myanmar Tourist Guide Association in 2015, sharing knowledge of potential historical tourism sites, art and architecture of ancient monuments and antiquity laws. It became a great opportunity for all through this on possible ways to link archaeology and the development of cultural tourist industry.
7. MAA read a paper in the Myanmar Ceramic Symposium at Yangon University in 2014.

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8. MAA also celebrates International Archaeology Day in Myanmar by showing information on heritage sites of the world and distributing a flyer of Myanmar archaeology issues to the public.

Bagan Home Stay Project of Myinkaba village

Together with the people in the Bagan Ancient Zone, in 2015 MAA planned and began a Home Stay Study project in Myinkaba, Bagan. Out of all the villages at Bagan, Myinkaba seems to be one of the oldest with rich material for study including archaeology, ancient and present religious structures, and one of the '10 Arts' of Myanmar, lacquer ware.

Legends of Myinkaba (Myinkapa(r))

There are the several interesting legends that took place in the area of Myinkaba of the fighting between king Anawarhta (CE 1044-1077) and his half-brother king Sokkate of Bagan, and also the legacy of the Mon king Manuha. According to oral history, king Anawrahta make an appointment with Sokkate to fight in "Alanpagan", the eastern part of Myinkabar. They met near the stream and while Sokkate's lance struck the pommel of Anawrahta's saddle, the lance pierced through and Sokkate fell in to the stream and died. His body was lost and only his horse saddle was recovered at the spot. Over time, the place of 'brought up the horse's saddle' became Myinkabar (Myin or horse; Ka or saddle and 'bar' or 'pa' being brought).

Another legend connected to this says that 'Thitsawaddi pagoda is the place of king Anawratha's promise'. The place where the king's spear fell was called 'Hlankya' (spear falls) pagoda and the one near Myinkabar was called 'Kyasın' (tiger falls). It is also said that Myinkaba pagoda marks the place where Anawrahta killed king Sokkate.

The places of the legendary events are often those of celebration today. For example, the Bagan Myinkaba pagoda stream where so many battles occurred, is now in the compound of Myinkaba Phyar Gyi monastery. This monastery celebrates Myinkaba pagoda festival during Tasaungmone falling usually in November. This example of the long term connections between past and present, legendary events and places, in addition to the rich architectural and archaeological heritage of Myinkaba were important in our choice of where to focus our project.

Our study began with the following objectives:

1. To document local knowledge on cultural heritage and ancient monuments. Because we stay with families, we learn much from the villagers.
2. To encourage public awareness of local people living the near ancient monuments and looting areas
3. To encourage the grassroots level and local participation in sustainable culture heritage including the traditional festivals, dances, songs and religious ceremonies.
4. To work with our joint partners in local cultural management organizations for planning and encouragement to villagers to resist the temptation to excavate and sell locally found artefacts.
5. To study and record present traditional tangible and intangible culture heritage.

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The MAA Home Stay Study group, both grassroots and academic, undertook preliminary survey of Myinkaba sphere in 2015. One team recorded the lacquer ware technology, another the tangible cultural heritage, a third team the lacquer ware market, the fourth the intangible cultural heritage and the fifth the beads and ceramics of kiln sites in Myinkaba. This team also discovered and documented a new kiln, No.8 in Myinkaba.

From this fieldwork we presented three papers presented at the 'Myanmar and the sustainable Development Goals: Informed by the past, looking to the future' Conference hosted by Australia Myanmar Institute, University of Yangon and Myanmar Institute of Strategic and International Studies from 10-12 July 2015. The papers were as follows:

1. The Current Monasteries of Myinkaba and Sustaining Bagan Heritage
2. The Lacquerware of Myinkaba
3. Traditional Glass Mosaics of Myanmar

SOAS/SAAAP (Alphawood) further supported the Myinkaba Home Stay Study project for research around Myinkaba village in the follow areas:

1. Background history of Myinkaba
2. Inventory of ancient monument around Myinkaba
3. Ancient kilns of Myinkaba: beads and ceramics
4. Arts and crafts: lacquerware, weaving, production of toddy palms
5. Research on the Razakumar (Yazakumar) stone inscription
6. Festivals of Myinkaba: Ayoke Thwin festival, festival dishes of Myinkaba (e.g. installing banknotes with bamboo sticks), the Manuha festival and donating gold and silver to the pagoda
At the Manuha festival, we documented the art and crafts and traditions of Myinkapa villagers. The craftsmanship of the Ayoke Thwin festival highlighted the sustenance of bamboo technology and community collaboration with Myinkaba's current monasteries.
7. The connection of current monasteries between ancient pagodas and ancient brick monasteries in Myinkaba

Two of these projects are described briefly below: the Ayoke Thwin festival and our survey of monasteries. These two complement each other because monasteries are the centre of activities during the festival and all the proceeds from the festival go to the monasteries and pagodas.

