



Re-envisioning the heritage: Towards interpreting Mandalay's multi-ethnicity through the lens of old city quarters

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ABSTRACT

Mandalay is a multi-ethnic metropolitan city since the 19th century. Mandala symbolism is included in the city structure of Mandalay. In order to compete the Western power structure, Mandala was based in Mandalay's city planning design which was planned in parallel with Yangon to go against the colonial power. It was quite transparent which ethnic groups were kept there, how they served the king and made cultural exchange among them and formed the national centre of cosmopolitan power and future multi-ethnic capital city. After the king was sent to exile and during the colonial period, these diverse cultural patterns were disturbed. It has undergone many changes since its creation, very slow and inappropriate ad-hoc developments after independence and only promoting the ancient Myanmar cultural heritage in past few decades. This paper highlights the multi-ethnic cultural heritages of Mandalay where Mandala symbolism is included in the city planning concept. The unique Myanmar feature of Mandalay not only lies in its Buddhist and ritual believes, but also in its multi-ethnic groups' rituals and meanings because of nearly 170 years of impermanence of different heritage of diverse ethnic groups. There are some parts still visible in daily fabric and activities. The paper concludes that the complexity of urban cultural heritage highlights that simple definition of urban identity does not make sense for Mandalay. Capturing Mandalay's ethnic complexity is beyond the range of a single short paper. In this paper we will limit our discussion to a focused discussion of Islamic, Thai, Chinese, Christian and Manipuris and Assamese communities. Mandala's cultural exchange was transparent and there are still the possibilities to be so in 2023 landscape.

KEYWORDS: cultural authentication; cultural group; cultural heritage; historical geography; nation state; place identity

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1. Introduction

King *Mindon* laid the foundation of Mandalay in 1859 CE and simultaneously laid the foundations of seven edifices such as the royal city with the moat surrounding it, the *Maha Lawka Marazein* Pagoda (*Kuthodaw* Pagoda), the higher ordination hall named the *Pahtanhaw Shwe Thein*, the *Atumashi* (the Incomparable) monastery, the *Thudhama Zayat* (public houses) and the library for the Buddhist scriptures (Shin, 1976). He moved from *Amrapura*, where there were disharmony in that city and a new city was founded for important reasons, to the new capital Mandalay in 1860. After the Third Anglo-Myanmar war in 1885-1886, the British took over Mandalay and the whole Myanmar (Anonymous, 2006). During World War II, after Japanese occupation, it was bombed by the allies.

The Golden Boundary of Mandalay (the boundary defined by King *Mindon* for whole city area of Mandalay) is the *Shan* Mountain ranges in the east, the *Ayeyarwaddy* River in the west, the *Matayar* River in the north and the *Myit Nge* River in the south (Shein, 2001). The royal palace surrounded by a moat and a city wall at the foot of the Mandalay Hill, which is almost square (12 *Pya* (6,300 feet) from the east to the west and also from the north to the south). The perimeter of the royal city is 2,400 *Tar* (126,000 feet) and there were 144 blocks inside. The royal families and their servants lived in 128 blocks and 16 blocks were for the royal palace (Anonymous, 2004). The square royal city plan with 12 gates connected by straight roads divides the royal city into 16 blocks which is prescribed in the Buddhist meaning of mandala as ritual centre (Snodgrass, 1985). The moat surrounding the royal city is approximately 225 feet wide and 11 feet deep. Water from the *Yadana Nadi* Canal flew into the moat. There were 20 gardens and 5 bridges spanning over the moat but, nowadays, there are 4 bridges to cross the moat - the *U Hteik* Bridge leading to the east, the *Kye Mon* Bridge leading to the west, the *Lay Thein* Bridge leading to the north and the *Kyaw Moe* Bridge leading to the south (Anonymous, 2006). *Maung Maung Tin* published a research paper called 'History of Mandalay Quarter' in 1993 and during 2001, *Nat Mauk Tun Shein* published a very important book called 'Kingdom was Built with Compounds'. In his book, he mentioned a lot about compounds in quarters (as some of these compounds joined together to form quarters and some quarters joined together to form wards) that we would mention in later part of this paragraph and maps of some quarters, where ethnic groups have been living are shown in later part of this paper. The grid pattern of Mandalay has geographical square compounds with streets and roads crossing one another at right angles. Different nationalities and ethnic groups such as Shan, Chin, Kachin, Indian, Chinese, English, French and Italian have lived in some old city's compounds since the time of King *Mindon* or some even before that. The old names and religious buildings of these compounds reveals the history of the groups of people who have been living there and their livelihoods

(aAung mye tharsan), W-9 (mMin-te' ei-kinn), W-10 (tThiri marlar), W-11 (pPyigy kyet thayay), W-12 (cChan aye tharsan), W-13 (tThiri haymar), W-14 (pPyigy pyawbwe), W-15 (aAung nann yeik thar), W-16 (yYadanar bonmi), W-17 (mMahar aung mye), W-18 (dDae-wun), W-19 (sSein pann), W-20 (tThan-hlyet hmaw), W21 (sShwe bone shein), W-22 (kKyun lone ushaun), W-23 (tTam pa wati). (E = the east, S = the south, W = the west of the city) (Tin, 1993).

