

HISTORY OF ALLAKAPPA VILLAGE DURING KONBAUNG PERIOD

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Abstract

In Myanmar history, it was known that the people of Pyu had settled in the centre region of Myanmar. They also built the cities such as Vishnu, Sriksetra and Hanlin. According to the historical evidences, at that time the people of Pyu had also settled in Allakappa region. When the people of Myanmar reached the country of Myanmar, the people of Pyu were disappeared from their cities and that were also destroyed. But Allakappa region was not destroyed and it continued to thrive under the people of Myanmar. During the reign of Myanmar kings, Allakappa was more flourished in social, economy and civilization. In the later Konbaung period Allakappa was a town and it had reached its peak. In the British administrative period Allakappa was degraded as a village.

Keyword: to known historical site

Introduction

Nowadays, Allakappa Village is located in Myinmu township of Sagaing Division of Upper Myanmar, between 21° 55' 20" and 21° 56' 10" North Latitude, between 95° 29' 10" and 95° 30' 00" East Longitude and the region is very dry. It is situated about two miles away from the northern bank of the Ayeyawaddy river, six miles away on the western of Myinmu and the Mandalay-Monywa motor road. Mandalay-Monywa railway acrosses on the northern part of Allakappa Village. It is bordered by Wunbye Village in the east, Boe Min Gyi King Village in the west, Kywe Raik Village tract in the south and Pe Ku Village and San Tin King Village in the north and the total area is 0.265 square miles. The Village is divided into the eastern ward, the western ward, the southern ward and the northern ward, having 1800 households and a population of 6192. Allakappa has been pleasantly and magnificently seen with Pagodas and Monasteries established by the kings, Queens, royal families, servants and wealthy persons and that it has 108 pagodas and twenty-one monasteries. There has also a high school and three primary schools. Since the monarchical rule, it had sufficient cultivated lands which were flat and smooth for cultivation. In addition, it was good communication by land route and waterway. At present, it is found that Allakappa Village has developed and prospered in social, economy and civilization.

Materials

In preparing the present research, primary sources as Stone inscription, Bell inscription, *Parabaiks*, interview and secondary sources that are books, records and evidences had been cited.

Aim

The present paper aims to know about the historical site of Allakappa Village. The people of Pyu had settled in Allakappa region and that it can be systematically pursued historical evidences of the Pyu people. Allakappa was a very important region for the administration and trading during the reign of Myanmar kings. Therefore, it can be pursued and maintained the historical heritages and evidences of Allakappa in successive period.

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Background History

In Myanmar history, the people of Pyu had settled along the Ayeyawaddy river valley from the Hanlin-gyi of Shwebo district in the north to the town of Pyay in the south of Myanmar about the 3rd century A.D.¹ According to this evidence, Allakappa is situated in the south of Shwebo region and on the northern bank of Ayeyawaddy river. Thus, it can be assumed the people of Pyu had settled in Allakappa region. So, those people were renowned as the Allakappa Pyu. According to Hmannan Chronicles, it is known that the various dynasties of Pyu had settled in Myanmar. There were 800 kings of Hanthawaddy Pyu, 190 kings of Tampadipa Pyu, 160 kings of Makkhaya Pyu, ninety-seven kings of Pinle Pyu, thirty kings of Kaungs Sin Pyu, twenty-six kings of Allakappa Pyu, 150 kings of Ywapyugyi Pyu, forty kings of Legaing Pyu.² Nowadays, it can be seen there are terracotta and stone beads, silver coins and the ancient city walls in Allakappa village and that it is assumed that artifacts had been the Pyu period.³ Although there is no other evidence to confirm this statement, it can be assumed that Allakappa village had emerged since the period of Pyu.

