

# Transition within an Agrarian Transition: An Alluvial Farming Community of the Irrawaddy in Central Myanmar

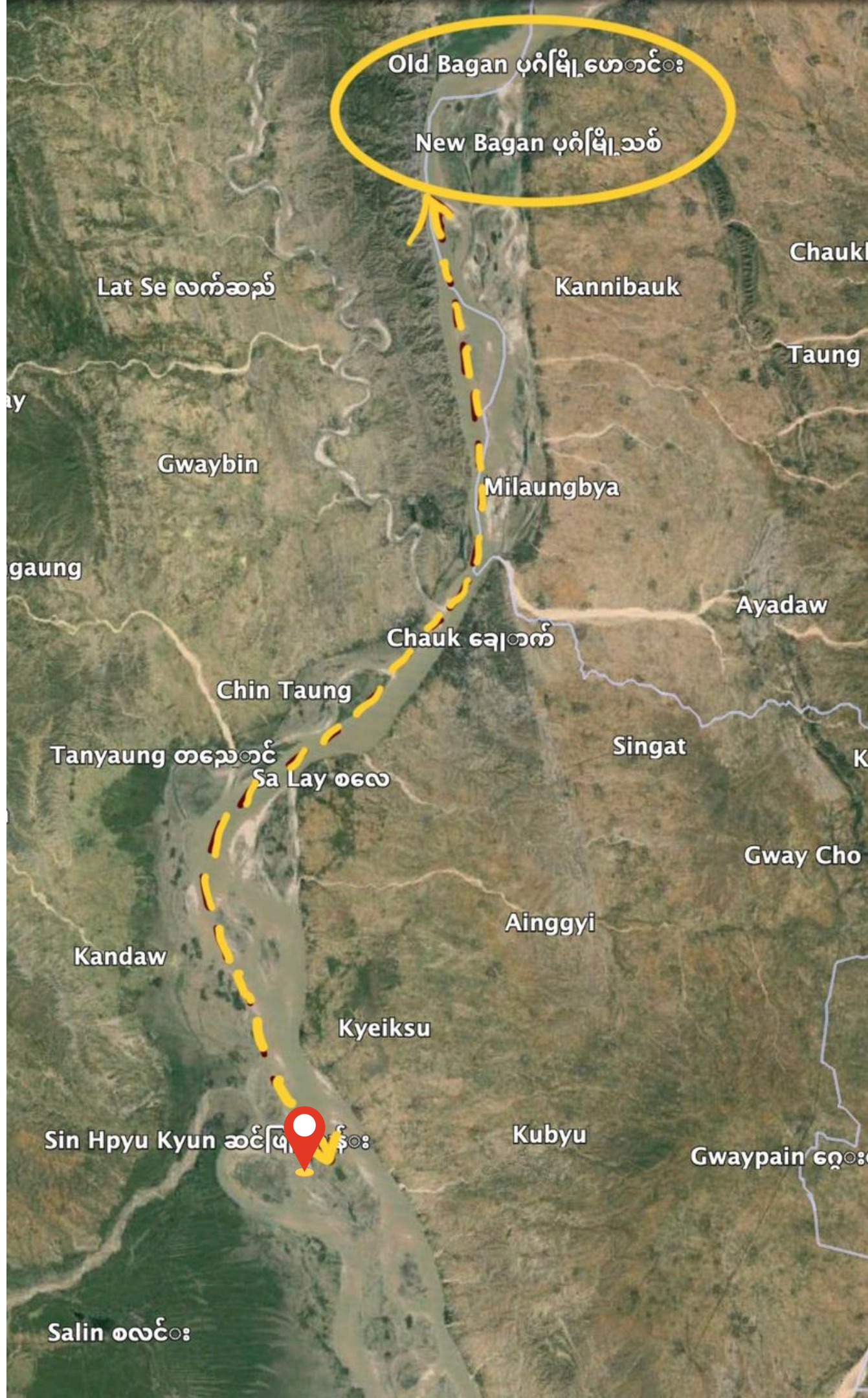
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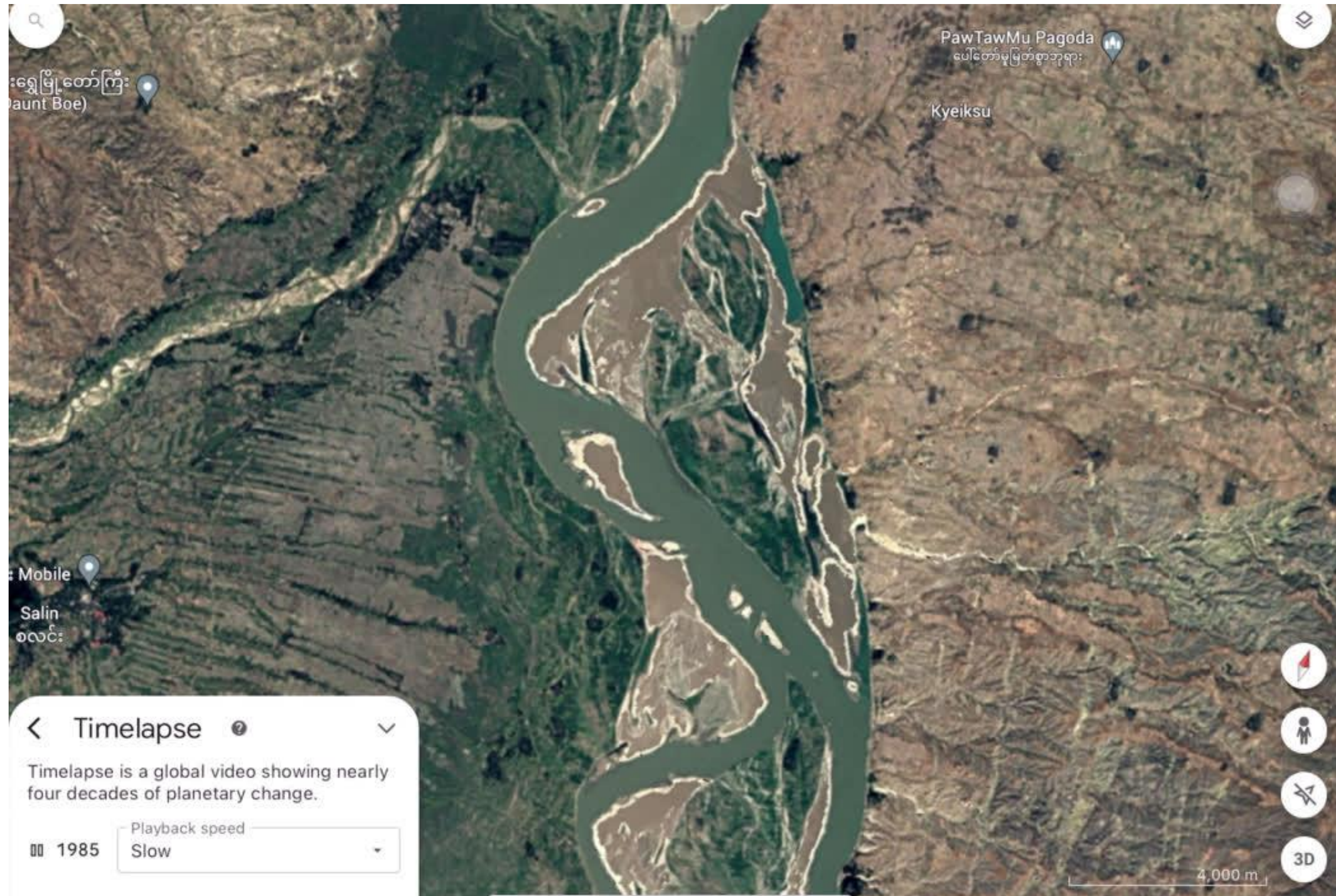


