

The Toyota Foundation Managing Director's foreword

On behalf of the Toyota Foundation, I should like to congratulate U Aye Myint on the publication of his *Burmese Design Through Drawing*. This book, published in Thailand, is the fruit of a joint international project funded by the Foundation and involving the cooperation of Thai and Burmese specialists.

The idea of publishing this collection of traditional Burmese designs goes back more than five years to 1985, when Kazue Iwamoto, then the program officer of the Foundation's International Division, visited Burma during one of her regular trips to Southeast Asian countries. In Rangoon she was introduced to the architectural designer U Aye Myint. He showed her a collection of traditional Burmese designs he had copied over a period of several years and expressed his strong desire to publish the drawings in order to make Burma's artistic heritage better known both to the Burmese people and to students of Burmese art overseas.

Iwamoto was eager to help U Aye Mint realize his dream. Unfortunately, the Foundation's International Division, which awards grants for projects aimed at preserving and revitalizing the indigenous cultures of Southeast Asia, had been unable to award grants to researchers in Burma for various reasons. If, however, the work could be published in Thailand, the Foundation would be able to offer grant assistance. Traveling on to Thailand, Iwamoto discussed the possibility of publication in that country with Associate Professor Anuvit Charernsupkul of the Faculty of Architecture and Assistant Professor Sone Simatrang of the Faculty of Decorative Arts at Silpakorn University. Upon studying the drawings, the two Thai scholars praised the collection as both a systematic presentation of the development of Burmese art styles and techniques and a fine example of U Aye Myint's artistic skill. They offered to do whatever they could to facilitate the publication of his work in book form in Thailand.

Burmese Design Through Drawing thus represents the successful outcome of international collaboration. The international character of the book is underscored by the fact that Professor Toru Ohno of Osaka University of Foreign Studies, an authority on Burmese history and culture, has contributed a background essay, "A Cultural History of Burma."

Joint international projects often take a relatively long time to reach fruition because of administrative complexities and the need to establish mutual understanding among the members of the project team, who represent differing cultural and social traditions. We deeply appreciate the hard work of all those involved in the project and are honored to have had the opportunity to assist in making the publication of this important work possible.

It is our heartfelt hope that this book will deepen understanding of Burma's magnificent art among people in Burma itself and around the world.

Hideo Yamaguchi
Managing Director
The Toyota Foundation

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