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**A HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL STUDY OF THE INFLUENCE OF
BUDDHISM ON INHABITANTS OF ARAKAN (RAKHAING) STATE**

BY

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A HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL STUDY OF THE INFLUENCE OF BUDDHISM ON INHABITANTS OF ARAKAN (RAKHAING) STATE

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ABSTRACT

Despite the fact that many researches in Rakhaing Studies has been dominant focusing on political, cultural and archeological issues, this study is an attempt to elucidate the general feature of the history and culture of Buddhism on the inhabitants of Rakhaing frontier land with major attention on Buddhism in Dhaññavatī and Vesālī periods and its Buddhist relationships with Sri Lanka on the basis of the historical dates available focusing local chronicles and epigraphic sources how Buddhist developments taken place in ancient Rakhaing from the period in which the local account of the Buddha's visit to Rakhaing i. e. 6th B.C. to the Burmese conquest in 1784 broadly .

The thesis comprises of seven chapters. Firstly, in the introduction which forms chapter one, a critical study of the sources, both primary and secondary, is made using them to highlight the importance of Buddhist Rakhaing history in Southeast Asia; in addition to the previous studies by various scholars who have had little access to the original sources, this thesis makes use of the original sources much of it not available to scholars before this. In the second chapter, the periodisation of the Rakhaing history is critically discussed. The third chapter deals with the geographical and ethnic backgrounds to the development of the earliest Rakhaing. It is followed by the feature of religious milieu of the pre-Buddhist Rakhaing. Different Buddhist traditions especially introductions of Buddhism and the tradition of Mahāmuni Buddha Image are discussed therein. A general introduction and annotated translation of the *Satthubimba Sutta* is also presented. And how Buddhism was introduced into the land is critically examined. Furthermore, in the following chapter, developments of Buddhism in Rakhaing throughout centuries especially in Vesālī period are discussed. A special account on the Buddhist relationship between Rakhaing and Ceylon has been discussed in the chapter six. The final chapter reflects on the Buddhist history and culture of Rakhaing which thus emerges, examining in details the rationale behind the developments of the concept of the Buddhist tradition in the land.