

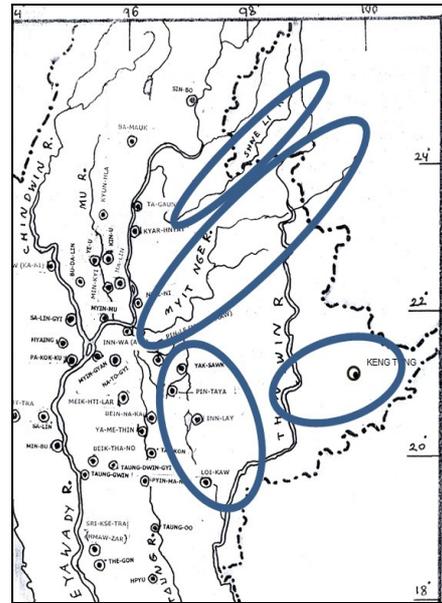
## Buddhist archaeology on the Shan Plateau: the first millennium AD

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### Introduction

The roots of Shan Buddhism in Myanmar (Burma) lie in the rich but little documented Bronze and Iron Age cultures of the present Shan States.<sup>1</sup> Is 'Shan Buddhism' therefore the product of a single ethnic group? The prehistoric and early Buddhist archaeology on the Shan Plateau suggests not, for its artefacts and exchange networks are quite removed from ethnicity. While a sense of reciprocity and permeable 'spheres of influence' are often buried under nationally shaped vocabularies, artefacts from the Shweli (Mao), Myit Ngeh, Zawgyi-Belu and Thanwlin valleys verify the existence of diverse cultures trading across and beyond the Shan Plateau by the first millennium AD.



Map: Shweli, Myit Ngeh, Zawgyi-Belu and Thanwlin after Win Maung (Tampwaddy)

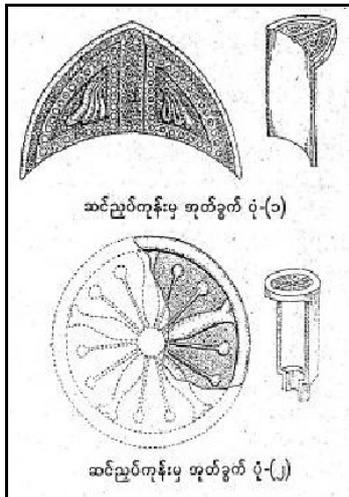
Prehistoric excavations by the Department of Archaeology, Ministry of Culture, in Myanmar have grown over the last decade. Nonetheless, systematic survey and excavation of the Shan States has yet been undertaken, so that this paper both surveys and defines a regional archaeology. The artefacts of the plateau valleys described here highlight prehistoric trade along the same routes that fostered early Hindu and Buddhist sects. Shan State rivers spread within current borders to sites such as Sriksetra and Thaton and without to India, Sri Lanka, China and Thailand. The valley profiles below begin with the Shweli and one of several examples of upstream-down exchange: trade of timber and elephants around Mogok to the ancient city of Tagaung on the Ayeyarwaddy where recent excavations yielded urns, roof finials and 'Pyu' bricks dated before 800 AD. South of the Shweli along the Myit Ngeh linking Muse to Mandalay and the Kyaukse plain, are a number of bronzes of the 'Dian cultural sphere' of Yunnan dated to the early centuries AD.<sup>2</sup> Next is the Zawgyi-Belu bracketing Inle Lake, with artefacts linked to bronze and early historic sites north and south of Mandalay dated to *circa* 700 BC-400 AD. East of the Thanwlin is Keng Tung, with its archaeology and topography connected to that of northwest Thailand.

Of the four rivers, the Thanwlin is the largest, but its ribbon-like drainage basin makes it one of the least useful for transport and cultivation.<sup>3</sup> In contrast, the Shweli, draining down into the wide plain of the Ayeyarwaddy, has long been associated with early migration. Forming the border with China, the watershed between the Taping, Shweli and Thanwlin is extensive, with indication of its strength

seen in recent construction of the 600 megawatt Shweli hydel power plant in Namhkam Township.<sup>4</sup> Further south, fertile areas are notable along the Zawgyi flowing down from Pindaya to the Ayeyarwaddy and along the Belu alluvium south of Inle. <sup>5</sup> Other basins scattered around the Shan Plateau suggest additional lakes, some of which may have dried up only in historical periods.<sup>6</sup>

This geography of the ancient river valley cultures is quite removed from the ethnic confrontation of the Shan and Bamar that seems to colour many accounts of the region. Such views in many cases assume a near 'epistemological-centric' perspective whereby the Shan knowledge and beliefs are superior to those of the Bamar or *vice versa*.<sup>7</sup> The archaeological data by contrast underlines an exchange network that made the most of difference, a context not unaware of ethnicity but informed more directly by natural, strategic and spiritual aspects of 'place'. The arrival of the T'ai Shan to this landscape is unresolved although migration is presumed to have been from the north along rivers such as the Shweli.<sup>8</sup> By the seventh century AD, however, the Shan States and southern Kachin State, there were probably, as they are today, a mixture of T'ai, Mon-Khmer and Tibeto-Burman

peoples.<sup>9</sup> Whether understood as a simple dualism or this ethnic variety, the archaeological material is better framed within the 'ecological opportunism' of the disparate locales where artefacts are found.<sup>10</sup>

