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New Documents of Burmese Sculpture: Unpublished ‘Andagū’ Images

Claudine Bautze-Picron

THE CONTEXT: SCULPTURE DURING THE PAGAN PERIOD

The rich iconographic ornamentation of murals that covers the inner walls of the religious monuments built in the plain of Pagan between the 11th and 13th century cannot let forget that artists also practised their craft in producing various types of carvings which were distributed in very specific locations within and without the monuments. Decorative stucco carvings adorn the outer walls. Rows of terracotta plaques depicting *jātakas* (‘births’, i.e. ‘previous lives’ of the Buddha) are distributed on terraces or in galleries belonging to square monuments, such as the Ananda (or Nanda),¹⁾ the Shwezigon or the Hpet-leik.

Made of bricks under a stucco coating which was painted, images often of a very imposing size were constructed in most shrines showing the Buddha who displays the *bhūmisparśamudrā* (‘earth-touching gesture’); the same technique was also used for door-guardians who could flank the entrance to the shrine. Very tall wooden images, nearly 10 meters high, of the Buddhas of the Past were erected in the four wings of the Ananda, and similar ones, but cast and measuring c. 4 meters in height, stand in the four small temples flanking the Shwezigon.²⁾

Smaller wooden and metal carvings were also found, probably aimed at standing on an altar in front of the cult image or at being hidden in the relic chamber.³⁾ Among the wooden images, attention should be paid to a group of bejewelled Buddhas, whose identity has been an object of discussion, and who are all shown standing, the right hand displaying the *varadamudrā* (‘gesture of gift’) and the left one put on the chest while holding the extremity of the dress.⁴⁾ Whereas most metal images

1) LUCE 1969-70, I: 347-348 concerning the name of the monument. It is also named Ananda-gu-hpaya-gyi and bears the number 2171 in the inventory of the Pagan monuments (PICHARD 2001: 144-153).

2) LUCE 1969-70: pls. 173 (Shwezigon, inventory monument 1) & 277 (Ananda); PICHARD 1992: 66, fig. 1q-r & 2001: 151, figs. 2171aa-ad; SNELLGROVE 1978: pl. 230.

3) LUCE 1969-70: pls. 419-448.

4) All known images are reproduced by LUCE (1969-70, III: pls. 421-422 and I: 142-143, II: 187-189) and have been collected in various temples from Pagan. However, a group of 12 such images, the present location of which

have been stray finds made in fields, mounds or ruined temples, some were actually recovered from the relic-chamber of a shrine or of a *stūpa*,⁵⁾ or found even standing in a shrine.⁶⁾

Stone has not been apparently used for the carving of cult images, but was retained for the production of series of large sculptures inserted in niches and depicting either the Buddhas of the Past (in the Naga-yon), or the life of Śākyamuni (in the Ananda and the Kyauk-ku-umin).⁷⁾ A particular type of stone, a yellow-beige pyrophyllite known as *andagū* in Burmese, was also introduced for the carving of rather small images, rarely exceeding 30 cm. Like the cast images, most of those found at Pagan or in Burma are stray finds, and were only rarely discovered in a relic chamber.⁸⁾

THE 'ANDAGŪ' IMAGES

Around 50 of those 'andagū' images or fragments of images have been up to now brought to the notice of art-historians.⁹⁾ They, i.e. those among them which can be considered to be of a Burmese manufacture, have definitely contributed to our knowledge of the sculptural art at Pagan, forming a very specific group characterized by its iconography which finds in Pagan an echo in some monuments of the late 11th or early 12th century, the best and most well-known example being observed in the

is unknown, was recovered together in a single chamber of the Kyauk-ku-umin (monument 154) by Emanuel Forchhammer (LUCE 1969-70, I: 291). LUCE suggests (I: 143) these images to be "... Bodhisattvas; they may be kings; or (as I should guess, but Col. Ba Shin disagrees), dead royalty reborn in Devakoka, and placed perhaps in temples which they built." See also II: 187 where he labels them as "Bodhisattva-Kings (?)" (followed by FRASER-LU 1981c: 129-130).