Background to the Ayoke Thwin festival

In Myanmar, there are three categories of festivals: pagoda festivals, seasonal festivals, and regional festivals. Among them, Ayoke Thwin festivals are held traditionally in the Myanmar months of Wakhaung and Tawthalin related to regional and pagoda festivals of Manuha and Myazeda. Buddhist of Myinkaba, southern part of Bagan celebrate Ayoke Thwin festivals during the pagoda festivals of Manuha and Myazedi annually. Although Myazedi pagoda festival is held the Ayoke festival normally Manuha pagoda festival is celebrated it with Ayoke dancing and a competition between monasteries and villagers of Myinkaba. The judgment is not on the quality

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of figure dancing but the style, ideas on making of figure and character from 550 Jatakas, legends, oral history, beliefs and the craftsmanship of the Ayoke. They have traditional belief that their ancestors also enacted the Ayoke Thwin festivals in Myinkapa village during the Bagan period (9th to 13th century CE). It is also believed that the festival of installing Ayoke is paying homage to the Manuha pagoda.

Ayoke Thwin meaning

Ayoke Thwin means making the large figure of animals and human out of bamboo. The figures are different styles, after which paper is pasted on the bamboo framework of figure and decorate different colours of paint. They are then embellished with other materials, to add hair, reins for a horse and so forth. The figures are open at the bottom, made to be worn by one to four performers with their head and shoulders inserted in the figure (Ayoke).

Community support

Now for the sake of preserving the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Myinkaba village, five groups of associations sponsor the ancient Ayoke Thwin festivals and make a competition. Out of fourteen monasteries in Myinkaba village, twelve monasteries and associations of six quarter villagers join in to celebrate this festival. Although twelve monasteries make Ayoke only six monasteries and ten communities take place in competition. The Ayoke Thwin festivals stand out as a symbol of bamboo technology and ideas, and also social cooperation between of Myinkaba villagers and communities gathering at their local monasteries. The Ayoke in 2015 of the ten communities and six monasteries were as follows:

Manuha Monastery: “Angulimala” who after killing many, converted by the Buddha.



Angulimala of Manuha monastery

Myinkaba payar kyi Monastery: “Razarkumar” donated image of his father King Kyanzittha

Shwe ou min Monastery: “Two Nat princes” Byat-twi and Mae-wunna



Two Nats Princes of Shwe Ou Min Monastery, and King Thiwi of Sheinkone quarter

Lay thar Monastery: “Maewunna” who became Popa Maedaw

Ngwe zedi Monastery: “Yama- catching the deer Jataka

Shan Monastery: “Alms bowl of Manuha” after made captive by King Anawrahta

Sheinkone Quarter: “King Thiwi” knowledge after with another man’s wife

New Quarter of Myolae: one of 550 jatakas-“Mahazanaka”

New Generation of Myolae: “the doll of Thungedaw”

Shein Kone Quarter: the “Musician and Dancer”

Myo Lae Quarter: “Manuha’ Drum”

Myo Lae: the historical events of “King Thibaw and Queen Supayarlatt” of the 19th century

Sheinkone: “Two Nat Princes”

Artists Association (Painters): “Four Scenes of Buddha to be” [old man, sick man, monk and dead man]

Shwe Chan: “Ko Gyi Kyaw”

New Light Border: modern “3 in 1 disco” [2 female Ayoke with live boy dancing to shake them]

Myinkaba monasteries

Our survey of the fourteen current monasteries includes:

1. The meaning of the monastery.
2. Different names and kinds of monasteries (e.g. cave monasteries, brick monastery, wooden monasteries, monastic schools)
3. Layout/ elements of the monastery
 - i. Religious function: monastic ceremonies
 - ii. Commemorative or funerary functions
 - iii. Educational functions
 - iv. Festivals
 - v. Local communities and the monastery
 - vi. Historical events of the monastery
 - vii. Ancient antiquities and artifacts discovered in the areas of monasteries
4. Decoration of monastery (e.g. wooden sculpture and motifs, mural paintings)

We also documented any tangible record of renovation such as inscriptions or around the structures of the monastery compound in the centuries between the late Bagan period (12th to

13th century) and the 19th century Colonial era. We are glad to provide the results of our study for any future study of Bagan.

