

**ICONOGRAPHY OF BAGAN :  
SEMIOTIC STUDIES ON THE SIGNIFICANCE  
OF ICONOGRAPHIC REMAINS**

**Ph D (DISSERTATION)**

**PYIET PHYO KYAW**

**DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY  
UNIVERSITY OF YANGON  
MYANMAR**

**MAY 2012**

### Abstract

Bagan is one of the ancient cultural heritage zones in the region of South East Asia. In the main lands of South East Asia, *Mon*, *Khmer* and *Pyu* cultural materials could be found not only underground surveying but also on the artistic and architectural remains of ancient monuments. Especially, concerning the diffusion of religious cultural materials, the regions of South East Asia originated from *Sri Lanka*, southern and eastern India. Relying on the ritual or religious diffusion, many forms of cultural materials could be compromised and adapted to become the diversity of tangible cultural patterns. These cultural assemblages or subassemblages can be figured with their iconographic remains. An icon which is found with the recording of matrix or provenience can give the valuable archaeological context to reduce the complexity. Therefore, hypothetical situation of this field of study is that the context of artistic achievements in Bagan Ancient Monuments can be evaluated in comparison with the artistic creativities of Southeast Asian regions. It can be shown how Bagan iconography can give some new evidences between their roots *Mon, Pyu, India and other Southeast Asian regions* and their indigenous styles and types of artistic creativity. Bagan iconographic remains were directly related to the Buddhist cultural influences mingled with other subsidiary or inferior spiritual gods and goddesses. It can be contributed that the significance of Bagan Buddhist cultural remains could be synchronized in the repertoire of visual art or iconographic sources combined with those of Hindu, Mahayana and Tantric pantheons and it might be assumed that the Buddhist cultural tradition originated from the India was disseminated obviously through Myanmar and its boundaries to arrived the Mainland Southeast Asia. Consequently the material culture of Bagan could be prosperous itself to bear the Buddhist cultural flourishing with the visual references of iconographic substances.