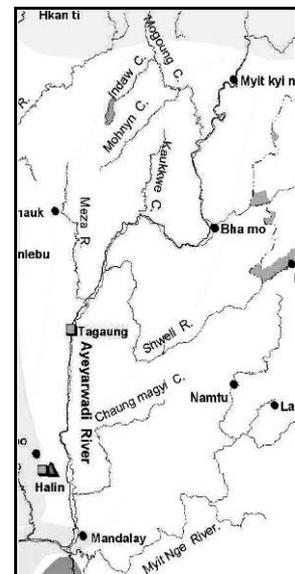


<-Roof tile finials Tagaung, after Win Maung (Tampawaddy)

Map of Shweli after Cho Zaw->

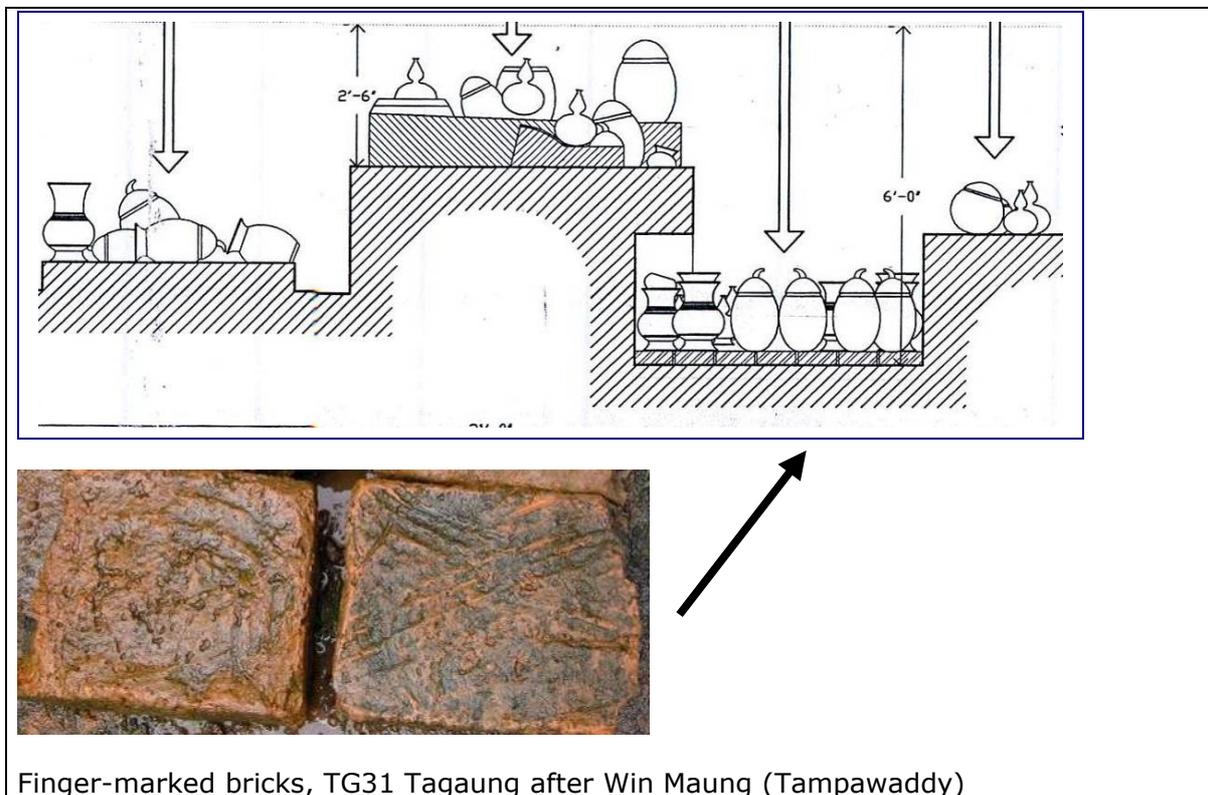
**Shweli (Mong Mit) and Tagaung**

Tagaung (E96.01, N 23.5) illustrates this adaptation in its ties to the Shan Plateau. Located on the Ayeyarwaddy, Tagaung trade relied on the timber and elephants



of the upland Mogok area. There are also silver mines at Bawdwin and Yadanatheingyi, Namtu, with copper and gold along the western edge of the plateau.<sup>11</sup> In the early 19th century AD *Glass Palace Chronicle*, Tagaung initiates a long line of Buddhist capitals ending in 1885 AD with the fall of Mandalay.<sup>12</sup> Over the preceding two millennia, one city culture ushers in the next: Tagaung is followed by Sriksetra (5 – 8 C AD), Bagan (9-13 C AD), Pinnya, Inwa, Amarapura (13-19 C AD) and Mandalay (1857-1885). Although the founding of Tagaung is credited to the arrival of Ahbiraja seven hundred years before the birth of the Buddha, the 'hero' of Tagaung is the ninth ruler of the Second Tagaung Dynasty, Maung Pauk Kyaing, who kills a Mogok *Naga*, the jealous lover of the Queen who kills all who marry to her.<sup>13</sup>

