

The New Kingdom of Hanthawaddy and Kambawzathadi Palace

Hla Hla Nwe*

Abstract

One unique feature of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar is that there were many ancient cultural heritage zones such as religious buildings, residential buildings including Royal golden cities, and Royal palaces etc. for studying the scholars, researchers and students. Among them, Kambawzathadi Palace was also included there. The new kingdom of Hanthawaddy with the Kambawzathadi Palace was founded by King Bayinnaung. On 16 November 1566, the foundation for the capital was laid up. According to the Thuthawdita Chronicle, the circumference of the city and the moat measured 3400 tahs and had 20 gates. The Record of Hanthawaddy states that the city-wall was 2000 tahs in circumference. The construction of the new royal palace was started on 18 July 1567. On 16 March 1568, King Bayinnaung held the house-warming ceremony of the new royal city. He named the royal city “Kambawzathadi”. The wall of the Kambawzathadi Palace measured 600 tahs. The Hall of the Lion Throne was seven-tiered and most splendid of the halls in the royal city. The royal city of Kambawzathadi had three circles. It was destroyed and burned to ashes by the kings of Taungoo and Rakhine. Today, Kambawzathadi Palace of the Hanthawaddy Kingdom can be seen in its grandeur and fullest extent of national pride. Relying on these documents, this paper presents the knowledge of the Palace in a fresh way from the perspective of a historian.

Introduction

The new kingdom of Hanthawaddy with the Kambawzathadi Palace was founded by King Bayinnaung, who united the Second Myanmar Empire in the 16th Century. The place of Hanthawaddy site was selected by the King Bayinnaung himself because the area of Hanthawaddy was a place of Tabinshwehti's consecration. In 1566 when the king held a meeting on the country's matters with the Crown Prince and the ministers, the ministers were intent upon extending the empire territories,¹ whereas the Crown Prince added that a royal capital with seven necessary requirements including the city wall, moat and so on should be built for receiving diplomatic officials of other countries, on which the ministers also agreed.²

* Hla Hla New, Lecturer, Department of History

¹ UttharawAh-mat Gyi, ဟံသာဝတီဆင်ဖြူရှင်အရေးတော်ပုံမော်ကွန်းဥဒါန်း၊ (Record of the Historical Account of the Hanthawaddy Hsinbyushin), (Edited by U Toe Hla), Yangon, University Press, 2006, P. 149. (Hereafter cited as Uttharaw, Hsinbyushin).

² Kala, U, မဟာရာဇဝင်ကြီး၊ ဒုတိယတွဲ၊ (The Great Chronicle, Vol. II), Yangon, Yarpipi Press, Fifth Edition, 2016. P. 293 (Hereafter cited as U Kala, Vol. II).