King Mindon built the compounds not only inside but also outside the palace for people. Systematically, these names of the compounds represented the owner's name, step of the official position, their works and ethnic group (Tin, 1993). There were Indians, Chinese, Ka Thir, Mon, Yodaya, Shan, Yoon, Yakhine and Linzin inside and outside of the royal palace (Shein, 2001). The history of Mandalay is deeply intertwined with the diverse cultures and people of the region. During colonial time, use of the palace has been changed and tangible and intangible heritage of Mandalay had lost and elites (former royal staffs of King Mindon) staying inside all were ordered to move out from the royal palace and Wat Ma Sut Win Htauk bought land at the east of Yodaya Market. When his father passed away, he moved to his plot and donated the former house to a monastery (Shein, 2001). The palace was burnt down during World War II. The site of the first project of the Ministry of Culture in the creation of national cultural heritage was reconstruction of the Royal Palace (1989-1996), Mandalay, "to contribute to national reconsolidation" and next the rebuilding of the Atumashi Kyaungdawgyi monastery (1995-1996) to "display the skill and talent of Myanmar to create national consolidation" (Nyunt Han, 1997: 157-61).

While Mandalay has historically been a Culture Centre of Upper Myanmar major center of Burmese culture after it was founded by King Mindon and power, the interactions with neighboring regions, including Siam (Thailand) and Manipuri Assam, have contributed to the cultural mosaic of the area.

It is not possible to leave the books and sayings of one Mandalay's most famous author Ludu Daw Amar while authors are talking about Mandalay. Understanding the cultural 'process' of cultural reconstruction in Mandalay is especially significant as the urban landscape has changed dramatically according to Daw Ahmar (1993) now in her 110th year (if she would be still alive) as a resident of Mandalay, influenced by a variety of factors. The city in a brief 180 years has undergone many transformations. More "subjects" come into focus as cultural practices and processes of cultural mediation are studied when the concept of culture refers less to a unified entity (a culture) than to mundane practices of everyday life (Rosaldo, 1989). Understanding the cultural 'process' of cultural reconstruction in Mandalay is especially significant as the urban landscape has changed dramatically according to Daw Ahmar (1993) now in her 110th year (if she would be still alive) as a resident of Mandalay, influenced by a variety of factors. The city in a brief 180 years has undergone many transformations.

Mandala in Mandalay's city planning

One of the best ways to understand the structure of the city is to understand the nature of the Mandala as an organizing principle and artistic expression because this was guiding the elites in how they structure the city.

A Mandala (Sanskrit for "circle") is an artistic representation of higher thought and deeper meaning given as a geometric symbol used in spiritual, emotional, or psychological work to focus one's attention. The image first appears in India via the Hindu text known as the Rig Veda c. 1500 - c. 500 BCE (Joshua J. Mark, 2020).

The circle of the cosmos is depicted in the form of a square pattern of a specific measurement. The relationship of the square to cosmic space is indicated by its orientation to the cardinal points. The space thus enclosed by the square is believed to be the ideal space that has cosmic proportions and is classical in its form. The form of four quarters formed by a cross in a square is a spatial archetype that symbolizes the basic unit of architectural forms. These squares are the abstraction of the cosmos in geometrical form, where architecture is perceived as a bridge between the cosmos and the man - the model of 'cosmic man'

(Vastupurusha Mandala). The cosmic-man model is a system of self-similar multiple squares starting from 1, 4, 9, 16 to 1024 (M. Pratap Rao, 2001) (Patra, 2014).

In Myanmar as well as Indian tradition, sacred and secular architectural forms are not always clearly demarcated. As a result this mandala model can be applied at any scale and finds infinite applications in architecture, be it at the city planning level, urban design or a house planning level. The unit is also repeated and elaborated to develop considerably different versions of the ideal diagram. For instance, one way of developing the grid is to further subdivide it into nine squares each believed to be representing a god.

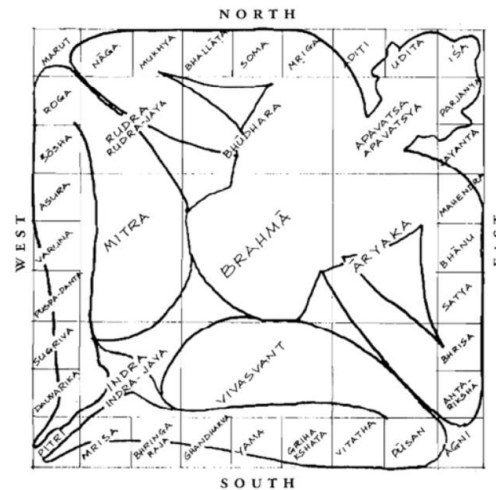


Figure 2. Vastu-Purusha Mandala model of India
Source: Reena Patra (2014)

