

BAGAN

PANORAMA





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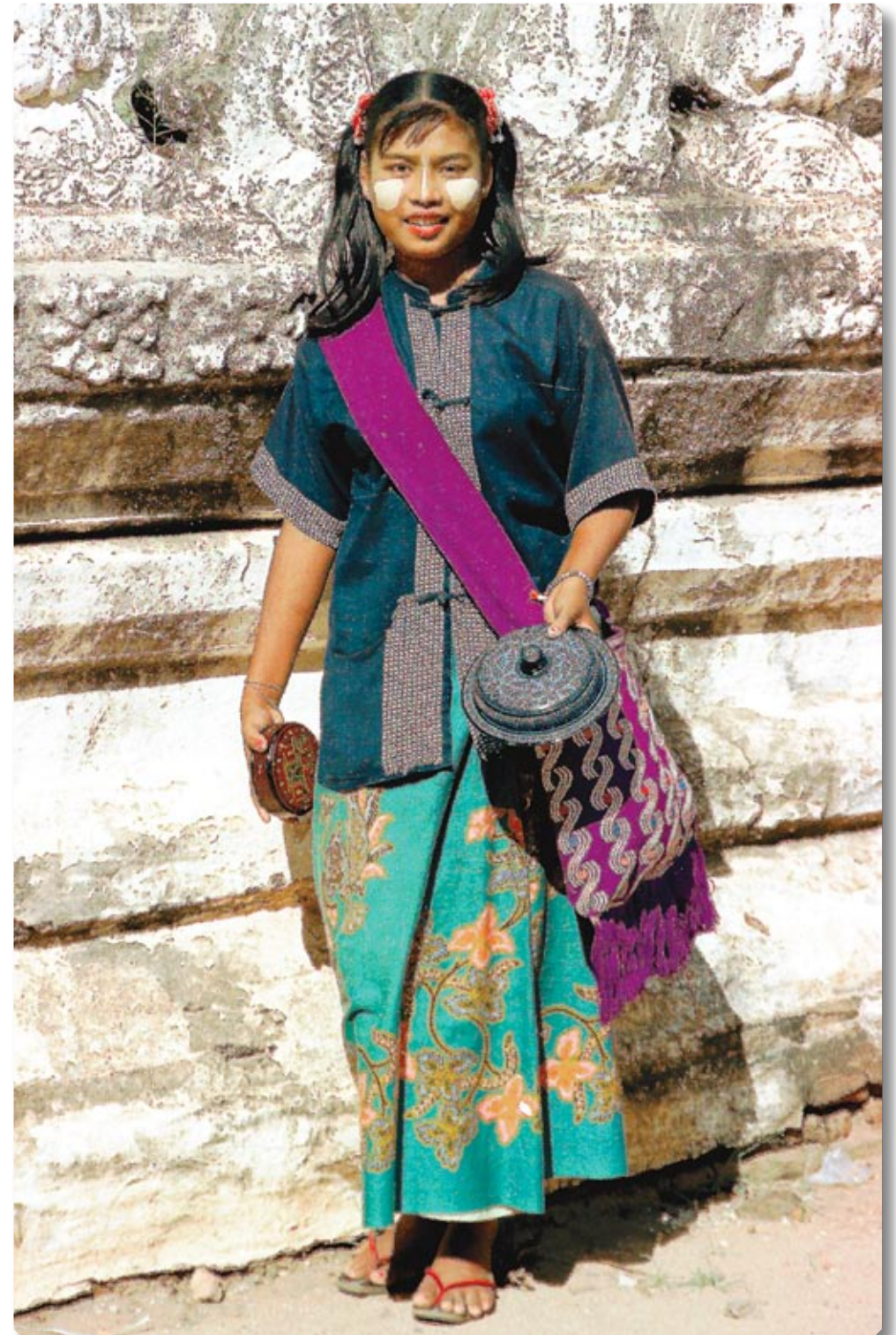
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A Stupa (Shwezi gon Pagoda)



A Temple (Ananda Temple)