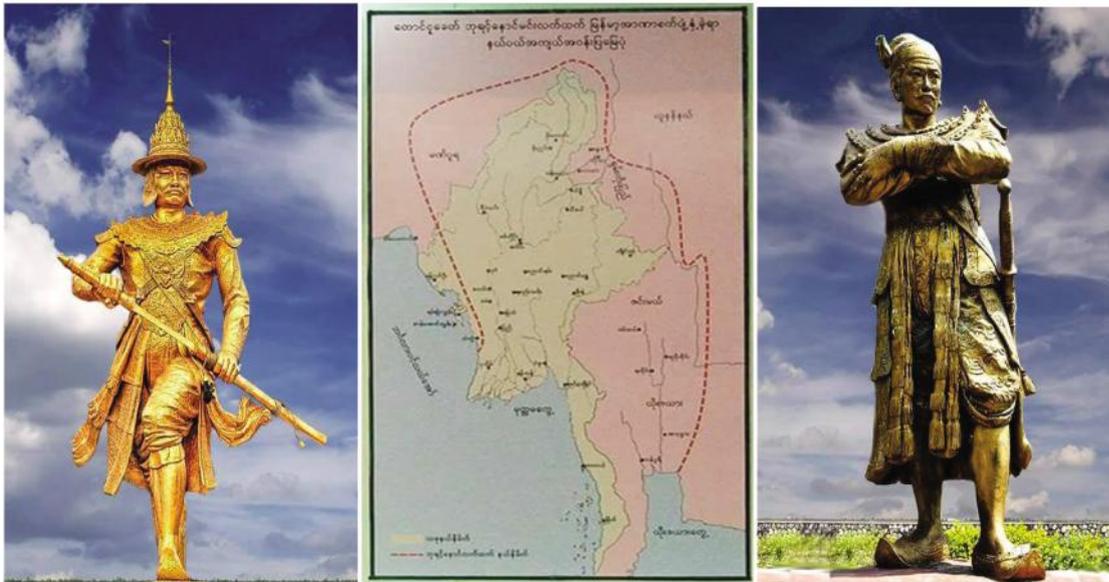


Fig (1)

The king was so delighted to hear the Crown Prince's suggestion that he summoned the Hu: ja: Bei din PjinNja Shins(the astrologers) to propose the plans for a new capital. Out of the 17 city-plans put forward by the astrologers, the king favored two plans which were used in the projects of Taungoo and Ayutthaya.¹ It was said that King Bayinnaung assessed the value of city-plans of Taungoo or Kaytumade which had been auspicious ground of Taungoo, from where the country's power was gathered.



Fig (2)

On 22 October 1566, construction was started west of the capital, to which a person from every household was summoned for digging the mount east of the capital and land filling.² On 16 November 1566, the foundation for the city wall having the circumference of 3400 tahs³ was laid upon together with those for Shwemawdaw Pagoda's wall and for a Pitakataik Library.⁴

¹ Uttharaw, Hsinbyushin, P. 150.

² U Kala, Vol. II, P.293.

³ It was unit of measurement for a distance equal to seven cubits.

⁴ U Kala, Vol. II, P.294.

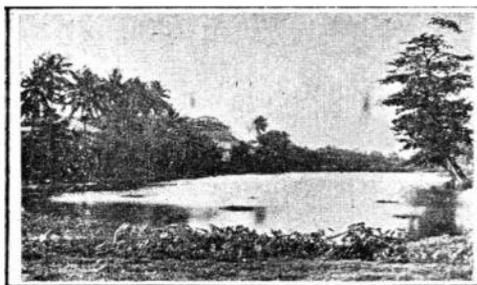
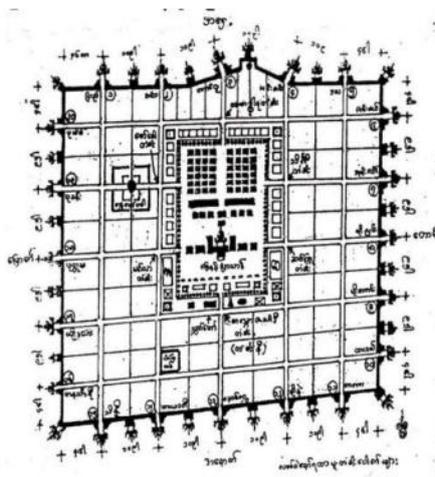


Fig (3) Fig (4)

According to the Thuthawdita Chronicle, the circumference of the city and the moat measured 3400 tahs and it had 20 gates.¹It was found that the number of the gates of the Hanthawaddy was the same as that of the gates of Taungoo.

