



# Architecture in Burma: Moments in Time

*Lorie Karnath*

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## **Architecture in Burma: Moments in Time** Lorie Karnath

Architecturally, Burma is both a melting pot and a museum. Boasting a wealth of influences from all of the countries that surround it--India, China, Laos, Thailand, Bhutan, Laos--Burma has also preserved many key examples of religious architectural styles no longer extant in their countries of origin, most famously in Pagan, the country's capital in the ninth to twelfth centuries. Alongside the pagodas of Pagan, Burma's architectural jewel is probably the Shwe Dagon pagoda in Rangoon, a magnificent social hub in the city's center that has also been the site of much political turmoil. During colonial rule, many extraordinary Victorian civic buildings were erected, especially in Rangoon and Mandalay; throughout the country, Buddhist monasteries and villages also offer many fascinating varieties of architecture. Despite a few recent instances of architectural modernization, Burma remains largely an open-air museum, whose buildings embody and chronicle centuries of dynastic squabble and migration of cultural influences. (Such quarrels frequently resulted in new rulers packing up entire palaces and other structures and transporting these by elephant to establish a new seat of government or capital elsewhere.) Authored by Lorie Karnath, President of the Explorer's Club in New York, *Architecture in Burma* is the first serious overview of the astounding architectural treasures of this long-isolated country.

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