

FOREWORD

History cannot exist without legends. Human beings, by nature, like the unusual. They want to listen to miraculous or amazing events. Early historians who understood human nature inserted legends into their history books. They added oral history and local gossips and mixed traditions into their books. Rational persons or researchers took the substance out of superficialities. They discarded legends, word of mouth, local gossip and traditions and took only what there was in inscriptions and antiques for reference.

The history of Bagan, especially the history of Bagan pagodas and temples is no exception. When nearly 1,000 years have elapsed, the building of the history of Bagan pagodas has become covered with bushes. Legends, oral history, local gossip and traditions are bushes which have made the history of Bagan pagodas opaque. Historical researchers have cleared these bushes with the evidence supplied by antiques and inscriptions.

The present author who writes "The Bagan Wayfarer" is not the person who clings to legends, oral history, local gossips and traditions. He is also not a historical researcher.

The objective of the author who writes "The Bagan Wayfarer" is merely to bring the people to the pagodas of Bagan and to let them know about the same.

The author does not omit legends, oral history or local gossips of the Bagan pagodas. He does not neglect researches carried out by historical researchers. This "The Bagan Wayfarer" is a mixture of profound researches conducted by historical researchers and superficial legends, oral history and local gossip compiled by historians of Bagan.

Many books on Bagan pagodas, cultural heritage of Myanmar, have already come out. Some authors write in a traditional style of the history of pagodas. Some write in a style of research report based on the history of Bagan. Some write about the architecture, painting and art of stone sculpture in Bagan pagodas and temples from the artistic point of view.

In this "The Bagan Wayfarer" the author who has visited Bagan many times vividly portrays experiences gained during his travel in Bagan, deviating from the style used by previous writers. Writing this book, he had in front of him not only ancient Myanmar history books but also books on Bagan history and the history of Bagan pagodas.

Paragu

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