

## DVĀRAVATĪ AND OLD BURMA

by

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The so-called Burmese Era, dating from 638 A.D., should rather be called the Pyu Era, for it is pretty certain that it was used, and first used, by the Pyu of Śrī Kṣetra (modern Hmawza, 4 miles S.E. of Prome).<sup>1</sup> Indeed, I suspect that it is the date of the founding of that city, the first capital of Burma in any large sense. Megaliths found in the neighbourhood may well be older than that date; but I doubt if anything Buddhist antedates it.

Old Mon inscriptions and late Burmese Chronicles lay great stress on the founding; but the dates they give are far too early. In the great Shwezigôn inscription (c. 1100 A.D.)<sup>2</sup> the Buddha foretells that the Rishi Vishnu (the future king of Pagan, Kyanzittha), "together with my son Gavaṃpati, and King Indra, and the (celestial architect) Viśvakarman, and Katakarma king of the Nāgas, shall build the city called *Sisit*" i.e. Śrī Kṣetra. The Chronicles<sup>3</sup> add that the Buddha himself flew over and stood on Mt Po-u, north of the site, in order to make his prophecy. Earth-convulsions, he said, would mark the founding. The sea would retreat from its foundations (it is now 200 miles from the sea); and Mt. Pôpa, the 5000 ft. volcano in the heart of Burma, would "arise like a cone out of the earth". Gavaṃpati, the Rishi (Vishnu), Indra, the Nāga king, Garuḍa, Caṇḍī (Dūrgā) and Parameśvara (Śhiva), all were present at the founding. Indra stood in the centre. The Nāga king swished his head round, describing the perimeter. The area enclosed by the walls, said to be 18 square miles, is far larger than that of Pagan, whose walls, even allowing for river-erosion, are barely 1 mile square. The difference lies in the

1. See C.O. Blagden. "The 'Pyu' Inscriptions", *Epig. Indica* Vol. XII, No. 16, reprinted at *J.S.R.S.* Vol. VII Part 1, pp. 37-44 (esp. pp. 42-43). The era was used in the Pyu kings' urn-inscriptions, brilliantly read by Blagden. The period covered is from 35-80, sc. 673-718 A.D. 718 is the last certain date in the history of Pyu Śrī Kṣetra.

2. *Epig. Birm.* I, II, Inscr. I, Face, A, 11. 30-33. The date of the founding is given in Inscr. III, Face C, 1.3: "in the year of my reaching Nirvāna", i.e. 544 B.C. according to Burma tradition.

3. See, e.g., *Glass Palace Chronicle* (transl. from the 'Hmannan Yazawin' by Pe Maung Tin and G.H. Luce, 1923, Oxford University Press) pp. 7, 14-15. The date of the founding is given as 101 A.B., i.e. 443 B.C.

presence or absence of ricefields. At Pagan there are none. At Śrī Kṣetra, the northern half of the city, and much of the southern, is ricefield.

All this fuss about the founding points, I suspect, to the fact that it was the first strongly Buddhist capital in Burma. I used to think that there was an earlier Buddhist capital. Chinese authors<sup>4</sup> tell of plans made (but cancelled on his death) by Fan Shih Wan (Śrī Māra.), the great king of Fu-nan, to conquer the thriving port of CHIN-LIN (or CHIN-CH'ĒN). This was near the beginning of the 3rd century A.D. Chin-lin was situated on a big bay over 2,000 *li* west of Fu-nan. It was a populous kingdom, rich in silver and ivory. *Chin*, the first syllable, means Gold, *Suvanna*. Two thousand *li* inland beyond it, in a wide plain, was the kingdom of LIN-YANG (Liem-yang), with an ardent Buddhist population of over 100,000 families, including several thousand monks: "one goes there (from Chin-lin) by carriage or on horseback. There is no route by water. All the people worship the Buddha". Two thousand *li* beyond Lin-yang, was NU-HOU kingdom of "the descendants of slaves", over 20,000 families, conterminous with Yung-ch'ang (Pao-shan).—There are some discrepancies in the texts, throwing doubt on whether the "great bay" was the Gulf of Siam or the Gulf of Martaban. I used to think the latter: but now, in view of what we know about the antiquity of Dvāravatī, and perhaps Haripuñjaya, I incline to place Lin-yang in North Siam, rather than in Central Burma. Lying equidistant between the sea and Nu-hou Yung-ch'ang, it might be in either country.

Another reason that inclines me to place it in Siam is the recent work of U Aung Thaw,<sup>5</sup> the energetic head of our present Burma Archaeological Department. He has been excavating, 'Peikthano-myō', a large walled ruin at Kōkkōgwa, a hundred miles north of

4. For 金隣 Chin-lin (金陳 Chin-ch'ên), 林陽 Lin-yang, and 奴後 Nu-hou, see discussion at *J.S.R.S.* 1924, Vol. XIV, Part II, pp. 142-158; 1937, Vol. XXVII, Part III, p. 240, n. 1. The chief Chinese sources are *Liang-shu*, ch. 54 (Section on Fu-nan); *Shui-ching-chu* ch. 1, f. 6 r°; *T'ai-p'ing-yü-lan*, ch. 787, f. 4 v°; 790, f. 9 v°, 10 r°.

5. See Aung Thaw, *Preliminary Report on the Excavation at Peikthano-myō, 1959* (publ. by the Asia Foundation for the Archaeological Survey of Burma). *A.S.S.* 1959, pp. 8-10 (Burmese), and Plates 1 to 28.

