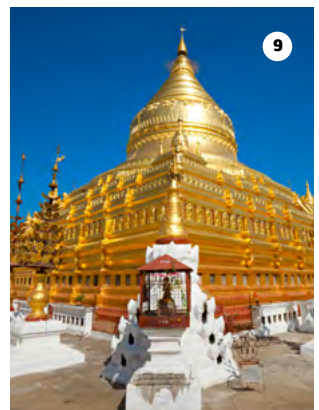


A large golden pagoda with many smaller ones in front, under a blue sky with clouds. The pagoda is the central focus, with its spire reaching towards the top right. The smaller pagodas in the foreground are arranged in a line, creating a sense of depth. The sky is a vibrant blue with some white clouds. The overall scene is bright and colorful, representing the 'Golden Land' of Myanmar.

JEWELS OF THE GOLDEN LAND



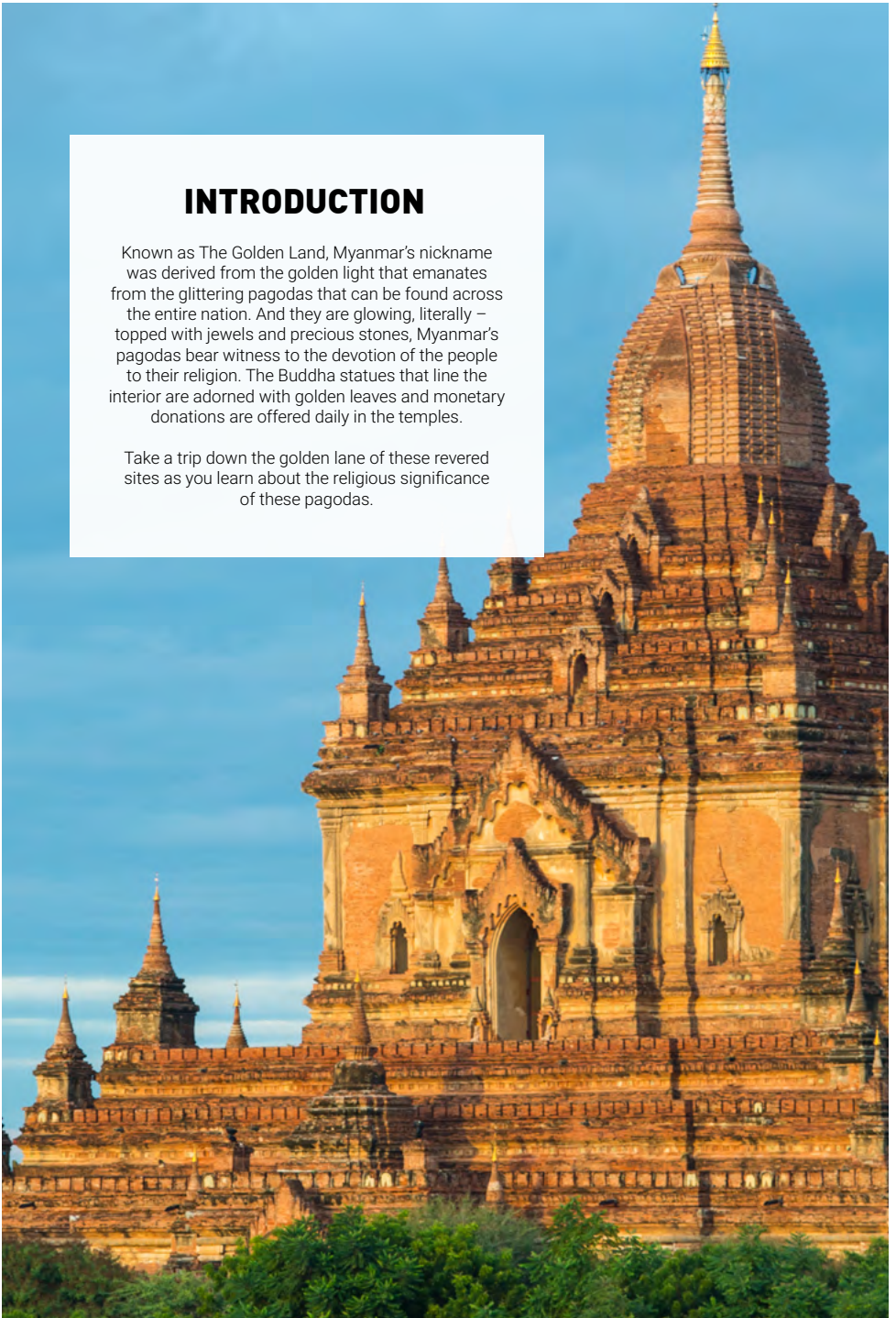
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INTRODUCTION

Known as The Golden Land, Myanmar's nickname was derived from the golden light that emanates from the glittering pagodas that can be found across the entire nation. And they are glowing, literally – topped with jewels and precious stones, Myanmar's pagodas bear witness to the devotion of the people to their religion. The Buddha statues that line the interior are adorned with golden leaves and monetary donations are offered daily in the temples.