By far the most reliable source of information available now on the construction of Hanthawaddy and its palace is Hanthawaddy Hma' tan: (the Record of Hanthawaddy) which was originally part of Letwenawrahta's Notes. In 1757, when King Alaungmintayagyi conquered Hanthawaddy, Minister Letwenawrahta took the opportunity of recording the ground-plans of the Hanthawady Kingdom and the Kanbawzathadi Palace. Using the data from this record, U Thet Tin, a lecturer of the Nationalists' Amyotha College, wrote in the 1938published Thuriya magazine a detailed account of Hanthawaddy Kingdom. ²The Record of Hanthawaddy states that the unit distance measure of the city wall was 2000 tahs in circumference,³ the eastern and western sides of the wall having 472 tahs, and the northern and southern sides 528 tahs. Therefore, the unit distance measures form Northern to Southern was more length than East-West. Near the corner spires (pyatthats), the city gates had the spires (pythat) which were 46 tahs from each other. However, the distance between the city gates on the same sides were 95 tahs on the eastern/western sides, and 109 tahs on the northern/southern sides.⁴ It is probable that only the difference in the terrains of the two palace sites differentiated the size of the walls and the distance of the gates.



Each side of the wall had 5 gates, totaling 20 on all sides, with a small turret on each gate.⁵The spire and the door panels were fully gilded. The corridors were double framed.¹King Bayinnaung assigned a vassal king to build each gate and name it by the subject's city.²

¹ Win Maung (Tampawadi), Ko,ကမ္ဘောဇသာဒီနန်းတော်ဆိုင်ရာမှတ်တမ်းများ(၃)ဆောင်းပါး:(The article concerned with Records of the Kambawzathadi Palace, 3), Kywemon Newspaper, 24.8.1993, P. 3.(Hereafter cited as Ko Win Maung, Records of the Kambawzathadi Palace).
² San,(Archaeology), U,ယဉ်ကျေးမှုရေးရာဆယ်နှစ်တာ (Ten Years of Culture),Yangon, Sarpay Beikman Press, First Edition, 2000, P. 49. (Hereafter cited as U San, For Ten Years).
³ Ko Win Maung, Records of the Kambawzathadi Palace (3),Kywemon Newspaper, 24.8.1993, P.3.
⁴ Ko Win Maung, Records of the Kambawzathadi Palace (1),Kywemon Newspaper, 22.8.1993, P.3.
⁵ Ko Win Maung, Records of the Kambawzathadi Palace (1),Kywemon Newspaper, 22.8.1993, P.3.

The naming of gates with the vassals' names can be interpreted to be part of the tradition of Myanmar kings who exercised much of their powers. However, the interpretation that King Bayinnaung treated his vassals well and equally would not be less plausible at the same time.

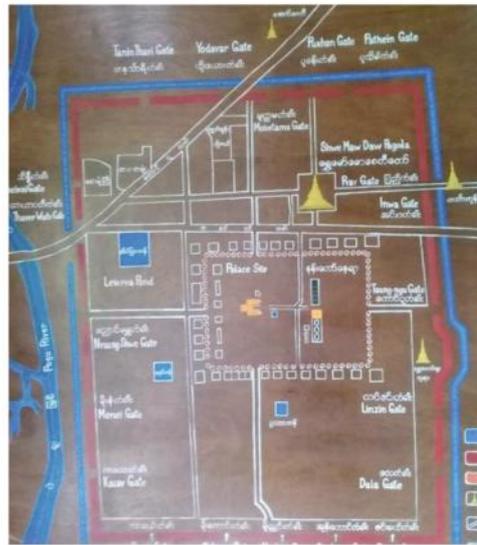


Fig (6)

On the eastern city wall were the gates of Pyay, Innwa, Taungoo, Linzin and Dala; on the western city wall were those of Theinni, Thayawaddy, Nyaungshwe, Monaiand Kalay; on the southern city wall were those of Zimme, Ohnbaung, Monyin, Mokaung and Dawei; and on the northern city wall were those of Pathein, Pukham, Mottama, Yodaya and Taninthayi. The gates Nyaungshwe and Taungoo were connected by the east-west main road whereas the north-south main road connected the gates Mottama and Monyin. These main roads and the other eight roads were the ten roads that interconnected the places in the capital.³The gates were seen straight from the opposite gates, with the roads wide enough for 10-12 people walking abreast.



Fig(7)

¹ U Kala, Vol. II, P.296.

