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Exterior Decorations of Religious Monuments in Bagan

(AD 1000-1300)

- Myanmar is the land of pagodas and we are confronted with Buddhist shrines of all shapes and sizes erected on almost inaccessible heights.
- The Myanmar Buddhists, like other oriental, live more in the future than in present, and the extraordinary number of pagoda all over the country attests to their anxiety to attain bliss in the next world as well as to the stronghold which Buddhism has over them.



Firstly: - a bell-shaped stūpa raised on a series of terraces or platforms and crowned with a conical finial.

They consist of solid masses of brickwork, with a small sealed-up chamber in the basement containing supposed relics of Buddha.



Secondly: a temple which is square on plan with sometimes

projecting porches or vestibules and, in the thickness of the walls, narrow corridors, the walls of which are decorated

with frescoes or sculpture, with niches at intervals

containing images of the Buddha.



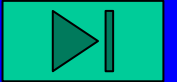

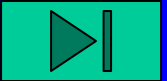


During the kingdom's height between the 11th and 13th centuries, 4,446 Buddhist temples, pagodas and monasteries were constructed in the Bagan plains alone, of which the remains of 3,822 temples and pagodas still survive to the present day.






UNESCO inscribed Myanmar's ancient capital of Bagan as a World Heritage Site on 6 July 2019.

Bagan becomes Myanmar's second addition to the World Heritage List, after the three ancient Pyu cities of Sri Ksetra, Hanlin and Beikthano, which were listed in 2014.



The architectural types of Bagan religious monuments may be further classified as follow:

- (1) Stūpa whose dome is modelled on a reliquary, e.g. Bupaya;** 
- (2) Stūpa whose dome is modelled on a tumulus; e.g. Lawkananda, Shwezigon, Shwesandaw, Mingalazedi;** 
- (3) Stūpa of Sinhalese type, e.g. Sapada, Pebingyaung;** 
- (4) Temple based on North Indian type, e.g. Ananda;** 
- (5) Temple of Central India type, e.g. Mahabodhi;** 

- (6) Temple based on South Indian model, e.g. Gawdawpalin, Sulamani; 
- (7) Cave temples based on Indian model, e.g. Kyaukku Umin, Kyansittha Umin; 
- (8) Ordination hall, e.g. Upali Thein; 
- (9) Library, e.g. Pitakat Taik; 
- (10) Brick monasteries, e.g. Soemingyi Oak-kyauung, Phwa Saw Sutaung Pyi Oak-kyauung 



There are very few stone structures left at Bagan. Out of the present total figure of over two thousand, only four were built of stones. They are:

(1) Shwezigon



(2) Nanpaya



(3) Kyaukku Umin and

(4) Pitaka building commonly known as Set-ku Tail at the foot of Tu-yin Hill near Mya Kan Lake



OLD BURMA EARLY PAGAN

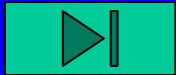
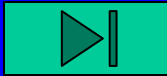
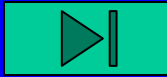
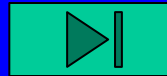




There are the Four Wonders of Bagan and the rhyme traditionally sung by the people of Bagan.

Massiveness that is Dhammayangyi, Loftiness that is Thatbyinnyu, Grace that is Ananda, and Almighty that is Shwezigon.



The exterior decoration of Bagan period religious monuments can be divided into as follows:

- (1) Plan (ပန္နက်ပုံ) 
- (2) Foundation and Plinth (အောက်ခြေမြေပင်နှင့် အောက်ခြေအုတ်ခုံ) 
- (3) Pediment (Triangular part over the front of a building)
Flame Pediment (or) Flaming Arch Pediment
(မှစ်တံကဲ၊ အဆောက်အဦရှေ့ပိုင်း တြိဂံပုံရှိသော ထိပ်ပိတ်၊ မြင့်မိုရ်ပိတ် (ကျီးအက်) ၊ ရာမလက်ညှိုးတံကဲ (သို့) မီးလျှံပုံတံကဲ) 
- (4) Niche (မှစ်ကပ်အချိုင့်(သို့) နံရံကပ်လှိုက်ငယ်) 
- (5) Perforated Stone Window (ကျောက်ပြုတင်းပေါက်) 
- (6) Terrace (ပစ္စယံ) 

(7) Kalasa Pot and Miniature Stūpa which decorated on the Terraces of Stūpas and Temples

(ကလသာအိုးပုံနှင့် စေတီရံများ)



(8) Sikhara and Amalaka (Fruit-like)

သီခရ (ကွမ်းတောင်)/ (အာမလက)/ (ဖရုံတုံးပုံ)



(9) Bell Shape (anda) (အန္ဓ၊ ခေါင်းလောင်းပုံ)



(10) Thabeik-hmout (Upper portion of pagoda with resembles on down turned monk's bowl)

(သပိတ်မှောက်)

- (11) Harmika (ဟာမိက (သို့) မိတုဂ္ဂ္ဗ / မိတ်တော်တိုက်) 
- (12) Chattrāvali (ဆတ္တရဂလီ / မောင်းရစ် (သို့) ထီး) 
- (13) Vault Architecture (Voussoir Arch) (ပေါင်းကူး) (True Arch) 
- (14) Brick Bondage (အုတ်စီအုတ်နင်း) 
- (15) Reinforcement with Sandstone (သဲကျောက်တုံးများဖြင့် နံရံထောင့်များ၌ ထောင့်ချုပ်အားဖြည့်ခြင်း) 

(16)

Stair

(လှေကား)



(17)

Wall

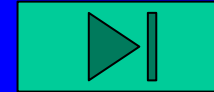
(တံတိုင်း)



(18)

Decoration with Stucco Carving

(အင်္ဂတေပန်း၊ ပန်းတော့လက်ရာဖြင့်အလှဆင်ခြင်း)