During the Bagan period, Allakappa was incorporated into Thunapranta Division with other towns and villages are as follows,

"Kalay, Khamti, Khampat, Sagaing, Sarhton, Taungdwin, Tan-se, Thei-Nyin, Dipeyin, Pakhan, Bagyi, Mintaingbin, Monywa, Monywa, Myay Du, Four Yaw Towns, Yeibawmi, Shwebo, Mokhsobo, East Gold Tracts, Middle Gold Tracts, Wuntho, Thaugthut, Hanlin, Alon, Allakappa and U-ru ten villages".⁴

According to a stray document, King Anawrahta appointed Thukywe Nga Thit as the headman of Allakappa and territorial boundaries of the village are as follows;

"the tract is to the east bordering Nabet,
to the south bordering to Myit-in and
to the west bordering to Ma-hat-taung including four mounds."⁵

Nowadays, it can see the foundation bricks of a religious building in the compound of Myo Taw monastery in Allakappa and that it is identical with the workmanship of Shin Arhan *Oak Kyaung* (brick monastery) of Bagan period. The monastery is situated in the compound of Maha Ngat Pyit Taung Pagoda in Nyaung -U town and that it is assumed this building had been the Bagan period.⁶

¹ Than Tun, Dr. *khit haung Myanmar Yazawin* (Ancient history of Myanmar), Seikku Cho Cho press, Yangon, 2017, P-40

² *Hmannan Maha Yazawin Dawgyi* (The Glass Palace Chronicle) vol-II, Yangon, ministry of Information, 1993, iv (Henceforth: *Hmannan Yazawin*, 1993)

³ personal interview with Ashin Dham Meik Sara, 37 age, Sasana Dhaja Dhamma Sarira, east Eisasara *chaung*, Sagaing Hill, Sagaing, (1-8-2021)

⁴ *Hmannan Yazawin*, 1993, IV

⁵ Shay Haung Thutethi Ta-U, *Shay Khit Myanmar Naingngan Ei Myoywa Nepa Thamaing* (Territorial History of Towns and Villages in Ancient Myanmar), Seinpan Myaing Sarpay, n.d, p-21 (Henceforth: Shay Haung Thutethi, n.d)

⁶ Dham Meik Sara, Ashin: *Bagan Pyin Pa Bagan Khit Oak Kyaung Mya* (Brick Monasteris of Bagan Period of the outside Bagan), 100 pre-year anniversary magazine of Myinmu Township, Lucky one press, Mandalay, April 2019, p-72-73

During the reign of Pinya Nga-si-shin in 1304 A.D, the headman of Allakappa was *Amat Zeya Thaw* who administered the village of same territory as in Nga Thit. In 1608 A.D, Allakappa, also known as Ywa Pu Gyi, was administered by Sanda Kyaw Htin Nga Thu. In 1647 AD, during the reign of Thalun Min, the region of Allakappa (Ywa Pu Gyi) was surveyed and demarcated as follows; The tract of Ywa-pu-gyi is

to the east bordering Wunbye,

to the south bordering Chaung-ma-gyi,

to the west bordering the religious land of Shwe-yin-ma Pagoda and

to the north bordering as far as Ma-hat-taw on the other side the land of Pe\`-taung Shwe-yin-ma

Within the tract, there are twenty-four villages, seven pagodas, twelve monasteries, three lakes, 325 *pe* of wet-cultivated lands, eighty-nine *pe* of *ya* (dry land) and the tract was surveyed by *Thugyi* (Village headman) Nga San Tin, and *Myay Daing* (Surveyor of land) Nga Pa¹. Therefore, it is assumed that Ywa Pu Gyi was not settled by crown servicemen in Innwa period.

Findings and Discussions

In Konbaung period, Allakappa was mentioned as *myo*(town).². Once Allakappa was a linear village. Allakappa was encircled by nine mounds³ and nine tanks^{4,5}. In AD 1782 the people of Allakappa were ninety-seven of *Athi* and 363 of *Sucha* (armed foreigners of non-Myanmar) and totally by 460.⁶ Although Allakappa was mostly settled by *Athis* (tax-paying people), some documents described that the local people had rendered their service to the king when it was necessary. In 1796, when king Badon visited Meikhtila to maintain Meikhtila lake, the servicemen from Allakappa town had accompanied him as a troop with the troops of the king.⁷

During the reign of King Bagyidaw, Myanmar was being engaged in war with the British. It started in 1824 and ended in the early 1826. Myanmar was defeated in many war fronts. More forces were badly needed to send to lower Myanmar to confront the invading enemy. Thus recruits were hastily made. And those who were recruited from 134 men of Shweyinma, sixty-seven men of Allakappa, twenty men of Wunbye, thirty men of Myinmu and ten men of Min-Kyi.⁸ According to the evidence Allakappa was assumed to be an important region in the administration of the country.