Despite ancient traditions such as these, until recently archaeological work at Tagaung yielded only 9-13<sup>th</sup> C AD Bagan period material. In 1997-2006, however, excavations unearthed a number of earlier objects, including urns and decorated roof-tile finials.<sup>14</sup> Similar finials dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> century AD, have also been recovered from Sriksetra, around Inle Lake, at Linzhang, Hebei province, and Trakieu and Go Cam in central Vietnam.<sup>15</sup> While these connect Tagaung to areas far to the east, other significant finds are paralleled on the west. For example, in Tagaung pit TG31, a layer of finger-marked bricks was found underneath a cemetery with possible familial clusters of urns. The discovery of the bricks generated a series of useful publications documenting the site. In these, the finger-marked bricks were used to attribute Tagaung to the Tibeto-Burman Pyu peoples and validate chronicles naming Tagaung the first capital of Myanmar. Finger-marked bricks in Myanmar die out at Bagan and so are significant chronological markers in the country's rich but little-dated first millennium AD archaeological record. Importantly, however, finger-marked bricks have been found in the southern Mon States and in western Rakhine, so there is little reason to identify them with any particular ethnic group.



The Pyu are by far the most problematic of the various ethnic groups associated with Iron Age and early Buddhist polities. One obvious reason is scarce evidence: the definition of Pyu derives from a negligible corpus of inscriptions using various undated scripts that are often illegible.<sup>16</sup> In addition, the absolute dating of Pyu culture rests on less than ten poorly provenanced radiocarbon results from only two of the eight major walled sites, Beikthano and Halin. Despite these shortcomings, the robust sustenance of the chronicle tradition in Myanmar has enshrined the Pyu. The result is a drawing in of what were many Tibeto-Burman, and probably Austroasiatic and Austronesian groups, into a single Pyu cultural type to form the

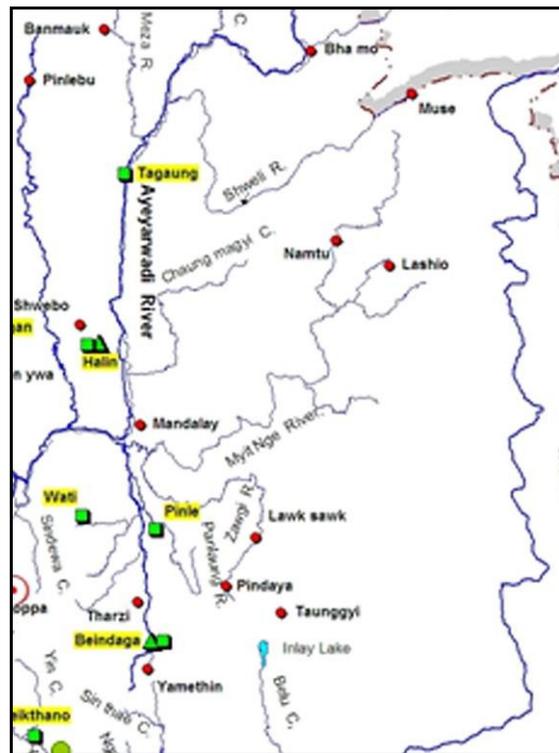
root from which nation and state flowered. The archaeological effects, such as the use of the finger-marked brick finds to champion of the Pyu origins of Tagaung, arise not from a straightforward nationalism but from local understanding of the complex language and compilation heritage of chronicles.<sup>17</sup> Which type of history is accurate – one whose memory pierces through allusion or the clear progressive line of temporal events? As is literally the case in the architecture of the 11<sup>th</sup> century AD Aniruddha palace at Bagan, conviction of the basic validity of the chronicles often seen as fables, has to be understood in light of prior knowledge of that tradition.<sup>18</sup>

The timber and elephants upon which Tagaung’s prosperity relied, rather expectedly fall silent within royal chronicles, and the Maung Pauk Kyaing legend is invisible in Tagaung’s archaeological ties to Yunnan. Despite the silence at one level, however, along with the adage ‘Myanmar starts from Tagaung’, Maung Pauk Kyaing who defeated the Mogok *Naga* remains the most often cited remnant of the ancient site. Similarly, and undoubtedly equally complex from an indigenous perspective are the national biases that have influenced interpretation of the Dian bronzes discussed below.<sup>19</sup>

Map of Myit Ngeh after Cho Zaw ->

**Myit Ngeh (Lashio)**

The Myit Ngeh flows southwest across the western Shan Plateau, emptying into the Ayeyarwaddy adjacent to the mouth of the Zawgyi south of Mandalay. Myit Ngeh sites, in a similar fashion to those of Mogok –Tagaung, are paired by those of the Ayeyarwaddy basin. Late Paleolithic (*circa* 12,000-6000 bp) sites include Badah-lin (21.06 °N, 96.18 °E) and material from Weiponla, Kayin State, where seasonal plateau edge occupation is balanced by lowland sites. Within historic times we find the re-establishment of older settlements such as Mekeyya on the Kyaukse plain by sons of the rulers of 14<sup>th</sup> century AD Myinsaing on the edge of the upland.<sup>20</sup> On a popular level are tales of Queen Sawmunla (Saw Mon Hla) describing the reliance of Kyaukse irrigation system on the various branches of the Myit Ngeh.<sup>21</sup>



