

# HERITAGE CONSERVATION OF RELIGIOUS COMPLEX IN MANDALAY CITY, MYANMAR

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## Abstract

Myanmar, especially in Mandalay with her long cultural history and plenty of architectural and religious monuments, need a program that would help to determine these historic places and monuments for conservation of cultural heritage of the national identity and character. In the light of present day criteria, the number of ancient structures that arouse our interest is so great that the unchanged condition of anything of historic, cultural or religious or even the natural landscape values cannot be claimed. In Mandalay, there are many heritage conservation areas which are desirable to be preserved and enhanced. But, some of the historic religious complexes are situated within the urban fabric and some are mixed with environment. Therefore, this paper would be conducted to give guidelines for conservation of ancient religious compounds. In Mandalay some religious compounds have no defined and separated components. Moreover, they are situated within the high density areas with traffic congestion. The ancient religious compounds are influenced by various effects. The first portion of this paper is to review and study the historic religious sites that had existed since early 19<sup>th</sup> century in Mandalay. The second portion is field studies and critical analysis on Kuthodaw Stupa and surrounding areas. When it has been studied, original ancients planning of the areas has been compared with the planning of that religious area in present conditions. After that, this paper will reveal the ancient compound area and give recommendations for how to conserve this area to retard deterioration or prevent damage. This paper will be a contribution for conservation of the places of cultural significance for present and future generations.

**Keywords:** Heritage, Conservation, Religious Complex

## 1. Introduction

Myanmar is a nation with high cultural standards and a long history. Most of the people of Myanmar are apt to trust in Buddhism and paid a strong faith in Buddha, Dhama and Sangas. It is said that it is subtle under the shade of Buddha and Dhama. There are many famous religious and historical cities in Myanmar such as Mandalay, Pagan, Mrauk.U etc. Mandalay, the last capital of the Myanmar kings is located in Central Myanmar. It was built in 1857 by King Mindon. Today, it is the second largest city boasting its rich cultural heritage. Mandalay still retains its old cultural traditions and is the center of attractions for its historical heritage. Mandalay is well-known and famous for the presence of significant monasteries, pagodas, temples and religious edifices and also for the palace where the last two Myanmar kings, King Mindon and King Thibaw, resided. Many historic religious areas comprise buildings erected at periods very distant from each other and they are covered by these buildings and structures. Thus, many religious compounds must be conserved to reveal its ancient composition, to retain its historic value and extend its physical life. Therefore, some experimental research works must do and observe for conservation of our heritage. Religion and religious complex, Myanmar Intangible culture, must be conserved to maintain the religious historic sites and their components.

## 2. Methodology

Interviews have been conducted and reports of local authorities have been studied especially on previous survey. This paper concludes that the two issues to be examined for the paper are revealing and conserving the historic sites. It includes not only conserving heritage site but also repairing the alteration and conserving the surrounding.

## 3. Study On Religious Complex In Mandalay City

### 3.1 Brief History of Heritage Conservation of Religious Complex in Mandalay

There were many religious complex (or) precincts and buildings in Mandalay founded by king Mindon. He made the plans of religious buildings and precincts systematically and conserved them in order to promote and enhance religion. In Mandalay, the religious condition is more outstanding than any other cities. But, the ancient historical handiworks in religious buildings and sites were destroyed by Second World War Therefore, heritage conservation efforts were carried out and enhanced in Present day. In 1998, the national government have been determined the Protection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage Regions Law and protected and preserved the cultural heritage. Many local authorities took action to preserve the historic sites and cultural heritage. Also people started to recognize the importance of heritage and cultural properties as a resource for tourism, commerce and industries. The public has become increasingly aware of the importance of heritage conservation, and governments are undertaking various measures to protect not only the heritage sites but also buffer zones.

### 3.2 Identification

Identification of such religious heritage conservation areas will depend on criteria of the elements to be conserved, based on the perception and need as well as upon specific situations. Table (1) describes criteria for identifying elements of cultural heritage conservation areas designated by national government.