Śrī Kṣetra. It is certainly older than Śrī Kṣetra. U Aung Thaw has revealed a number of large buildings and many interesting objects: but, in spite of the name ("Vishnu City"), hardly any Indian writing, and little evidence of Indian workmanship, and none whatever of Buddhism. Nor, I think, has he found megaliths. At Śrī Kṣetra, on the other hand, almost everything dug up (apart from megaliths) shows the influence of India—whether Buddhist (Hīnayāna or Mahāyāna) or Brahmanic (Vaishnavite). The southern half of the city is dotted with large cylindrical stupas, bell-like encased stupas, and small vaulted temples with great variety of plan and shape. There are also cemeteries with pots of ashes ranged in terraces. The Pyu kings still clung to megalithic customs: their ashes are found in huge stone urns, engraved with Pyu inscriptions, but otherwise like those of the Plaine des Jarres in Laos.<sup>6</sup>

Mr. Chairman, this is my first visit to Thailand. Let me admit that I am appalled at my temerity in addressing Thailand's eminent scholars about their antiquities. But with your permission, Sir, I propose to try and compare the arts of Mon Dvāravatī, as shown especially in Dupont's book, with those of Burma: namely the Pyu of Śrī Kṣetra (7th—8th cent.), the coastal Burma Mon (*Rāmaññadesa*), and the inland Mon/Burmese of Pagan (11th—13th cent.).

My first feeling, I confess, is how different they all are—even Dvāravatī Mon and Burma Mon. There was little or no difference between these Mons, either in language or race. The difference lay, I suppose, in the different influences from India which informed them. Dupont sees in Dvāravatī Mon especially the influence of Amarāvati and Ceylon. In Burma Mon, both architecture and sculpture, I see little Andhra influence except in the south. I only wish there were more, for the Andhras were great sculptors.

I see hardly any Singhalese influence before the 11th century. I see, on the other hand, the clear dominance of North Indian models, at any rate at Pagan. Your ancient Buddhism was simpler and purer than ours. It seems to date from before the wide diffusion of Shaivism

6. See M. Colani, *Mégalithes du Haut-Laos*, 2 vols., 1925 (Paris, École Française d'Extrême-Orient).

in Upper India. Our Buddhism, especially in the north (North Arakan, Pagan and even Prome) had close contact with the Mahāyānist, Tāntric, and Brahmanic schools of Pāla and post-Pāla Bengal. It was only, I think, after 1070 A.D., with the obtaining of the full Pali Tipiṭaka from Ceylon, that the great change to Theravāda was finally possible at Pagan. The chief agent in that change was King Kyanzittha, who reigned from 1084 to 1113 A.D. Round about 1090, near the beginning of his reign, he was building a Theravāda temple, the Nagayon, on one side of the road at Pagan, while his chief queen, (perhaps a lady from East Bengal) was building a Tāntric Mahāyānist temple, the Abèyadana, on the opposite side of the road. Kyanzittha's final temple, the Ananda, which dates (I think) about 1105 or later,<sup>7</sup> marks the final triumph of Singhalese Theravāda in Burma.

LATERITE. Dupont says little about laterite architecture or sculpture. At P'ong Tük—one of your oldest site—Coedès noted plenty of it:<sup>8</sup> buildings of brick and laterite, which foundations, round and square, of laterite blocks, neatly arranged; high basement platforms faced with laterite, with simple fine plinth-mouldings. My colleague, Col. Ba Shin, who had the great privilege last year of visiting your old sites under your guidance, thinks you may have here just as much laterite-work as we have in coastal Burma. At P'ong Tük, he noted "huge laterite pillars and carved blocks for the waist and recesses of the stupa". At the base of the Phra Paṭhom, "a lifesize torso-image, a ten-spoke Wheel of the Law, 3 small stupas, a carved pedestal, a large vase on a pedestal, and (perhaps) a *linga*—all in laterite. Near

7. Dupont (pp. 6, 57, etc.) follows Duroiselle (*A. S. I.* 1913-14, pp. 64-65) in giving 1090 A.D. as the date of the completion of the Ananda. I think this is much too early. The Mon inscription cited by Duroiselle, which was later edited by Blagden in Vol. III, Part 1, of *Epigraphia Sirmatica*, records the building of the palace (1102 A.D.), not of the Ananda. The "Burmese oral tradition" that the king "had the architect put to death, lest any similar edifice should be erected by any of his successors", to which Harvey (*History of Burma*, p. 41) adds the further refinement that "at the foundation a child was buried alive to provide the building with a guardian spirit", is just folklore cliché, not to say rubbish. It should not be repeated in serious history, any more than Governess Anna's account of Gate-sacrifice in 1865 Siam—a libel finally exposed by Mr. A.B. Griswold in his *King Möngkut of Siam* (Asia Society, New York, 1961).

8. See "The excavations at P'ong Tük and their importance for the ancient history of Siam", *Journal of the Siam Society*, Vol. XXI, Part 3, pp. 195-209.

Ratburi, "the Wat Mahāthat built of laterite, together with its enclosure-walls; also a seated Buddha image". At Lopburi, the Phra Prang San Yot, "built entirely of laterite, with pediments and spires beautifully carved"; and within the round-about across the railway-line, 'a ruin which looks like a hillock of laterite blocks, with two stone, images of Vishnu' (he thought). Finally, near Prachinburi to the east, "a huge laterite block, shaped like the *anda* of a stupa".