Conclusion

We have highlighted here the range of our activities in different parts of the country, and given some detail on two aspects of our Bagan Home Stay project on which we plan further research.

MAA is an independent organization providing all people interested in archaeology, even those with no formal education, with the chance of being part of a public participatory programme. Within the activities of MAA, all of the participants can learn informally how Myanmar archaeology can be developed and continued. MAA hopes to be like a bridge between the Alumni Society of Archaeology in University of Yangon, Dagon University and Yandanabon University and the grassroots level, encouraging awareness for the many not able to join the formal classes of archaeological institutions, to discourage local excavation of ancient artefacts and together value and honor our national cultural resources.

APPENDIX

There are 14 monasteries or Kyaung in Myinkaba village: below are details of six of the monasteries.

Ywar Shae Kyaung

LOCATION AND STRUCTURE

Ywa Shae Kyaung is located in Shwe Chan quarter at the north of Myinkaba village (21°09.343' N, 94°51.741' E). It was also called Ywar Oo Kyaung in the past. The presiding monk or Sayadaw (head of a monastery) said that it has been there from the Bagan period. The former monastery was badly damaged by fire during the 1940s and was rebuilt. The present monastery is supported by good-sized teak posts, with several buildings in the monastery compound.



There is also an old structure standing some distance from a nearby stupa, with re-painted *chinthe* or lions guarding the entry staircase. *Chinthe* also flank a small re-painted white stupa with detailed decorative moldings. An early 20th century CE brick gateway is decorated with remain of floral festoons and molding with the stucco retaining parts of the yellow, white and red paint.

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MONASTERY HISTORY AND MONKS

There have been five descendants or generations of presiding monks at the monastery; three monks live in the monastery now. The age of the rebuilt monastery is over 100 years using the calculation that one monk has an ordained span on average 20 years.

CELEBRATIONS AND EDUCATION

Annual celebrations take place at the Su Taung Pyi pagoda 'Swanlaung' festival of offering food to monks and at the Thein Phaya festival, both of which are in the monastery compound. We will confirm the exact date of these two festivals on our next survey trip. The Ywar Shae Kyaung monastery participates annually in Ayoke Thwin festival.

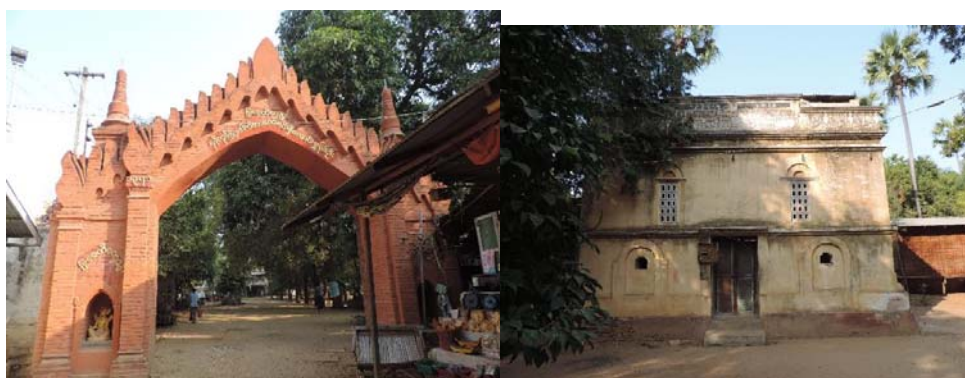
ALMS

The monks in this monastery do not have to go around the village to accept offerings of food or alms daily because the villagers who support and pay respect at the monastery take turns to offer daily meals to the monks. We did not obtain information this survey trip on the education offered at the monastery.

