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PREFACE

Myanmar Wonderland is an anthology of essays on some attractive tourist destinations in a country rich in both natural and human cultural heritage that is the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

A geographical entity of 261,228 square miles in size, with long stretches of land and sea fronts, fed by fresh waters from springs, falls, pools, lakes, streams and rivers, lofty mountain ranges, some with snow-capped summits, offshooting from the Himalayan system, forested hill ranges and large sea beaches along the coast, the country has beautiful landscape of Nature. Besides its flora, fauna, fossil and minerals provide a boundless field of resources for scientists to explore.

Within the frame of this Nature's creation a civilization of some antiquity emerged and developed passing through stages of human evolution and progress from anthropoid primate through Stone, Bronze and Iron Ages to modern times, leaving behind remains of human settlements in the form of dwelling caves, city states, dynastic kingdoms with several monuments in various degrees of preservation. An ancient city Bagan in Central Myanmar alone can boast of over three thousand old buildings within an area of 16 square miles, let alone other similar centres of culture throughout the country.

It is indeed a wonderland, and the essays compiled in this book described "places of historical interest and scenic beauty" in the Tourist column of a magazine *Myanmar Perspectives* which is issued in monthly electronic media as well as in quarterly printed media.

The author of these essays, Dr. Thaw Kaung, is a librarian by profession and a graduate in English literature. His wide reading and travelling at home and abroad has given him the inspiration to write. Being an old colleague of us, as he is a member of the Myanmar Historical Commission and a member of the Editorial Board of the above-mentioned magazine, he is always with us whenever we take yearly trips to the nooks and corners of the country to gather information and gain knowledge and experience. Reading his essays one finds in them an attractive easy style and one feels being carried away on an armchair travel to the places he vividly describes and savours a foretaste of them before one actually visits them.

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