¹ Shay Haung Thutethi, n.d, p-22

² Maung Maung Tin, U, *Konbaungzet, Maha Yazawin Dawgyi*, (The Great Chronicle of Konbaung Dynasty), Vol.III Ya-byei press, 2004 October, p-57 (Henceforth: Maung Maung Tin, 2004c)s

³ (1) Gu Kone (2) Shwe Lay Kone (3) Khan Taw Kone (4) Oah Htain Taung Kone (5) Oah Su Kone (6) Ye La Gyi Kone (7) Myo So Kone (8) Kyat Po Kone (9) Swan Kan Kone.

⁴ (1) Ga Pai Ye Kan (2) Kan Gyi Kan (3) Thein Da Ya Kan (4) Ma Min Aung Kan (5) Shwe Say It Kan (6) Myo So Kan (7) Shan Kan (8) Kan Sway Kan (9) Oak Kan.

⁵ Pale Aung, *Konbaung Khit Myinmu Ei Lumu-sipwayay* (The Socio-economic of Myinmu in Konbaung Period (1752-1885)), M.A Thesis, History Department, Mandalay University, 1998, p-7

⁶ Yee Yee Win; Peasantry of the lower Doab region (1819-1885), PhD Dissertation, Department of History, University of Mandalay, 2006, p-13 (Henceforth: Yee Yee Win, 2006)

⁷ Maung Maung Tin; U, *Konbaungzet Maha Yazawin Dawgyi* (The Great Chronicle of Konbaung Dynasty), Vol.II, Yabye Press, 2004, p-83, (Henceforth: Maung Maung Tin, 2004b)

⁸ Yee Yee Win; 2006, p-10

During the reign of *Thayawady Min*, (1837-46) of the Amarapura period, Allakappa was administered by *Myo Wun* (governor of a town) Minhla Minhtin Nawrahta¹ and then Amyint and Allakappa were administered by a single *Myo Wun*, Naymyo Shwe-daung Naw-ra-hta.² In AD 1847 Allakappa was separated and ruled by Min-ye Min-kyaw.³ In 1841, when King *Thayawady* visited Yangon to pay homage to Shwedagon Pagoda, with his royal fleet over 1500 musketeers from Amyint, Taungtha, Allakappa, Myotha and Pyay were comprised.⁴ So, it is known that Allakappa was settled by musketeers. On 16 March 1845 during the reign of king *Thayawady*, *Mingyi Maha Thiha Thuya* (Bangyi *Taik-wun*), Minhla Thihathu (son of Maha Thiha Thuya), and his brother organized the 1000 servicemen in Bangyi *Taik* and revolted against the king. Therefore, the king sent an army led by *Letwe windaw-hmu Mingyi Maha kyaw-khaung* to attack the rebels. In this crisis Minhla Min Htin Nawrahta, (*Myo Wun* of Amyint and Allakappa), and his servicemen served under the *Mingyi Maha Kyaw-khaung*.⁵ Therefore it can be said that Allakappa was ruled by the *Myo Wun* and the people including crown servicemen, faithfully served the kings in the time of emergency.

During the reign of king Mindon, there are 173 fishery lakes including Da-ba-yin Lake, Kokku Lake, Sa-yei Lake in Allakappa village.⁶ According to evidence so far collected in 1877 *Thayabaung Village* was put under the jurisdiction of Allakappa town.⁷ There were also a number of artists who did their livelihoods with dramatic arts in Allakappa village in the period. Among marionettes artists who were famous in Konbaung period until Colonial period, U Mu from the Allakappa village who had to take the role of an actor in royal marionette troupe (*sintaw-gyi*)⁸ since the reign of King Mindon.⁹ He was rewarded prizes and honors by King Mindon and Chief Queen Sakya Devi and given Allakappa village as a fief. He was Childhood teacher of Saya Pu, who was well known player of puppet actress of *Sintaw-gyi* of king Thibaw. Saya Pu was bestowed the title of *Nay Myo Thiri Madu Thaddha Shwe Taung* by the king Thibaw because he was very adroit in puppetry knowledge.¹⁰ Until today, once can see pagodas and stairways donated by Sayar Mu in Allakappa village.¹¹ Similarly, Pitakat *Sayar Wun*¹² from the Allakappa village was a well know marionette artist. As he was well versed in Pitakat treaties that he was well known as Pitakat *Saya Wun* (doctor of Pitakat). He was able to perform marionette shows and compose dramatic songs skillfully from the reign of King Thibaw to the Colonial Period It is noted that other famous marionette artists or puppeteers were U Tha Khaing, U Bo Mya and U Sanpe Thit in Allakappa