Burmese astrology and planning of Mandalay

Better study principles in India help us understand more about what was going on in Myanmar. Concerning Burmese Astrological Planning, Kings were also using astrologers or astrology for the structure the city and magic square in Burmese astrology also relates to urban planning. Many ancient Myanmar beliefs are connected with a magical square which

symbolized graphically the popular cult of the planets. Burmese astrology recognizes nine planets including the Sun, the Moon, and two fictitious planets, Rahu and Kate. They are closely connected with the cardinal directions, with the days of the week, with sacred animals, and with Buddha's disciples. Each of the nine planets, with its corresponding objects, has a definite position in the magic square (which marvellously resembles the plan of a "square city"). Planet symbolism has a pre-Buddhist origin. It was used while planning new cities, palaces, houses, stupas, and temples, and was also at the background of different

religious and magical ceremonies. Even now, Myanmar astrology uses "magical squares" with planetary symbols for horoscopes; these are widely spread among the ordinary people. The existence of square and rectangular city plans as far back as the 1st century A.D., and the wide circulation of the astrological "magic square," support the theory that Myanmar had independently developed the concept of "square cities." (Hla, 1978)

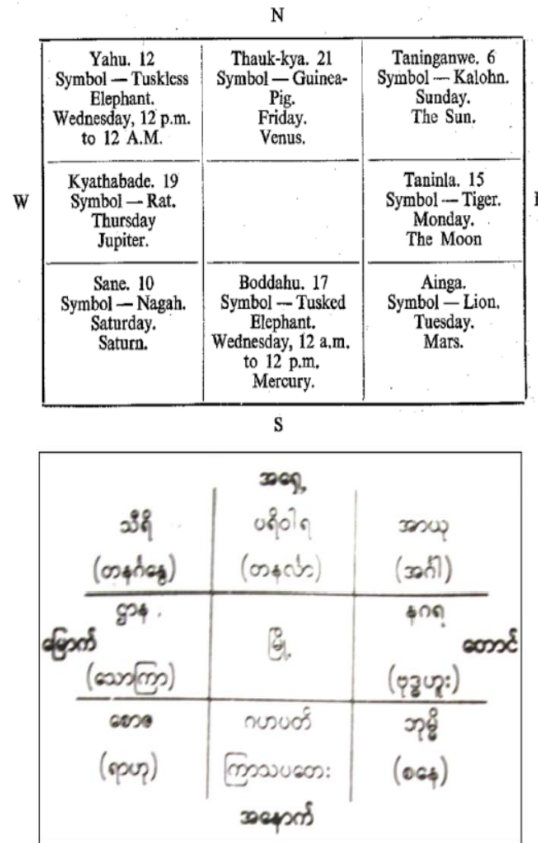


Figure 3. Photos of Burmese magic squares and beliefs
 Source: https://www.academia.edu/879827/On_Burmese_Horoscopes

Guided by religious and super natural belief systems that give people protective magic by keeping everyone safe with diversity in harmony, these could also be called notions of spiritual orders to live peacefully together in Mandalay. Astrological, supernatural Buddhist ordering of the city is very interesting and have profound impact in place making of the city as well as multiculturalism of city where everybody mixed together make it more exciting. In later sections, we would discuss more which ethnic groups were given lands in which directions of the city (See Figure 1) since King Mindon times or even before. It is also a question that ethnic groups who were more active in economic activities of Mandalay settled more between the area of western part of the moat and the Ayeyarwaddy River. It seems like the King put them in groups in each compounds to have internal leadership among them to be connected to the royal people but when we looked at today’s maps s of quarters, they all mixed together in each quarter as part of contemporary urban reality as part of the culture building aspect. Due to administrative reasons to separate ethnic groups, certain ethnic groups were allowed to live in certain areas and further research is required to find out what was underpinning more than bureaucratic ease of administering them.

2. Methods

In the case of cultural diversity in Mandalay, the case study method can be used to examine the complexities of diverse communities, particularly in relation to city branding and unsustainable development. We can examine diverse communities in Mandalay and how they have been impacted by city branding and unsustainable development practices. Indian, Thai, Manipuri, Christian and Chinese communities are chosen as good examples of the complexity of city branding in urban development and conservation in Mandalay.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Case studies

The following case studies demonstrate the complexities of multi-ethnic quarters in Mandalay, particularly in relation to city branding.

3.1.2 Case 1: Islamic communities in Mandalay

The religion of Islam arrived early in Myanmar than Christians, and the Muslims were then called *Panthay* and *Pa-thir*. In the Bagan stone inscriptions the believers of Islam were referred to as "*Pan Thein*" and "*Pe Thi*"; thus, it is to be believed that Muslims had resided in Myanmar since Bagan period. In the 14th Century, Muslims, like the Portugese, entered the country and served in the Myanmar and *Yakhine* Kings's armies, and under *King Sa-nay* of *Nyaungyan* period Muslims were formed as musketeers groups (*Kala-pyo Thay-nat Ah-su*). During the *Konbaung* period *Manipuris* were called *Ka-the* and Myanmar Muslims were named *Zay-ta-bar-ri*. In the many surveys of King *Bodaw-phaya* twelve villages such as *Toungoo*, *Yamethin*, *Meikhtila* and *Nyaungyan* were places allotted by the King to be settled by Muslim military servicemen where they could grow crops and they were given exemption from taxes. During the 19th century, the Muslim People from China, the *Panthays*, whose rebellion against Chiang Dynasty was the cause of being refugees in Mandalay. They were allowed to settle here by King *Mindon*. There is a mosque built by them till now.