² Kyaw Win, Dr., နှစ်လေးဆယ်သမိုင်းရှာပုံတော်(The Great Quest for Forty Years' History), First Edition, Yangon, Ah-hmanThit Book House, 2006, P.64 (Hereafter cited as Dr. Kyaw Win, The Quest for History).

³ Ko Win Maung, Records of the Kambawzathadi Palace (1), KywemonNewspaper, 22.8.1993, P.3.

Caesar Frederick of Venice (Italy) recorded this much information about the capital during his visit to Bago (Hanthawaddy) in 1569.¹The Myanmar art of road construction in Taungoo Period was so systematic and remarkable that it received the praises of the foreign witnesses.

According the Record of Minister Uttharaw, King Bayinnaung had installed gate sentries and their chiefs at the above-mentioned twenty gates and provided them with farmland for livelihood. The Dain: kain (shield-men), Lei: kain (archers) and Thana' mi: paukkain (gun-men) together with their chiefs were also deployed and provided with necessary supplies of horses and elephants. Since the city walls, pya ou and pyatthats were maintained under the care of 10 masons each for one side, the capital looked so new with gilded splendor that it was compared to Tavatimsa the realm of gods.²



Fig (8)

The moat of the capital was first dug on 12 February 1567,³and it had 20 tahs wide,⁴full of crocodiles and without bridges.⁵This was assumingly intended mainly for security purposes.

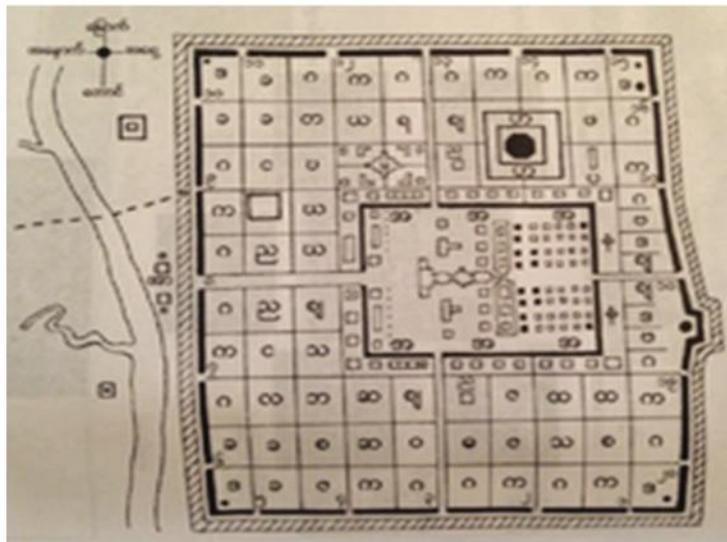


Fig (9)

The construction of the royal capital city was launched in 1566 and completed on 4 December 1571, thus taking five years.¹

¹ Than Htut (TaikSoe), U, ခရီးသွားစာပေမှတ်တမ်းများ၊ ဒုတိယတွဲ၊ (The Travel Dairy, Vol. II), Yangon, SarpayBeikhman Press, First Edition, 1981, P. 248 (Hereafter cited as U ThanHtut, Travel Diary).
² Dr.KyawWin, The Quest for History, PP. 66-67.
³ U Kala, Vol. II, P.293.
⁴ Uttharaw, Hsinbyushin, P. 151.
⁵ U Than Htut, Travel Diary, P. 248.

The name “Kampocasati” on the bell inscription donated by King Bayinnaung to Shwezigon Pagoda referred to the old wooden-fortressed royal city which was built on 17 November 1553.²



Fig (10)

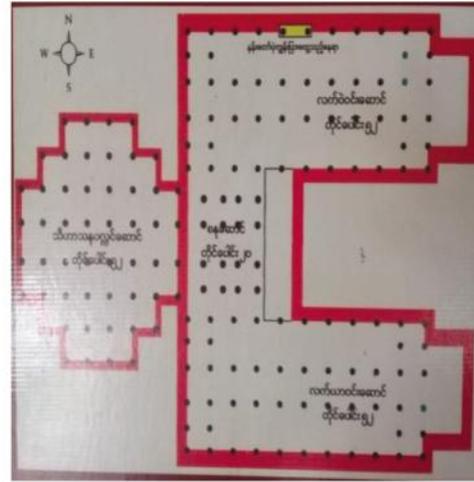


Fig (11)