(19)

Decoration with Glaze Plaques

(စဉ့်ချပ်စဉ့်ကွင်းများဖြင့် အလှဆင်ခြင်း)

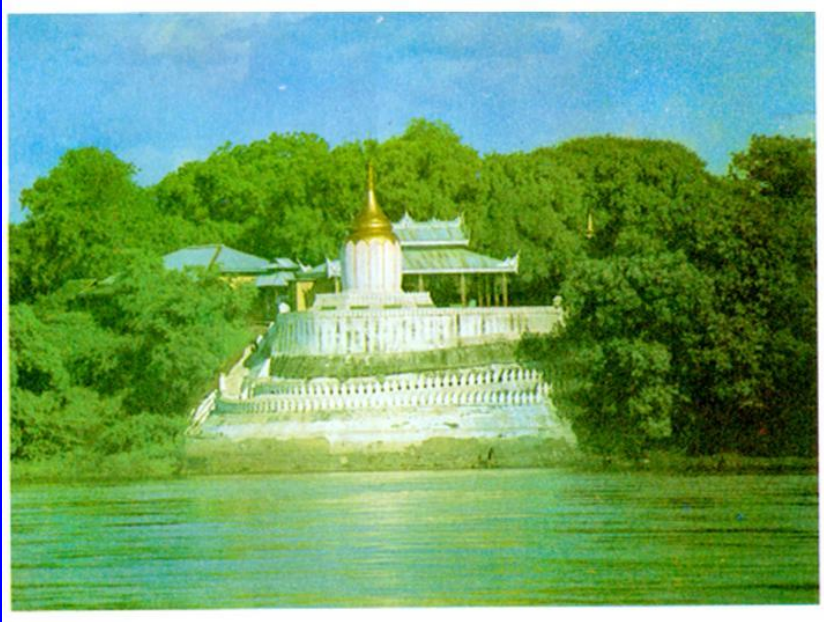
(20)

Decoration with Mural Paintings (Inner Wall)

(နံရံဆေးရေးပန်းချီများဖြင့် အလှဆင်ခြင်း (ဂူဘုရား၏အတွင်းပိုင်း))

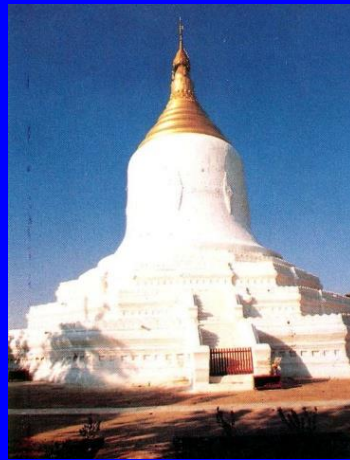


Bupaya





Lawkananda



Shwezigon



Shwesandaw



Mingalarzedi



**Pebin-chaung
Pagoda**



Sapada Pagoda



Ananda



**Mahabodhi
Bagan**



**Mahabodhi
India**



Gawdawpalin



Sulamani



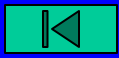
Kyaukgu-Umin



Kyansittha-Umin



Upali Thein



Pitakataik



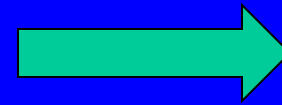
Soemingyi Oak-kyang (Monastery)

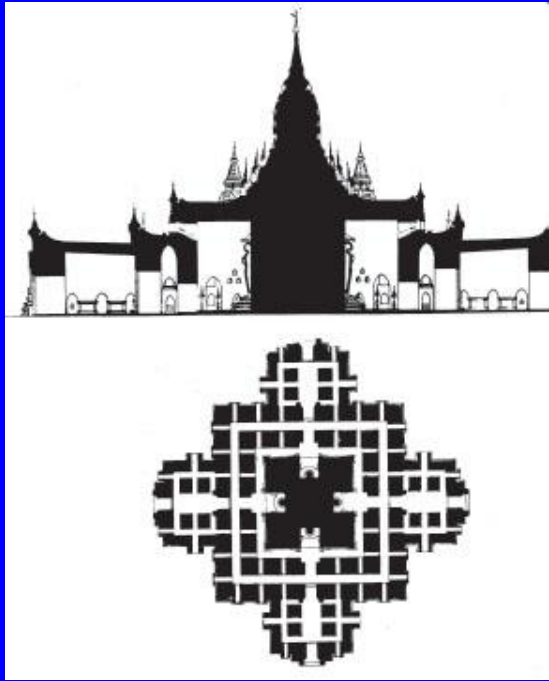


Plan

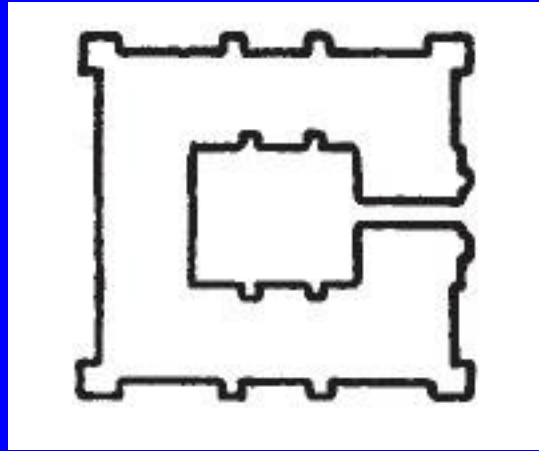
There were different kinds of plans in building pagodas and monuments during the Bagan period. Among those plans, the plan of Ananda is the most outstanding and is not the same as any other temples and pagodas numbering over two thousands.

A Perfect Greek cross.