Take a trip down the golden lane of these revered sites as you learn about the religious significance of these pagodas.





1

OLD BUT GOLD

SHWEDAGON PAGODA

True to its nickname as the 'Crown of Myanmar', Shwedagon Pagoda is completely gilded with gold and adorned with diamonds, precious stones and golden bells, all estimated to be worth around USD3 billion. It is more than 2,500 years old and ranks as one of the oldest pagodas in the country. It costs 9,000 Kyats to enter.

Religious Value:

It enshrines strands of Buddha's hair.

Highlights:

On the top of the structure sits a 72-karat diamond.

Festival:

During the month of Thadingyut and Tazaungdaing, the Festival of Lights lights up the pagoda magnificently. Tabaung Festival is also celebrated from February to March as the day of the completion of Shwedagon Pagoda.



2

CITY CENTRE OF HISTORY

SULE PAGODA

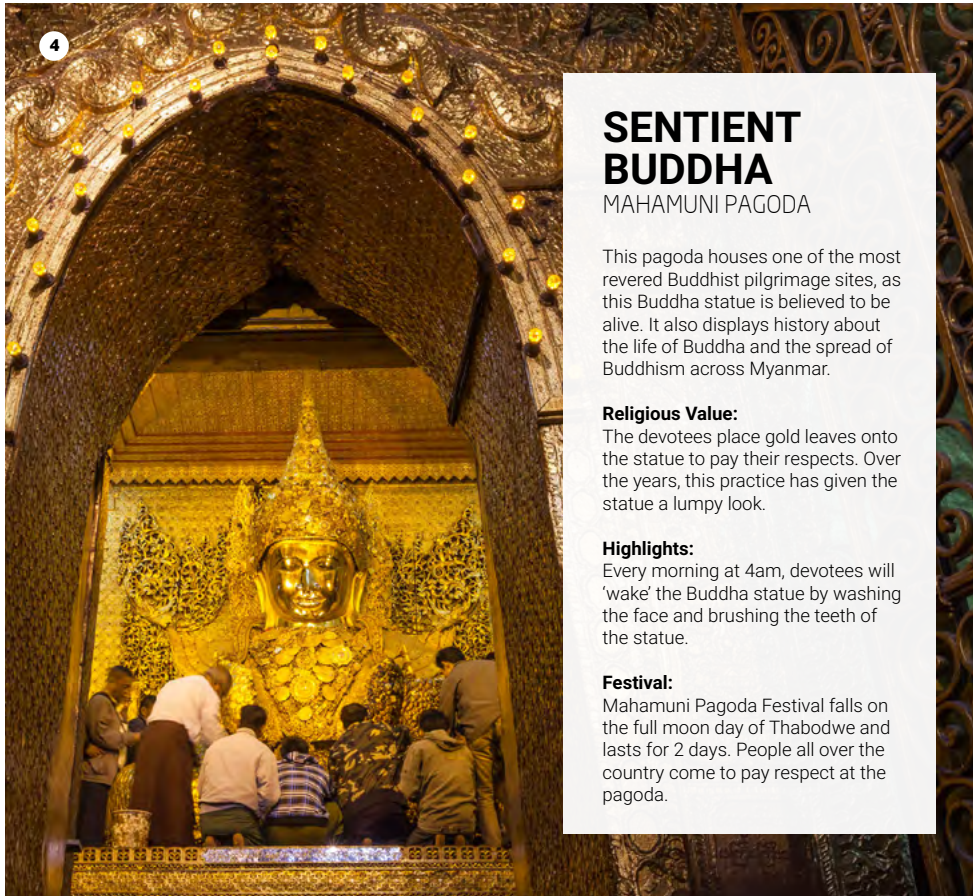
Sule Pagoda is uniquely located in the city centre of Yangon. According to legend, it was built during the lifetime of Buddha and thus is around 2,000 years old. It sits at the roundabout of Sule Pagoda Road and Mahabandoola Road and costs 3,000 Kyats to enter.

Religious Value:

It enshrines a hair relic of Buddha.

Highlights:

It is 48 metres tall in the city and sports an unusual octagonal design.



SENTIENT BUDDHA

MAHAMUNI PAGODA

This pagoda houses one of the most revered Buddhist pilgrimage sites, as this Buddha statue is believed to be alive. It also displays history about the life of Buddha and the spread of Buddhism across Myanmar.

Religious Value:

The devotees place gold leaves onto the statue to pay their respects. Over the years, this practice has given the statue a lumpy look.

Highlights:

Every morning at 4am, devotees will 'wake' the Buddha statue by washing the face and brushing the teeth of the statue.

Festival:

Mahamuni Pagoda Festival falls on the full moon day of Thabodwe and lasts for 2 days. People all over the country come to pay respect at the pagoda.

