

Contents

Introduction	
1. Pyu Period	1
2. Bagan Dynasty	8
3. Pinya Dynasty	12
4. Myanmar Saing-Waing Orchestra	15
5. Myanmar Marionettes (Innwa Dynasty)	22
6. Ahnyeint Thabin	30
7. Myanmar Dances	36
8. Myanmar Drama	68
9. Thabin Wun	100
10. Lamaing Nat	108
Bibliography	

INTRODUCTION

The earliest recorded inhabitants (races) of Myanmar were the Pyu and the Mon who established independent kingdoms in Central and Lower Myanmar. According to archaeological excavations being carried out at the ancient site of Tagaung, the Pyu civilization came into existence in about 500 B.C..

By about the 9th. century, the Pyu and the Myanmar (Bamar) merged peacefully together paving the way to the emergence of Bagan.

In 1057, the Mon kingdom of Thaton was sacked by Anawrahta (1044-77) and its clergy was induced to assist in transforming Bagan into the stronghold of Theravdda Buddhism until 1287 when invasion by the Mongols ended the ruling dynasty.

King Alaung Phaya (1752-60) founded the last Konbaung Dynasty in 1752 and it was during the zenith of this dynasty that the British moved in. Like India, Myanmar became the British colony after three Anglo Myanmar Wars of

1824, 1852 and 1885. During the World War II, Japanese Forces occupied Myanmar until the arrival of Allied Forces in 1945. Myanmar regained her independence from Britain in 1948.

There are about one-hundred-and-thirty- five national races in Myanmar and they all have their own cultures, languages, folklore, music, dances and colourful costumes.

The major national races are the Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Chin, Mon, Bamar, Rakkhine and Shan.

The scope of this book is limited. Therefore, this book traces the origin and development of only the Bamar (Myanmar) performing arts from the earliest times covering the period of from the 1st. century Pyu Period to 19th. century Konbaung (Ratanapon) Period, that is, before the annexation of the country by the British in 1885.