The Kyaukse-Mandalay-lower Myit Ngeh (Dhotawaddy) region is also where over the last five years a number of bronze drums of Heger I type dated to the early



centuries AD, have been recorded. These fit within a wider 'Dian' distribution that includes Lanna of drums cast in the Dian Lake region as a local adaptation of Dong Son sphere production in northern Vietnam. Many of these drums are vividly decorated on the tympanum with a central star, 'feather-headdress' warriors, birds and bands of geometric motifs. The mushroom-shaped mantle also bears 'feather-men', bulls, vernacular houses and rice barns on stilts. The Dian drums have close affinity to drum-shaped cowrie shell containers,

relevant to Ayeyarwaddy trade south to the cowries of the Andaman Sea.<sup>22</sup> The link between Myanmar and Lanna drums is illustrated by the similarity of a drum acquired in Chiang Mai with another found in the relic chamber of the Shwezigon pagoda and now kept in the Bagan Museum. The two drums are a rare Heger I type



with a star and geometric motifs but not the 'feather-men' noted earlier.<sup>23</sup>

*Above: Bronze drum kept in Sagaing courtesy Win Maung (Tampawaddy)*

*Below: Bronze Musical instrument from Pyaw Bwe region courtesy T&Q Collection*

Other drums found in the Myit Ngeh sphere include a whole drum of a controversial Wanjiaba pre-Heger I type found at Sin Bo between Myitkyina and Bhamo in Kachin State. The Wanjiaba

drums, which have the tripartite shape but not the 'feather-men' are called pre-Heger by Chinese archaeologists and dated as early as the sixth century AD based on dated from wood from coffins. Vietnamese archaeologists, however, classify this type as a late, coarse derivative Dong Son D type. Several additional fragments have been recorded by Win Maung (Tampawaddy) from four drums northeast of Mandalay. One was found at Bronze Age burial site by Yetagon Taung in the Shan foothills east of Mandalay. Two drum fragments bear vivid bird designs, an egret in one case and in the other a plump bird perched on the hindquarters of a spotted bull. This last motif is mainly seen on Heger I drums in the Dian sphere of influence, although sometimes on drum-shaped cowrie containers. Another Heger I drum (H. 40.5 cm, D. 51 cm) classified as a Dong Son type A and today kept in Sagaing bears a boat on the upper mantle and 'feather-men' and a rice barn on the tympanum.<sup>24</sup>

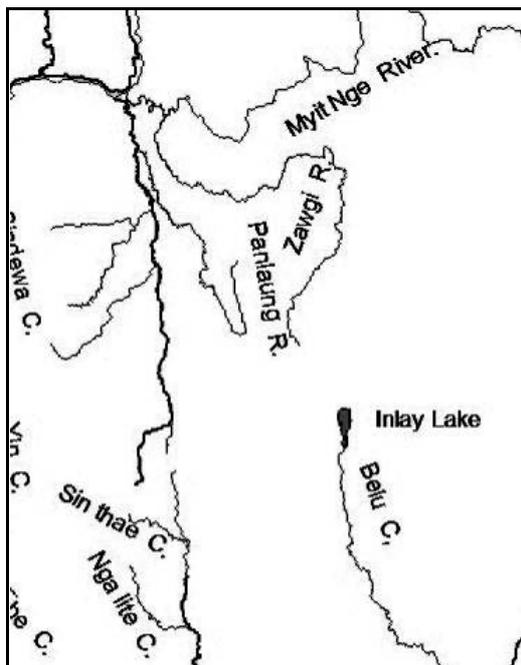
In summary, the Myit Ngeh drums link to others in Yunnan, northern Vietnam and northern Thailand. As a group, they highlight Myit Ngeh's prime position bridging to the Kachin State, the Ayeyarwaddy and possibly the eastern Shan Plateau. Also significant in this context is the Samon River south of Mandalay. At number of Samon cemetery sites stretching south beyond Pyaw Bwe and north of Mandalay to

Halin, artefacts once again parallel Dian bronzes. Notable finds from Pyaw Bwe include mouth organs, a ceremonial spoon and another musical instrument decorated with three dimensional anthropomorphic figures (Picture upper left). The Samon has also yielded a distinct series of bronzes not found outside the Ayeyarwaddy basin, such as headless 'mother-goddess' figures and small bronze packets or *kye doke*. As a group, the Samon finds point to ancestral cults, wet rice cultivation, animal husbandry and complex metallurgy. Now dated to *circa* 700 BC, it is possible that bronze production in the Chindwin and Samon valleys preceded that of Yunnan. An important element of this was the many small scale copper deposits along the edge of the Shan Plateau in the Zawgyi-Belu valleys.<sup>25</sup>