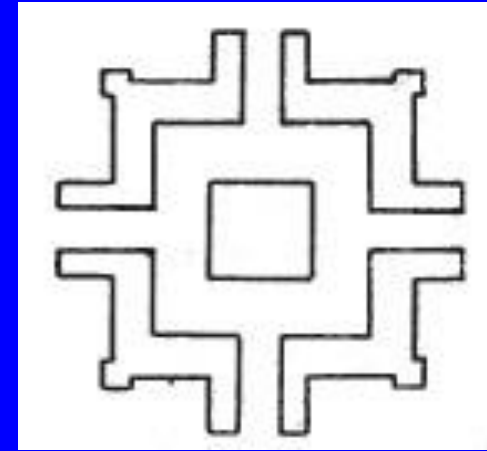




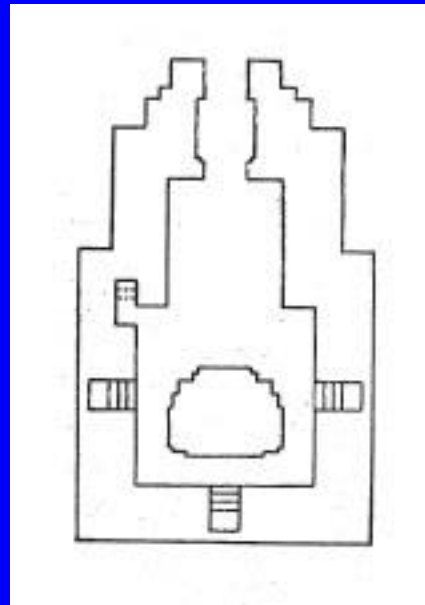
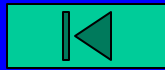
**The Cross Section
and Plan of Ananda**



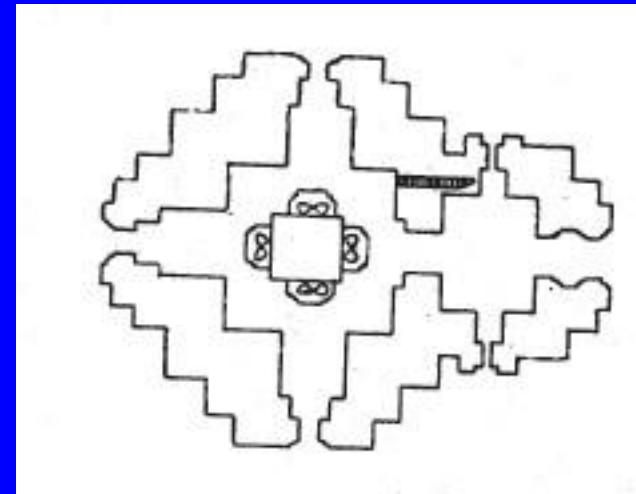
**Plan of Pyu
Be Be**



**Plan of Pyu 4 sided
Cave Pagoda**



**Plan of
Lokahteikpan**



Plan of Thanbula



Foundation and Plinth

The foundations of Bagan period religious monuments were not as deep as the foundation of present day buildings. The thicknesses of the walls of them are from 4 feet, 6 feet to 10 feet, 12 feet.

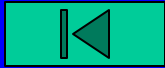
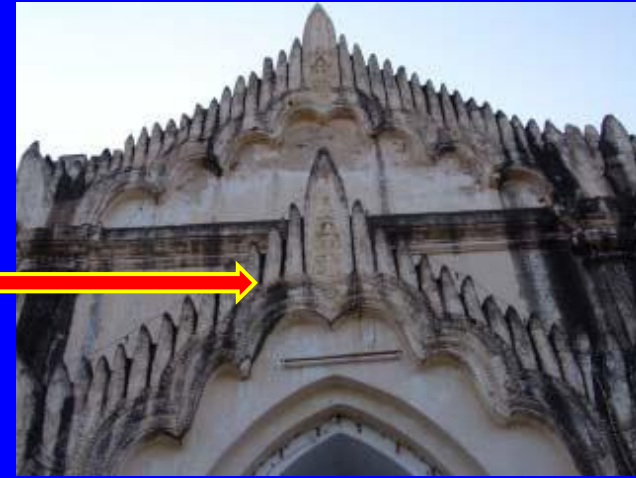
So they did not require the deep foundation. The Shwegugyi, Mingalarzedi and Minnanthu-laymyethna temple were built on plinth.



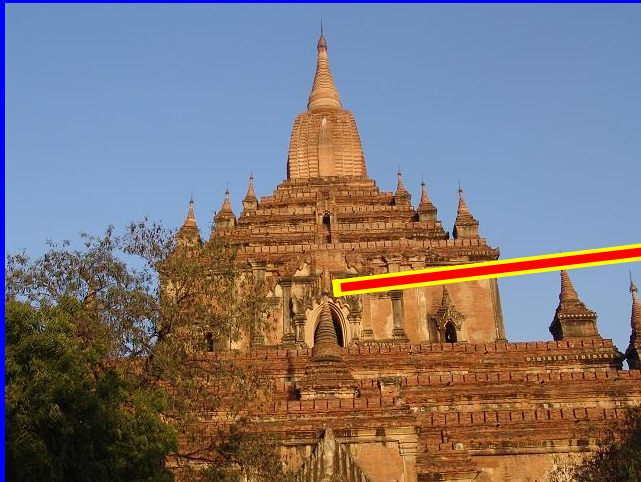
Elephant Head Frieze
Plinth of Sittanagyi Stupa



