

# **Encasement of the Buddhist Monuments at Bagan, Myanmar**

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## **Abstract**

Among the encased Buddhist monuments in Myanmar, the most have been documented at Bagan, located in the central part of the country. The types of encasement are the encased stupa, the encased temple, the encased group of stupas, the moathtaw stupa, and the encased image. Archaeological evidence indicates that the development of this practice from circa 900-1300 CE can generally be seen in the existing chronological and spatial developments of Bagan.

This idea originated from ancient India and some encased Buddhist monuments built in successive periods can be found in India. The practice of encased monuments was distributed in various parts of Myanmar. This was a deliberate and religious practice, not merely a way for a donor to conserve a damaged monument. The objectives of this article are to understand their concepts and technological developments, to realize the ritual customs and beliefs of the encasement. Sources include the strong epigraphic records such as stone inscriptions, ink inscriptions, Myanmar chronicles and history of Buddhist monuments regarding the encasement.

This paper combines archaeological study, architectural and art historical study, epigraphic records regarding the encasement and anthropological approaches. Most of the style of the encasement show varied influences of India, Sri Lanka, Pyu, and Mon areas. Some of them are Northern Indian styles while some are southern Indian styles. Some of them are very similar to Sri Lanka styles while some are very similar to Pyu and Mon styles.

**Keywords:** Encasement, Bagan, Myanmar, Architecture, Buddhist Monument, Epigraphic

## 1. Introduction

Among many Buddhist monuments in Myanmar, the least documented are encased monuments. Most encased Buddhist monuments were documented at Bagan, located in the central part of Myanmar. Not only encased Buddhist monuments have been found in the various parts of Myanmar but also encased Buddha images have been recovered at Bagan and to the east in Kyaukse. Most of them were the double encased monuments but a few of them were the triple encasements (Win Maung (Tampawaddy), 2011; Aung Kyaing, 2017, pp.157-162).

The encasement or encased monuments means an older smaller inner stupa or temple has been covered by a larger outer stupa or temple. It may mean a single stupa or that two or three small stupas or temples are encased by larger stupas or temples on the same plinth. Another type is the Moathtaw Zedis (stupas) which might have been built by King Asoka, encased and covered by the secondary donors in later periods (Thet Lwin, 2000). All types of the encased monuments can be called the encased monuments. Likewise, encased images mean the older smaller Buddha images that are encased by a later outer larger Buddha images donated by the secondary donors in later periods (Aung Kyaing, 1984, pp.157-162). Numerous encasements of Buddhist monuments have been found in the Property Zone of Bagan. Most of them were encased between 9<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries CE (Hudson, 2004). Some encasements consist of a corridor while some of them are solid structures. Most of them are square, rectangular and circular in shape. Some of the encasements between inner and outer monuments have a spatial gap while some have no space between the two structures (Pichard, 1992-2001, Vol.1-8: Myo Nyunt Aung, 2015).

At Bagan, and the outlying areas of the Bagan Empire, encasing stupas, temples and Buddha images became a significant part of Buddhist practice and related religious practices. There are many documents regarding the encasement through ink and stone inscriptions, the Myanmar Chronicles (Pe Maung Tin and Luce, 1960), the History of the Pagodas (Myat Min Hlaing, 2003) and Mahavamsa Text (the Great Chronicle of Ceylon) to demonstrate that this was a deliberate practice, not merely a way for a builder or a donor to preserve and conserve a damaged monument but they were already sanctified buildings. So the encasement is archaeologically important to understand the evolution of Bagan. Overall, the art and architecture of Bagan is adapted from India, Sri Lanka, Pyu, and Mon. This multicultural background of Bagan is very important to understand the practice of encasement. Relevant areas and groups include the Pyu regions of Upper Myanmar and Mon regions of Lower Myanmar with their prototypes in India and Sri Lanka (Than Tun, 1978; Sony, 1991; Than Tun, 2002).

Bagan covers an area of about 45- square kilometres along the eastern bank of the Ayeyarwady River. The total number of Bagan monuments was 4446 in the Bagan period. Many have been

destroyed by natural disasters, vandalism, and age so that now there are 3822 monuments of various sizes still standing in Bagan (Glimpses of Glorious Bagan, 1986; Aung Kyaing, 2007). Among the Buddhist monuments in Bagan, there are the eighty-three encased Buddhist monuments at within the inscribed Property Zone of the UNESCO World Heritage List.

According to the architectural typologies of the encased monuments found at Bagan, some of the inner stupas were built in Pyu period (9<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> centuries CE) while the outer stupas were built in the Bagan period (11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries CE) and post Bagan periods such as Pinya (14<sup>th</sup> century CE), Inwa (15<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries CE), Nyaung Yan (17<sup>th</sup> century CE) and Konbaung period (18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries CE) (Pe Maung Tin and Luce, 1960; Aung Kyaing, 1984, pp.157-162). In Myanmar, the earliest encased Buddhist monuments were found in the Pyu period while some of the encased Buddhist monuments have been found till to 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries CE and to the present day (Myo Nyunt Aung, 2008; Myo Nyunt Aung, 2015).