Was not Laterite the first native material, in the coastal regions of both our countries, to be used for Buddhist and pre-Buddhist art?—As for Burnt Brick, though hallowed by Aśoka's use of it, it is a foreign Indian word (*iṭṭhaka*) in nearly all our languages—Thai, Shan, Mon, Khmer, Burmese, etc. Laterite was certainly the old building and art-stone in Rāmaññadesa. It was used for drains, gargoyles, square wells, ramps, pillars and pedestals, casings of relic-caskets; for animal sculptures, platforms, city-walls and all the oldest Buddhas and pagodas; for colossal monolith such as the Htamalôn seated Buddha, 17 ft. 9 in. high. Such images soon lose their surface features, but the beauty of their colouring (if not buried in paint and plaster) remains for centuries.

At Zôkthôk<sup>9</sup> near our Kelāsa, where some of the Rākṣas turned Buddhist and offered their "ropes of hair" (*Mon juk sok*), they assembled huge beams of laterite, artfully piled, to construct the pagoda. All around there is a glorious congregation—all native monoliths of red iron claystone, skilfully carved: umbrellas with bead and tassel fringes resting on octagonal posts, altars hour-glass shaped with double lotus mouldings, knobbed pillars with table-tops, ends of ramps with volutes, 'buds' for corner-posts with little niches for candles, four-sided stupas, pinnacled, with four shrines for seated Buddhas, and all manner of carved stands with leaf-patterns. All are in laterite. They outblaze the noonday sun in April, yet keep their porous calm and coolness. For sheer workaday beauty, what stone in the world can beat it!

REREDOS. There is one great difference in iconology between Mon and Pyu. The earliest Mon images, both in Burma and

9. See U Mya, *Arch. Surv. Ind., Report 1934-35*, pp. 51-52 and Plate XXI.

(I think) Siam, were always in the round. With the Pyu, and usually the Burmans, they must be backed with a reredos ('tagè'). It is a relic, I suspect, from megalithic religion. The oldest images at Śrī Kṣetra are massive stone reliefs, Buddhist or Brahmanic.<sup>10</sup> But what is massive is not the figure but the stone 'tagè'. Right down to Pagan times, even when both are made of brick, the 'tagè', often plain, seems almost as prominent as the image. It has even recurred to me that one could measure the decay of one religion and the advance of the other by the relative thickness of 'tagè' and image!

VAULTING. In the temples, the greatest difference between Siam and Burma lies in the vaulting. From Pyu times (7th-8th century), right through our Pagan and Pinya periods, and (rarely) beyond, the Radiating Pointed Arch has been the main, preserving feature of Burma's architecture. No two Pyu temples are alike in plan; but all employ the radiating arch. The groining of the four pendentives at Śrī Kṣetra is sometimes crude and two-dimensional (e.g. the Bèbè shrine), but it can be perfect (e.g. the East Zégu temple). This neglected temple, as M. Henri Marchal realized,<sup>11</sup> is a small masterpiece, the prototype of Pagan.

Radiating arches have also been found in Old Pegu,<sup>12</sup> but not yet at Thatôn. The Mons, even at Pagan, did not entirely trust the radiating arch. At the centre of the archway they usually insert a lintel of carved or fossil wood. The original 'Mon' type of temple appears to have been a square shrine, with elaborate plinth-mouldings on the outer side, tall niches richly embossed above them, perforated stone windows with pediments, dado, and *Kīrtimukha* frieze and cornice. A lean-to corridor was later added, with perforated windows on three sides, and a broad entrance-hall on the fourth. This lean-to corridor had only a half-vault, which could not bear the shock

10. See, e.g., *Arch. Surv. Ind., Report 1909-10*, Plate L (r), "Stone Sculpture from the Kyaukkathein Pagoda".

11. See his "Notes d'Architecture, Birmane, 1° Zégu Est", with its excellent drawings at *B.E.F.E.O.* t. XI, 1940, pp. 425-431.

12. See J.A. Stewart, "Excavation and Exploration in Pegu", *J. Burma Research Society* Vol. VII, Part I (April 1917), pp. 17-18, 20. There are also radiating arches in the modernized Theinbyu pagoda, N. NW. of Kamanat village, E. of Pegu Old City.

of earthquake, as full keystone vaulting could. That is why the corridor roofs of so many of the 'Mon' type of temples at Pagan, have fallen in. The Old Burmans, taught by Mon experience, avoided this mistake: their fully vaulted temples have stood the shocks of centuries.

Dupont is wrong in saying (on p. 125) that vaulting was not used in Burma monasteries, partly because the spans were too broad. There is great variety in plan of the brick monasteries of Pagan; but all are vaulted. One monastery,<sup>13</sup> dated 1223 A.D. N.E. of Lémyethna temple, Minnanthu, has two large vaulted halls (44×20 ft., and 40×15 ft.), set at right angles to each other, with a mezzanine corridor crossing between the spandrels. Sad to say, nearly all these daring monasteries are in ruin, because the walls were too thin, quite vertical, and not buttressed; no allowance was made for the outward thrust of the vaulting.