Shwegugyi Temple



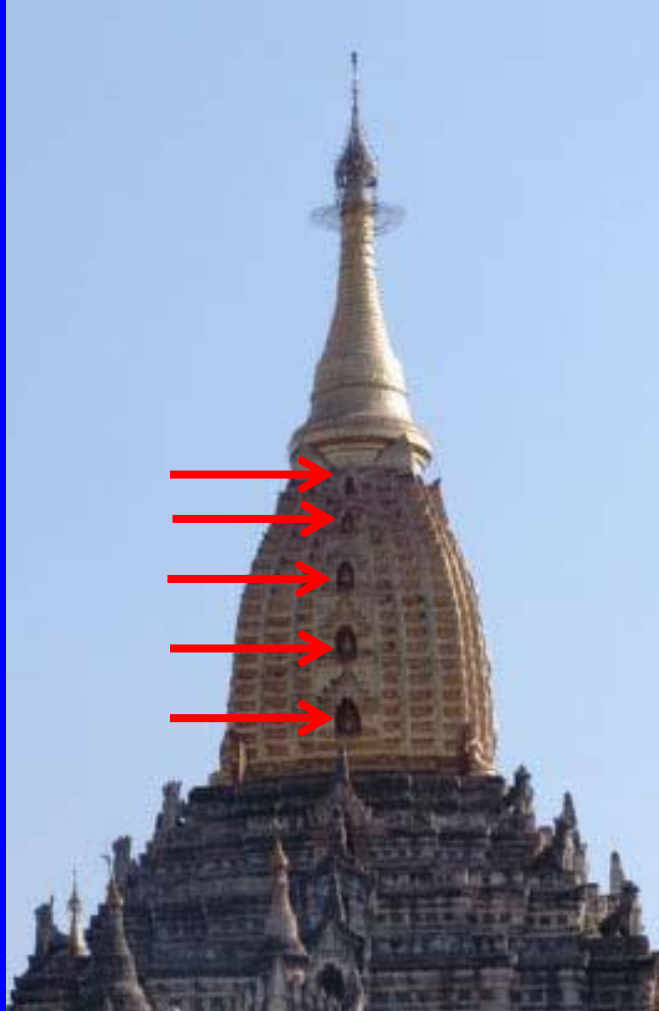
Flame Pediment of Thatbyinnyu Temple



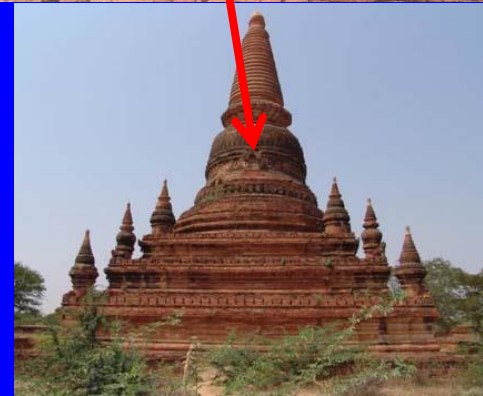
Flame Pediment of Sulamani Temple

In flame pediment there are figures of *nat* spirits, lions birds, *kainara* and flowers.

Niches were made in pagodas and temples and inside *Jatakas* and Buddha images were inserted.

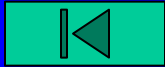


Niches at Ananda

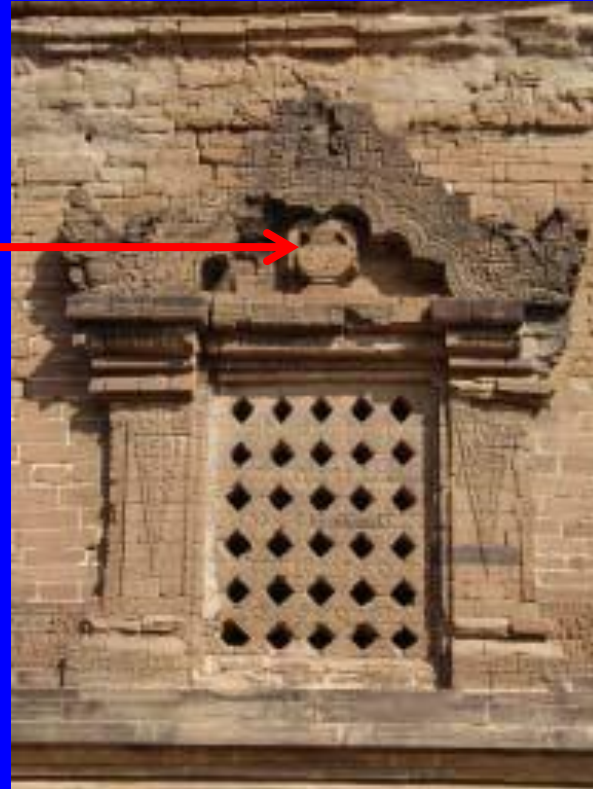
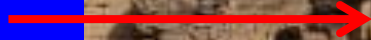


Niches at Seinnyet Nyima Pagoda

Another unique architecture of Bagan temples is perforated stone windows which embellished at the side of the temple.



kalasa pot



Nanpaya Temple
In the centre of the perforated stone window is decorated *kalasa pot* with flowers spilling over it.



Myainkaba Gubyaukgyi



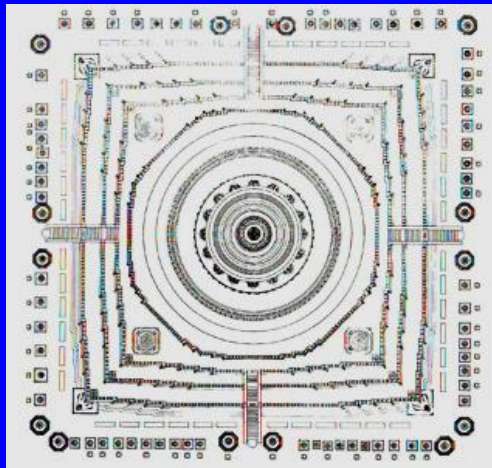
Terraces

In the building of cave temple the terraces are from three to five steps. But mostly three steps and five steps are rare.