Mya Zedi Kyaung

LOCATION AND STRUCTURE

The Mya Zedi Kyaung is next to Mya Zedi pagoda in Myoma quarter of Myinkaba village (21°09.424' N, 94°51.687' E). The outer gate to the monastery was repaired in 2009 CE (1371 ME).



One of the buildings in the monastery compound is documented through a concrete inscription on the structure as having been renovated in 1978 and another in 1981.

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The inscription also contains the name of the donor(s). The building renovated in 1978 is a two story brick and concrete structure dating to *circa* the 18th or 19th century. There are 4 buildings in the monastery compound including a classroom with tables and benches and a good-size well and area for bathing.

MONASTERY HISTORY AND MONKS

Local residents informed us that there have been five succeeding presiding monks living in this monastery. There are now two monks living in the monastery. According to the presiding monk Ashin Markinna, it is thought that the monastery has been situated in this compound since the 19th century CE period of King Mindon.

CELEBRATIONS AND EDUCATION

The presiding monk Ashin Markinna has established free tuition for children in Grades 9, 10 and 11. This includes both Buddhist teachings and their school curriculum [??]

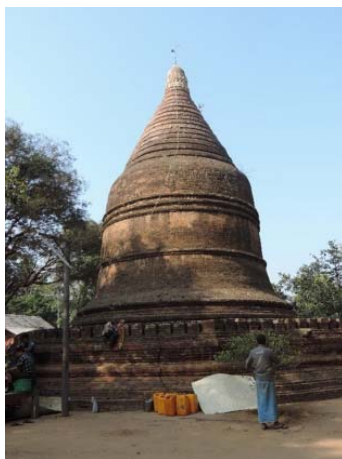
ALMS

The monks do not have to go around village for food as there are donors who bring the meals to the monastery every day.

Myinkaba Phayagyi Kyaung

LOCATION AND STRUCTURE

The Myinkaba Phayagyi monastery is situated in Myoma quarter near to the Myinkaba Gubyauk Gyi temple and the Myazedi pagoda (21°09.385' N, 94°51.651' E). One two story building for the monks is next to a painted and gilded a pavilion called '*Mya Nan Daw*'. This building is used for preparing offerings and festivals. The presiding monk or Sayadaw lives with his attendants in a brick building with an air-conditioner and a small garden. There was also wooden structure on stilts with a number of low tables to be able to be taken out for meals and offering of food. A brick stupa in the compound appears to be only slightly repaired brick work dating to the Bagan era. It is not covered in stucco or gilded but has been left to show the old structure.



MONASTERY HISTORY AND MONKS

Three presiding monks lived in succession according to our informants at the Myinkaba Phayagyi monastery. There are at present 3 monks living in the monastery. The presiding monk said that the age of the monastery is over 60 years or perhaps earlier.

CELEBRATIONS AND EDUCATION

The Myinkaba Phayagyi monastery participates in the annual Ayoke Thwin festival. We photographed one of these kept in a storeroom during our survey. The Akoke Thwin depicts an infantry soldier wearing boots and carrying a flask. The large horse on which he rides is decorated with mane, ears, and reins. It *circa* 5 feet high and 10 feet long, with an open bottom. It is designed to be worn by two performers in the Ayoke Thwin festival.



During our visit to the Myinkaba Phayagyi Kyaung, a large part of the compound was being used to cook rice in at least four open air hearths and prepare ingredients such as onions for curry. There were over a hundred small plastic bags of rice were being prepared to donate to monks for a 'soon' procession.

ALMS

The monks do not have to go around village for food as there are donors who bring the meals to the monastery every day.

North Shwe Zedi Kyaung

LOCATION AND STRUCTURE

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There are two names for the Shwe Zedi monasteries in Myinkaba village, divided into south and north. The North Shwe Zedi Kyaung is located in the east of the village in the Myoshae quarter (21°09.322' N, 94°51.833' E). It is situated about 300 yards south of the Mya Zedi stupa and just north of the Shwe Zedi stupa. There are several buildings in the compound such as the residence of the monks, an eating hall and ordination hall or *thein* with an inscription stating 'Aung-yatana-thathna-wipola-khayii-thein-daw-gyi' or 'ordination hall of the victorious gems of the sasana wipola journey'(?). An inscription stone records the date as 2004 CE (1366 ME).