Table (1) criteria for Identifying Elements of cultural heritage conservation areas designed by national government

Nos	Targets of Conservation	Criteria for identification
A.	Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ancient monument or ancient site which is required to be protected and preserved by reason of its historical, cultural, artistic or anthropological value.</li></ul>
B.	Ancient Monument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• That have existed before 1886 or that have been determined as cultural heritage</li><li>• Architectural structure, shrine, stupa, temple, monastery, palace residential building and carving, image and painting thereon</li><li>• Natural or manmade cave in which human beings had dwelt</li><li>• Stone inscription and record</li><li>• Road, bridge, sepulcher, sepulchral site and</li></ul>

		remains of excavated structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pond, city-wall, gateway, moat, fort and any remains thereof;</li> </ul>
C.	Ancient site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Place or high ground where a town or settlement of ancient people or ancient monument had existed before 1886</li> <li>• Place which is determined as cultural heritage whether it is in the process of excavation or has not yet been excavated.</li> </ul>
D.	Precinct of ancient monument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The enclosure of an ancient monument</li> </ul>
E.	Ancient monumental zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The zone where the ancient monument is situated.</li> </ul>
F.	Ancient Site Zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Zone where the ancient site is situated.</li> </ul>
G.	Protected and Preserved Zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Zone for the protection and preservation of the view of the cultural heritage, ancient monument and ancient sites in order that they may not be destroyed.</li> </ul>
H.	Cultural Heritage Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ancient monumental zone, ancient site zone or the protected and preserved zone</li> </ul>

Source; The Protection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage Regions Law (The State Peace and Development Council law no.9/98 ) on 10<sup>th</sup> September 1998.

For this paper, selection of potential heritage items will be based not only on age of the structure but also on the heritage value.

### 3.2 The Concept of “Cultural Heritage” in Mandalay

Although the protection and preservation of cultural heritage had been enforced by still law in 1998, the majority of Myanmar’s architectural and historical heritage and sites are unprotected. There are many cultural heritages in Myanmar, especially Mandalay. Therefore, many historic sites with cultural heritage must be revealed and conserved.

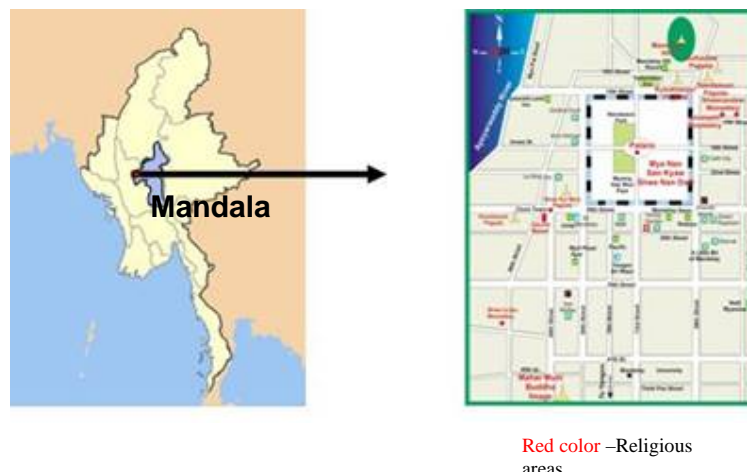


Fig.1 Mandalay Map

The religious complex that is possessed cultural heritage in Mandalay City which had existed in early 19<sup>th</sup> century can be divided into two types as shown in Table 2.

Table (2) Types of religious complex in Mandalay City

Two types of religious complex	Type (1) complex that stupa or temple is at the center.	There are (67) religious compounds in Mandalay City.
	Type (2) complex that monastery is at the center.	There are (42) religious compounds in Mandalay City.

Lists of religious compounds in each township are shown in Table (3). There are five townships in Mandalay City.

Table (3) Lists of religious complex in Mandalay City

Township	Type (1)	Type (2)
Aungmyaytharzan	20	2
Mahaaungmyay	12	10
Chanmyatharzei	12	18
Chanayetharzan	17	9
Pyigyitagon	6	3
Total	67	42

The scope of the paper is to study the compound in Type 1. After the general assessment and selection, it can be seen clearly that. In type (1) complexes, four grades of site composition and other factors can be classified.