## **2. Objectives of the Research Article**

- 1) To analyse relevant concepts and technological developments of the encased Buddhist monuments at Bagan
- 2) To revise the chronology and distribution of the encasement at Bagan
- 3) To document the ritual customs and beliefs of the encasement in strong epigraphic records such as stone inscriptions, ink inscriptions, Myanmar Chronicles and History of Buddhist Monuments regarding encasement

The underlying conceptual framework is the author's belief that these tangible and intangible attributes can be used to classify the form and the textual records of motivations for encasement. These can provide a new understanding of the tradition of encasement that may balance the existing descriptive literature. In a wider context, this paper may inform us on the ideology and expression of Buddhist religious patronage and Bagan with its high density of monuments and images and Myanmar with its unbroken tradition of Buddhism for the last two millennia.

## **3. Concepts of the Encased Buddhist Monuments**

The historical concepts of encasements in a religious sense are many: to commemorate one of the traditional Moathtaw sites which may have been built by King Asoka (Thet Lwin, 2000), to facilitate their worship, to meditate in front of the inner Moathtaw

stupa, to make larger and more elaborate than the previous donors, to enable a new builder, to manifest their meritorious deeds, to protect from the natural disasters and vandalism, to attain merit for the good deeds of protecting the inner monuments to enshrine the relics of the Buddha or the Buddhist saints donated by the primary donors, and to enshrine the inner stupas encased by the outer stupas built by the secondary donors (Bo Kay, 1981; Sony, 1991; Cooler, 2002). Most of these concepts of encasement can be found from stone inscriptions (Nyein Maung, 1972-2013, Vol. 1-6), ink inscriptions, Mahavamsa text (The Great Chronicle of Ceylon Text) (Geiger, 1912), some books and articles regarding Buddhism written by international scholars, Myanmar chronicles, History of stupas and temples, and oral history.

There were some relic caskets found at Lokananda stupa belonging to the 11<sup>th</sup> Century CE (Aung Kyaing, 1992) and in the vicinity of Bagan. After the earthquake in 1975, some relic caskets were uncovered at Htilominlo temple, Shwezigon stupa (Aung Kyaing, 2002) and Mahabodhi temple. Some of them made of the different materials were kept in the storage of the Bagan Archaeological Museum (BAM) (Museum Registration Book). A few stone inscriptions belonging to the Bagan period and the post Bagan period mentioned regarding the encasement of the different layers of the relic caskets how to enshrine and protect the relics. The history of Shwedagon Pagoda at Yangon has been also described regarding the belief, custom, and concept of the encasement and enshrining for the relics of the Buddha. There are also many layers of reliquaries to protect the relics enshrined in the stupa at Shwedagon stupa for safeguarding (Aung Thaw, 1972, pp.112-116, Sony, 1991).

#### **4. Distribution of the Encasement in Myanmar**

The encased Buddhist monuments including the encased Buddha images have been found in various parts of Myanmar. Most of them were found at Salin, Minbu, Lai Gaing, Seik Phyu, Beik-thano, Taungdwingyi, Pauk, Myaing, Myitche, Pakhangyi (DANM, 2015), Pakokku, Yesagyo, and Hti Lin in Magway region, Ah Naint and Ah Myint, Halin (DANM, 2016), and Shwebo in Monywa and Sagaing regions, Tamote, Sint Kaing, Myin Saing, Kyaukse, and Tagaung in Mandalay region, Srikshetra in Pegu region, Mrauk U in Rakhine state, Mwe Daw Kaku (Khon Rama, 2000), Shwe Intein (Shwe Indein Temple stone inscription, 2001), Alotaw Pauk (Thein Than Tun, 2000) in Shan state, Myitkyina state, Patheingyi in Ayeyarwady region and Yangon region. The encased Buddhist temples and images have been found in the vicinity of Kyaukse region. Most of them are the Moathtaw stupas and the encased stupas in these areas outside Bagan. Some encased monuments have inscriptional evidence while some are documented only by Myanmar chronicles and traditions. Some of the encasements can be viewed from the outside when they have been damaged by the natural disasters (Myo Nyunt Aung, 2008; Myo Nyunt Aung, 2015).