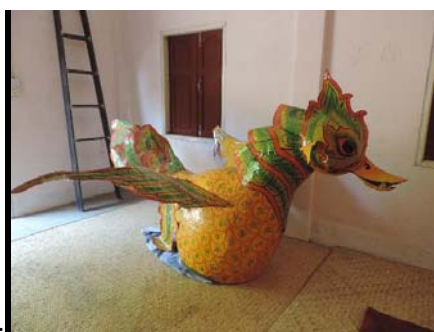


MONASTERY HISTORY AND MONKS

The monastery is over a hundred years old. The local informants state that there have been 8 successions of presiding monks. Two monks dwell at the monastery at present.

CELEBRATIONS AND EDUCATION

The annual festival of Shwe Zedi pagoda which is in the compound of the monastery is celebrated. They also participate in Ayoke Thwin festival. We photographed a pair of *hintha* Ayoke Thwin *circa* 10 feet long and 4 feet high Each was painted to detail the head and wings with yellow, green and orange paint. The bottom is open for one to two people to wear



ALMS

The villagers send meals every day for the monks so they do not have to go around the village for food.

South Shwe Zedi Kyaung

LOCATION AND STRUCTURE

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South Shwe Zedi Kyaung also Pubbha Yone Kyaung is also in Myoshae quarter (21°09.264' N, 94°51.890' E). It is located *circa* 200 feet south of the Shwe Zedi stupa. The buildings in the compound include a wood and brick residence for the resident monk, which bears an inscription reading 'Shwe-zedi-taung-thet Buddha-yon-kyaung-thit' (?) There is also a two-story structure and a shrine room where a number of begging bowls could be seen gathering dust.



MONASTERY HISTORY AND MONKS

Only one monk stay in the monastery now although there are several structures in the compound suggesting that previously there were more. The monk, who was not elderly, informed us that he was preceded by five successions of monks at the monastery.

CELEBRATIONS AND EDUCATION

This monastery takes part in Ayoke Thwin festival. We photographed one Ayoke Thwin in the shape of an ox. It was painted black, depicted with a hump and head lowered, as if in preparation to charge.



ALMS

The resident monk is supplied with food by the villagers and does not have to go to the village for food. ?

KAN KYAUNG (KUSSINA)

LOCATION AND STRUCTURE

The Kan Kyaung is situated in the southeast of the village in Myo Shae quarter (21°08.998' N, 94°52.128' E), a little bit far from Myinkaba village. A large *dhammayon* or offering hall is located within the compound of Kan Kyaung. A painting hung in the hall depicted the monastery in an earlier era, adjacent to a cluster of stupas.

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The painting, signed and dated to April 24, 1998, also shows the large pond near the monastery, which is included in Pichard's *Inventory of Bagan* map. The lake continues to be a prominent feature today. One wall of the *dhammayon* has a number of commemorative photographs displayed showing previous donations. Other buildings in the compound include an eating hall with kitchen, structures for the monks to reside planted with trees protected by blue plastic netting.

The Kan Kyaung is just north of the Shin Araham Sima (ordination hall). An inscription stone at the Shin Araham Sima records the history of the *thein* and its repair in 1932 CE (1294 ME). The wood and brick structure was repaired again in 1998 CE. Among the earlier structures is a round stone pedestal *circa* 4 feet in diameter that is marked with an umbrella mounted on a pole carried on the back of the figure of a kneeling elephant painted gold. There is also a square pedestal *circa* 3 feet square on an old brick pedestal. A painting dated to July 27, 1999, hung in the *dhammayon* of Kan Kyaung depicts the renovated Shin Araham Sima.

MONASTERY HISTORY AND MONKS



Only one elderly monk, U Zawana, is staying in the monastery now.

During our interview, he did not know about the former presiding monks. He did note, however, that the old monastery was burned to ashes and the new one is built on it.

CELEBRATIONS AND EDUCATION

The presiding monk U Zawana said that the Shin Araham Sima pagoda festival is celebrated on the Full Moon day of Tapotwal (Tabodwe, January-February). At that time, a ten-day meditation center is opened at the monastery. The monastery does not participate in Ayoke Thwin festival.

ALMS

The monk does not have to go around the village to accept offerings of food because the villagers send meals every day.

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