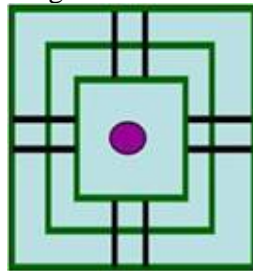


Fig.2 Grade 1 (Kuthodaw Stupa)

Fig.2 shows the site composition of Grade 1 type. Site area is situated with four entrances and surrounded by three enclosure walls. Stupa is located at the center of site. Site area is wide and complete with the religious factors. The composition is strong architecturally. Sample site is kutodaw stupa site. See Fig.2.

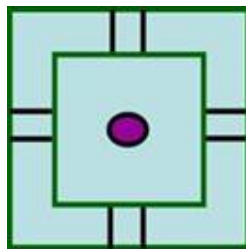


Fig.3 Grade 2 (Sandarmuni Stupa)

Fig.3 shows the site composition of Grade 2 type. Site area is situated with four entrances and surrounded by two enclosure walls. Stupa is located at the center of site. Site area is wide and complete with the religious factors. The composition is strong architecturally. Sample site is Sandarmuni Stupa site. See Fig.3.

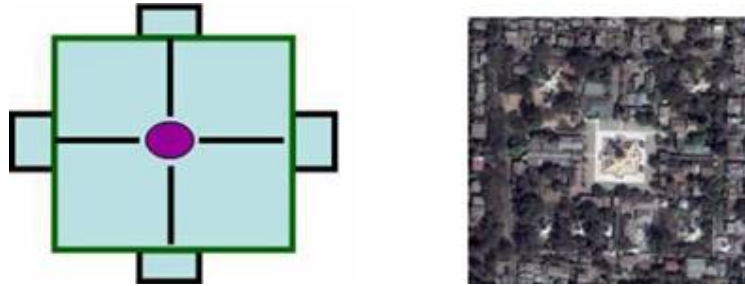


Fig. 4 Grade3 (Eaindawyar Stupa)

Fig.4 shows the site composition of Grade 3 type. Site area is situated with four entrances and surrounded by one enclosure walls. Stupa is located at the center of site. Site area is wide and complete with the religious factors. Sample site is Eaindawyar Stupa site. See Fig.4.



Fig.5 Grade 4(Faungdawoo Stupa)

Fig.5 shows the site composition of Grade 4 type. Site area is situated with one entrance and surrounded by one enclosure walls. Stupa is located at the center of site. Site area is small and not complete with the religious factors. Sample site is Faungdawoo Stupa site. See Fig.5. The religious compounds which are described as Grade 1 are Kuthodaw stupa and Mahamuni pagoda, Grade 2 are Sandamuni temple and Mahasularmuni pagoda and others are Grade 3 and 4.

Among above four grades, grade 1 type religious compounds are the widest and most of characteristics of religious compounds can be found compare to others. The composition is strong architecturally. Among two Grade 1 compounds, Ma ha lo ka ma ra jin stupa (Kuthodaw) has been revealed and some recommendations for the conservation of that stupa has been provided.

### 3.3 Outline of Ma ha lo ka ma ra jin Stupa (KUTHODAW STUPA)

This religious historical site is located in the north-east of palace and at the foot of Mandalay Hill. It is situated in protected and preserved zone. This kuthodaw stupa was founded by king Mindon in 1862. Among all the religious buildings in Konebaung dynasty, it is one of the best. This religious site is

usually important not only historically and architecturally but also socially and culturally.



(a)Location

(b) isometric form

(c)kuthodaw stupa

Fig.6 Kuthodaw Site

The World's biggest book(stone inscriptions of pitaka) located within the three enclosure walls of this compound. The stone inscriptions are made of marble. Being marble, it remains as good as new after passing more than a century. Also king Mindon believed that this stone copy of Pitaka will last as long as the world exists. The stone inscription in the complex has same function, form and color.