Shwezigon and Shwesandaw have five terraces. At the terraces of pagodas and temples are ornamented with miniature stūpas and *kalasā pot*.



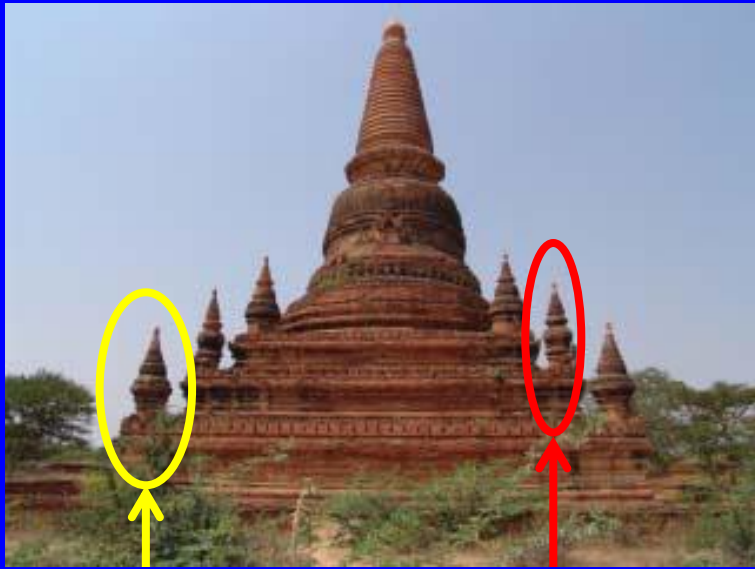
Shwezigon



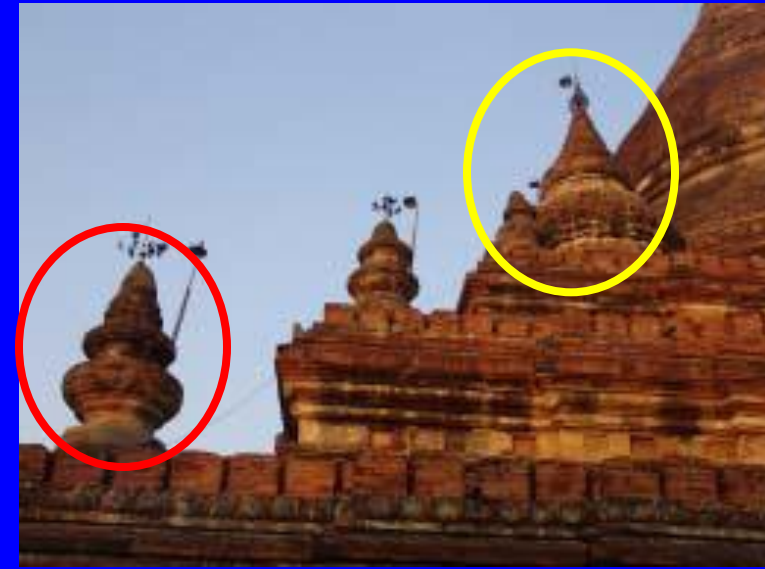
Shwezigon
Plan



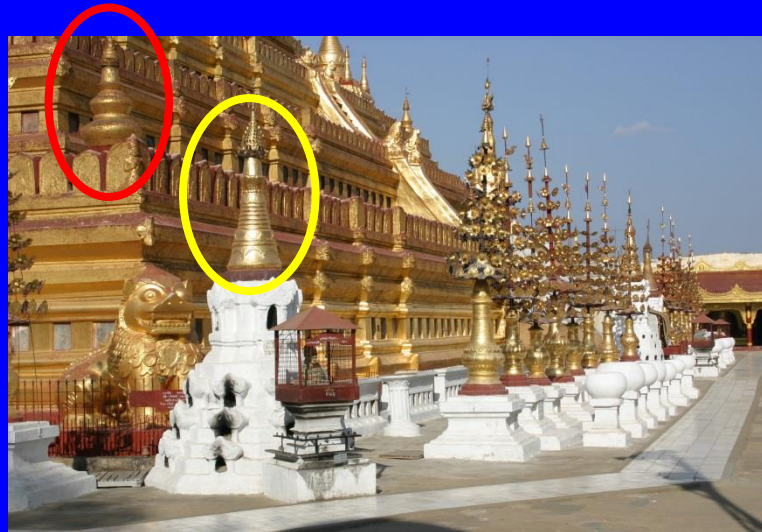
Shwesandaw



Miniature stupas and *kalasa pots*
Seinnyet-nyima Pagoda

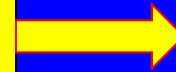


Miniature stupas and *kalasa pots*
Mingalarzedi Pagoda



Miniature stupas and *kalasa pots*
Shwezigon Pagoda

About Kalasa
(*kalasha*)pot





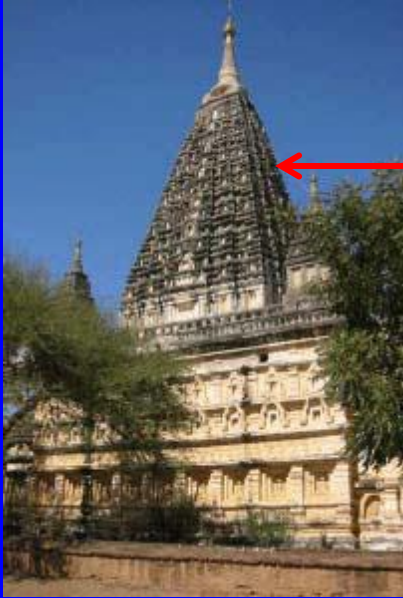
Kalasa (kalasha) pot

At the terraces of pagodas and temples are ornamented with miniature stūpas and *kalasā pot*.