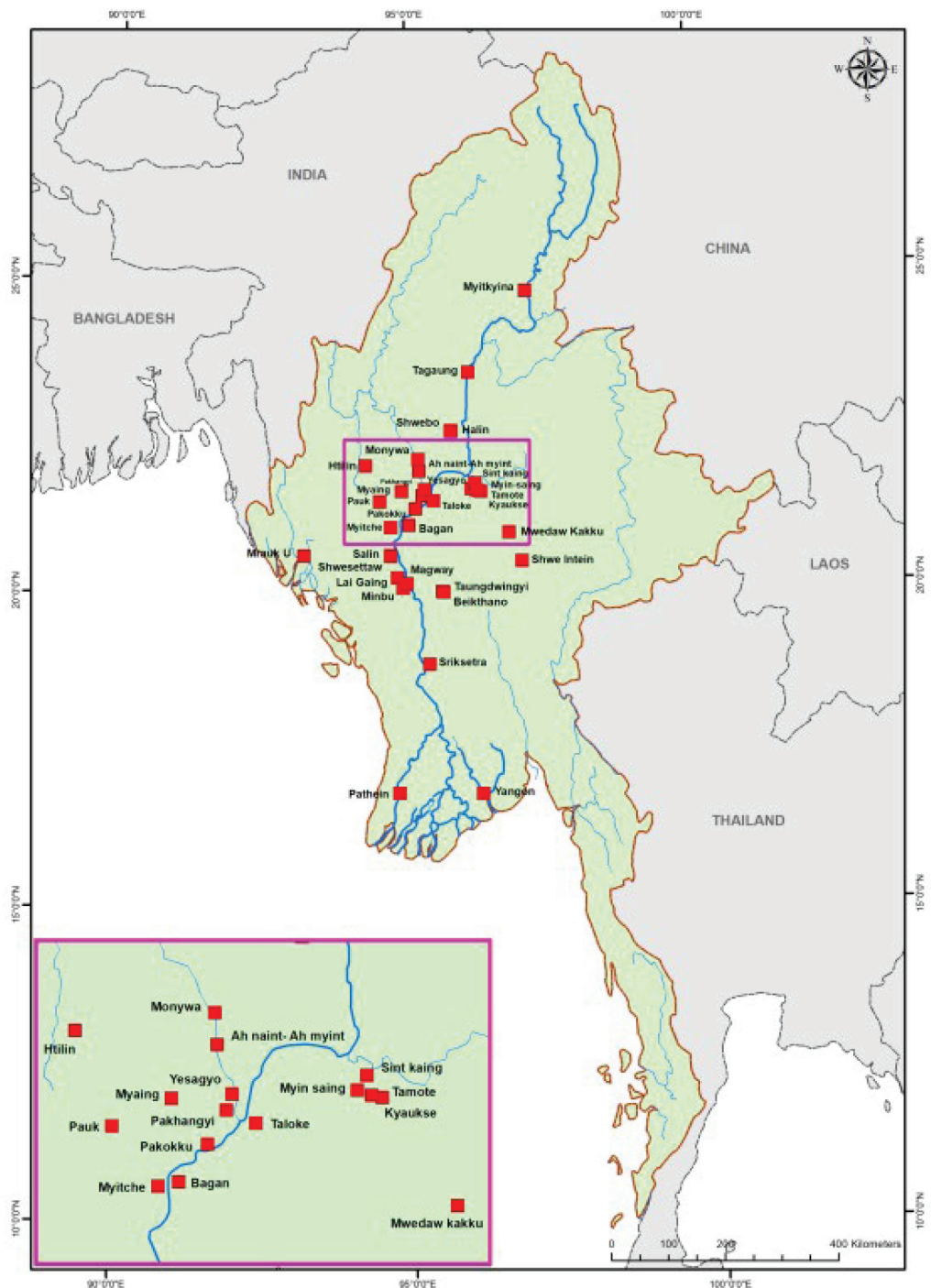


Figure 1: Map showing the distribution of the encased monuments in Myanmar  
 Reference: Phyo Pyae Ko Ko, Assistant Director, Research and Training Section, Department of Archaeology and National Museum, Taungdwingyi

## 5. Architectural Typologies and Archaeological Evidence of Encasement

The encased Buddhist monuments found at Bagan may be classified into five types. They are the encased Buddhist stupas, the encased Buddhist temples, the encased group of Buddhist stupas, the Moathtaw Zedis (stupas), and the encased Buddha images. Previous scholars writing about encasement have not mentioned the architectural typologies of the encased monuments. Normally we cannot say exactly if is an encased monument or not. Traditionally it was noted that it was an encased stupa and an encased temple for some encased monuments but some monuments have strong inscriptional evidence although the inner stupas cannot be viewed from the outside. Most of them were the double encased monuments but a few of them were the triple encased monuments recovered at Bagan. Mostly previous scholars have not mentioned the epigraphic records regarding encasement. The author has noted, however, thirteen stone inscriptions, two ink inscriptions, and mention in the Mahavamsa or Great Chronicle of Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Myanmar chronicles and the History of Pagodas regarding the encasement. In addition, archaeological evidence regarding encasement was uncovered after an earthquake occurred in 1975. There were some monuments, the Shwezigon stupa (11th century CE), the Lokananda stupa (11th century CE), Mahabodhi temple (13th century CE) and Htilominlo temple (13th century CE) that gave evidence of relic enshrinement in different and at times, a series of reliquaries such as golden, silver, glass, copper, and stone caskets (Aung Kyaing, 1992; Aung Kyaing, 2002). These have added sound archaeological evidence that a similar tradition of encasement has been followed since Bagan times.