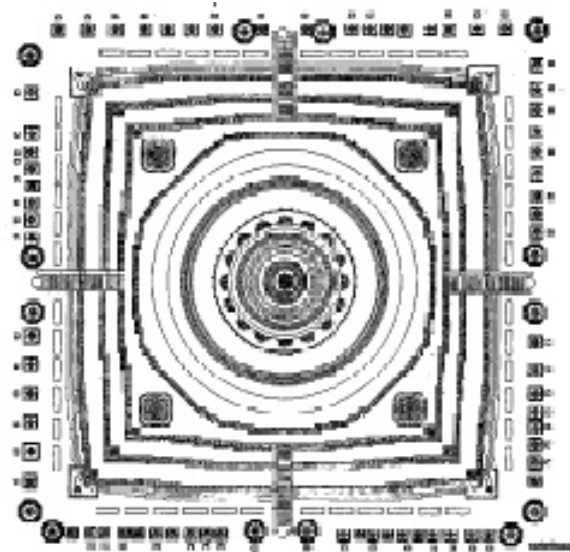


Pagoda or Stupas are solid structures, the layout is usually a square or five sided.

Enshrined are sacred relics or a particular potent image or figure of the Buddha, scriptures and / or precious items. The structure is terraced, three or five times, with a bell shaped top.

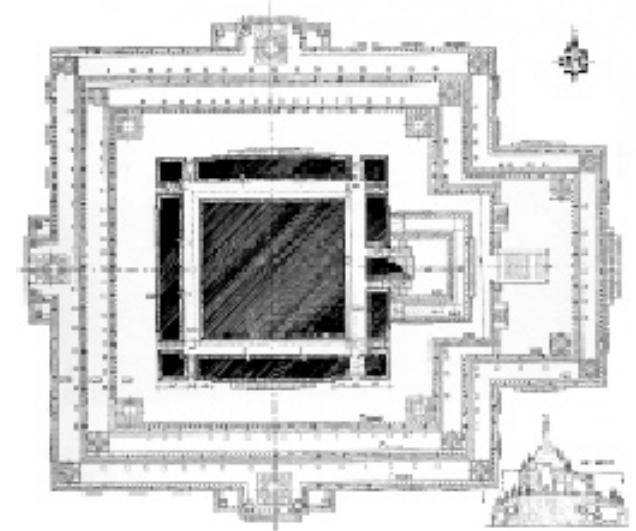
The terraces indicate the slopes of the cosmic mountain Mt. Meru, the abode of Hindu gods.

The stupa is a symbol of the buddah and naturally functions as a protective structure for the relicts.



The temple layout has its origins in the caves used by Buddhist of the very early days in India, the Burmese word is gu, or cave.

The hollow structure allows the visitor to enter. With the time and the emergence of different building techniques the layout grew more sophisticated spreading out into chambers and passageways.





Introduction

UNESCO affirms that the rustic Bagan - with over two thousand religious edifices and ruins - is an archaeological treasure not only of the Myanmar people but also of the whole of civilization.

Yes, indeed, ancient Bagan, even after a millennium of waste and decay still stands as a unforgettable sight, depicting the greatness of human endeavors and aspirations. At this old site, there still exist (a Myanmar cryptogram) - Kyaung Gyi Ok Ni - exactly says) 2217 temples and stupas, covering an area of just four square miles, on the eastern bank of the Ayeyarwady river in the dry zone of Central Myanmar.

Bagan had been the capital of Myanmar for two and a half centuries (1044-1286 A.D.) when the Myanmar empire, so to speak, reached the zenith of its power for the first time.

Actually the founding of Bagan city (a group of 19 villages) took place quite early in the dim past (about 107 A.D.), but the illustrious dynasty of temple-builders, which made Bagan strong and famous, started



MURAL or FRESCO PAINTINGS

The next 4 pages are illustrated with photos of frescoes or mural paintings which adorn many of Bagans monuments. Among other temples with the best preserved frescoes are the Patothamya, Nagayon, Abeyadana and Nanpaya.

The technique to create this mural paintings is, first to smoothen the wall to be painted with a mixture of lime, vegetable and animal material, after it will let dry for a few days. Now the master painter draws the outline with chalk or ink, after this he will apply colors with the help of his assistants.

Those colors are composed of compounds made from vegetables, animals (mainly fat) and locally available minerals.

The paintings have no perspective, instead lines of many variations are drawn and pigments with strong colors are used to create lively and expressive pictures. The gaps between the lines are filled with floral and geometric patterns or just some creative inspiration of the artist. Usually the frescoes tell a story, this story is rendered in one picture with many scenes divided by floral boundaries, some space is left to write explanations. The main themes are jataka stories very often blended with scenes of the daily life of that time.