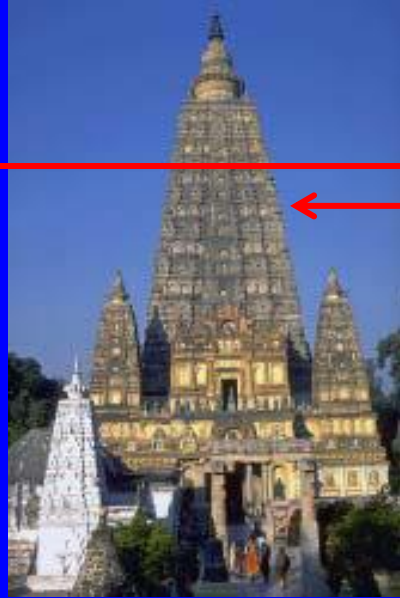
The word '*kalasā pot*' seems to refer to the '*kalashā*' (meaning a water pot, a rain vase) which is a prominent part of the Hindu temples.

In Hinduism, the *kalashā pot* held the creative element, or the nectar of immortality churned by gods and demons from the cosmic ocean.

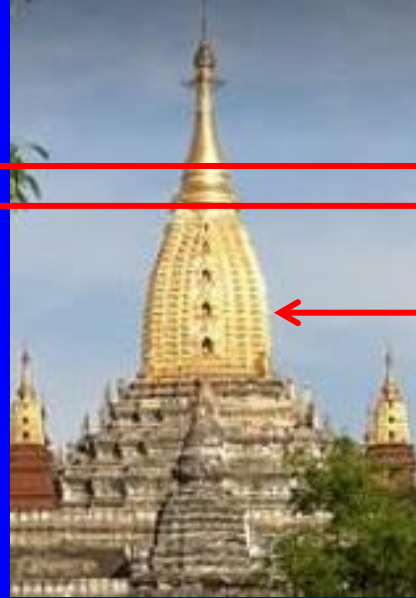




**Mahabodhi
Bagan**



**Mahabodhi
Bodhgaya**



**Ananda
Bagan**

**Sikhara
(ကွမ်းတောင်)**



**Reduced Top Tower (Sikhara),
Northern India
Above the *sikara* fruit-like 'amalakas' and
above which is the final pot-shaped 'Kalasa'**



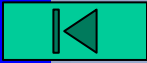
Bell-shape



Myinkaba Pagoda



**Stucco carving on the
Bell-shaped dome of Seinnyet-nyima**



**Pebin-chaung
Pagoda**



Sapada Pagoda



**The Stone Relief on A
Relic-chamber Cover
Sriketra**



Sanchi Stupa, India

**Thuparama Dagoba,
Anuradhapura, Srilanka,
erected 307 BC**





Chattrāvali

(ဆတ္တရပုလီ / ဖေါင်းရပ် (သို့) ထီး)



**Pebin-chaung
Pagoda**

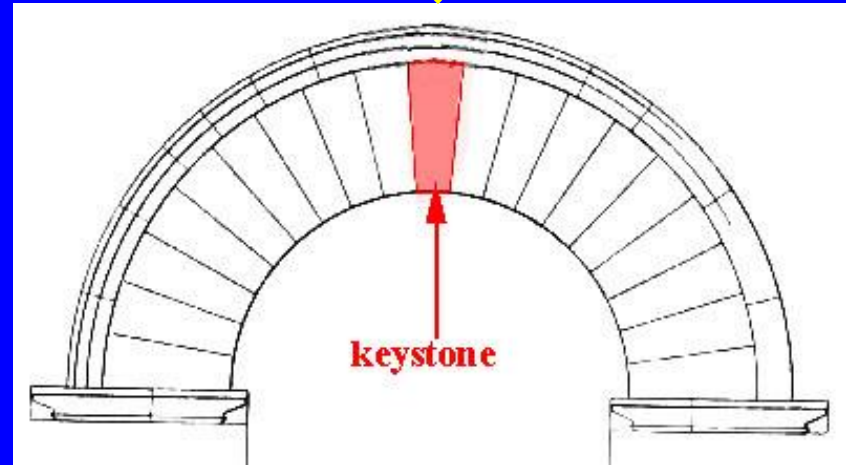
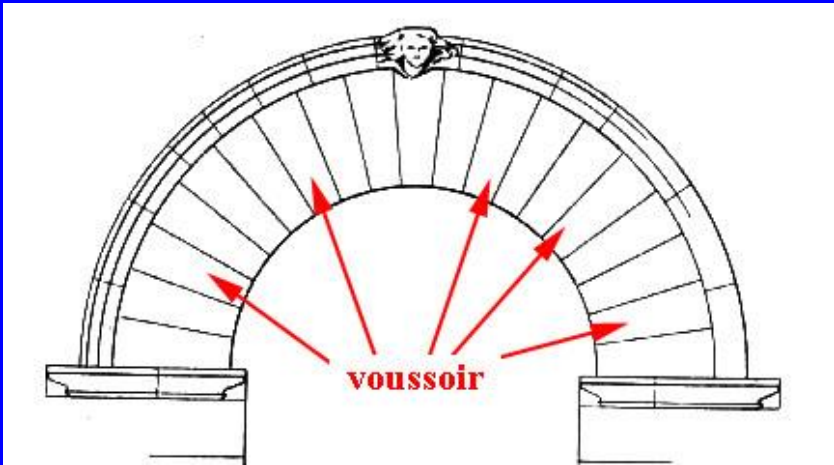


Sapada Pagoda

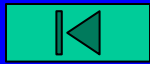
Vault Architecture (Voussoir Arch)