For the construction of the new royal city, wood-cutting was started on 24 May 1567. On 18 July 1567, the Mon minister Banyadala supervised the construction project,³ and 222 ministers from Mon and Rakhine regions despatched 222 teak-posts for the Royal Audience Hall (Myaynanpyatthat) – 20 posts for Sha’Samou’hsaun (the entrance hall), 48 posts for Letwei Win hsaun (the left-wing hall), 48 posts for Letyar Win hsaun (the right-wing hall), 24 posts for Sanuhsaun (the adjoining hall), 32 posts for Thihathana Palinhsaun (the Lion Throne hall) and 50 short secondary posts for the entire left-right sides of floors.⁴



Fig (12)



Fig (13)

On the teak-posts were written the names of the places of origin. The 1992 findings of the Department of Archaeology supported evidence to the Record since the names like Thayawaddy, Hlaing, Mokaung, Kaungtong, Pyay and Lagunbyee can be seen on the teak-posts excavated. Therefore, it was said that the same as the historical records.⁵ On 14 February 1568 alone, the houses for the ladies-in-waiting and for the royal elephants were built among the six main royal halls of the king and queens.

¹ Than Tun, Dr., ကမ္ဘောဇသောဒီ (“Kambawzathadi”), Kalyar Magazine, No. 185, July 2000, P.24. (Hereafter cited as Dr. Than Tun, Kambawzathadi).
² Ko Win Maung, Records of the Kambawzathadi Palace (7), Kywemon Newspaper, 28.8.1993, P.3.
³ U Kala, Vol. II, P.297.
⁴ Ko Win Maung, Records of the Kambawzathadi Palace (8), Kywemon Newspaper, 29.8.1993, P.3.
⁵ Dr. Kyaw Win, The Quest for History, P. 68.



Fig (14)

On 16 March 1568, King Bayinnaung held the house-warming ceremony of the new royal city by entering through the gate of ‘Khemadvara’ and circling the western part of the city. He named the royal city “ Kambawzathadi”.¹ The construction work of the royal city lasted for seven months.²

The palace of Kambawzathadi was located in the center of Hanthawaddy, south of Shwemawdaw Pagoda and on the eastern side of the street joining the Yodaya and Mokaung gates between the gates of Innwa and Linzin. The royal city had six gates to get into: Dhagani (the red gate) or the Kambawzathadi gate on the western side, the Mingala and Mawdaw gates on the northern side, the White Elephant gate and the Theingi gate on the southern side, and the Khemadvara gate on the eastern side.³ That is why, the western and eastern sides of the Palace had a gate each while the northern and southern sides had two gates each.

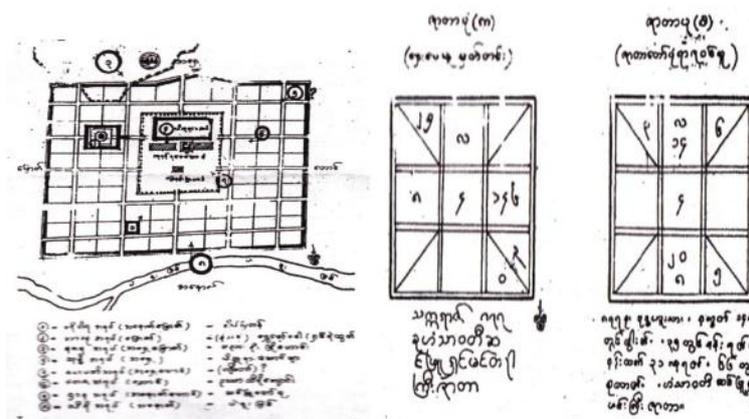


Fig (15)

The Record of Hanthawaddy states that the gate into the palace faced west, although the palaces of Innwa, Amarapura and Mandalay had the main gate towards the east. In connection with this matter, King Bayinnaung probably used the royal astrologers’ advice on the basis of his day of birth.⁴ It was also suggested that it would be improved glorious for King.