Where did the Pyu learn the art of vaulting?—Not, I think, from the Chinese Later Han dynasty tombs in Tongking, as M. Henri Marchal suggested;<sup>14</sup> for there the style of bricklaying is quite different: the brick's broad face being at right angles to the plane of the arch.<sup>15</sup> In Burma, as at Nālandā<sup>16</sup> and in Central Asia,<sup>17</sup> the brick's broad face is always parallel to the arch-face. No radiating arches survive in Eastern India, so far as I am aware, as old as those of Śrī Kṣetra. But I expect the Pyu learnt their fine technique from North Indian

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13. See Plate 5 of Mr. Braxton Sinclair's article, "The Monasteries of Pagan" in *J.B.R.S.*, Vol. X, Part I, reprinted at pp. 585-8 of the *Fiftieth Anniversary Publication* No. 2. The Lémyethna dedications are recorded under date 585 S., in *Inscriptions of Burma*, Portfolio I, Plate 73. The pillar is still *in situ*.
14. *loc. cit.*, pp. 428, 435-6.
15. See, e.g., O.R.T. Janse, *Archaeological Research in Indo-China*, Vol. I (Harvard University Press, 1947), Plate 7 (2), which shows "the undisturbed brick construction" of one of the Thanh-hoa tombs. Or see G. Coedès, *Les peuples de la péninsule indochinoises* (Paris, 1962), Pl. V (bas).
16. Nālandā Monastery No. 1 (Granary) has two radiating barrel-arches, between vertical front and back walls, the bricks of voussoir being laid (as in Burma) parallel to the arch-face. Here wooden lintels are also usual. The date is thought to be 9th cent. These vaults, says Dr. Ghosh, are "among the first specimens of the true arch in ancient India": see his *Gulde to Nālandā* (Delhi 1959) p. 8.
17. See L. Beylié, *Prome et Samara* (Paris, 1907), p. 99, fig. 71, for a sketch of an 8th cent. barrel-vault in Chinese Turkestan. Here too the broad face of the bricks is parallel to the arch-face.

architects, whether from Bihar, Orissa or Bengal. Heavy rainfall and earthquake may account for the disappearance of such vaulting, both in Eastern India and at Thatôn.

MON PEDIMENT (*clac, clac*).—For architectural ornament the Pagan Burman was deeply indebted to the Mon. The Mon pediment is the most conspicuous detail of Pagan architecture, crowning or enclosing almost every arch and window. *Śrī*, Goddess of Luck and wife of Vishnu, is often seen in the top centre. This goes back to the carved stone jambs and architraves of Buddhist toraṇas at Sāñcī,<sup>18</sup> or to the entrance of the Jain Ananta Gumphā Khandagiri, in Orissa. But the two elephants with trunks bathing her, have passed at Pagan into floral arabesques. At the lower corners of the pediment, there are spouting *makaras*. *Śrī* and Makara are, properly speaking, Vaishnava figures. King Kyanzittha, who declared himself an Avatār of Vishnu, popularized the Mon *clac* at Pagan, though it occurs earlier on the Nan-paya and the Nat-hlaung-gyaung (a Vishnu temple). The word *claco*, a pure Mon word, occurs in one of the Vat Kukut inscriptions at Haripuñjaya;<sup>19</sup> and the pediment itself crowns every tiered niche in that magnificent monument.<sup>20</sup> Judging from photographs, I guess that the *makaras* are shown, but not the *ŚRĪ*. I do not know if the *clac* occurs in Dvāravatī art. The two Mon words, *Kyāx Śrī*, “Goddess *Śrī*”, have passed into Burmese ‘kyesthyé’ as an abstract noun meaning “splendour”.

VOTIVE TABLETS.—Burma’s art here comes nearest to that of Dvāravatī. For the origin of Votive Tablets—often shown by the Buddhist Credo (*ye dharmā hetuprabhavā* etc.) stamped in Sanskrit-Nāgarī, usually on the obverse—is clearly from N.E. India, especially Bodhgayā. After comparison, not only with Dupont’s book (where few tablets are shown), but also with Coedès’ admirable article, “Siamese Votive Tablets”, published in the Siam Society’s Journal,<sup>21</sup>

18. See e.g., H. Zimmer, *The Art of Indian Asia*, Plates Vol., Nos. 18, 27 (Sāñcī).

19. See *B.E.F.E.O.* t. XXX, p. 97 (Vat Kukut Inscr. II, 1.4).

20. See *The Arts of Thailand* (ed. by T. Bowie, 1960), p. 50.

21. *J.S.S.* Vol. XX (Part I,) 1926, pp. 1-23, with 15 plates. Reprinted in the Fiftieth Anniversary Vol. I, pp. 150-172 (1954).



and also with notes made by Col. Ba Shin on his visits to the Bangkok and other museums, we have found 8 or 9 types of plaques in Burma which are exact, or close, copies of yours in Thailand.

(i) Coedès' Plate I (top) illustrates the First Sermon: the Buddha seated between stupas in *pralambanâsana*, *dharmacakramudrâ*, with a Deer on either side of his footstool, and the Wheel of the Law below it. Your plaque comes from P'ong Tük.<sup>22</sup> Several variants, never (I think) quite the same as yours but very similar, have been found at Pagan,<sup>23</sup> Śrī Kṣetra<sup>24</sup> and Twanté<sup>25</sup> near Rangoon. A bronze mould for such tablets has been found at Myinkaba, and is now in Rangoon University Library.