Mosques in Mandalay

Plot 592 (Between 82x83 and 28x29) is *Ou:Boo Mosque* which is the oldest one built during *Mindon* Era burnt down in 1984 donor was Silk Merchant U Chain of Bagan built during *Mindon* Era 1221 Myanmar Era (Shein, 2001). Later it was rebuilt again by *Hajji U Myit*. Other old mosques which could be seen still now are: *West Tailor Mosque* built by *Hajji U Mya* and *Daw Pu* and *Panthay Mosque* near the 35th street overpass. Plot 552 (between 83x84 and 34x35) is *West Tailor Mosque Compound* and Mosque was built in 1919 by *Hajji U Mya* and *Daw Pu* and Plot no 553 is *East Tailor Mosque Compound* (Shein, 2001).

King *Mindon* sent Muslims to India to gather intelligence on Anglo-India feudal relations, and *U Shwe Toke* was one of the noted members in the intelligence gathering team. As Muslim population soared there were 70 mosques during the rule of King *Mindon*. Muslims were mainly traders selling gems to foreign countries and bought back commodities wanted by the King. Moreover, the Muslims were appointed Royal Tax officials and Appraisers to deal with the foreign merchants and the wealthy Muslims were conferred the title *Thu-Htay* (rich persons) by the King. Plot no 177 (Between 25x26 and 82x83) Tax officer *Mular Isman In* lived and it is called *Mular Compound* (Shein, 2001). Plot 179 is 86th eastern part between 25 and 26, *Suuli Mosque* is in the eastern part, donated by Tax Minister *Mular Isman In* in 1250 Myanmar Era (Shein, 2001). Some were even appointed *Myo-wun* or Lord of Town. During the reign of King *Mindon*, the King appointed Muslims as ship captain and some were made to work as overseers at the dynamite factory.

At South of *Horse Clerk Compound*, corner of 83 and 23, *Kyauk Mosque* was donated by (Diamond) *Ma Ma Cho* who had to arrange diamond related jeweleries. Plot 591 is (Between 28x29 and 83x84) *Southern Stockade Mosque* built during the time of King *Mindon* where *Thway Thought Gyi Kyaw Swa* lived. Plot no 593 is *Ou:Taw Mosque* (Between 81x82 and 28x29) where royal pottery makers stayed there which is also called *Horse, Jewellery and Daw Ma Ma Gyi Compund* (Shein, 2001). Plot no 596 (Between 81x82 and 27x28) *Joon Mosque Compound*. Royal buyer *U Phoe* donated Mosque on the land donated by the King. Plot no 598 is *Northern Stockade Mosque Compound* (Shein, 2001).

Kala-pyo-Kintarr (Kala-pyo) musket group

Kala-pyo-Kintarr (Kala-pyo) musket group comprised of young muslim men and carried out reconnaissance duties for the King's army and they enjoyed somewhat autonomous powers to exercise over the affairs of their own group. When the capital of *Konbaung* Dynasty was moved to Mandalay from *Amarapura*, the *Kin-tarr Kalapyo* servicemen were quartered at the place east of *Mingala Gate* or *Kyaw Moe Bridge* of the Golden Palace during the reign of King *Mindon* and his son King *Thibaw*. During the British colonial period *Kinn-tarr kalapyo* group was resettled near the *Gaw-yar Cemetery* on 35 th street, and a mosque was constructed in *Yan Myo Lon* quarters for them.

Ancient Muslim cemeteries

Four ancient Muslim cemeteries were abolished and a new space was given at *Kyarnikan In-gyin*, beside the *Mandalay-Mogok* motor road. A Muslim cemetery was on block no. (282) in *Ywar-heng* Quarter which was once the residential quarter for relatives of Siamese monarchy. This cemetery was also known as *We-Lu* cemetery ground; it was bought by *Daw Cho* from *East At-Choke* quarter and her brother built a mosque. Another Muslim cemetery was on either side of "A" street. This ground of three acres was donated by descendants of *Hajji U Byaing*, the grandson of *Mg Phyu Oo*, the Commander of *Kala-pyo-Kintarr* musket group. *Oke-Shit Kone* Muslim cemetery was on the west of *Ar-la-wi* bridge, the west entrance to the Golden Palace, and there were many mosques and religious buildings on it.

Sub-Commentary writer Hajji Kalu (1859-1942)

The writer's young name was *Mg Kalu*, and his Muslim name was *Hajji Kalu Nurut Din* and his parents were traders of precious stones during the reign of Kings *Mindon* and *Thibaw*. He was born to *U Sa* and *Daw Ha Wa* in 1859 at *Shwe Phone Shein* quarter, Mandalay. He was the middle of three sons, and during the rule of King *Thibaw* he visited *Bombay* with his elder brother on a business trip. He brought back books on *Arabic* grammar and was so proficient in *Pali, Myanmar* and *Arabic* that his translation of *Koran* was considered a classic.



Figure 4. Pyi Gyi Kyat Thaya Quarter
Source: Authors (2024)



Figure 5. Chan Aye Thar San Quarter
Source: Authors (2024)



Figure 6. Aung Nan Yeik Thar Quarter
Source: Authors (2024)

3.1.2 Case 2: Thai in Mandalay

Thai and Myanmar had connections since 14th century. The evictions of Thai detainees in wars were found since King *Tabinshwehti* era in 16th century until King *Hsinbyushin* in 18th century (Ky, 2001, pp 3).

