

Myanmar War Veterans Organization



Forts from Myanmar Monarchial Period

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In the history of Myanmar, forts and fortresses structured with wood logs and brick walls were built at military strategic places for defensive purposes.

The relation between Myanmar and English fell through because of Assam Manipur affair and the first Myanmar-English war broke out as the English declared war upon Myanmar in 5th March 1824. Then the English conquered the whole Myanmar country by waging second Myanmar-English war in 1852 and third Myanmar-English war in 1885. During those wars, there were many forts used by Myanmar to resist English forces. Among them, the following well-known fortresses are to be presented below.

Brief history of InnwaHsinKyone Fort, SagaingAsekhan Fortress , AmarapuraThapyaytan Fortress, Minhla Fortress and Gwaychaung Fort

HsinKyone Fort



Location

The HsinKyone Fort is located on the southern bank of Ayeyarwaddy River near HsinKyone village, west of Innwa ancient city (now Tada Oo Township).

Construction Date

The HsinKyone fort was built in 1874 during the reign of King Mindon and it was named after the fact that it was restructured and rebuilt from an old ring of palisades used to tame wild elephants.

Dimensions

The HsinKyone fort has double rings of walls with 355 feet tall inner wall and 293 feet tall outer wall which are separated by the 31 feet wide ditch.

Structure

The foundation of the fort is square shaped with three layers of defensive fortifications and a reinforced brick moat surrounding the entire fort. There is a 83 feet long, 4 feet wide brick wall from east to west across the moat which provides entry into the fort. Inside of the moat lies a 213 feet long rampart. There can also be found two chambers with stairs built over them at the northern part of the fort. A series of circular parapets along the terreplein can also be found at the northern inner part of the fort. Furthermore, the fort included chambers for the storage of arms and ammunition.

Sagaing Fortress or Asekhan Fortress



Location

The Sagaing fortress or Asekhan fortress, named after the Asekhan Quarter which is located southwest of Sagaing near the west bank of Ayeyarwaddy River.

Construction Date

The SagaingAsekhan fort was built by ConmotoPeree and Molinari, naval engineers from Italy in cooperation with Myanmar engineers in 1879 during the reign of King Minson. It was built at the recommendation of KinwunMingyi as a defense against not only foreign but also domestic threats.

Dimensions

The fortress is built in crescent shape, facing towards the city. The fortress stretches about 240 feet from north to south, 230 feet from east to west, with the height of just 9 feet.

Structure

The fortress is constructed with 2 sally ports at the north and east walls. The southern side of the walls is built 30 feet wide with double brick wall with earth in it, while the other three sides are protected with 2 feet wide single straight walls. Apart from the southern wall, all the other walls are dotted with embrasures for firing. There are two 4 feet long, 2 feet wide, and 3 feet thick reinforced chambers at the south side of the fortress. Three stages of stairways to climb on top of the walls can be found at eastern, western and southern parts of the fortress.

AmarapuraThapyaytan Fortress



Location

The Thapyaytan Fortress is located at the east of the Ayeyarwaddy and the north of the Dottawaddy River, near the two villages of ThapyaytanYwama and ThapyaytanYwagale, and is built with brick and reinforced concrete.

Construction Date

The Thapyaytan fortress was built by ConmotoPeree and Molinari Naval engineers from Italy in cooperation with Myanmar engineers during the reign of King Mindon. The construction process began in 1874 and finished in 1878.

Dimension

The dimension of the fortress is 400 feet long at east and west walls, 352 feet at the south wall and 492 feet at the north wall with the height of 20 feet.

Structure

Thapyaytan Fortress is built with three rings of walls at the eastern bank of the Ayeyarwaddy River. The northern sally port of the fortress is 16 feet 6 inches wide with a 62 feet long tunnel. It has a 78 feet long, 14 feet 6 inches wide brick stair. However, the passage is now being blocked by the eastern mound created from building the Mandalay-Myitkyina railroad. Beneath the ramparts there are 6 feet wide and 9 feet high tunnels into small chambers which are connected throughout with a pathway between them. The fort also possess a secret way out and 6 feet wide terreplein on the ramparts.

Minhla Fortress



Location

The Minhla Fortress is built on the bank of the Ayeyarwaddy River near Upper Minhla town of the Magway Region.

Construction Date

The fortress was built by the young Burmese engineers under the leadership of the Crown Prince Kanaung in 1223 M.E. (1861 A.D.).

Dimension

The dimension of the fortress is 173 feet 7 inches length, 131 feet 4 inches width at the outer layer and 108 feet 8 inches length, 88 feet 4 inches width at the inner layer of the wall.

Structure

The northern wall of the fortress is reinforced with double brick wall with earth in it. The wall are 17 feet 4 inches thick with the height of 25 feet 9 inches at the outer layer and 23 feet 5 inches at the inner layer. The fort has 16 sally ports, 4 stairways and 21 barracks and ammunition depots with 7 at the east, 4 at the west, 6 at the south and 4 at west respectively. The terreplein above the bulwarks is 21 feet 6 inches wide with 4 stairways at the 4 corners of the fort and flag poles and sentry posts along the terreplein. The western wall has slopes on either side of the sally port which was used to transport cannons atop the fortress.

Gwaychaung Fort



Location

The Gwaychaung fort is located on the left bank of the Ayeyarwaddy River in a diagonal view from the Minhla Fortress near Myingun Township of the Magway Region.

Construction Date

The Gwaychaung fort was built by the young Burmese engineers under the leadership of the Crown Prince Kanaung in 1223 M.E. (1861 A.D.).

Dimensions

The Dimension of the fort is 240 feet length, 155 feet width from North to South.

Structure

The Gwaychaung Fort is rectangular shaped with a reinforced wall at the north side. The wall has 86 embrasures and the south side of the fort contains a raised cannon platform and a command station. There is a large chamber under the platform which is connected to the top with a brick stairway. Two chambers for arms and ammunition storage can be found underground with the entrance of the first chamber locating at the west wall and the other locating directly at the rear of the officers' quarter. Ammunition chambers are locked with two doors. A smaller chamber with a complete ventilation system can be found inside one of the underground chambers.

Minhla fortress and Gwaychaung fort are located on the either side of the Ayeyarwaddy River with Minhla fortress being the on ground fortification and Gwaychaung fort being underground fortification. These two fortifications are being preserved by the Department of Archaeology and National Museum since 1957.