**Zawgyi-Belu (Inle).**

The significance of river networks is seen once more on the materials from the Zawgyi-Belu region (below). The Zawgyi (Mekkeya) empties into the Ayeyarwaddy twenty-five kilometres south of Mandalay while the Belu flows south from Inle. Crops around the lake include rice, sugar cane, groundnuts and betel, with wheat having been introduced by the British. Although villages such as Nam Pan are noted for silk weaving, raw silk was generally obtained from other regions.<sup>26</sup> The area just south of the lake is 'a reedy stream hardly definable from the marsh of the surrounding lake area'.<sup>27</sup> To the west along the plateau edge are small scale copper deposits, tin, lead, silver and zinc.<sup>28</sup> That these deposits were made use of in prehistoric

periods can be seen in the 1930s records by Morris of a number of bronze celts from the Shan Plateau.<sup>29</sup>



Map of Zawgyi-Belu after Cho Zaw, and aerial photo of Bawrithat after Aung Myint 1998.

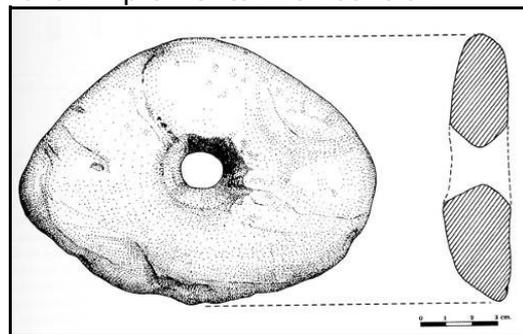
Data from Inle is fragmentary but this is the one of the most accessible areas on the plateau for future archaeological work. A number of sites are located around of the lake, including Kaung-daing on the northwest, and Ramawadi, Nam Pelu and Paung on the Belu to the south. The largest is Bawrithat, 3.2 km north of Nyaungshwe (above).<sup>30</sup> A distinct rhomboid shape, its brick wall and moat are bisected today by a stream and the Nyaungshwe road.<sup>31</sup> Its antiquity is indicated by brick kilns south of

the wall, a 'Wat mound' within the walled area and a pagoda sometimes dated to the 11<sup>th</sup> century AD. Much earlier finds from recent surveys include terracotta roof tile finials similar to ones from Tagaung and Sriksetra as well as quartz beads, silver coins, and finger-marked bricks.<sup>32</sup>

### ***Thanlwin (Keng Tung [Jengtung, Kyaing Tong])***

Keng Tung is 300 km east of Inle, and the largest administrative area (more than 31,000 sq km) of the east half of the Shan States. While the main crops are rice and sugar cane, cotton, tea and garden produce has been traded, along with gold and teak. Rivers branch out in all directions from Keng Tung valley (19 by 11 km) although the primary drainage is into the Mekong and the largest communication routes are to the eastern borders with Thailand, Laos and China. Although our understanding of the prehistoric era in this region is minimal, some finds have been made with the construction of dams, road and rail projects in recent years. These include the 54 megawatt Kengtawng hydel power in Mongnai Township along the southern border of the Shan States, and a number of other projects are planned where the Thanlwin begins its descent to the Gulf of Muttama.<sup>33</sup> The author for example, has examined stone tools and other oval implements with central perforations recovered during preliminary survey. The ovals are very similar to implements dated to *circa* 22,000 and 12,000 bp found during research and excavation to the east in Mae Hong Song Province at Tham Lod rockshelter, Pang Mapha.<sup>34</sup>

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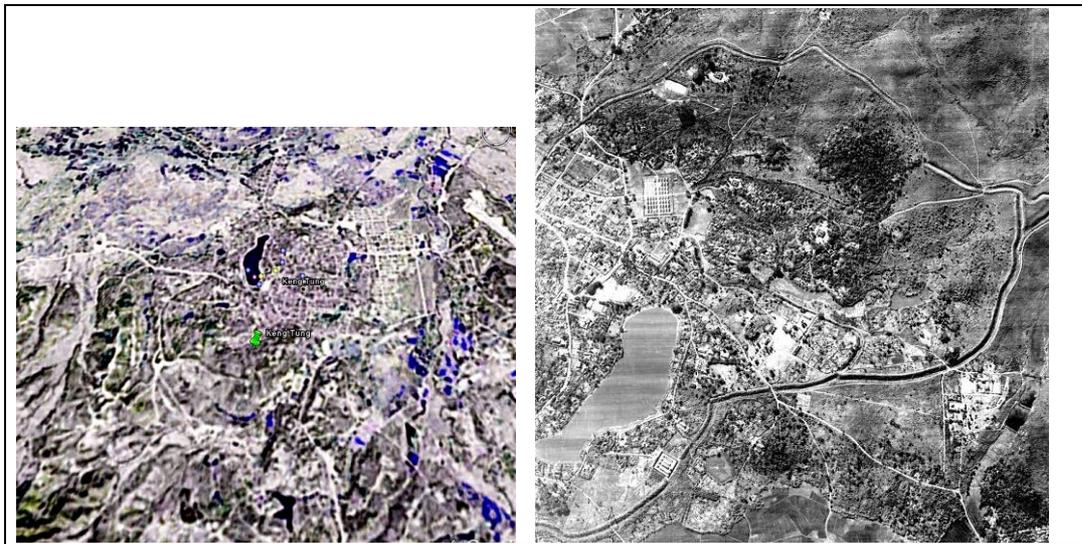
*Oval stone artefact Tham Lod after*