¹ U Kala, Vol. II, PP.298-299.

² Dr. ThanTun, Kambawzathadi, P.24.

³ KoWin Maung, Records of the Kambawzathadi Palace (2), Kywemon Newspaper, 23.8.1993, P.3.

⁴ KoWin Maung, Records of the Kambawzathadi Palace (2), Kywemon Newspaper, 23.8.1993, P.3.



Fig (16)

Nevertheless, the Department of Archaeology excavated the palace under the guidance of the authorities in 1990, and found that the foundation plan of the main hall was U-shaped oriented towards east, rather than T-shaped facing west.¹

This discrepancy has led to the research into the contemporary records where we find that the foundation plan of the palace was pentagonal in shape bearing the left-wing hall, the right-wing hall, the entrance hall, the adjoining hall and the Lion Throne hall.²



Fig (17)

The former three were included in the interior of the group of the Royal Audience Hall on the glazed brick floors of the U-shaped brick foundation and the adjoining hall on the wooden floor supported by teak-posts in the space between the hands of the U-shaped brick foundation. The spired main hall which housed the Lion Throne was located on the wooden floor between the zigzagged corners of the U-frame.³

The wall of the Kambawzathadi Palace measured 600 tahs having four gates with spired roofs. The east/west sides measured 140 tahs, and the north/south sides 160 tahs.⁴The plan of the Kambawzathadi Palace suggests that the west red gate of the royal city led eastward to the following buildings: on the left-hand side (i.e., in the north), the Hluttaw hall and the residential halls of Let YarPwe: jaThaje: Than(royal right-knighted heroes) and Let Yar Win: Hmu: (gate sentries); on the right-hand side (i.e., in the south), the Eastern Hall and the residential halls of LetweiPwe: jaThaje:

¹ KoWin Maung, Records of the Kambawzathadi Palace (7), Kywemon Newspaper, 28.8.1993, P.3.
² Ko Win Maung, Records of the Kambawzathadi Palace (3), Kywemon Newspaper, 24.8.1993, P.3.
³ KoWin Maung, Records of the Kambawzathadi Palace (7), Kywemon Newspaper, 28.8.1993, P.3.
⁴ YinHlaing (PyinmaMyaing), Maung, ဟံသာဝတီ(ပဲခူး)တစ်ခွင်မှ သမိုင်းဝင်လေ့လာစရာများ (The Study of the Historical Sites from the areas of Hanthawaddyor Bago), Yangon, The Literature Committee of Tun Foundation Bank Press, First Edition, 2014, P.38.

Than(royal left-knighted heroes) and Letwei Win: Hmu: (gatesentries),¹walking straight to the east, Myaynanpyatthat (the Royal Audience Hall).

The Thihathana Palinsaun (the Hall of the Lion Throne)was seven-tiered and most splendid of the halls in the royal city, its pinnacle commanding the tallest height from the center of the royal city.²In this hall, the King received the audience of the chiefs and Saophas of the vassal states who came to the palace with tributes three times in a year at the beginning and end of the Lent and on the New Year day.³ The hall was regarded to be the most important place of royal glory where the vassals showed their allegiance to the king.⁴



Fig (18)

To the north of the Lion Throne Hall was Paduma Palinsaun (the Lotus Throne Hall), where the vassal chiefs came to honour the Chief Queen (Her Majesty) and the King (His Majesty). To the north of the Lotus Throne Hall was Marura Palinsaun (the Peacock Throne Hall), where the tributes of the vassal chiefs were collected.⁵