After the war, the pagoda trustees had some difficulty in removing some families out of the pagoda premises where they had been staying too long. And then, this religious site and its environs were destroyed due to the Second World War and colonies. After that, this religious site was maintained by national government. This site and its environs are now designated as "districted area of important historic features "under the protection and preservation of cultural heritage regions law. Maintaining "buffer zones" to preserve the natural environment of this heritage site is at the discretion of the national governments and local authority.

### 3.4 Result and Analysis

#### (a) Significance of Historic Site



Fig.7 (a) stone inscriptions within each shelter located in three enclosure walls

It is the ancient site which is required to be protected and preserved by its historical, cultural and artistical value. It is embodied in the site itself, its fabric and its structure. It is ancient site that had existed in 1862. It had been determined as cultural heritage by the protection and preservation of cultural heritage region law. In this site there are architectural structures and stupa,



stone inscriptions and records. This site is located with three enclosure walls and there are (729) numbers of stone inscriptions and records in these walls. This site is located in the ancient site zone and protected and preserved zone.



Fig.7 (b) Significance of Entrance Doors

#### (b) Survey from Architecture Points of View



Fig.8 Harmony and deference

**Location of Dominant Structures**, their structures of stone inscription were planned to be in central or axial position and in nature to express their importance

**Harmony between Nature and the Structure**- In Kuthodaw Pagoda, the whole complex is in harmony and unity with respect to the distance and height and the whole complex is in harmony with the nature of its environment, Mandalay Hill.

**Deference between Nature and the Structure**- Kuthodaw stupa is giving deference with respect to each other and Mandalay hill. Moreover, the structures of stone inscriptions give deference with one another and site.

**Visual Axis**- - This site is planned to be directed towards the most important structure from four entrances. Therefore, it can get the best visual view from everywhere in the site.

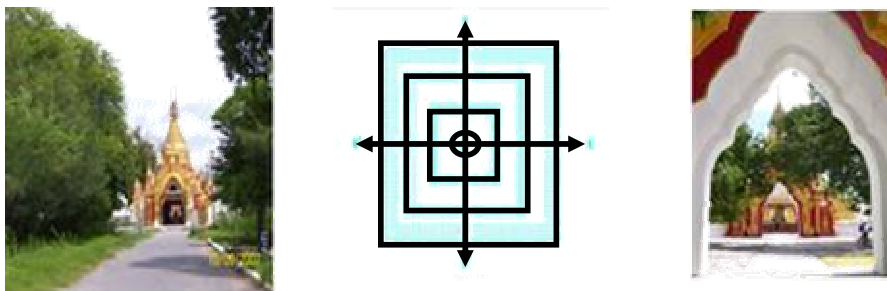
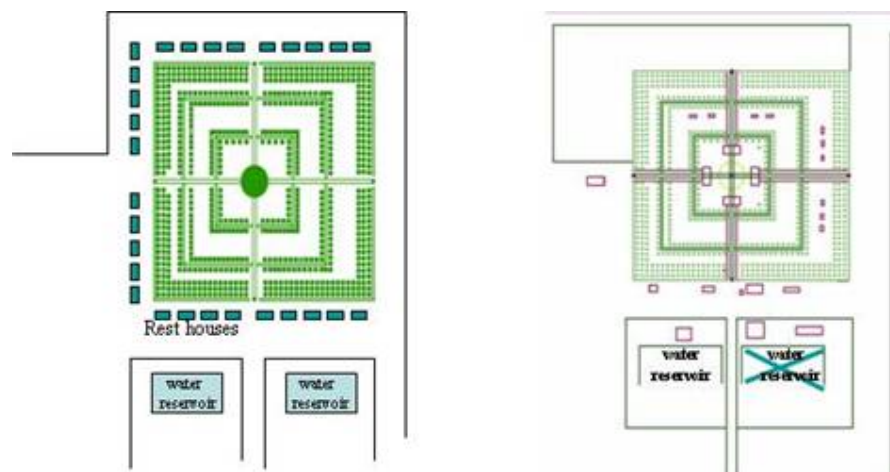