*Scoocongdej 2006*

At Ban Wang Hi close to Lampang (18° N, 99 ° E), 200 BC to 200 AD Iron Age burials with glass, agate and iron artefacts have been unearthed. There is also much earlier evidence, with stone implements from other sites around Lampang comparatively dated to gravel beds in the geological strata to *circa* 700,000 years ago.<sup>35</sup> Given the scattered archaeological finds and the presence of tungsten, tin, antimony iron and gold in the Lanna provinces bordering Myanmar, there is every reason to expect a chronology in this region comparable to that of Tham Lod and Ban Wang Hi.

At Keng Tung itself, there is also potential for documenting earlier habitation, notably the site's 8km-long outer moat and brick wall. Although the wall is thought to have been built by Braya Rattabheri (1416-1441) adjacent to an earlier site, chronicles record a 10<sup>th</sup> century arrival of Buddhism from Lower Myanmar.<sup>36</sup> The extent of change in this region in the last century can be seen in comparing the 1944 Williams-Hunt Collection aerial photographs with current satellite images of this region. When the Williams-Hunt cover was flown, the highly visible earthwork hugs the contours of the hill to encircle the settlement. Today, however, only

sections of the earthwork are evident.<sup>37</sup> While the feature has not been excavated, the site form and manmade alterations recall the walls and gates of Lanna sites such as Lampang and the later wall of Chiang Rai (19°56'N, 99°51'E).<sup>38</sup>



Keng Tung earthwork: Current and Williams-Hunt Collection (22-09-1944) views

### **Conclusion - borders and early Buddhism**

The first known records of Buddhism in Southeast Asia are those of already sophisticated cultures.<sup>39</sup> The earlier local evolution of these is will not only be tested in written texts but, as highlighted in this paper, in the landscape, sites and stone and metal artefacts. In the transition from ancestral to Buddhist rule, South Asian texts did not arrive as an intact corpus, but were gradually drawn into indigenous practices and hierarchies. The remains in Myanmar of monastic communities who spread such texts provide some of the earliest and best evidence for the processes of development and dissemination of a local canon.

Radiocarbon dates from Halin and Beikthano are plagued by imprecise contexts and often given over-broad readings. Nonetheless, by the early to middle first millennium AD, artefacts and architecture display unique styles. At Halin and Sriksetra, local names and excerpts from the *Tripitika* and commentaries are inscribed on stone, metal and terracotta surfaces. Stone slabs engraved with protective Buddhist verses were placed near large iron nails rammed in the earth. Evidences such as these strongly suggest that doctrines were not new and untried but deliberately chosen, and perhaps even written, on the basis of local beliefs.

The monks and laypeople of these Buddhist communities relied on the land, with cultivation of rice and garden produce in and around the walled perimeters. Walls were not necessarily demarcations of 'inside' and 'outside'. Dissemination was literal and virtual, one where politically grounded religious domains spread easily through and beyond the sharply defined edge implied by walls, possibly in a like fashion to the city and forest-monk traditions seen in Sri Lanka, Thailand and Myanmar in the fourteenth century AD.<sup>40</sup> Given the abundance of ritual architecture along the outside of walls, communities and borders appear to have been active in a world

where 'being a border' was at the heart of things, neither 'this nor that' but a dynamic reached in the vacillations of the margins.<sup>41</sup> Social memory of such processes may lie within the allusions of chronicle records such as those cited earlier from the Mogok-Tagaung region. To put discussion of an archaeology formed from languages and practices such as these, defines an 'inside' and 'outside' within judgements grounded outside those used to define that being judged as 'correct'.<sup>42</sup>

Equally, the borders of the Shan States are not the limits of Shan Buddhism or the basins boundaries of rice based communities. Keng Tung's rivers flow into northern Thailand and the Shweli watershed spreads across borders into China and Kachin State. The same pattern is seen in Buddhist sites, where for instance the Kaung Muu Lon pagoda on the Malika is of Shan origin.<sup>43</sup> Nonetheless, while ethnicity does not help to define the prehistoric and early Buddhist cultures of the Shan Plateau, the empirical factors which do are often relegated to a subaltern position. The preliminary evidence presented here fills the porous borders of geographic and cultural zones reaching across much of the Shan States to the Ayeyarwaddy, Yunnan and Lanna. We need not look beyond to trace out the roots but more closely within at the very tangible archaeological factors that gave rise to the Shan Buddhism seen today.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Shan Buddhism' is addressed here within the context of the Union of Myanmar. While some reference is made to areas in Thailand, the wider questions of T'ai ethnicity are beyond the present scope. Within Myanmar, the Shan States are the largest of the 14 states and divisions in the Union of Myanmar as seen in the following list of areas (square kilometres): Shan 155,800; Rakhine 36,780; Mon 12,155; Kayin 30,383; Kayah 11,670; Kachin 89,041; Chin 36,018; Ayeyarwaddy 35,138; Bago 39,404; Magway 44,819; Mandalay 37,023; Sagaing 93,527; Tanintharyi 43,328; Yangon 10,170 (Administrative Divisions, online resource)

<sup>2</sup> Calo' 2007

<sup>3</sup> Dobby attributes this to capture of tributaries by the parallel courses of the Ayeyarwaddy on the west and the Mekong on the east (1950, 155).