## 6. Hypothesis of the Encasement

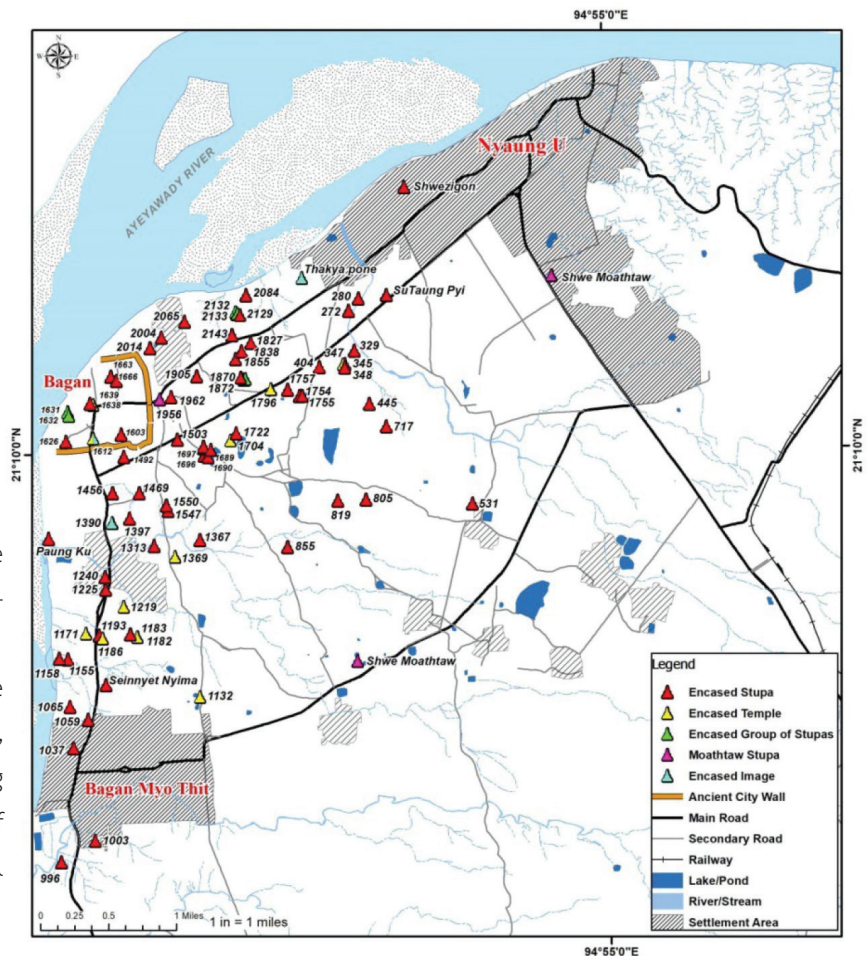
Concepts, ritual customs, and traditional beliefs regarding encasements may have come from India and Sri Lanka as the Buddha attained Enlightenment in India and Buddhism was first developed in Sri Lanka after the demise of the Buddha. The encased Buddha images were recovered at Bagan and in the vicinity of Tamoat region near Kyaukse. Why did they not destroy the previous Buddha images when they built the outer monuments with the outer Buddha images? According to the author's hypothesis, if we find the inner and outer Buddha images in the temple, previously there would be an original inner encased temple and inner Buddha image. When it was damaged or destroyed by natural disasters, the secondary donors did not destroy the inner Buddha image to be free from curses as noted below in inscriptions that destruction of the image consigns the person to hells or other dangers. The secondary donor only constructed the outer temples but the original inner temples have totally disappeared. A number of stone inscriptions in Myanmar mentioned that their curses and prayers are always added underneath the sentences commemorating the donations (Nyein Maung, 1972-2013, Vol.1-6). Such statements lauded future generations if they had the good sense to



take care of the donor's meritorious deeds. The statements also promised such do-gooders that they would acquire additional merit, be reborn in the celestial realms, and even come to be in the presence of Maitteyya, the next Buddha, and finally to attain Nibbana. If someone destroyed the donors' meritorious deeds, they would go to hell. Sometimes they mentioned the name of the hells on the stone inscriptions. Most of the secondary donors wanted to encase the primary ones to last five thousand religious years and to acquire merit. In the Bagan period, people believed that they will acquire merit by reconstruction, enshrining and encasing of the Buddhist monuments. The author interviewed U Aung Kyaing, archaeologist regarding the encasement of donation between the primary and secondary donors. Among the encased monuments in Myanmar, by traditions and in some inscriptions, it is known that most of the donors of the encased monuments were had familial relationships with earlier donors and subsequent renovators. They could have been, as secondary donors for example, their brother, uncle, father, grandfather, and great grandfather (Aung Kyaing, 1984, pp.157-162; Myo Nyunt Aung, 2015).

Figure 2: Map showing the encased Buddhist Monuments at Bagan

Reference: Phyo Pyae Ko Ko, Assistant Director, Research and Training Section, Department of Archaeology and National Museum, Taungdwingyi.



## 6. Encased Buddhist Monuments: eight areas at Bagan

Among the numerous Buddhist monuments at Bagan, there are eighty-three encased Buddhist monuments including three encased Buddha images. Mostly it was found that the inner monuments were built in the Pyu period while the outer monuments were built in the Bagan period. According to the eight-volume Inventory of Monuments at Pagan by the well-known architect Pierre Pichard, each encased monument has an original number as he described and some of them have the original names and additional names. The encased monuments have been grouped into eight areas at Bagan depending on their locations. Each area is designated by the name of the nearest village with the examples detailed in the author's forthcoming doctoral thesis (Myo Nyunt Aung, 2022).