(ii) A rare variety, from Nyaungbingan in Meiktila district, shows the Buddha seated in the same attitude between two Bodhisattvas, seated on the same throne in *lalitâsana*.<sup>26</sup> I do not know if this variety is found in Thailand. But a third variety, oblong with arching top, is shown in Coedès' Plate II, top, right and left corners. Here the Bodhisattvas are standing, and three 'Dhyāni' Buddhas are added at the top of the plaque. The plaques come from Badalung and P'ra Pathom. Coedès already notes "an identical tablet" from Burma, "pictured by R.C. Temple."<sup>27</sup> This comes from Kawgun Cave, 30 miles above Moulmein. There is a duplicate in the Indian Museum, Calcutta, said to come from Śrī Kṣetra. We have a similar oval plaque, also from Śrī Kṣetra.<sup>28</sup>

(iii) Coedès' plate III (centre) shows an oval plaque with the Buddha seated in the centre preaching to 8 (Coedès says 12)

22. See correction at *J.S.S.* Vol. XXI (Part 3), 1923, p. 196, n. 1.

23. See Thomann, *Pagan*, (Stuttgart, 1923), Abbildung 70 and p. 103. *Burm. Archaeol. Neg.* 2710 (1926-27). *Arch. Surv. Ind* 1915, Part I, Plate XX (f), and p. 24 U Mya, *Votive Tablets of Burma*, Part I, figs. 57-62.

24. See U Mya, *Votive Tablets of Burma*, Part II, figs. 87, 88.

25. See *A.S.I.* 1906, Plate LIII, fig. 2, and p. 134.

26. *Burm. Archaeol. Neg.* 2436 (1923-24). *Arch. Surv. Burm.* 1922, p. 11.

27. See *Indian Antiquary* 1894 plate XVI (top right).

28. See U Mya, *V.T.B.*, Part II, figs. 53, 54.

persons, seated in ecstatic attitudes around him. It comes from Tham Guhā Svarga. A good specimen of the same plaque, from Śrī Kṣetra, is in the Indian Museum, Calcutta, and a worn specimen from the same place is also shown by U Mya.<sup>29</sup>

(iv) On the same plate (bottom right), coming from the same cave, is a round Mahāyānist plaque showing the Green Tārā (*Śyāma* or *Khadiravanī* sitting in *lalitāsana*, right hand on knee in *varadamudrā*. This also is in the Indian Museum, found at Śrī Kṣetra.<sup>30</sup>

(v) Coedès Plate V (centre) shows a high triangular plaque with the Earth-touching Buddha, royally adorned, mounted on three elephant-heads, with many other Buddhas beside and above him. This type was found at Bejraburi. Specimens have also been found at Rangoon Tadāgalé.<sup>31</sup>

(vi) Col. Ba Shin has a photograph of an oval plaque, showing the Earth-touching Buddha seated between stupas within an arch crowned with an umbrella. It is said to come from a cave in Khao Ngu hill near Ratburi. The strong tall-torsoed figure with long arm falling vertically, is found in East Bengal;<sup>32</sup> but it is so characteristic of Aniruddha's work at Pagan that I have ventured to call it 'the Aniruddha type'. Aniruddha's own plaques have 2 full lines of Sanskrit/Nāgarī below the double lotus, containing the king's signature.<sup>33</sup> Others like yours, have 3 full lines, containing the Buddhist Credo.<sup>34</sup> The former come from the king's pagoda, Pagán Shwehsandaw; the latter from other sites at Pagán. A terracotta mould has also been found.

(vii) Col. Ba Shin has 3 photographs of a plaque, squared at the base, pointed at the top, which shows the same type of Earth-

29. *V.T.B.* Part II, figs. 84, 85.

30. Cf. U. Mya, *V.T.B.*, Part II figs. 86.

31. See U. Mya *V.T.B.* Part I, Fig. 88.

32. e.g. N.K. Bhattasali, *Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical Sculptures in the Dacca Museum* (Dacca, 1929), Plate IX (a).

33. See *A.S.I.* 1927, pp. 162-3 and Plate XXXIX (a); 1915, Part I, Plate XX (h). U Mya, *V.T.B.*, Part I, fig. 4.

34. See U Mya, *V.T.B.*, Part I, fig. 18, Mon Bo Kay, "Ye dhammā hetuppabhavā," *Yin-yé-hnu* magazine, Vol. III, Part 9 (Feb. 1961), p. 116.

touching Buddha, seated between stupas on a high recessed throne, under an arch crowned with sikhara and stupa. They come, I think, from Kañcanaburi.—This type, in Burma, we associate with Aniruddha's son and successor, 'Saw Lu', whose title, stamped on some of these plaques in Sanskrit/Nāgarī, is *Śrī Bajrābharāṇa*. These have only 1 line of writing below the throne,<sup>35</sup> while yours have two. Our Sawlu plaques have been found so far only in the north, at Mandalay, Tagaung, and Kanthida in Katha township.