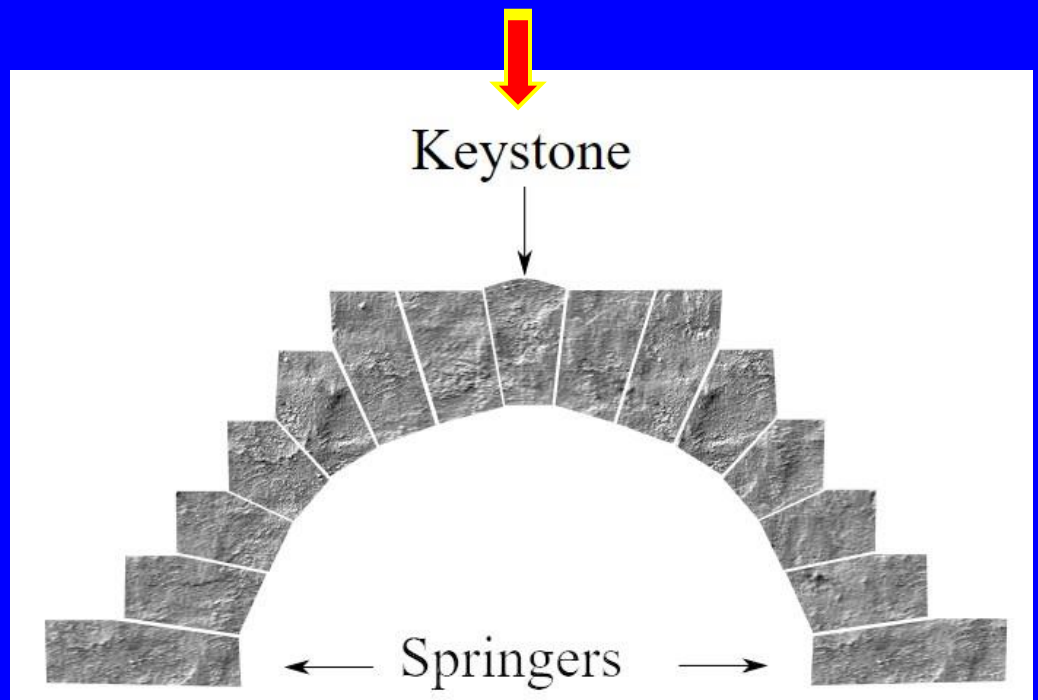
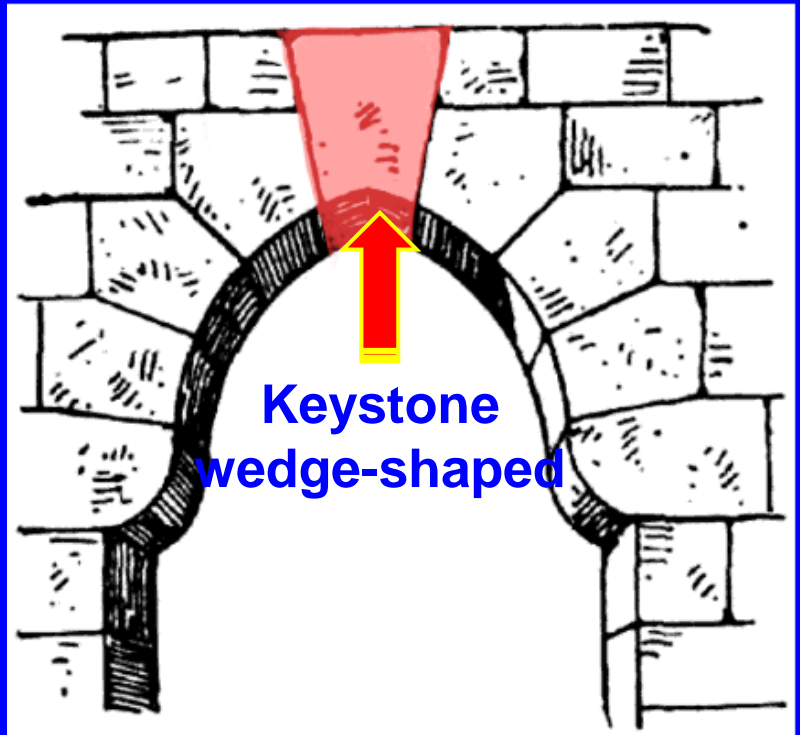
Keystone (Central Voussoir)
wedge-shaped (သပ် ပုံသဏ္ဍာန်)



Vault Architecture (Voussoir Arch)