<sup>4</sup> The Taping, Shweli and Thanlwin are known as the Ta Ying Chiang, Lung Chuan Chiang and Nu on the Chinese side of the border. FAO Treaties, New Light of Myanmar 30 July 2006

<sup>5</sup> The lake is approximately 22 km long and 6 km wide (Scott and Hardiman 1901, 385)

<sup>6</sup> Chhibber 1933, 48-50

<sup>7</sup> From an historical analysis of '*Mranma Pran/Burma*' in Aung Thwin 2007 (forthcoming). An example is seen in discussions of ethnic 'otherness' and Burmese royal dominance suggested for various *nat* traditions of the Shan ( Micho 2000, 2,8).

<sup>8</sup> The movement of Shans down the Shweli or Mao is thought to have prompted founding of the Mung-Mao kingdom whose local founding legends are similar to Burmese accounts of Tagaung. Milne translates Shan accounts as dating to 1274 years after the Buddha's final demise, about 730 AD. Dhammasami cites Wyatt in suggesting the presence of a substantial T'ai population in Mon-Buddhist Dvaravati domains. See Milne 1910, Dhammasami (online)

<sup>9</sup> Often included are Shan, Bamar, Kachin, Danu, Intha, Taungthu, Palaung, Pa-O, Wa and many others. Sai Aung Tun (N.D. online resource) describes the Keng Tung population as Hkun, Lu, Tai Long, Yun, Ngio, Tai Nu, Lem, Laotian, Wa, La, Tai Loi, Kaw, Mu-Hso (La Hu), Ako, Li Saw, En, Hsen Hsum, Pyen, Palaung, Kwi (La Hu Chi), Kang, Yao, Hsem, Miao, Mang Tam, Sawm (son) and Thai.

<sup>10</sup> Glover's term places the evidence within wider debates about the date when Austroasiatic language speaking groups dispersed from China to Southeast Asia. Glover and Bellwood maintain that Austroasiatic speaking peoples were dispersed on the mainland by the Neolithic and that the start of wet rice farming arose from ecological opportunism by groups such as the Hmong-Mien. Higham, on the other hand, puts movements from southern China bringing wet rice farming to the second or third millennium BC. (See Glover and Bellwood 2004, 11, Higham 2002, 110, Higham 2004, 51)

<sup>11</sup> San Win 1997, Win Maung (Tampawaddy), pers.comm. August 2006

<sup>12</sup> Pe Maung Tin and Luce 1923

<sup>13</sup> The story of Maung Pauk Kyaing is recounted in Brown 1926: 111-112; Maung Tin and Luce 1922: 32; Htin Aung 1959: 87-92; Pe Maung Tin and Luce 1923/1960: 6. The final capital of Tagaung is placed in the further up the Shweli, with the city of Kant Kaw Taung (Kan Thida, Maingmaw Thupa-hu-min) ruled by Queen Naga Sein. Forty-two rulers of this line, in th Momeik *yazawin* are recorded as being of Kyaing Hon (Pandita Nanda (Tagaung) et al. 2006, 23).

From a Shan viewpoint Tagaung's chronology is Ngai-Lao Shan (Chao Tzang Yawnghwe 1987, 63). While both Shan and Bamar versions revolve around the union of a *Naga* and a human, Tagaung's records the union of the queen with a male *Naga* while the Mao legend centres on Hkun-ai who marries a dragon princess. The male child born from her egg is raised by the father following the return of the *Naga* princess to 'dragon country' but eventually marries the daughter of a Ngai-Lao Shan king of Yunnan. He reigns as Hkun-Tung, succeeded by his son Hkun-lu. The last of this line is his son Hkun-lai, ruling up to 951 AD and subjection of Nan-chao to China although in earlier periods the Ngai-Lao kingdom of Tali may have been subject to the Mao-Shans. Other versions involve a blind Chinese princess whose four sons begotten with a princess and a white tiger, found principalities in the Mao kingdom (Chao Tzang Yawnghwe 1987, 63; Milne 1910, 17-23). A similar episode in the Keng Tung chronicle has the son of the Mangrāy, borne of a bear, father a child with a *Naga* of the city's lake (Sao Saimong Maingrai 1981, 201-203, 212-221).

<sup>14</sup> The Tagaung finds included crescent-shaped (15-20 cm high, 21-26 cm wide, 1 to 1.5 cm thick) and round finials (1-4.5 cm thick, 13-20 cm diameter with a rim 1-3 cm wide). The round pieces have 10-15 thin sun-like rays radial lines around a central spot, the rays sometimes

tipped with circular raised dots (Chit San Win 2004, Pandita Nanda (Tagaung) et al. 2006).