In 1765, after conquered *Ayutthaya* Kingdom, King *Hsinbyushin* brought Thai royal family and around one hundred thousand Thai detainees and were placed upper Myanmar near *Innwa* capital (Sein, 1998, pp 28). Although there were many captives from Thai, only around thirty thousands detainees arrived *Innwa*. Thai craftsmen also served as royal artists in Myanmar court (Kyi, pp 15). They were dispersed to the north of *Innwa* which later become *Amarapura* and *Mandalay*. Thai craftsmen were used as the royal serviceman. Thai settlements can be found not only in *Mandalay* but also in *Sagaing* because the silversmith and goldsmith found in *Ywa-Htaung* and *Linzin* are the Thai descendants (ibid). According to Kyi (2001), Thai king captured to Myanmar in 18th century lived in *Ywa-Htaung* village in *Sagaing* region (Kyi, 2001, pp 3).

Since before the establishment of *Mandalay*, Thai people were allotted along *Shwe-ta-chaung* Creek (*Nam kuso* in Thai language) which serves as the bridge between *Madaya* township and *Mandalay* region (Kyi, 2001, pp 6). As the evidences of their settlement in *Mandalay*, the sand pagodas can be found along that creek and *Yodaya Zay* (Thai market), *Phaya-thone-su* (three pagodas) and *Yama* shrine are located in both *Amarapura* township and *Mandalay* downtown area. During King *Thibaw* reigned, 91 Thai staffs were given lands (Shein, 2001).

Evidences of their settlements

After *Amarapura* and *Mandalay* had been founded, Thai settlements area such as *Phaya-thone-zu* (three pagodas), *Rahine Zay* (*Rahine market*), and *Yodaya Zay* (*Ayutthaya market*) has become downtown area (Kyi, 2001, pp 4). *Rahine* is the name of the place which is located near Thai-Myanmar border in Thai territory. These three landmarks can be found in both *Amarapura* and *Mandalay*. Thai descendants followed their tradition of paying offerings and homage to *Rama* shrine (*Rama nat sin*). According to Kyi (2001), the reason of building three pagodas, *Rama* shrine and *Yodaya zay* in every place they settled in *Mandalay* region was to create their homeland environment in order to heal their home sickness (Kyi, 2001, pp 8). In addition, missing their homeland results in creating the environment they settled by giving the name of the places from their origin (Kyi, 2001, pp 16).

Currently in *Mandalay*, there is no market on the place where *Yodaya zay* (*Rahine Zay*) was located. Plot no 584 is called *Yodaya zay* plot (between 81x82 and 29x30) (Shein, 2001). No.8 police station which is close to that place is commonly known as *Yodaya zay* police station (Kyi, 2001, pp 23).

Rama shrine or *Yama Nat sin* is situated between 82nd-83rd and 29th-30th streets. The shrine building was upgraded from bamboo structure to brick structure after 2000. Unlike *Yama nat sin* in *Amarapura*, it is still living and worshiped by both Thai descendants and indigenous Burmese.

Sand Pagodas

The existence of sand pagoda and festival is one of the evidences of Thai settlements. Sand pagodas tradition has been prevailing around Myanmar since long time ago especially famous in *Nyaung Yan* period (17th to 18th century) and *Konebaung* period (18th to 20th century) according to the literature (Kyi, 2001, pp 15). Normally, there are five tiers in sand pagodas representing the Mt.Meru in Buddhist cosmology (ibid).

Sand pagoda is usually made on the bank of river. The festival of making sand pagoda is held annually on every *Taboung* (last month of Myanmar calendar or March) (Nyunt, 2020). In that month, sand banks appear in rivers, streams and lake. Making sand stupa on the bank of river is intended to be temporary before the next river water rises in coming rainy season (Kyi, 2001, pp 16). Nowadays, some sand pagodas were covered by brick to be permanent and the festivals are no longer held in nationwide except only in few regions (Nyunt, 2020). Burmese usually made sand stupa on the bank of river while Thai did it on stream bank. Thai detainees were placed as a small group according to their family and

craftmanship background along *Shwe-ta-chaung* Creek which was big enough to use for trading (Kyi, 2001, pp 16). Therefore, Thai descendants built temporary sand stupa beside that creek in each group.

Sand Stupas' locations in Mandalay

One of the reasons of celebrating sand pagoda festival was to gather Thai detainees in each group (quarter) (Kyi, 2001, pp 16). After two hundred years later, Thai descendants gather in *Phaya-thone-zu* public rest house on every first day of beginning of the Buddhist lent in order to preserve their traditions. Most of the Thai descendants sold their lands and moved other places and merged with the locals and their whereabouts eventually sunk into oblivion. Although *Shwe-ta-chaung* canal is now used as a sewage, it was useful for trade and wide enough for small boat to sail to and from Myanmar villages and Thai communities. According to Kyi (2001), Thai villagers are responsible for cleaning along that canal which was 50 miles long (ibid).

