

ART AND ARCHITECTURE OF MRAUK U

1430-1785

Ph.D. DISSERTATION

KYAW WIN OO

THA-3(2002-2003)

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

UNIVERSITY OF YANGON

MYANMAR

MAY, 2006

Abstract

Mrauk U was the capital city of the kingdom of Rakhine and flourished from AD 1430 until 1785. The integration of Mrauk U into the trade and cultural networks in the Bay of Bengal brought about the growth of its art and architecture producing what could be called a sandstone-based Buddhist culture. The chapter one deals with what can be learned about Mrauk U from an examination of contemporary epigraphic evidence. In chapter two the civil architecture of Mrauk U is studied. The most important temples and stupas are discussed in chapter three, with a comparative analysis of Buddhist architecture of South and Southeast Asia. The donation of land and pagoda slaves for the temples and stupas is also examined, using information from epigraphic sources. The chapter four focuses on images of the Buddha created in the Mrauk U period, in the context of the region. In chapter five, the sculptural art of Mrauk U is discussed in detail. Most of the examples studied form part of the architectural decoration of the various temples. It is hoped that this study widens the horizons of our understanding in art and architecture of Mrauk U and will pave new paths for future studies in this field.

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