¹ Maung Maung Tin; 2004C, p- 44

² Appoint of *Myo Wun* for Amyit and Allakappa, *Parabaik M.S*, Ludu Library Collection, Mandalay, pu, 0067

³ Maung Maung Tin; 2004 C, p-57

⁴ Maung Maung Ti; 2004 C, p-24

⁵ Maung Maung Tin; 2004 C, p-48

⁶ Maung Maung Ti; 2004C, p-156

⁷ Bell Inscription of Theintaw Monastery, *Thayabaung village*, Myinmu Township

⁸ There were *Sintaw-gyi*, *Sintaw-lay*, *Wintaw-sin* and *Pyin-Wintaw* where *Sintaw-gyi* was the stage to entertain the King, *Sintaw-lay* was the stage to entertain the Queen, *Wintaw-sin* was the stage to entertain the princes and princesses and *Pyin-Wintaw* was the stage to entertain the Royal Ministers

⁹ Maung Maung Tin, U, (MahaWeikza), *Myanmar Pyazat Sarpay Thamaing* (History of Myanmar Dramatic Literature), Yangon, Ngwe-pyi-taw Press, 2001, p-29

¹⁰ Amar,Daw,Ludu, *Pyithu Chit-Thaw Anu Pyinnya-thi-mya* (Artists belovedly by the Citizens), Mandalay, Kyipwayay press,1997, p-82

¹¹ *Myinmu Myo-ne Hmat-tan* (Record of Myinmu township), Department of General Administration, Myinmu, type script, 1982, p-244-245(Henceforth; Record of Myinmu,1982)

¹² As he was well-versed in Pitakat (Buddhist Scripture), he was Known as Pitakat *Sayarwun* or Doctor of Pitakas

village. The well-known painters in the period were U Nyo, U Pho Shin, U Lu Ga Lay, Sayar Pu and Sayar Ku in Allakappa village.¹

During the reign of king Thibaw, by the year of 1884, the list of *Apyo-daw* (ladies in waiting) in king Thibaw's Palace was comprised of the two daughters of Allakappa *Myo Wun*.² Other sources yield the information about the settlement of some servicemen in Allakappa. A land mortgage deed mentions the name of mortgager “*Thwei thauk kyi ka-daw Ma Htay*” (the wife of *Thwei-thauk*).³ On 6 September 1885 king Thibaw appointed Nga Ku, ex-clerk, as the *Thaynatbo* (captain of musketeers) in Allakappa.⁴ Although the kings attempted to provide the stability in the provincial administration, the social and economic instability was common in the rural area. In this situation, some people involved in the crime to ease their current problems. During the king Thibaw’s reign a band of decoits led by Nga Lu-bei and Nga Lu-tei robbed the Allakappa village.⁵ So it can be said that Allakappa was weakened the security in Konbaund period. We can be assumed that it was few settled by the Crown servicement.

During the monarchical rule, the local *Sanghas* had quasi-judicial authority. In Konbaung period Allakappa was put under the jurisdiction of Amyint *Nga Myo Wun*. In the region, almost all of the civil law suits were tried by Bangyi *Sayadaw* (*Thathanabuy Sayadaw* of Amyint), *Gaing-ok* of Amyint (Byonpyan monastery) and Amyint *Myo Wun*.⁶ In 1882 AD the case of Nga U (steersman of Shwelaunggyi) was tried by Allakappa *Sayadaw*. Customarily the cases were tried on the principle of arbitration.⁷ Therefore, Allakappa village it can be said that the local monk leader and *Myo Wun* took the responsibility in the judicial administration.

