

**RELIGIONS OF PYU**

**Ph D (DISSERTATION)**

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation attempts to examine the emergence of different kinds of religions during Pyu period. The ancestors of Pyu, who settled in northwestern part of China near Tibet, migrated to Myanmar since 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C like Naga, Kadu and Thet ethnic groups. At the beginning they were nomadic, finding places where water was fresh and grass was tender. After that, they set up their cities along the Ayeyarwady river valley. The prominent Pyu cities were Beikthano, Pinle (Maingmaw), Halin and Sriksetra. The religious evidences were discovered from these sites and they were concerned with Hinduism, Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism. It is found that there were also evidences of different traditional belief systems and some of the systems might be existed since before the advance of city state. The evidences of Hinduism are images and coins and that might be advanced in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D. Mahayana Buddhism flourished in the Pyu period and that might not be earlier than 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D. The evidences of Theravada Buddhism were discovered in the Pyu period abundantly and that might be advanced since the 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C. Moreover, it is found that Theravada Buddhism was the most influential religion throughout the Pyu period.