Maha Waluka Sand Stupa

Montisu Sand pagoda was devoted by the Ayutthaya King who was believed that he resided in *Paung-Le-Tike* monastery which is now situated south of *Mahamuni* pagoda. The history of sand pagoda (*Thebon cedi*) at *Montisu* has begun in 1784 permitted to build by Burmese king. By building and finishing up the sand pagoda within one day is a kind of performing magical rituals (*Yatra*) which can bring back the advantages for their prosperity (Kyi, 2001, pp 17). This sand stupa is located in *Montisu* quarter, on 85th street between 37th and 38th street. There is a stone inscription together with *takhuntaing* (ornamented victory column, typically erected in Buddhist compounds) and elephant statue. It will be facing eight cardinal points after being built in festival. That sand stupa will be established on two feet high plinth by the residents of that region. According to *Daw Aye Aye Myint* who lived near sand stupa compound, the umbrella is uninstalled on every 8th wanning day of *Ta-baung* and the establishing of sand pagoda is to be completed only on 13th waxing day of *Ka-sone*. Sand pagoda festival has been held on a grand scale every year. Not only Thai descendants but also Thai citizens today come to attend the ceremony annually.

Koe-na-win Sand Pagoda

The name of *Koe-na-win* means a traditional Buddhist ritual during which devotees are to do Buddhist chores telling beads, and reciting *Parittas* in front of specific religious places for nine consecutive days. This sand pagoda is situated on 86th street, between 41 and 41 H in *Min-thar-su* quarter where Thai royal families from *Ayutthia*. For this reason, in Mandalay, this *The-bone ceti* is the first stupa which celebrate the pagoda festival. Building sand stupa within one day is intended to fulfill their wish to go back to their homeland as for performing magical rituals. They believed that after sand pagoda was collapsed naturally, their performing magical rituals could be answered their prayers. The recent previous ceremony was 240th anniversary and held on the second day of Thingyan festival. The size of sand stupa is 24 feet in length and width. On the first day of Thingyan festival, devotees and volunteers of all ages and genders came and brought sand from the street to pagoda compound. Construction process was on the following day and females are not allowed to involve in process. The sand from the toppled stupa were used in filling potholes in the compound of the pagoda, with limited amount of the remnant sands left in the original place. The reason of not allowing to use in other places is that this sand had been sacred because of constructing the replica of Buddhist stupa. The above information was contributed by U Myo Win (patron of trustee) and U Phoe Htoo (trustee member).

Kan Oo (Koe-na-win) Sand Stupa

It is located on 83rd street between 36th and 37th street in *Kan-Oo* street. It has now become permanent brick small stupa. The pagoda festival is held on full moon day of Thadingyut annually and do not inherit the Thai descendants' tradition.

Pyi-lone-chanthar sand stupa

It is situated on 24th street between 83rd and 84th street in *Dar-tan* quarter. It is now Dhamma hall (community hall of quarter). There is no sand pagoda festival as those in *Mintharsu* and *Montesu* but celebrate the quarter festival annually.

Yodaya market, Rama shrine and Phaya-thone-su

Another characteristics of Thai settlements is the creating environment with *Yodaya* market, *Rama* shrine and *Phaya-thone-su*. Upper Myanmar, especially in *Innwa*, *Amrapura* and *Mandalay*, the places which is called "*Yodaya Zay*" or *Yodaya* market (*Ayuthia* market) can be found where Thai captives settled (Kyi, 2001, pp 23). *Yama* shrine (also *Rama* shrine) can also be called *Bo Bo Gyi* shrine (*Nat sin*) (Kyi, 2001, pp 20). Three pagodas, *Phaya-thone-su* in Burmese and *Wat Phra Si Sanphet* in Thai which is also one of the replicas of *Ayutthaya* situated in the northern side of city showing how much Thai descendants attached to their environment (Kyi, 2001, pp 6). As described above, this layout can be found in both *Amarapura* and *Mandalay* downtown.

3.1.3 Case 3: Manipuris and assamese in Mandalay

The historical accounts of the migration and settlement of the *Kathe* and *Akabat* people from Manipur and Assam in *Mandalay* are intriguing and shed light on the complex territorial dynamics during the *Bagan* period in Myanmar. According to records, the western boundary of Myanmar extended as far as *Padeik Khaya-kala*, encompassing regions that included Manipur and Assam. The *Hanthawaddy* *Hsinbyushin* of the *Taungoo* period further solidified Myanmar's territorial influence, covering the entire state of *Kathe* in the north-western boundary. In 1725, and again in 1749, the Manipuris under their Hindu king *Garib Newaz* overran much of today's *Sagaing* Region, contributing to the fall of the *Toungoo* dynasty in 1752.

In 1819, the Burmese king *Bagyidaw* conquered Manipur, leading to what the Manipuris call the "seven years of devastation" (*chahi taret khuntakpa* in Manipuri). The *Shwezigon* Pagoda Inscription on *Shwethahlaung* Hill indicates that *Kathe* state was situated in *Thunaparanta Taing*, the north-western region of Myanmar to the west of the *Ayeyarwaddy* River during King *Minye Kyawhtin's* reign in *Inwa*. Additionally, the *Bonsan Tulut* Monastery Inscription of *Shwebo*, dated 1765 A.D, establishes Manipur as one of the 16 taings-divisions of Myanmar during the *Konbaung* period. These inscriptions collectively suggest that the Meitei people, identified as *Kathe*, were vassal states of Myanmar throughout its monarchical rule. After *Bagyidaw's* conquest, thousands of Manipuri captives were then settled in the *Ava-Amarapura* area and together with construction of *Mandalay*, some of them moved to *Mandalay* where their descendants remain to this day. They became integrated into the Burmese power structure as hundreds formed the elite *Kathe* Horse regiment in the *Konbaung* army and Manipur brahmins (*ponna*) promoted Hindu rituals and ideas of kingship at the royal court.