Agriculture, being a main source of feudal economic during the monarchical period, played an important role as a basic mode of earning in the rural area. In Konbaung period we can find the name of some crops like paddy, millet, maize and pulses were grown in Allakappa.⁸ Apart from agriculture some people followed the profession of craftsmen like black-smith.⁹ In 1883, 12,480 kyats of Le-khun (wet-cultivation land tax), 320 kyats of Ya-khun dry cultivation land tax and 1000 kyats of Kaing-kyun-khun (the tax imposed on alluvial cultivation) from Amyint and Allakappa villages.¹⁰ This amount of revenue collected from Amyint and Allakappa shed the light on the sound situation of economy in the area because one tical of gold in King Thibaw time was equal to twenty kyats of silver.¹¹ Therefore, we can assume that the revenues collected from Allakappa region because considerable supplement for the crown.

¹ Record of Myinmu, 1982, p-226- 245

² Maung Maung Tin, 2004C, p-413

³ Land Mortgage Deed of Ma Htay, *Parabaik*, M.S, U Kan Yin Collection, Allakappa Village

⁴ Maung Maung Tin, 2004c, p- 460

⁵ Maung Maung Tin, 2004c , p-456

⁶ Than Tun, *The Royal Order of Burma* (AD 1598-1885), Part,IX (AD 1598-1885), Kyoto, Kyoto University Center for Southeast Asia Studies, 1989, p-1066

⁷ Taw Sein Ko , *Hluttaw Hmattam* (Records of Hluttaw) , Yangon , Government Press , 1960 , p-150

⁸ Nyein Maung; *Shayhaung Myanmar Kyauksa Myar* (Ancient Myanmar Stone Inscription), Vol.II, Yangon, Department of Archaeology, 1983, p-17

⁹ Land mortgage Deed between Maung Ei and Ma Ya Shin, 1872 AD, *Parabaik MS*, U Kan Yin Collection, Allakappa Village

¹⁰ *Aya-taw Le-sa-yin* AD 1883 (List of Crown Lands), *Parabaik MS*, Ludu library Collection, Mandalay, *Pu-0008*

¹¹ Toe Hla; *Wunbyi Tho-ma-hot Taik-Kyan Sei-ywa-ei Si-pwar-yay Son-chet*, (Economic Pipot of the ten Village Excluded Villages), *Shasha Phwei-phwei Myanmar Thmain*, Research of Myanmar History, Yangon, November, 1997, p-169

In the later Konbaung period, Allakappa was a trading centre where the merchandizes from Myinmu and Chaung-u were sent for market. The important trade items were paddy, rice, cotton, pulse, millet, onion, chilli, cooking oil, jaggery, pickled tea, fish-paste, cutch, tree-gun, wax, ivory, rubber, oxen, buffaloes, horses and animal hides. According to these trade items it is known that the people in Allakappa had engaged in the occupations of agriculture, animal husbandry and trade. There were also craftsmen. In the year of 1885-86 the trade value of the vicinity of the capital, Inwa and Sagaing had amounted over 600,000 *Kyats*.¹

It was until the annexation of Myanmar by the British, Buddhist monasteries provided education to the people in all the countries of the eastern world. It is known that the providence of Buddhist monasteries to the education of Myanmar was much more than that of the other countries.² So the education of people in Allakappa were fully responsibility by the monasteries in Konbaung period.

It is found that as the majority of the people who had been living within the village were Myanmar nationalities, Buddhism was traditionally and devotedly worshipped. Moreover, the location of the village was good for communication as it was near to such royal capitals of successive Myanmar Kings as Bagan, Pinya, Innwa, Sagaing, Shwebo, Amarapura and Yadanapon. Myanmar Kings had strong desires to become the donors or supporters of Buddhism, they let the religion be promoted and propagated in the regions under their authorities by constructing, renovating and restoring of Pagodas, Temples, Monasteries, ponds, rest-houses, etc. Allakappa abounded with ancient Pagodas and Stupas. At present, there have 108 Pagodas and twenty-one Monasteries. In these Pagodas, over ninety Pagodas were the ancient Pagodas. The people of Allakappa were known by the tradition and that Shwe Ceti Pagodas was donated by King Ashoka and the other Pagodas were donated by the donars of Bagan, Innwa, Nyaung Yan and Konbaung period. Shwe Gu Gyi Pagoda was donated by Phon-ma Theinka in 1298.³ There also have wall painting Pagodas such as Nga Shau Pagodas, Myin Tha Pagodas and Shwe Eu Min Pagodas. It can be study that the wall paintings can be deducing the Innwa period and the early Konbaung period.⁴ Most of the Pagodas were usually celebrated Pagodas festivals. Shwe Gu Gyi, Shwe Gu toke, Lay Kyun Man Gu and Kauk Saik Ma Pagodas were the Gazetted Pagodas festivals in the region.⁵