- Area 1: Nyaung Oo Area, Two encased monuments
- Area 2: Wetkyi-in Area, Thirteen encased monuments
- Area 3: Taungbi Area, Twenty-five encased monuments
- Area 4: Old Bagan Area, Nine encased monuments
- Area 5: Myinkaba Area, Twenty-one encased monuments
- Area 6: Thiripyitsaya Area, Seven encased monuments
- Area 7: Minnanthu & Phwasaw Areas, Five encased monuments
- Area 8: Tant Kyi Area, One encased monument

The five kinds of encased monuments differ in each of the eight areas, as seen by the different colours on the maps above (Fig. 2, 3). In total, there are sixty-three encased stupas, nine encased temples, three encased images, three moathtaw stupas, and five groups of stupas. According to the distribution of encasement, there are 2.4 % in Area-1, 15.66 % in Area-2, 30.12 % in Area-3, 10.84 % in Area-4, 25.30 % in Area-5, 8.43 % in Area-6, 6.02 % in Area-7, 1.20 % in Area-8 (Fig.4).



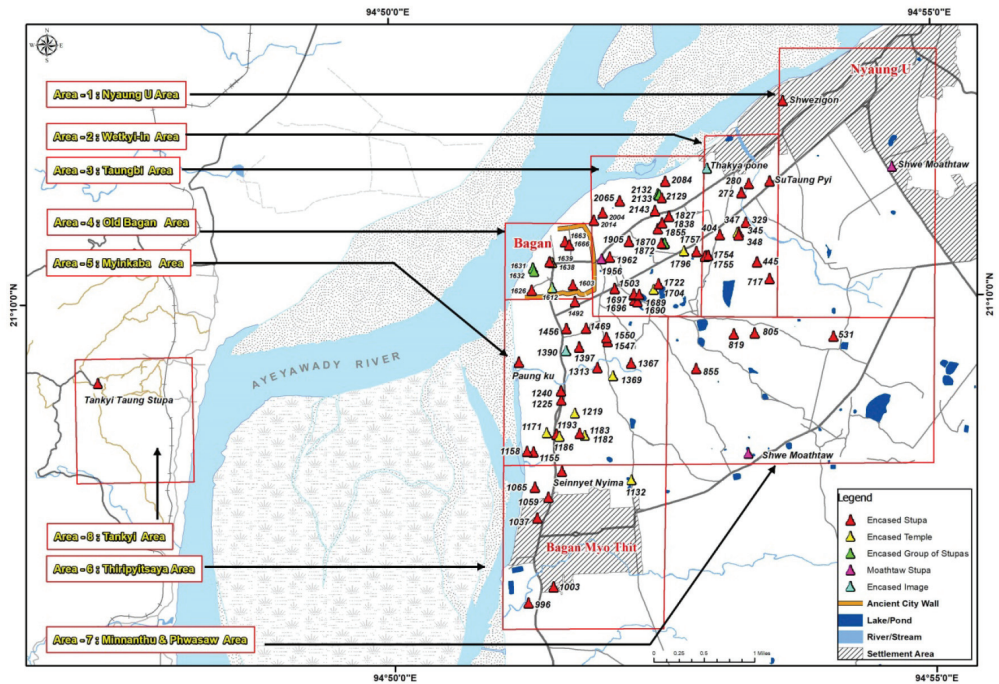


Figure 3: Map showing the encased Buddhist monuments with eight areas at Bagan  
Reference: Phyo Pyae Ko Ko, Assistant Director, Research and Training Section, Department of Archaeology and National Museum, Taungdwingyi

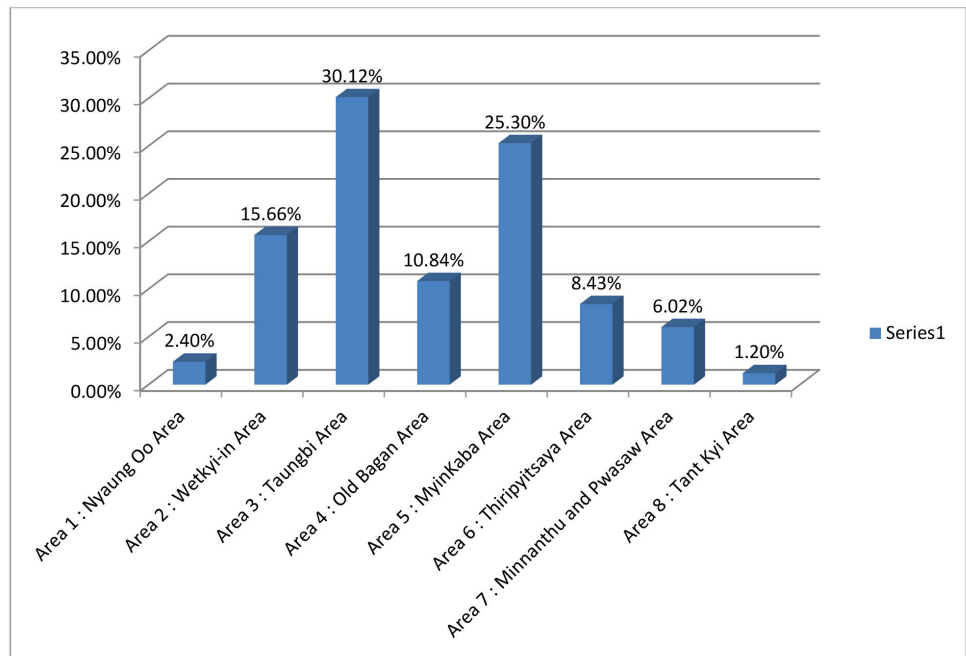


Figure 4: Encasement at Bagan by Area-1 to Area-8 in percent

หน้าจั่ว: ว่าด้วยสถาปัตยกรรม การออกแบบ และสภาพแวดล้อม  
วารสารวิชาการ ประจำคณะสถาปัตยกรรมศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยศิลปากร

## 7. Epigraphic Records regarding the encasement found in Myanmar

A summary list of epigraphic records regarding the encasement found at Bagan and in upper Myanmar: consist of thirteen stone inscriptions and two ink inscriptions. This includes the serial number, name of inscription, reference, Christian era, page number, language, number of lines, number of faces, original place, and present place. Eleven stone inscriptions regarding encasement are recorded in *Ancient Myanmar Stone Inscriptions* (Vol-1 to 6) written by archaeologist U Nyein Maung. Two stone inscriptions are recorded at their original places: the Makkhaya Shwezigon stupa and the Nan Oo stupa. Two ink inscriptions are recorded from Kyasin temple and Thetkyamuni temple at Bagan. They were also described in *Guide to Bagan Research (In Myanmar)* written by U Bo Kay, former archaeologist. All of the inscriptions were used old Myanmar language.

1. The Manuha stone inscription, No.9 of Mandalay Nan Twin Inscription shed, described a small stupa called Mathtaw stupa which enshrined the relics of the Buddha encased by three massive Buddha images and another enormous image depicting the demise of the Buddha image built in 1067-CE to protect the relics. The construction of the huge Buddha images over the Moathtaw stupa was completed in six months and six days. This stone inscription was mentioned that the Manuha Phaya (temple) is located on the victorious mound (Zeyabon Kon) to the northeast of the Lokananda Harbour where the tooth relic of the Buddha was received by the King Anawrahta. King Manuha built the Buddha images after he received six bullock-carts loaded with silver by selling his ring with a precious stone named Manawmaya (Nyein Maung, 1972, Vol-1, pp.322-323).

2. The Hlai Htaung Phaya stone inscription, No.4 of Mandalay Nan Twin Inscription shed, records that among the two small stupas there was originally a small stupa (Mahtaw stupa) remaining at Taung Pyone region, that was encased by a temple (gu), enlarged and developed by King Alaungsithu, the grandson of King Kyansittha in 1111 CE. This stone inscription was originally found at Taung Pyone Gyi village (Nyein Maung, 1972, Vol-1, pp.331-332).

3. According to the Shwe Kon Cha temple stone inscription dated 1141 CE, located inside an inscription shed to the northeast of its temple, King Alaungsithu, the grandson of King Kyansittha donated and enshrined the gold, silver, copper, stone Buddha images, and other rare material Buddha images in this temple. It also records the placing and enshrinement of the relics of the Buddha in the two golden patho (miniature stupas), two silver patho, four sandalwood patho, two ivory patho, two cinnabar patho, five orpiment patho, five stone patho, together with three golden umbrellas and nine white umbrellas inside the reliquary (Nyein Maung, 1972, Vol-1, pp.143-151). These show how encasement was a means to protected the security of the relics in a manner similar to a stupa encasement.

4. According to the Anantathuya Couple stone inscription dated 1223 CE, No.2 stone inscription of Lemyethna inscription shed inside the Minnanthu Lemyethna monastic complex, it was mentioned that the donors enshrined the relics of the Buddha encased by eight layers of the relic caskets made of various materials such as sandalwood (Myat Kyaw, 2009), glass, red sandalwood, gold, silver, gold with jewellery, ivory, and copper. These relic caskets were put in the stone patho (miniature stupa) (Nyein Maung, 1972, Vol-1, pp.151-163). As with the Shwe Kon Cha, the Anantathuya Couple stone inscription shows that the concept of encasement in order to protect the relics of the Buddha since Bagan times.

5. According to the King Uzana stone inscription dated 1340 CE, originally found between the farmyard of U Tha Paw and Daw Tin May, Tadaoo Township, a secondary donor, King Uzana, encased the inner stupa which has been enlarged and elaborated by his son Saw Htwe up to 13.72 metres in diameter. This stone inscription is currently No.5 of Maw Kun Phaya Inscription shed at Saga Inn village, Tadaoo Township.

6. According to the Kan Swet Kyaung stone inscription dated 1324 CE, originally found at Taung Pulu Pagoda to the northeast of Nge Toe Gyi village, 8.05 kilometres to the northeast of Kyaukse, the Taung Pa Min stupa at Taung Pa was enshrined into the Kan Swet Kaung monastery Kyaukse region in 1324 CE (Nyein Maung, 1983, Vol-3, pp.299-300). This stone inscription is currently No.94 of Mandalay Nan Twin Inscription shed. It illustrates the reason for enshrining a structure in the 14th century.

7. The Shwezigon stupa stone inscription dated 1325 CE, located at the ancient city of Makhaya, Kyaukse region, recorded that King Uzana enlarged and encased a previous small stupa (Mahtaw stupa) to be larger and more elaborate attaining 53.50 metres in diameter (Shwezigon stupa stone inscription, 2007).

8. The Nan Oo stupa stone inscription dated 1329 CE, also mentioned that King Uzana enlarged and encased a previous small stupa to be larger and more elaborate reaching 47.09 metres in diameter, named Nan Oo stupa at the ancient city of Myinsaing, Kyaukse region (Nan Oo stupa stone inscription, 2007).