ANCIENT RELIC

SHWESANDAW PAGODA

This pagoda is located in the Old Bagan and was constructed in 1057 by King Anawrahta, the founder of Bagan kingdom. It is made of 5 terraces and stands at nearly 100 metres tall. It costs 24,000 Kyats to enter, but the fee also grants access to the Old Bagan for five days.

Religious Value:

It houses hair relics of Buddha.

Highlights:

The Buddha image is believed to date back to the 11th century. The walls also have murals from the ancient kingdom.

Festival:

Shwesandaw Pagoda Festival displays the tooth relic for pilgrims to view and is celebrated in November.

5



TEMPLES OF OLD

ANANDA TEMPLE

In the entire city of Bagan, Ananda Temple stands as one of the oldest. The temple grounds is shaped similar to a Greek cross and has four golden Buddha statues inside.

Religious Value:

The four Buddhas inside the temple represent the four previous Buddhas that have reached nirvana, namely, Kassapa Buddha (South), Kakusandha Buddha (North), Konagamana Buddha (East) and Gautama Buddha (West).

Highlights:

The Kassapa image seems to reflect a different expression when viewed from different angles.

Festival:

Ananda Pagoda Festival is the largest yearly celebration in Bagan and is a 15-day event of prayer rituals and fun entertainment. It usually begins in the first week of January to the end of the month.

6



SIMPLY ETHEREAL

HSINBYUME PAGODA

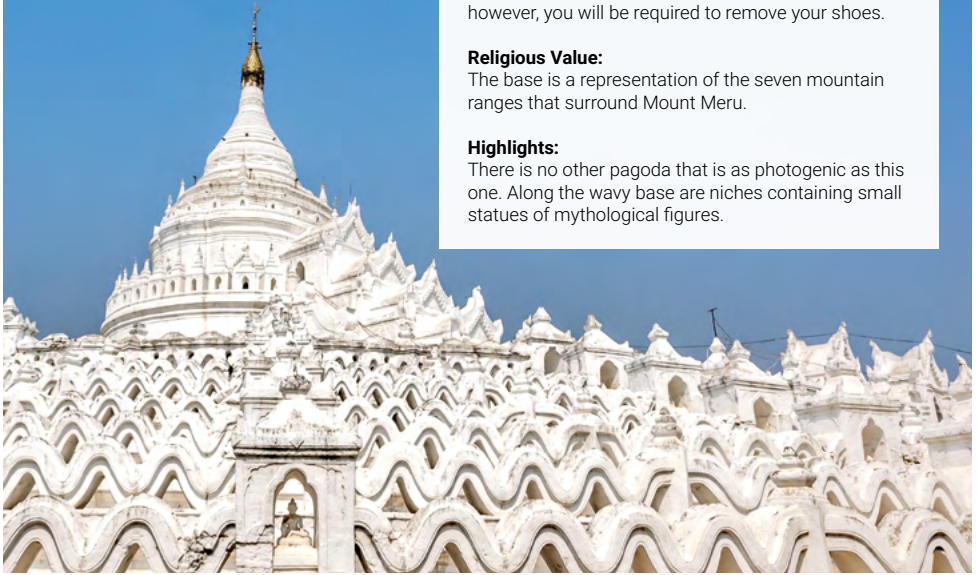
This pagoda lies along the Ayeyarwady River and its completely white exterior gleams brightly. The architecture of this structure is unique as it has wavy lines across the terrace. There is no fee to enter, however, you will be required to remove your shoes.

Religious Value:

The base is a representation of the seven mountain ranges that surround Mount Meru.

Highlights:

There is no other pagoda that is as photogenic as this one. Along the wavy base are niches containing small statues of mythological figures.



BUDDHA'S BOOK

KUTHODAW PAGODA

This pagoda is known for the 'World's Largest Book' with 729 marble slabs inscribed with Buddhist teachings. The teachings are written in a language known as 'Pali' and can only be read by trained monks. It costs 7,500 Kyats to enter.

Religious Value:

The texts were copied from ancient manuscripts made of dried palm leaves, with every letter chiselled onto the stone.

Highlights:

Each slab measures 153 centimetres tall and 107 centimetres wide. One of the slabs describes how the 'World's Largest Book' came about.





NINE WONDERS

SHWEZIGON PAGODA

This pagoda is considered to be the religious heart of Bagan. The name originated from 'Zeyabon' in a poem about the nine wonders of Shwezigon, so it was called 'Zeyakon'. This temple was built by King Anawratha, founder of Bagan, after his white elephant that was carrying holy relics kneeled at this spot.

Religious Value:

It enshrines a few relics which are Buddha's frontal and collarbones, a copy of the tooth relic from Sri Lanka, and an emerald Buddha image from China.

Highlights:

The expressions of the four large Buddha statues change, depending on where you stand.

Festival:

The Shwezigon Festival is celebrated in November, which is a chance for travellers to experience the culture of Bagan.