In Myanmar, since from the reign of Thay Lay Kyaung in the fourth century AD to the reign of Anawrahta in the eleven century the people of Myanmar worshipped *Nats* (sprites).⁶ Even up to the present day the people still worshipped various *Nats*. So, the people of Allakappa had worshipped the *Nats*. The prominent *Nat* propitiating ceremonies were crowdedly held in Allakappa village on respective fixed days in March of every year since long time ago. The prominent *Nats* propitiating ceremonies in Allakappa are as follow;

¹ Kyan, Ma; *Myanmar Naingngan Achay-anay* (1885-86) (The situation of Myanmar), Yangon, Sarpay Beikman Press, 1978, p-30

² Furnivall, J.S, *An Introduction to the Political Economy of Burma*, Yangon, People's Literature Committee and House, 1947, p-36

³ Stone inscription of Shwe Gu Gyi Pagada, Shwe Gu Gyi Pagoda, Allakappa Village

⁴ Personal interview with Ashin Dham Meik Sara, 37 age, Sasana Dhaja Dhamma Sarira, east Eisasara *chaung*, Sagaing Hill, Sagaing, (1-8-2021)

⁵ Record of Myinmu, 1982, p-253

⁶ Pho kyar, U, *Thone-sal Khun-nit Min Ko toae withtu Mya No-5*, (Own experiences regarding the stories of thirty-seven Nats No.V), Yangon, Harthawaddy press, p-10-11

Table-II**Nat-propitiation Ceremonies traditionally held in Allakappa Village**

No.	Title of the Spirit or Nat	Name of Ceremony	Related Villages
1	Myin Phyu Shin	Ywataw Shin	Wunbye and Myinmu
2	A Pho Aye	Shan A Pho Aye	Mandalay, Wunbye, Monywa
3	U Min Kyaw	Ko Gyi Kyaw	Myinmu, Kalar Ywa, Wunbye, Natyekan
4	Koe Myo Shin	Koe Myo Yin	Myinm, Wunbye, Kalar Ywa, Peku, Natyekan and Ywatha
5	Anauk A Pho Aye	Anauk A Pho Aye	Sappankon village
6	Hti Phyu Saung	Hti Phyu Saung	All villages and other towns
7	Lay-kyun Maung Lay	Lay-kyun Maung	Allakappa Village
8	Taung Nat Gyi	Taung Nat Gyi	Villages along the south of the river

Source: Record of Myinmu, 1982, p-260

Conclusion

It is found that Allakappa region which is existed in the central part of Myanmar had been a place where Pyu people had settled since long time ago. As the Pyu people who lived in Allakappa region and that it was known as Allkappa Pyu. Myanmar race began to migrate into Kyaukse area, Allkappa region had been included in “*Latuy-Taik*”, the secondary residence of Myanmar. In Bagan and Pinya Period, Allakappa region was put under the supervision of a headman and it had stood as an ordinary village. In Inwa period, it can be seen Alalkappa was more prospered by the social and economic condition. In Konbaung Period, Allakappa was upgraded and recognized as a town and it was put under the jurisdiction of the Amyint *Nga Myo Wun* (governor of Amyint five towns). In the reign of King Thayawady, as Allakapa became more developed socially and economically, Nay Myo Shwe Taung Nawrahta was appointed as separate governor of Allakappa and let him govern the town. In 1847, Min Ye Min Kyaw ruled the town. It is found that most people lived in Allakappa were the *Athi* class and only a few numbers of serviceman group settled in the town. In the later Konbaung period, it had been the most important a trading centre of the regions along the Chindwin river. In the British administrative period, because of the good and convenient condition in land and water communication, Myinmu village, the port for the then streamers, was upgraded and recognized as a town, and put as a Allakappa village under the jurisdiction of Myinmu Township. But Allakappa was never ruined as the other Pyu cities and it was very important region for administration and trading of the country in successive periods. Therefore, since the reign of Myanmar kings with good tradition Allkappa had reached its peak in social, economic and religious affairs. At the present time, Allakappa developed and prospered in social, economy and civilization.