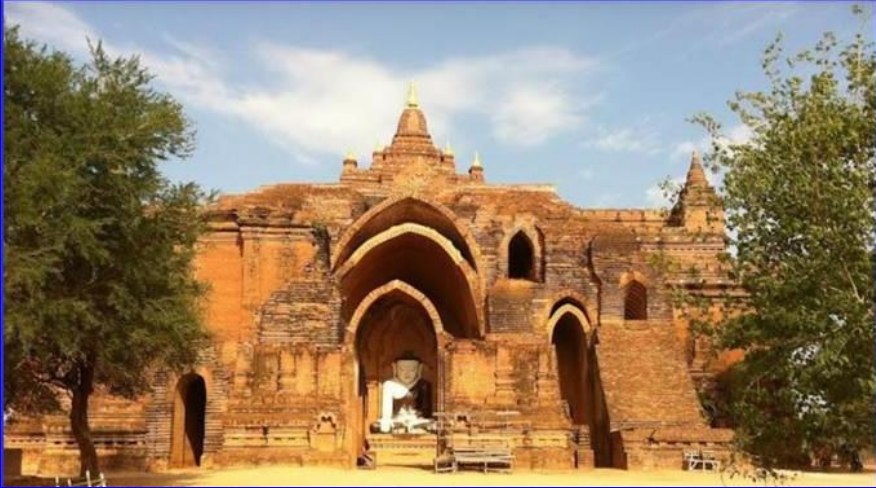
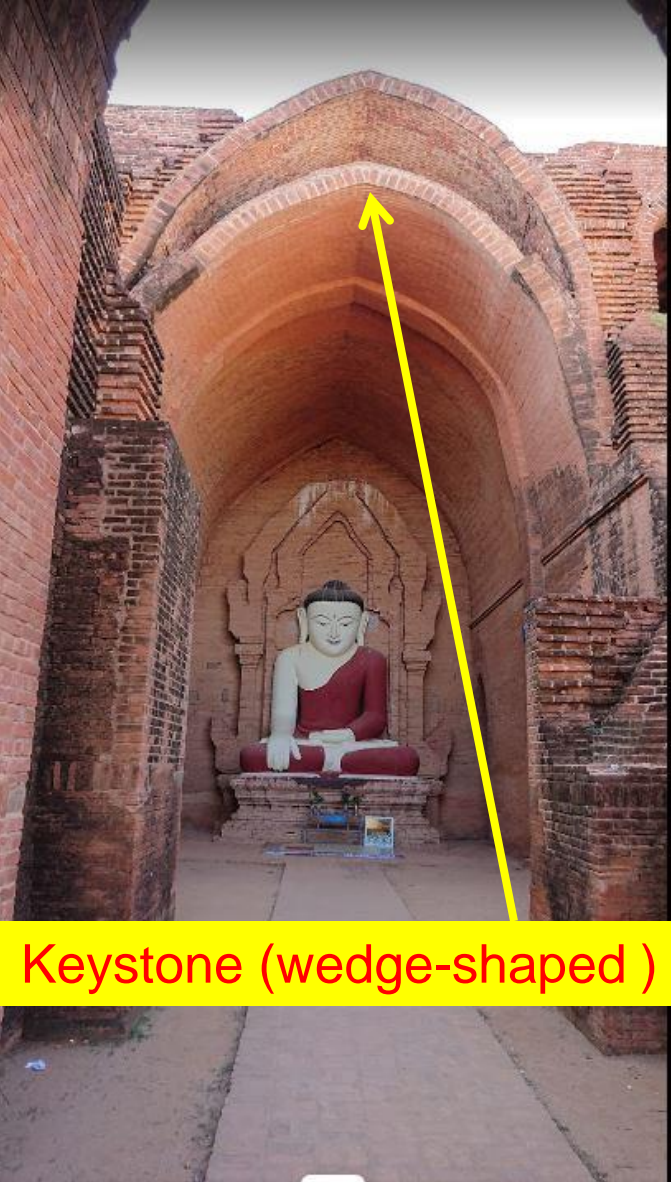
Keystone (Central Voussoir)
wedge-shaped (သပ် ပုံသဏ္ဍာန်)



Next

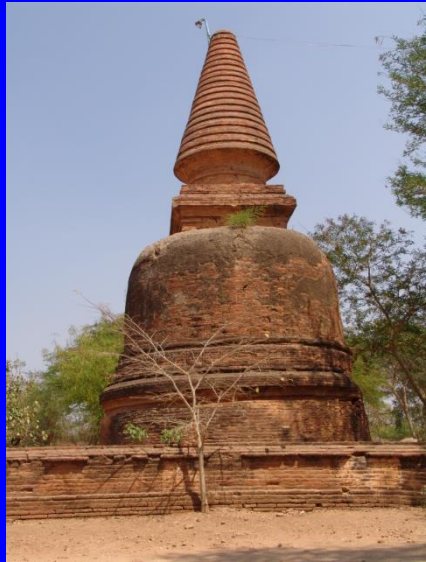


Pyathadar(Pyathatgyi) Temple



Next 





Pebinchaung Pagoda
Sinhalese Type



Sulamani Temple

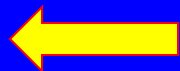


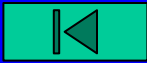
Pebinchaung True Arch

Keystone
(wedge-shaped)



Sulamani True Arch





**Reinforcement Sand Stone
Dhammayangyi Temple**



**Reinforcement Sand Stone
Mingalarzedi**





Stairs

In nearly all medium size and large size temples in late Bagan period, stairs were made. Some are timber stairs. Of the decorated stairs the most remarkable are the stair at the arch of Thatbyinnyu and the brick stair of Pitakataik.

The edge of those stairs are decorated with unique architectural design which resemble with *tha-yet-kinn* (the young mango; the top of which is vaulted shape). So *tha-yet-kinn* means spiral scroll stucco carving at the end of down stair

Pitakataik



thayet-kinn Design, Down Stair of Pitakataik



Double Enclosure Wall of
Minnanthu Laymyethna Temple



Sinhalese type miniature stupas
outer wall of Ananda Temple

Before putting up buildings of a religious establishment the first important thing is to enclose the site by a wall. Some of the enclosure walls were circular but usually they were rectangular or square as they are referred to as ***Tantine Lay Myethna***- four sided walls, complete with doors and gateway.

Some donors built double enclosures. The wall is also useful as a safeguard against fire. Because fires were frequent then and the great fire of 1225 completely destroyed the city of Bagan.



**Stucco carving
Thanbula Temple**

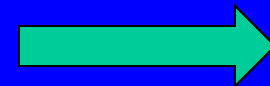
**Remains of a relief
arched pediment from
the Phwa-saw Hsu-
taung-pyi monastery**



**Lion figure of stucco carving
Corner pilaster at Sapwetin Temple**



**Ogre head stucco carving
Corner pilaster at Sulami Temple**





**Relif figures of three faced Brahman
seated with lotus flowers,
Nanpaya Temple**



**Stone carving
Kyaukgu Umin**

Thank You