(viii) Col. Ba Shin has also photographs of plaques, squared below, arching to a point above, showing a similar Earth-touching Buddha seated on double lotus, with 3 stupas below the lotus, as well as 2 faint lines of what looks like Mon writing. They come from Tham Rsi, Khao Ngu hill, Ratburi—Mr. David Steinberg of the Asia Foundation found the lower half of a sūntar plaque at Mōkti pagoda, at the mouth of Tavoy river. It is now with the Burma Historical Commission. Several other plaques from the same site had Mon writings on the back, showing that they were made by governors (*sambeī*) of Tavoy (Dawāy), under king Kyanzittha (*Śrī Tribhovanāditya*).<sup>36</sup>

(ix) Finally, Col. Ba Shin has a photograph of a thick-rimmed plaque from Uthong, Suphanburi, showing the Earth-touching Buddha under an arch crowned with an umbrella, between 4 other small Buddhas in two tiers. Below is a line of inscription in Old Mon saying; "This *Buddhamuni* was made by *Matrārājīkār*", governor of the *Madrā*, a people N.W. of India. Perhaps he was a minister of Kyanzittha who gave several of his ministers fanciful Sanskrit titles.—Dozens of this type of plaque have been found at Pagan, E. of the Mingalazedi.<sup>37</sup> Often they have Mon writings on the rims. One is to be seen in the Trésor at Pegu, Shwemawdaw pagoda.

THE EIGHT SCENES.—One large and important group of votive tablets at Pagan, illustrates the Eight Scenes (*atthamahāthāna*) in the life of Gotama Buddha. These have a long history in Indian

35. See U Mya, *V.T.B.*, Part I, fig. 38. *A.S.B.* 1948-52, Plate I (right).

36. See U Mya, *V.T.B.*, Part I, figs. 79, 80. Cf. Duroiselle, *A.S.B.*, 1924, pp. 38-40; *Ibid.* 1959, Plate 31.

37. See U Mya, *V.T.B.*, Part I, fig. 98.

art, from Gandhāra onwards. At Old Nālandā one of the Pāla kings built a colossal image of the Earth-touching Buddha against a reredos 15 ft. high and 9½ ft. broad, showing the Eight Scenes.<sup>38</sup> This, and the many Pāla carvings on black slate, must have spread the fashion to both our countries. In Burma, at Srī Kṣetra, only two fragments of a votive tablet of the Eight Scenes have yet been found.<sup>39</sup> At Pagán they are plentiful. They may be painted, as in Loka-hteikpan temple, on a large scale, 18 ft. in height.<sup>40</sup> They may be condensed onto terracotta tablets barely 3 inches high. The finest are intricately carved on what we call 'Andagu' stone, defined in the dictionaries as Dolomite.<sup>41</sup>

Not having previously seen mention of the Eight Scenes in Thailand, I was delighted to read, in *Artibus Asiae*,<sup>42</sup> an article by Coedès: "Note sur une stèle indienne d'époque Pāla découverte à Ayudhyā (Siam)". It is a small gilded stone, a little over 6 inches high. The kind of stone is not stated; one would like to know whether it is a stone common to Bengal and Thailand, or one peculiar to either; for although the style is plainly Pāla, the size is that of our 'andagu' carvings, not of ordinary Pāla black slate reliefs. The scenes shown include the usual Eight:

- |                         |                  |                      |
|-------------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Nativity,            | at Kapilavatthu. | (bottom left corner) |
| 2. Enlightenment,       | at Bodhgayā.     | (center)             |
| 3. First Sermon,        | near Benares.    | (middle tier, left)  |
| 4. Great Twin Miracles, | at Sāvatti.      | (middle tier, right) |

38. See A. Ghosh, *A Guide to Nālandā*, pp. 20-21. Burgess, *The Ancient Monuments, Temples, and Sculptures of India*, Part II, fig. 226. Duroiselle, *A.S.B.* 1923, p. 31.

39. See L. de Beylié, *Prome et Samara*, Plate V, fig. 2, and *L'Architecture Hindoue en Extrême-Orient*, p. 245, fig. 198 (from the Lémyet-hna temple). *A.S.I.* 1910, Pl. XLIX 7 and p. 123, (from the East Zégu). Col. Ba Shin reports that a complete specimen (except for damaged rims) has been found 300 yds W. of the Lémyet-hna, Srī Kṣetra, and is now in the library-museum of Shwe-hpon-pwint pagoda, Prome Town. Height 5¾" Breadth 4⅔" Thickness 1⅜"

40. See Col. Ba Shin, *Loka-hteikpan* (Rangoon, 1962), pp. 10-12, and Plates 10, 13, 14, 16, 17a, 18a, 19a, 21.

41. See, e.g., *A.S.I.* 1923, Plate XXXIII (d) and p. 123; 1930-34, Part I, p. 180 (items 4 and 5), and Part II, Plate C (c, d). *A.S.B.* 1935, Plates 9 and p. 14.

42. *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. XXII 1/2, 1959, pp. 9-14.

- |                                       |                |                         |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| 5. Descent from<br>Tāvatiṃsa,         | to Sarikassa.  | ( top tier, left )      |
| 6. Monkey's offering<br>of honeycomb, | near Vesāli.   | ( bottom right corner ) |
| 7. Taming of Nālā-<br>giri elephant,  | at Rājagaha.   | ( top tier, right )     |
| 8. Parinirvāṇa,                       | at Kusinagara. | ( top )                 |

There are also 3 additional figures in the middle of the lower tier—the Buddha sheltered by the Mucalinda Nāga, flanked by two Buddhas with outer hands on knee, and inner raised in *abhayamudrā*. Coedès dates the carving 11th or 12th century, judging partly from the writing of the Sanskrit/Pali Buddhist Credo engraved on the reverse.

The arrangement of these scenes is not rigid, except that the Parinirvāṇa is always shown at the top, and the Nativity at the bottom; but the latter may be either on the left or the right, and the same applies to the other scenes. Burma plaques sometimes add an extra scene at the bottom centre; and several 'andagu' slabs add, between the 6 side-scenes and the central Buddha, another series of 6 (or 8) scenes in intermediate relief, showing the Seven Sites<sup>43</sup> in the neighbourhood of the Bodhi tree, where the Buddha, according to the later texts, spent the first seven weeks after the Enlightenment.

