

A STUDY ON BUDDHA IMAGES OF BAGAN PERIOD

PhD (DISSERTATION)

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MAY, 2015

ABSTRACT

This dissertation attempts to study on Buddha Images of Bagan Period. The practice of making Buddha images originates from India because the Buddha was enlightened in the valley of the Ganges River in India. It is learnt that the practice of carving Buddha images endowed with the characteristics of Mahāpurissa (Great Man) started in India about 500 or 600 years after the demise of the Buddha. Sculptors carved particulars of physical appearances of the Buddha, ways of wearing robes, hand-gestures (mudrā) leg-positions (āsana) proportionately. The art of carving Buddha images together with the Sāsana which flourished in North India during Gupta and Pāla Period and in South India during Andhara Period spread to the eastern and South-east Asian regions. The Pyus were well known to have established urban civilization in the pre- to history of Myanmar. The ancient Chinese records and excavation prove that the Pyus were the followers of Theravāda Buddhism. The earliest Buddha images were found in Myanmar during the Pyu Period. Pyu artists made silver and bronze Buddha images. Pyu Buddha images have a chubby faces and a stout body. The common hand gestures are the Bhūmiphassamudrā, the Jhānamudrā and the Vitarkamudrā. In Bagan Period during the reign of King Anawrahta, Theravāda Buddhism flourished to a great extent. Buddhist art also developed. It is found that Buddha images of early Bagan period have a triangular-shaped face and a stout body. The Buddha images belonging to middle Bagan Period have the slender face and body, the pointed nose and chin. During later period, Buddha image became more Myanmarized. This dissertation also attempts to bring out the outstanding characteristics of the Bagan Period Buddha image.