The Byai-Taik or GajaPalinsaun(the Elephant Throne Hall) was situated south of the Lion Throne Hall. From that hall, the royal orders and edicts were issued including promotion and demotion of the ministerial ranks. South of the Elephant Throne Hall was the southern adjoining hall called Miga Palinsaun (the Deer Throne Hall), where the ceremonies of donation to the monks and the poor were held.⁶ The Jetavana Hall with Hamsa Palinsaun (the Brahminy Duck Throne) existed east of the Lion Throne Hall and housed the statues of the King’s father, mother, grand-mother and grand-father.⁷ To the east of the Brahminy Duck Throne Hall was the Hall of the Royal Headgears Hall or Khayuthin Palinsaun (the Conch Throne Hall).⁸The Conch Throne Hall was flanked by the tea hall, the flower hall and the northern donation hall to the north and by the garment Hall, the treasury hall and the southern donation hall to the south.⁹

¹ U San, For Ten Years,P. 51.

² U San, For Ten Years,P. 52.

³ Than Win Hlaing,U,ဘုရင့်နောင်မင်းတရားကြီး၏ကမ္ဘောဇသောဒီနန်းတော်(King Bayinnaung’s Kambawzathadi Palace), Yangon, Shwezweman Press, 2017, P. 85.(Hereafter cited as U Than Win Hlaing , The Palace of Kambawzathadi).

⁴ Yin Yin Mon (Archaeology),Ma, ဘုရင့်နောင်မင်းတရားကြီးနှင့်ကမ္ဘောဇသောဒီလက်ရာမွန် (King Bayinnaungand the Grand Kambawzathadi), Yangon, SarpayBeikhman Press, 2015, P.62.(Hereafter cited as Ma Yin Yin Mon, the Grand Kambawzathadi).

⁵ MaYin Yin Mon, the Grand Kambawzathadi, PP.62-63.

⁶ Ibid, P.63.

⁷ Ibid, P.61.

⁸ MaYin Yin Mon, the Grand Kambawzathadi, P. 60.

⁹ U San, For Ten Years,P. 52.

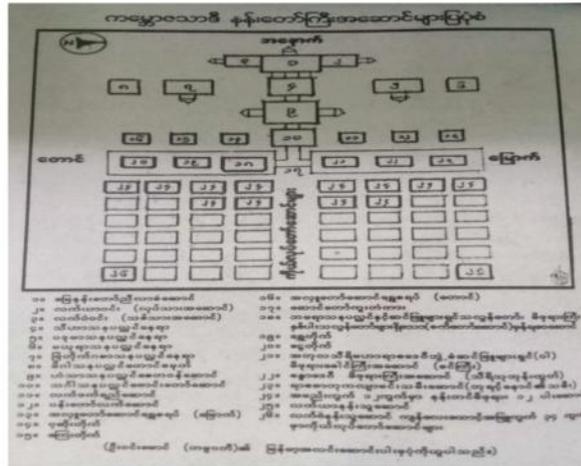


Fig (19)

As described above, the Kambawzathadi Palace was beautifully built together with different kinds of halls serving different purposes and different ranks in variegated royal terms. The Royal Headgear Hall led eastward to Hsaun Dow Ku: bridge (the Connectivity Bridge), which was linked with the rightwing and leftwing halls of the queens.¹



Fig (20)

The posts of the Connectivity Bridge were firmly founded on the 5-inch-thick and 18-inch-wide teak planks at the depth of 4 ½ feet.² The six main royal halls were built on the left and right sides of the paved area. To the east of the paved area of the queens' halls was Bhamara Palin hsaun (the Bee Throne Hall).

¹ Ibid.

² KoWin Maung, Records of the Kambawzathadi Palace (2), Kywemon Newspaper, 23.8.1993, P.3.