However, a significant shift occurred after the first *Anglo-Myanmar War* (1824-26) and the subsequent negotiation of the *Yandabo Treaty*. Myanmar, having to relinquish *Taninthayi*, *Rakhine*, and Manipur, resulted in Manipur becoming a state under *British-India*. The *Yandabo Treaty's* Article 11 specified the surrender of Assamese and Manipuri subjects under the Myanmar king to the British Government for deportation to Manipur.

Despite this provision, the Myanmar government contested, asserting that the Assamese and Manipuri populations had voluntarily settled in Myanmar, making it impractical to hand them over to the British Government.

As mentioned earlier, there has been historical migration and settlement of Manipuri people in regions near Mandalay. The presence of Manipuri communities contributed to the local culture and diversity. Manipur has a rich cultural heritage with unique traditions in music, dance, and artisanal production. Elements of Manipuri culture have been integrated into the broader cultural fabric of Mandalay. Manipuri especially known for its labor intensive handloom weaving. As Manipuri weavers settled to Mandalay, became critical to the innovation and production Acheik, the most elite and coveted textile within the royal palace.

Historically, the Manipuri astrologers played a significant role in the palaces of Kone Baung Dynasties in Myanmar. Their influence extended beyond personal matters to encompass political decisions, governance, and even the planning of significant events. They were settled near the palace site by the kings and till now their descendants are still living on as the astrologers. There are two Manipuri/Kathe settlements in Mandalay, namely Ponnar Su in Chan Aye Tharzan Township and Ponnar Gone in Patheingyi Township. Plot no 715 (29×30 and 73×74) is Ka Thir Compound where Kathe especially horse staffs, stayed there (Lwin naing, 2013).

The Burmese ethnonym Akabat applied to the Assamese in the Konbaung era and was also applied to groups of people captured from the Manipur kingdom during the many Konbaung era raids into that country. In this second context it is difficult to ascertain who the ancient chroniclers were referring to when they used the term Akabat. We may presume that these people had resettled to Manipur from the Assam area at some time before they were captured and relocated to upper Burma. Akabat people were recruited into the Konbaung military, Akabat are listed in the elite ranks of the cavalry in numerous royal documents. The Assamese were also known for their musical traditions. In the interview with Time of India, which was issued on 15th July 2015, Thant Zin, an Assamese, is the drummer of a popular music band said that there were 30 to 50 people left in Mandalay who have kept their Assamese identity intact. He added that majority of them have either migrated to other parts of Myanmar or assimilated to the Myanmar society by converting to Buddhists. While Manipuris are better organized in Mandalay, the Assamese were economically weaker and many of them preferred to get absorbed into Burmese society.



Figure 7. Seik-Tra Mahi Quarter
Source: Authors (2024)

3.1.4 Case 4: Chinese communities in Mandalay

The earliest records of Chinese migration into present-day Myanmar were in the Song and Ming dynasties. In the 18th century, Ming Dynasty princes settled in Kokang (the northern part of present-day Myanmar). Chinese traders, however, travelled as far as the capital city as well as northern towns on the Irrawaddy such as Bhamo. Some of them stayed and started a Chinese community at *Amarapura*.

A Brief Account of the Rebuilding of the Guanyin Temple in *Amarapura*

A good example of handing over of the responsibilities can be marked by Mandalay Guanyin Temple that dated back to Thirty-eighth Year of King Qinlong, when the successor of Han troops, Qinkai, tried to establish a friendly relationship between the two states so that there came a stream of merchants trading silk and cottons crossing the two states. At that time, the place was scarcely populated. Builders of the temple felt that the room for building temple was too narrow that they just laid a stone image of Buddha, just a Bodhisattva. After a few years, the stream of merchants and the flow of commodities exchange increased. By Jiaqing Fifteenth Year, all the buildings and images of the temple were burnt down. A little higher temple was rebuilt with pious efforts. The image was still a stone one. But there added a God of Wealth, Marquis of Martial Arts and Saints were laid to be worshiped and to ask for providence. By Daoguang Ninth Year, the temple was burnt down and was rebuilt again. But by Daoguang Seventeenth Year, an unexpected fire broke out. The fire was so terrible that within seven days the temple was surrounded by the flake and flare as if there were troops from heaven came to visit the temple. At last, the temple was completely burnt down. The merchants made up their minds to rebuild the temple. However, they felt that the place was too narrow. So they together asked Myanmar King to grant them the land behind the temple. They were granted more than ten metres of land. It cost them more than a thousand silvers to bribe for the grant in negotiating the price of the land with the landowners. Thus the land was larger than the original one. The success of the asking of land and other things was believed to be blessed by Bodhisattva. This made people more enthusiastic in rebuilding. So the rebuilding started in Daoguang Eighteenth Year and finished in Twenty-sixth. Although there were a lot of difficulties in the process of rebuilding, the new temple was a grandeur one with two lions sitting in front of the outer wall. Inside the wall were two wing rooms for guests which were attached to. There were general executives, authorized executives and master of stone and wood curving and drawing and master sculptor. This story was authenticated by the public and recorded calligraphied under the supervision of His Holiness Abbot Daocheng. The monument was erected by Chinese merchants and public at the date of Lucky Day of Lucky Month of Twenty-sixth Year of the Reign of Daoguang of the Dragon-Flying Qin Dynasty. When King Mindon moved his capital from *Amarapura* to Mandalay in 1859, the Chinese were the only community that decided to stay behind. Many of their descendants intermarried into the host society and remain important and respected citizens of *Amarapura* (Suryadinata, 1997).