<sup>15</sup> Some of the Go Cam pieces are linked to raids against 'southern barbarians' after the fall of the Tsin in 206 BC. Western Yunnan was annexed somewhat later during the reign of the sixth Han Emperor, Wu Ti (140-86 BC) with tribute missions from Myanmar including pearls, vitreous objects and rare stones. In 225 AD, the Wei general Chu-ko-liang is said to have used bronze drums to frighten 'savages' by placing them in torrents to strike like military watch-drums at regular intervals. This links to explanations that Tagaung (Ta-Gong) is a Shan word meaning 'drum ferry' (Chao Tzang Yawngnhe 1987, 63; Hudson 2004:31; Kyaw Zin N.D.; Southworth 2004: 214; Taw Sein Ko 1913: 16-17)

<sup>16</sup> Tha Myat 1963, Myanmar Language Commission 1993:vi

<sup>17</sup> E.g. Chit San Win 2004, 2005

<sup>18</sup> Aung Thwin 2007 (forthcoming)

<sup>19</sup> Examples cited in Calo' include a bronze drum type found at Wanjiaba discussed in the text in relation to finds in the Myit Ngeh region. The Wanjiaba drum type is dated by Calo' to the second to first century AD but to the sixth to fifth century BC by Chinese archaeologists and considered a late derivative type of Dong Son D type by Vietnamese scholars. A related example is the use of radiocarbon dates, again from wood dug out of coffins from cemeteries at Lijiashan, Tianzimiao and Yangfutou, to as early as the sixth-fifth century AD. This is used in Chinese literature to give an earlier date to the usual third century BC to early first century AD to the burials and style of the Dian culture documented by work at these and other cemeteries such as Shizhaishan. A third comes in Calo's classification of a 'Dian' drum type from which she notes that a number of Shizhaishan type drums in China are rather Dong Son type A and B drums in the Vietnamese classification (Calo' 2007, 18, 51, 74-77, 96).

<sup>20</sup> Win Maung (Tampawaddi) 2007, 24-25

<sup>21</sup> Micho 2000, 2,8.

<sup>22</sup> Calo' 2007, 75.

<sup>23</sup> Bernet Kempers 1988, Calo' 2007, 75; Heekeren 1970

<sup>24</sup> Data courtesy U Win Maung (Tampawaddy)

<sup>25</sup> This fits with laboratory reports that the Samon bronzes such as *kye doke* are almost pure copper, with a bit of tin and other metals. See for example Pautreau, J.P., Anne-Sophie Coupey, Patricia Mornais, Aung Aung Kyaw. 2006. Bronze and Iron Age Burials in the Samon River Valley. In *Uncovering Southeast Asia's Past – selected papers from the Tenth Biennial Conference of the European Association of Southeast Asian Archaeologists, The British Museum, London, September 2004*, edited by L.Bacus, I. Glover, V.Piggott. Singapore: National University Press. 2006, 128-136.

<sup>26</sup> Scott and Hardiman 1901, 385-6

<sup>27</sup> Mi Mi Khaing, Kanbawsa: 18

<sup>28</sup> Chhibber 1933, 85, 1934, 2-3; Ivanhoe Exploration Ltd. sketch map of Myinsaing region courtesy A. Mitchell, 2003.

<sup>29</sup> Morris 1935, 1938

<sup>30</sup> The site is also known as Bodhithat, Tayoke-myo ('Chinese city'), Kawsambi, and Ancient Nyaungshwe, measuring 1.2 by 1.5 km or 824 acres at 20°44'58"N, 96°56'02"E. Aung Myint 1998, 207-214

<sup>31</sup> Aung Myint 1998: 212-213

<sup>32</sup> U Win Maung (Tampawaddy) pers. comm. 2004

<sup>33</sup> New Light of Myanmar 30 July 2006, 19 January 2002

<sup>34</sup> Scoocongdej 2006: Fig. 3.12, 33

<sup>35</sup> Higham 2002: 222-223. This data is also useful in regards to the geological dating of the Anyathian stone artefacts of the Ayeyarwaddy basin to *circa* 100,000 bp.

<sup>36</sup> Dhammasami (online), Tambiah 1984,66

<sup>37</sup> The Williams-Hunt Collection (briefly described in Moore and Surat Lertlum, 2005) is an archive of more than 5000 aerial photographs dating to the 1940's and 1950's, held at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). For current imagery, reference is made to <http://earth.google.com>

<sup>38</sup> See for example, Osiri, Navanath 2001. Space and Rituals in the Vernacular Architecture of Northern Thailand. London: University of London, PhD thesis, 2001

<sup>39</sup> Skilling (1997) provides a concise but detailed summary of usage of some of the inscribed texts recorded in the Chao Phraya and Ayeyarwaddy basins.

<sup>40</sup> Tambiah 1984, 66

<sup>41</sup> Balibar 1998: 218

<sup>42</sup> And as Aung Thwin notes, 'our arrogance in presuming they are not' (2007, forthcoming).

<sup>43</sup> The Kaung Muu Lon 16km east of Putao (27.3° N 97.4° E) is said to be one the three most auspicious pagodas in Myanmar, along with the Shwezigon at Bagan and the Shwedagon in Yangon. (Aung Myo, pers.comm. 2007)