THE FAT MONK.—Dupont (p. 87, and fig. 253) shows a remarkable 'votive tablet' from Wat P'ra Pat'on in which a Fat Monk, seated with both hands supporting his belly (or is he in *dhyānamudrā*?), takes the place of the Buddha. In one of his reports<sup>44</sup> Duroiselle mentions, without illustrating it, a similar plaque found in a mound near Tilominlo temple, Pagán. Statuettes of the Fat Monk are plentiful in Burma, in stone, bronze, silver-gilt, bronze-gilt, plaster, terracotta, and unburnt clay. They are found frequently in old relic-chambers, at Śrī Kṣetra, Rangoon, Pegu, Mandalay, Pagan etc., from the 7th to the 17th Century. Perhaps the oldest is a stone statuette, once lacquered and gilded, found in the stone casket in the relic-chamber of Kyaik Dé-ap (Bo-ta-htaung) pagoda, Rangoon.<sup>45</sup>

43. See, e.g., *A.S.I.* 1930-34, Part I, p. 180 (item 5), and Part II, Plate C (c): *A.S.I.* 1929, Plate LII (e) and p. 113; *A.S.A.* 1923, Plate III, fig. 1, and pp. 30-31.

44. *A.S.I.* 1928-29, p. 111.

45. *A.S.B.* 1948-52, Plate III a, b.

In Thailand, I believe you call this Fat Monk *Kaccāyana*. — Is this the 5th–6th century author of the first Pali grammar, *Kaccāyana vyākaraṇa*? Or is it the eminent disciple of the Buddha, *Mahākaccāna*, famous for his golden complexion? — The rich youth of Soreyya, according to the *Dhammapada-atthakathā* ( I, 324 ff ), wished that his wife were like the latter: a prayer that seems improbable if he was really so obese. In Burma we hardly know how to identify him. Personally, I follow our venerable archaeologist, U Mya, in thinking he is *Gavaṃpati*, patron saint of the Mons, and a sort of ‘elder statesman’ in Buddhism, whose gilded images are mentioned in our inscriptions.<sup>46</sup> But I know no text that says Gavaṃpati was abnormally fat. And Burmese scholars have suggested that the monk is the Great Disciple of the Left, *Moggallāna*, uncomfortably swelled by the naughty *Māra* entering his belly, as told in the *Māratajjanīya Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*.<sup>47</sup>

THE DVĀRAVATĪ BUDDHA-IMAGE. — Our experts, Dr. Dupont and Dr. Le May,<sup>48</sup> are pretty well agreed about the distinctive features of the Buddha image in Mon Dvāravatī. Dupont (pp. 177-185) defines three of them:—

- ( i ) the brow-arches are joined.
- ( ii ) the figure seems almost naked, but sexless (“le nu asexué”).
- ( iii ) both hands tend to execute the same *mudrā*.

For ( i ), Dr. Le May says “lightly outlined eyebrows, in the form of a swallow springing”.

For ( ii ), he says “torso . . . like a nude sexless body under a fine diaphanous cloth”.

For ( iii ), he distinguishes two types:—

- ( a ) the standing Buddha with right hand raised in *abhaya mudrā*, or both in *vitarkamudrā*.
- ( b ) the image seated Europeanwise (*pralambanâsana*), either in *dharmacakramudrā*, or with right hand raised, left in lap.

46. e.g. *inscrs. of Burma*, Portfolio I, Plate 6, 11. 4-6, where gilded images of *Sāriputrā* ( 1 ), *Mokkalān* ( 1 ), and *Gavaṃpati* ( 2 ), are mentioned.

47. See *A.S.I.* 1928-29, p. 110.

48. See Reginald Le May, *The Culture of South-East Asia* (1954, London, Allen and Unwin), pp. 65 ff.

He also adds other features :—

- ( iv ) spiral curls of hair, of abnormal size.
- ( v ) elliptical form of face.
- ( vi ) bulging upper eyelids.
- ( vii ) the material never sandstone, but a hard blue-black limestone.

How does all this compare with our images in Burma. — I find it difficult to say. Nearly all these features, except the last, occur in some Burma images, both stone, bronze and terracotta. They are commonest perhaps at Pegu; but they occur everywhere from N. Arakan to Śrī Kṣetra. And they do not exclude other, different features. In many cases the images are so old or damaged that we cannot be sure about the curls, the eyelids or the brow-arches. We can, however, usually determine the *mudrā* and the *āsana*. The Burma image seated Europeanwise, represents ( with few exceptions ) *either* the First Sermon, *or* the Pārileyaka Retreat. In the former case hands are in *dharmacakramudrā*, with Wheel and Deer usually visible at the base. But the *pralambanāsana* is not obligatory in this scene. More often the Buddha sits crosslegged in Indian fashion. In the Pārileyaka scene he nearly always sits in *pralambanāsana*, sometimes turned half-left towards the Monkey in the right corner. He has usually almsbowl in lap. The Elephant is generally shown in the left corner, with an irrelevant monk behind.