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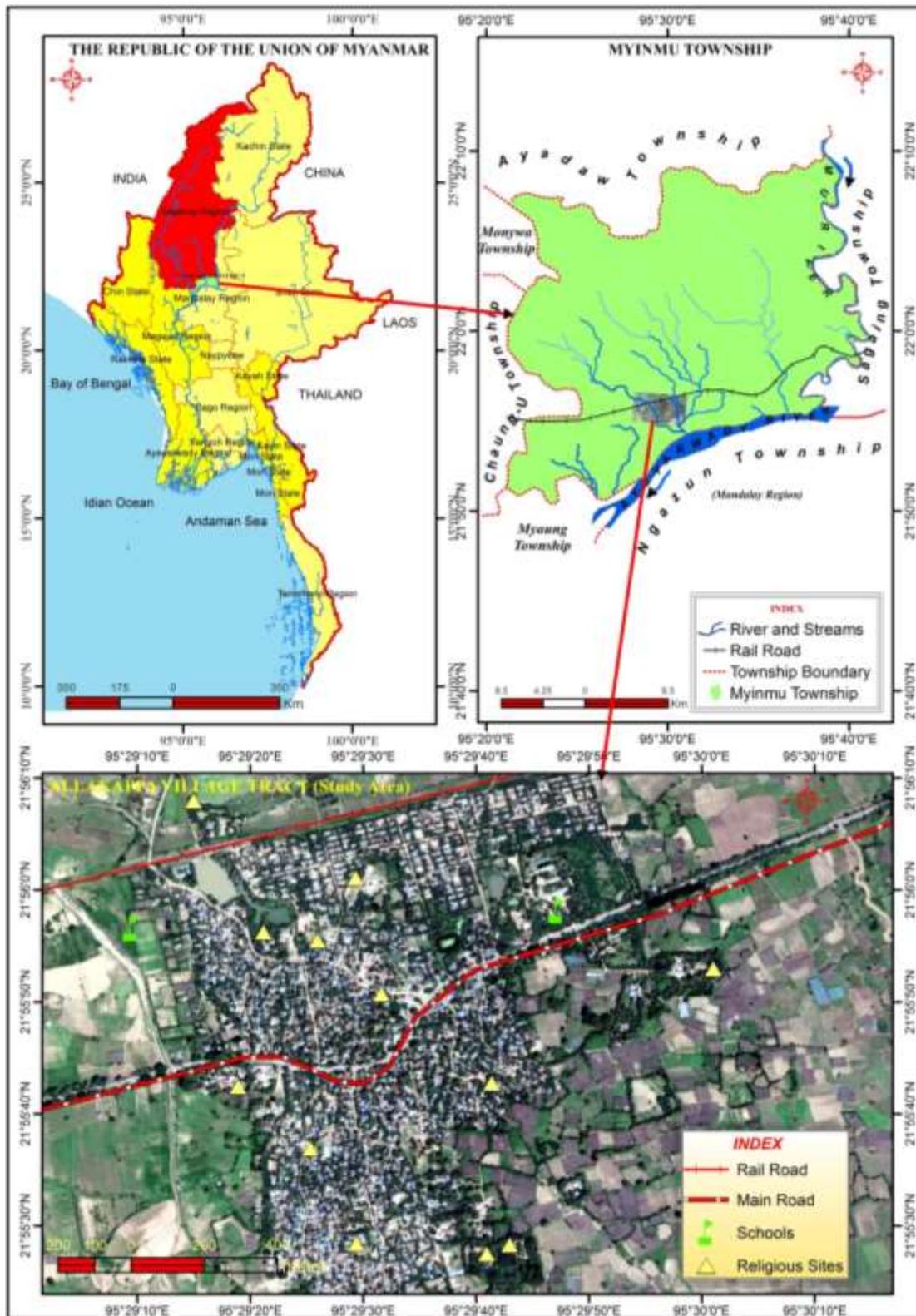
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Appendix I

Map 1 Location of Allakappa Village Tract



Source: Department of Geography, Banmaw University