9. According to the Mahtaw Zedi stone inscription dated 1335 CE, originally found Mahtaw Zedi (stupa) to the south of Tapekon village at the ancient city of Myin Khone Taing (Myingondaing) Kyaukse region, King Uzana enlarged and encased a previous small stupa (Mahtaw stupa) to be larger and more elaborate measuring 28.80 metres in diameter. This stone inscription is currently No.101 of Mandalay Nan Twin Inscription shed (Nyein Maung, 1983, Vol-3, pp.351-352).

10. According to the Thayegu Phaya stone inscription dated 1336 CE, there was a small ruined stupa rebuilt and encased by King Uzana to be more elaborate and larger stupa measuring 27.89 metres in diameter. This stone inscription was originally found at Thayegugyi pagoda to the east of Kinton village, Myin Khone Taing region, Kyaukse District and it is currently No.114 of Mandalay Nan Twin Inscription shed (Nyein Maung, 1983, Vol-3, p.357).

11. According to the Thaman Star stone inscription dated 1343 CE, the rich man named Thaman Star built a temple to the east of the ordination hall built by King Sithumngyi and a monastery for the chief monk (thera) with the permission of a monk named Maha Upalawun in 1256 CE. It recorded that Maha Upalawun had a relic of the Buddha and Thaman Star also had a relic which was brought from the Mahabodhi temple, India. These two relics were placed and encased by three layers of the reliquaries: a golden relic casket, the silver casket, and a small stone stupa with a golden umbrella enshrined at Thanman Star temple, Chaung Oo Township, Monywa District (Nyein Maung, 1983, Vol-4, pp.50-54). This inscription illustrates that there was a concept of the encasement with relic caskets for the protection of the relics of the Buddha. Traditional custom and belief like enshrining and worshiping the relics with a golden umbrella inside the reliquaries can be also found in this temple built by Thaman Star.

12. According to the Nga Kausg Yan Thin Couple, Headman in the Pareinma stone inscription dated 1344 CE, it gives inscriptional evidence that there was a small stupa (Moathtaw stupa) which may have been built by King Asoka at the Pareinma region. The Moathtaw stupa is one of the encasement types with this inscription recording the pride of the donors that they constructed and offered a monastery where the Moathtaw Zedi (stupa) built by King Asoka and an ordination hall built by Sithumngyi are located. Besides they noted Pareinma was their native place and the monk named Maha Kassapa also lives in this place. So they assume that this region called Pareinma is a very glorious land. This stone inscription was originally found at Shwe Moathtaw stupa, Pareinma village, Monywa District and it was currently No.110 of Mandalay Nan Twin Inscription shed (Nyein Maung, 1983, Vol-4, pp.56-59).

13. According to the Zigon Phayagyi Inscription dated 1352 CE, King Thihapati, the grandson of King Thiha Thuya built Zigon Taw Zedi at Sagaing called Zeyapura

in ancient time. In this stupa, he enshrined the relics of the Buddha encased by four layers of relic caskets, gold, silver, ivory, and stone materials. All of the relics encased by the reliquaries together with over one hundred silver Buddhas and three baskets of the Buddhist scriptures (Tripatakas) were put into the relic chamber in order to protect the relics. This stone inscription is No.1 of the Htupa Yon Inscription shed, Sagaing. It gives epigraphic evidence that there was a concept of encasement (Nyein Maung, 1983, Vol-4, pp.89-91).

14. There are two ink inscriptions regarding the encasement at Bagan. According to the ink inscriptions at Kyasin temple, the secondary donor named Thindra-o enshrined the inner temple built by the primary donor named Barusi who died in 1125 CE after he began but probably did not complete building a temple. Thindra-o totally enshrined the Barusi's temple in 1217 CE, completed in 1223 CE. The original name of the outer temple was called Tre-Loka-Luwalbo in the Bagan period (Bo Kay, 1974; Bo Kay, 1981, pp.336-338). Now it was called Kyasin temple. The inscription illustrates ancient knowledge of the donor in enshrining a structure in the 13th century.

15. In the Thetkyamuni temple, ink inscriptions belonging 13th century CE record that King Asoka built 84,000 stupas in Jambudipa Island including Myanmar in the 3rd century BC (Bo Kay, 1974; Bokay, 1981, pp.222). There are numerous Moathtaw stupas which may have been built by King Asoka in the various parts of Myanmar mentioned in Myanmar chronicles and some stone inscriptions with these records adding evidence from ink inscriptions.