Chinese communities of 19th Century Mandalay

Since the 19th century, as Mandalay became more economically prosperous, large influxes of Han Chinese immigrants have continued to settle there, resulting the Sinicization of the entire *city* (Wong, Bernard; Tan, Chee-Beng (2017). Under the auspicious of the entrepreneurial Chinese minority, Mandalay became a booming modern metropolis filled with foreign businesses and gem trading centers. Many Chinese-owned and operated Burmese businesses such as trading cooperatives, market stalls, food joints, medicine shops, hotels, and gem shops have also flourished (Miller, Tom (2017) and Maung, Mya (1998)). By 1886 the city had a population of almost 200,000. The Chinese were prosperous merchants and their trade was important for the survival of the economic well-

being of the people of Upper Burma. Mandalay gradually expanded to encompass the Chinese community (O'Connor, 1907: 79-80).

British Colonial period onwards

Another wave of immigration occurred in the 19th century under the British colonial administration. Britain encouraged immigration of the Indians and Chinese to British Burma, and such incentives for work opportunities and enterprise and for accumulating wealth attracted many Chinese immigrants. They primarily came to Burma via British Malaya (Suryadinata, 1997). The Chinese quickly became dominant in the highly lucrative rice and gem industries. Many Chinese merchants and traders own both wholesale and retail businesses. Unlike in British Malaya, where most Chinese were coolie labourers, the Chinese in Burma were largely from the artisan and merchant classes (Stamp, L. Dudley (January 1930)). During British rule, marriage between the Chinese and Burmese, particularly Chinese men and Burmese women, was the most common form of intermarriage in Burma, as evidenced by a High Court ruling on the legal status of Sino-Burmese marriages under Burmese Buddhist law (Ikeya, Chie, 2008) Chinese quarter St (it is called so since *Mindon Thibaw* time) is 80th St and market was 79th St till 34th St (it was moved to 78th St between 33 and 34 Yadanabon market) (Shein, 2001). Plot number 570 (between 80x 81 and 31 x 32) Yunan Chinese Temple built since Myanmar era 1219 is the place for events managed by 31 members of management committee (Shein, 2001).

3.1.5 Case 5: Christian communities in Mandalay

King *Mindon* permitted Anglican priests and Roman Catholic priests to settle in Mandalay. The Catholics began transferring control from the missionaries to local elements in 1959, with the appointment of the Archbishop of Mandalay who is a descendant of Portuguese who arrived in the 17th century. Likewise, the Protestants transferred control to locals in the 1950s (Latourette, 1962).

Khojas, the Armenian merchants, arrived in Myanmar in early 1550 and they served at Inwa Royal Palace while other Armenians who did not serve the Myanmar king were wealthy by doing businesses in some towns and villages in Myanmar including Amarapura and Mandalay (Wong, Bernard; Tan, Chee-Beng (2017)). There is Anglican Church South of Pha Ya Ne at the plot no 157, side of 22nd St (between 81x82), the place given for Armenians by King Mindon. Father was Steven George (1844 - 1905) and his wife Johanna also died in Mandalay. The church is for Armenians, Portugals and Juus (Shein, 2001).



Figure 8. Pale' Ngwe Yaung Quarter
Source: Authors (2024)

Plot no 555 is Father Lafon Church built by French Catholic Father Joseph Lafon in 1919 (Myanmar era 1281) and vocational school was attached in 1933 (Shein, 2001). Saint Joseph's Cathedral, west side of 80th & 34/35th, also known as Father Lafon Church is a lovely and pleasant this gothic style Roman Catholic church in Mandalay well cared for by the local parishioners. It is a gothic style architecture church built by French Fathers in 1894. The interiors of the church have decorations of gold, the beautiful colour of Myanmar (Miller, Tom (2017).). Plot 557 (Between 33×34 and 81×82), there is Kelly Christian Church and called Kelly Compound. It is also the place of Judson Baptist Christian Church (Shein, 2001).

4. Conclusions

Re-envisioning the Heritage through Mandalay's "branding" in the light of multi-ethnicity highlights the importance of balance between those local communities.

The city continues to maintain its hold as the cultural centre of the nation but this is really related to the different ethnic groups' tangible structures which have undergone a variety of changes over three centuries. Opposite to the impermanence of buildings and the recognition of generations after generations as creators of the country's cultural centre, it is very important for authorities, urban planners, developers, architects, landscape designers, etc of each generation should keep the meaning of diverse cultural atmospheres that make the branded unique livable city of South East Asia and the world. In search for authentic cultural heritage seeks to capture, Mandalay dominates the Myanmar's multi-ethnic heartland.

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