

[Free and download] Imperial Pagan: Art and Architecture of Burma

Imperial Pagan: Art and Architecture of Burma

Paul Strachan

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Hard cover with dust jacket. Beautiful color photographs along with interesting text about the unique art and architecture of Burma. | File size: 78.Mb

Paul Strachan : Imperial Pagan: Art and Architecture of Burma before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Imperial Pagan: Art and Architecture of Burma:

18 of 18 people found the following review helpful. Imperial Pagan
By Michael Gunther
"Imperial Pagan" is a paperback reprint (159 pages, 8" x 11 3/4" format) of the 1989 hardcover title "Pagan: Art and Architecture of Old Burma" by Paul Strachan. The book provides an in-depth introduction to the Pagan Dynasty (11th-13th century) and its marvelous temples. In Strachan's words, he aimed at "... greater detail than a pocket guide book, whilst lacking the cumbersome nature of a more detailed and encyclopedic study... such a work has been conceived as being of use to both the scholar and the more interested visitor to Pagan." I feel that on the whole, the author has successfully met this objective, although the book does require some effort; it is by no means an "easy read." Pagan is a huge site (2 miles x 3 miles, or more), with thousands of temples and temple remnants. To keep the book manageable, Strachan wisely concentrates on the better preserved and more important temples. His "temple-centric" view will be useful to those who visit and study Pagan, but necessarily omits a great deal of the site context; this is a book of art history, not archaeology. Strachan divides the art history of Pagan into three periods - Early (850 - 1120), Middle (1120 - 1170), and Late (1170 - 1300). Using this overall framework, the book commences with a 30-page introduction to the history, architecture, and iconography of Pagan. Part II, occupying the rest of the book, describes 70 or so of the major temples, arranged in chronological order. Maps, illustrations, photographs (34 color, 149 black-and-white), a glossary,

notes, and index are provided. The author is a Scotsman who first visited Burma [Myanmar] in the 1980's, at the age of 18. Falling in love with the place, he returned there after studying art history in college. He has since made it his adopted home, both writing extensively and founding a cultural publishing house and a tour company. The book's major strength is the amount and quality of information that it contains, which makes it quite useful as a reference when visiting or studying the site. Its major weakness, I feel, is stylistic: the complexities of Strachan's sentence structure and exposition make it heavy going at times. Potential readers also need to be aware that this book assumes a basic prior knowledge of Indian and SE Asian art history; topics like the Mon people, Vishnu, and the Pala art of India (to pick just three examples of many) come up frequently in the book, and it is assumed that the reader already has this sort of background knowledge. Clearly, then, this is not a book for the beginner, or for someone with only a casual interest in Pagan. If you are "just passing through," then one of the standard guidebooks would probably be a better choice. Other than that, I feel that most people who have a substantial interest in SE Asian art, especially those who are fascinated by the "city of temples" that is Old Pagan and want to learn more, will be glad to add this book to their libraries.

This work aims to revive interest in the least-examined monumental Buddhist site in Southeast Asia.