*SAME MUDRĀ FOR BOTH HANDS.* — Images, seated or standing, where both hands execute the same *mudrā*, are always, in Burma, archaic. Here I would readily admit Dvāravatī influence: with this difference, that standing images are commoner in Dvāravatī, while seated images are commoner with us. Here is a summary of the Burma evidence :—

From Śrī Kṣetra come at least 4 such images, 3 seated cross-legged, 1 standing; 3 in bronze, 1 in gold. All have both hands raised in *vitarkamudrā*. The gold image, seated right leg on left, was found south of the Tharawady Gate, in a garden just outside it.<sup>49</sup> A beautiful bronze, seated in much the same pose, comes from the octagonal

49. See *A.S.I.* 1929, Plate LI ( g ) and pp. 106-7. *Burm. Arch. Neg.* 3097, 3098 ( 1928-29 ).

ruin at Kan-wet-hkaung-gôn.<sup>50</sup> Here the robe covers the left shoulder only. A similar bronze image, much cruder in style, is clearly a Pyu attempt to copy an Indian original, with features exaggerated, bulging almond eyes, large hands propped on the robe, and legs awkwardly superposed, right on left. It comes from a site west of Yindaik-kwin.<sup>51</sup> The standing bronze image, found by the Shwenyaungbin-yo abbot near his monastery S. of Taunglônnyo village,<sup>52</sup> wears a heavy pointed crown: but in all other respects he is dressed as a monk, with an indented line across the waist, and plain robe spreading behind the legs.

From the relic-chamber of a ruined pagoda at Twanté, some 15 miles W. of Rangoon, comes a fine bronze image of the Buddha seated in *pralambanâsana*, his delicate hands raised from the elbow in *vitarkamudrâ*. His robe covers only the left shoulder.<sup>53</sup>

At Pagan, 3 bronzes and 1 terracotta illustrate this feature. One small weathered bronze comes perhaps from Paunggu pagoda,<sup>54</sup> now mostly fallen into the river, just N. of the junction of Myinkaba Chaung and the Irawady. It is a Buddha seated cross-legged, right leg on left, with large hands propped at the wrist, raised in *abhaya-mudrâ*. With it was found another archaic bronze of the Pyu Maitreya. I have a note also, written in Pagan Museum, of a similar "small bronze of 'Pyu' style, headless, with tiny round legs and feet barely crossing, and both large hands in *abhayamudrâ*". Another bronze, from Pagan Shwehnsandaw,<sup>55</sup> shows the Buddha seated on double lotus, right leg on left, with both hands propped at the wrist. Here, I think, the attitude is *vitarkamudra*. The Shwehnsandaw, built by Aniruddha c. 1060 A.D. or earlier, contained some of the oldest Pagan tablets and bronzes, including Pyu.<sup>56</sup>

50. See *A.S.I.* 1928, Plate LIV (b) and p. 129 (item c). *Burm. Arch. Neg.* 3040 (1927-28).

51. See *A.S.I.* 1929, p. 105, item (v). *Burm. Arch. Neg.* 3055 (1928-29).

52. *A.S.B.* 1939, Appendix F, p. xii, no. 79. *Burm. Arch. Neg.* 4124 (1938-39).

53. See *A.S.B.* 1920, Plate II, figs. 1 and 2, and p. 25. *Burm. Arch. Neg.* 2179, 2180 (1920-21).

54. It is now at Pagan Museum, oddly labelled as found in a "stone mound W. of the Myazedi, 4 furlongs W. of the main road". I guess that the reference is to Paunggu pagoda.

55. *Burm. Arch. Neg.* 2721 (1926-27).

56. See Duroiselle, *A.S.I.* 1927, pp. 161-5 and Plate XXXIX (f).



The Hpetleik pagodas at Lokananda, 3 miles S. of Pagán, are probably older than Aniruddha. It was he, doubtless, who encased them each with a corridor to hold 550 unglazed Jātaka-plaques, the finest in Burma. In doing so, he reorientated the pagodas so as to face East, instead of North or West where the old stairways are still visible. At the West Hpetleik, the North steps led up to the main niche in the *aṅḍa* or bell. Here a row of very antique bricklike tablets can be seen, and 3 similar ones at Pagan Museum. They have long tenons which ran back into the bell. Faintly visible in the centre is a haloed Buddha of Dvāravatī type, standing with large hands raised, palms forward, perhaps in the pose of Argument (*vitarkamudrā*) rather than Freedom from Fear (*abhayamudrā*). Of the three tiers on each side, the upper one may hold stupas, the two lower ones worshippers.<sup>57</sup>

CONCLUSION.—Perhaps you will feel, as I do, that the really distinguishing features of Mon, or any other art, are not really contained in such rigid criteria. Useful as they are as workaday means of identification, they do not contain the essence of works of art, such as the many noble specimens from Dvāravatī to which Dr. Le May has introduced us. I do not think that we can rival these in Burma. But our archaeological record of Rāmaññadesa is far more incomplete, I fear, than is yours of Dvāravatī. And while we talk, with some confidence, about the ‘Mon’ element in the early temples of Pagan, we still write ‘Mon’ in inverted commas: for though we see clearly that it is different from Burmese, we are not always absolutely sure that it is Mon. To ascertain this, we shall have to do much more excavation in Tenasserim.

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57. See A.S.I. 1907, Plate L (d) and p. 127, where Taw Sein Ko suggested that they represent “Dīpankara . . . prophesying that Sumedha and Sumittā, a flower-girl, would respectively become Prince Siddhattha and his wife, Yasodharā.” Cf. A.S.B. 1908, pp. 11-12.