Fig.9 Visual Aspect

### (c) Finding and general conservation guidelines

#### Survey of the original condition and the present condition of historic site



(a) Original condition

(b) present condition

Fig. (10) Site plan of Kuthodaw Stupa

Originally, Kuthodaw stupa was located at the center of site and it is surrounded by three enclosure walls. There were rest houses at the south, north and west sides of site. There were two water reservoirs at the south of site. See fig. 10(a). In present condition, Kuthodaw stupa is located at the center of site and it is surrounded by three enclosure walls. But, there are no rest houses at the south, north and west sides of the site. Although there are two water reservoirs at the south of site, but one of the two is covered with the garbage. Moreover, there are some structures of various buildings obstructed the view of Stupa in the site. See fig 10(b).

If there are alterations in this historic site, that alteration can reduce the values of the original condition, such alterations must be removed and the compound should be restored to the original state.

### Preservation

In the present day, many donors donated the buildings for the pilgrims in this religious complex. Their structure obstructs the view to the Pagoda due to their height location and distance. Moreover, they obstruct the ancient historic effect of site with their different structures and color as shown in figure (11) and (12) below. Therefore, it is very important to preserve the setting of site. In this site, it is strongly stated that Conservation requires the retention of an appropriate visual setting and other relationships that contribute to the cultural significance of the place.

New constructions, demolition, intrusions or other changes which would adversely affect the setting or relationships are not appropriate. Therefore, the new constructions should not be allowed and then the site should be restored its ancient characters and affects such as form an color. Moreover, the valuable paintings and sculptures should be made to retain their original value as much as possible. Therefore, the painting of moats should be replaced to the original color to retain original value. Certain precautions must be taken against damage.





(a)



(b)



Plan of structures which obstruct Photos which shows visual obstruction  
Fig.11 Obstruction View



(a) Original color of moat



(b) Present color of moat

Fig.12. Obstruction of different color that require preservation

## Reconstruction



(a) New structure



(b) original rest house

Fig.13 Reconstruction Case

In fig. 13 (a), it is a new structure and it is a new construction at the present day. Fig.13 (b) is the last original rest house. It is necessary to reconstruct the missing parts of historic site to retain the original value. When the new reconstructed parts are designed, they must be harmonized with the original building.

## Restoration

This historic site had the two water reservoirs since it was founded. But, fig (a) is the one which is good condition and fig (b) is the one which is

covered with garbage and it has not been used in the present day. Therefore, it should be put back to a former state. It is necessary to reconstruct the missing parts necessary for such restoration.



(a) Good condition



(b) Bad condition

Fig.14 Restoration Case

And then, it is important to dig the land for returning the site to its original state. It is necessary to make measures to prevent further damage without diminishing its archaeological and historic value.

#### 4. Conclusion

The law for the Protection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage Region in Myanmar (enacted in 1998) sets its goal as “to protect and preserve the cultural heritage regions and cultural heritage, to uplift hereditary pride and to cause dynamism of patriotic spirit of citizens by protecting and preserving the cultural heritage regions and to promote public awareness and will as to the high value of the protection and preservation of the cultural heritage regions,” while the government has been taking various measures for heritage preservation. However, it is very important to let the people fully accept that cultural heritage as a public good. This paper will somehow contribute to the public awareness for heritage conservation. Moreover, there are many things to do conservation practice according to above mentions about the site. Therefore, it should be recommended that some structures of new construction obstructed the view of the stupa should be removed and the compound should be restored to the original state and the height of the structures should not be too high. It should be planned to get the appropriate visual setting and other relationships that contribute to the cultural significance of the place. And then, the different color of new constructions and the different painting of moats of site should not be allowed and should be replaced to the original color. The missing parts of this historic site should be reconstructed and the missing part of two water reservoirs should be put back to former state to retain the original value. Moreover, we must conserve this historic site and its surrounding area after revealing and restoring the original site to prevent threats and risks. There are also many things to do for conservation according to the conservation principals of the World Heritage Properties in the Asia-Pacific Region after revealing the religious historic sites. This paper shows the requirement of appropriate guidelines for the conservation and restoration of Kuthodaw stupa as an example which will lead to conservation guidelines of each religious compounds in Mandalay.

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