In Sitkone village, what has always been moving is ‘the soil’ and occasionally ‘themselves’ with river flow.

- Current inhabitants moved to this island in the 1980s
- One season farming – various short term crops such as beans and peas, peanuts, chilli, ...
- but no rice because the soil is too soft and sandy.



# The alluvial 'primary transition' in context



# Alluvial 'primary transition' in context

## Sitkone Village on an unstable island: Time lapse of alluvial changes over time (1984-2022)

- The island's size and the surrounding farmlands vary with the flow of the Irrawaddy
- Alluvial soil is the foundation of civilization
- Flood is a gift from nature, free fertile soil
- Irrawaddy River and alluvium accumulation
- Fertile alluvial soil is like gold



# Changes

- No more floods, no more magic since 2015
- Water pumps in the 1990s enable them to do two-season farming
- The need to use chemical pesticides and fertilizers
- higher cost to farm and end up in debt, stop farming
- Migration for work



# Agrarian Transition Concept

The penetration of capitalist relations of production into agriculture, the growth of the associated social structure, the creation of modern production techniques, and the emergence of urban-industrial societies (Byres, 1986)



Larger societal changes



Capitalist penetration (commodification)



Green Revolution (changing technologies)



Growth of urban industrial societies

# Alluvial farmers who experience a ‘Double Transition’

## ‘Primary Transition’

Already in transition as they live and work on an unstable, everchanging alluvial riverine island

‘Agrarian Transition’ is secondary to this longer-term primary alluvial transition process in the context of national and global agrarian transition



## Current Agrarian Change Idea

Third World must modernize farming and adopt capitalist models (Mohanty 2016b: 1, 3)

**But, evidence shows,**

**Only 3 countries** fully completed this transition model: Japan, Korea, Taiwan

(Bernstein (2016, p. 75)

- Alluvial farmers face new challenges as they are drawn deeper into the national and international economy.
- Farmers find it today increasingly difficult to make ends meet.
- Myanmar's alluvial farmers, who farm the most fertile lands in the country, are failing since 2015:
  - **what does this indicate for the country's 'agrarian transition' as a whole?**
  - In the wake of the coup, pandemic, and climatic change, **the benefits and end goals of agrarian transition are adequate to understand what is going on with alluvial farmers?**



☀️ New model to conceive sustainable agricultural practices that do not damage our climate

☀️ If Myanmar can overcome its civil war, blockchain technology is promising to help farmers with markets and financial loans.

☀️ Things are going to look different from the current agrarian transition model.





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Thank you so much!