## 8. Spatial Pattern of the Encased Monuments

Mostly the encasements at Bagan have no gap between two monuments or two images but some of them have a space. Moreover, a few inner encased stupas are very low in height and small in size. When the secondary donors would like to build the larger monuments, they left a space between two of them to save bricks. In Kyauk Myat Maw stupa (No.1158) (Fig.5) at Bagan, there was the notable space between the inner and outer structure. This style is a unique architecture in Myanmar. There are raiding walls on the inner stupa (Pichard, 1995, Vol-5, p.34). The brick masonry works were not fully used to fill between the inner and outer stupas but the rectangular brick blocks measuring about 0.84 m in length and 2.7 m in height were placed between two stupas. Finger marked bricks among the debris were found

in this stupa. It shows that it is one of the Pyu characteristics (Luce, 1969). All these rectangular brick blocks acted as buffers or buttresses around the inner stupa with some of the damaged blocks able to be seen from the outside. The shape of Kyauk Myet Maw (Stupa No.1158) is Pyu with the inner stupa was unique to the architecture of Myanmar. The shape of the outer stupa which is similar to the Lokananda stupa is surmounted with an elongated bell-shaped dome built during the early 11th century CE. The concept of the secondary donor may have been to protect the inner stupa which enshrined the relics of the Buddha or other treasures. Most of the inner stupas could be seen from the holes dug by treasure seekers for many centuries. Some treasure seekers have not only dug into the outer stupas but also they have continued digging into the inner stupas (Aung Kyaing, 1984, pp.157-162, Myo Nyunt Aung, 2015).

Monument No.1182 is situated to the southeast of Nagayon Temple. This is an extraordinary and beautiful encased temple in Bagan. Pichard noted that it is a temple of a very unusual shape (Pichard, 1995, Vol-5, p.61). There is a gap making a circumambulatory corridor measuring about 1.5 m between the inner and outer temples. If you look from the outside, it seems that the inner temple was enclosed by the shape of its precinct. The concept of the secondary donor may have to enlarge and elaborate the inner temple. Actually it was found that the inner one was encased by the outer one with a deliberate spatial design. Inside the inner temple can be worshipped and meditated and the decorative art of the outer temple can be viewed. This style may be the influence of Mon architecture. It is a unique encased temple at Bagan (Myo Nyunt Aung, 2015).

There are three Moathtaw Zedis (Stupas) at Bagan. They have the spatial patterns with the circumambulatory corridors between inner stupas and outer temples. Mostly they have no spatial pattern between the inner and outer stupas among those found in the various parts of Myanmar. The secondary donors would like to enshrine the inner ones built by the primary donors (Cooler, 2002; Aung Kyaing, 1984, pp.157-162). All of them have a space measuring from 0.6 to 1.5 m in breadth between two of them. The concept of the secondary donor appears to have been to protect the inner stupa which enshrined the relics of the Buddha or treasures. The secondary donors might have had the idea to create the space in order to move, worship and meditate around the inner stupas (Myo Nyunt Aung, 2015).





Figure 5: Kyauk Myet Maw stupa at Bagan

## 9. Conclusion

Most encased Buddhist monuments and images in Myanmar cannot be found easily. When the outer stupas were collapsed by natural disasters such as earthquake, rain water, flood, wind, age, and vandalism from treasure seekers, thieves and smugglers, the inner stupas can be seen from the outside. Normally we cannot say exactly that is an encased monument or not. Traditionally it was noted that it was an encased stupa and an encased temple for some encased monuments in; however, some encasements have strong inscriptional evidence or epigraphic records even though the inner stupa cannot be viewed from the outside. In Bagan, there were many treasure holes on encasements so that most of the inner stupas can be viewed from the holes. Sometimes no one knows that is the encased monument but when the severe earthquake occurred at Bagan, inner monuments with original architectural decorations appeared. When the inner stupas or inner temples have been uncovered, the original extraordinary and artistic works in successive periods such as the stucco carvings, the stone carvings, the glazed decorations, the mural paintings, the brick masonry works, and the different architectural typologies with ornaments

can be observed on the exterior of the inner ones (Aung Kyaing, 1984, pp.157-162; Pichard, 1992-2001, Vol. 1-8).

The stupa encasement is not merely a phenomenon of renovating older or damaged stupas. It could, in fact, be the avenue for its donors, perceived as the protectors of Buddhism, to strengthen their spiritual power. The development of this practice from circa 900-1300 CE can generally be seen in the existing chronological and spatial developments of Bagan. The religious ideology and distribution of the encasement at Bagan have been analysed through epigraphic records. The different architectural typologies of encasement with the art and iconography of Buddha images are extraordinarily diverse in their artistry at Bagan.

According to my analysis, the main religious ideology of the encasement is to protect the relics of the Buddha enshrined into the inner monument encased by the outer monument. This idea of making them be safer is seen in Myanmar and other countries such as India, Sri Lanka and Thailand as well (Mitra, 1971; Sony, 1991, pp.37-47; Byrne, 1995).

The outcome of encasement studies can contribute to understanding the impact of patronage on the archaeological remains of Bagan. It can provide a revision of the chronology of the site at Bagan, the continuity of donor traditions, customs and religious beliefs. Furthermore, it aids understanding of the relationship between primary and secondary donors, from the new temporal and spatial hypothesis described in the typology of this article. It can also contribute to identification of architectural typologies of encasement and donors, social practice, and religious practice through ink and stone inscriptions, the Great Chronicle of Ceylon (Mahavamsa Text), and Myanmar chronicles. Regionally, it can contribute the development and distribution of the encasement in the South and Southeast Asian archaeology and Buddhist Archaeology. It can also add knowledge on the development of artistic works such as stone and brick masonry works, stucco decorations, glazed works, and iconography of the Buddha images and other figures on encasement. This article has focused on the art history and architectural evidence for the encasement of Buddhist monuments and images from circa the 9<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries CE at Bagan.

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