

Was Bagan: “the metropolis of Buddhism in Indo-China”? (Duroiselle 1924)

Conference Proceedings



Jointly Organized by
SEAMEO CHAT and SOAS SAAAP University of London
Yangon, 9-11 July 2017



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(SEAMEO CHAT)
Pyay Road, Institute of Medicine(1)
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Was Bagan: 'the metropolis of Buddhism in Indo-China'? The citation is from the report of Charles Duroiselle in the *Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India, 1924-1925, Burma Circle*:

"As is well known, Pagan, once the metropolis of Buddhism in Indo-China, is now the greatest place of attraction in Burma from an archaeological standpoint ... In this area is found many types of Burmese religious architecture in brickwork, from the smallest and simplest monument to the most imposing in design and size; all, or at least the very great majority, being built between the middle of the 11th and the end of the 13th centuries." (p. 42)

It is intended that scholars will debate this proposition, notably Duroiselle's suggestion of Bagan's dominance within Buddhist scholarship and implied wider political and economic interchange. Scholars working on other areas of Southeast Asia such as Angkor, for example, may challenge Duroiselle's view. The retention of his 'Indo-China' is also deliberate as the term is little used today but has particular relevance to Bagan where South Asian including Sri Lanka and Chinese influences may well have played a greater role than at other contemporary Southeast Asian kingdoms such as Sukhothai or Angkor.

(Elizabeth H. Moore)

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