VESĀLĪ PERIOD OF RAKHINE HISTORY

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PHRU PHRU KHINE

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

UNIVERSITY OF YANGON

MYANMAR

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is an effort to bring to light Vesālī Period, which is one of the four periods which constitute the long Rakhine history. In general, the four periods which thrived in ancient Rakhine region are Dhañña vatī Period (B.C. 3325 - A.D. 327), Vesālī Period (A.D. 327 – A.D. 818), Lemyo Period (A.D. 818 – A.D. 1430) and Mrauk-U Period (A.D. 1430 – A.D. 1784). Vesālī City, which is the second earliest City in Rakhine history, is located on the bank of Ram Creek, a tributary of the Kaladan (Gisspanadi) River about six miles from the Old Dhañña vatī. All Rakhine chronicles mention with one voice that it was founded by King Mahā Taing Candra, son of King Suriyaketu, the last king of the Third Dhañña vatī City. As the first and the second sections of the Anandacandra Stone Inscription describes that a line of twenty-two kings ruled over Vesālī City, it can be considered that the reigning kings in Vesālī would total twenty-six, if King Cūlacandra, King Amratu, King Pebyu and King Ngaton were to be added to the number of the kings mentioned in the Anandacandra Stone Inscription. Vesālī kings used gold and silver coins in commercial transactions. Although Vesālī coins bear conch-shell and tricula like Pyu coins, they are not used as the symbol of belief but as currency units. Vesālī became an important trading centre on the coast of the Bay of Bengal. It also was a stop-over between India and eastern countries. It became a vast Kingdom. According to the Rakhine chronicles, it is known that Rakhine was inhabited by the Rakhines, the Maramās, the Myos, the Kadus, the Kanyans, the Thets, the Daing-nets, etc during Vesālī Period. Rakhine Kingdom had stood as an independent Buddhist one for a long time. Vesālī City also became a famous Buddhist centre in Southeast Asia. As the monastic

education had taken a firm root in Rakhine during Vesālī Period, the educational system of that period would be based on the monastic education. The basic medium of instruction and the script used education were Pāli, Sanskrit and Kamacha and a type of modified Brahmī script. Rakhine traditional medicine is based on that of India, which is within the easy reach of Rakhine. Ancient Rakhines studied old Indian traditional medical treatises and some went over to India for the study of Indian traditional medicine. So they were well acquainted with Indian traditional medicine. Due to the attacks of the Shans during the time of King Ngaton, son of King Cūlacandra, Vesālī City was destroyed.

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