Fig (21)

Which is Hmanya Wei hsaunor Se' Taw hsaun of King Bayinnaung, the back of which was the king's bedroom and had the royal couch.¹The royal golden treasury hall and the royal silver treasury hall were located on the southern of Se' Taw hsaun.²



Fig (22)

Excavation has revealed that the teak posts of the queens' halls were originally 18 inches each in diameter, circled by brick rings which formed like water wells.³

The northern rightwing paved area had the hall of the Chief Queen (King Tabinshwehti's sister KhinKhinGyi), with that of the Queen (daughter of the Innwa king) to the north. The hall of Princess Rajadhatukalya, daughter of King Bayintnaung, was to the farther north of the Queen's hall.⁴

¹ Yin Hlaing (PyinmaMyaing), Maung, ဘုရင့်နောင်မင်းကြီးနှင့်ဟံသာဝတီမြို့တော်ဟောင်းကိုတူးဖော်ကြည့်ခြင်း (King Bayinnaung and excavation of the old city of Hanthawaddy), Yangon, Sarpay Beikman Press, First Edition, 2016, P.111.

² U San, For Ten Years, PP. 52-53.

³ KoWin Maung, Records of the Kambawzathadi Palace (6), Kywemon Newspaper, 27.8.1993, P.3.

⁴ U San, For Ten Years, P. 53.



Fig (23)

At the northernmost, there was the Buddha Shrine Hall called Kesabeikman,¹ from which were found as many as 1896 broken sandstone Buddha images and glazed roof-tiles of green and white colors.² On the eastern part of left and right sides of the six main royal halls, there were 48 halls, 12 Nan: Tin Mi. Baja hsauns (the queen halls), 34 Maun: ma Mei' than hsauns (the houses for the ladies-in-waiting) and 2 female courtier halls known as Letya Nan: Tuhsaun and Letwei Nan: Tuhsaun. According to the foundation plan of the Kambawzathadi Palace, there were only 76 royal halls there.³

According to the Record of Minister Uttharaw, the royal city of Kambawzathadi had three enclosures. Within the first innermost enclosure were the Royal Audience Hall, the six main royal halls and ladies-in-waiting halls, the royal golden treasury hall and the royal silver treasury hall and the ammunition building. Between the first and second enclosures were kept the nine white elephants, and the elephants for riding and for protective purposes. Between the second and third enclosures were other good elephants and those for fighting with security forces.⁴ It was found that the innermost enclosure was filled with the halls and residences of most importance, the second enclosure with white elephants and the third or outermost enclosure with war-elephants and security forces.



Fig (24)

¹ KoWin Maung, Records of the Kambawzathadi Palace (5), Kywemon Newspaper, 26.8.1993, P.3.
² MaYin Yin Mon, The Grand Kambawzathadi, P. 59.
³ U San, For Ten Years, P. 53.
⁴ Dr. KyawWin, The Quest for History, P. 67.

Fryer Tsuzar, a Portuguese resident in the Hanthawaddy Kingdom during the reign of King Bayintnaung, recorded that the palace was beautifully decorated with paintings and gilded with the gold tiles as roofs and there were statues of kings and queens studded with precious gemstones in some of the rooms.¹ As recognized by the foreign and local writers of contemporary records, the Kambawzathadi Palace thus reflected the wealth and success of the Myanmar Kingdom, the largest power of its time in Southeast Asia. The best and the grand of the Hanthawaddy Kingdom and the Kambawzathadi Palace were destroyed and burned to ashes by the kings of Taungoo and Rakhine 18 years after the death of King Bayintnaung in the times of his son, King Nanda.²

In conclusion, it is now over four centuries since the Kambawzathadi Palace disappeared from earth and, from 19 April 1990, under the auspices of the Government, the Department of Archaeology excavated its site.³ On 7 March 1995, reconstruction of the Royal Audience Hall of the Palace started with a view to maintaining a cultural heritage of Myanmar. The project was finished in 2002; the Bee Throne Hall was rebuilt on 29 June 1994 and completed in 1997.⁴

Today, the Kambawzathadi Palace of the Hanthawaddy Kingdom can be seen in its grandeur and fullest extent of national pride showing the high skills in art and architecture of the Taungoo Period of Myanmar Culture Heritage History.

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