5) LUCE 1969-70: pls. 429 (II: 193), 430b-c (II: 194), 433d (II: 195), 435-436.a-b (II: 197), 439.c-d (II: 201), 440 (II: 201), 441.b (II: 202), 442-443 (II: 202-203), 444a-b (II: 204).

6) LUCE 1969-70, III: pl. 431 and II: 194 (c. one meter); FRASER-LU 1981b: 63; GATELLIER 1985: fig. 13; PICHARD 2001: figs. 2166b-d, now preserved in the site museum. Found in shrine 2166 (Ananda Kyaungdaik) which is located in the vicinity of the Ananda temple. Further bronzes from Pagan are reproduced by GATELLIER 1985: figs. 12 and 14.

7) LUCE 1969-70, III: pls. 141-142 (life of the Buddha in the Kyauk-ku-umin, inventory monument 154; see also PICHARD 1992: 252, figs. 154x-ac), 192-202 (Buddhas of the Past and life of the Buddha in the Naga-yon, inventory monument 1192; see PICHARD 1995: 77, figs. 1192v-w), 278-323 (*jātakas*, life of the Buddha in the Ananda, PICHARD 2001: figs. 2171p-q, t-w), 407-412 (stray images and fragments). The images of the Nat-hlaung-gyaung, being brahmanical, are not considered in the present paper.

8) LUCE 1969-70, III: pls. 400-406 and II: 174-175. Only the image reproduced on his pl. 405 was discovered in the relic chamber of a *stūpa* at Yamethi, north Burma.

9) The list of 47 images added to our 1999 paper should be enlarged with the following ones, which came to our notice in the meantime: 1) SOTHEBY'S 1999: lot 153; 2) CARLTON ROCHELL GALLERY, New York (http://www.carltonrochell.com/view_image.html?image_no=86) (carved in *andagū* and bearing traces of paint); 3) see note 17 below (with an added image in silver); 4) to 12) von SCHROEDER 2001: pls. 129A-131C. Further a dark stone image – but probably of Burmese origin – showing the traditional iconography of the eight great events and seven stations appeared in a sale in 2005 (CHRISTIE'S 2005: 29, lot 38). An exhaustive discussion of small stone carvings has been published by U. von SCHROEDER (2001: 369-405; concerning the images probably carved in pyrophyllite and found in India, see p. 371).



Fig. 1 The Enlightenment, surrounded by further scenes of the Buddha's life, including the 'Great Events' and the 'Stations', 20.2 x 12.2 x 4.7 cm

more carved in the typical dark-grey, almost black stone of Bihar/Bengal, have been discovered in a wide area spread over North India, Sri Lanka, Tibet and Burma. Due to the fact that a group of fairly well preserved examples was initially collected at Pagan, it has generally been assumed that these sculptures must have been produced in Burma, more particularly at Pagan – whereas examples recovered in India or Sri Lanka remained isolated in the context of their finding and whereas the images observed in Tibetan monasteries were clearly 'imported' from countries located south of the

Loka-hteik-pan.¹⁰⁾ In those monuments, the stucco image of the shrine (with *bhūmisparśa-mudrā*, i.e. symbolizing the Enlightenment at Bodhgaya) and the murals painted on the wall behind this image (and illustrating seven further events of the Buddha's life) are combined in a single composition.

The 'andagū' images form indeed a homogenous group, sharing one single iconography, viz. the depiction of a number of scenes drawn from the Buddha's life which are organized according to a fixed pattern: around the central depiction of the Enlightenment, seven further scenes are distributed in a row illustrating the further seven main events of the biography, to which can be added a second concentric row showing six of the seven stations followed by Śākyamuni in Bodhgaya once he had become a Buddha (Fig. 1). As shown in a previous publication, the original concept of this iconography – with the central image surrounded by seven further ones – is to be traced in Magadha (Bihar), probably in the region of Nalanda where a large number of images reproducing the eight major events of the Buddha's life have been produced from the 8th century and onwards.¹¹⁾

Known by art-historians since a long time already, such small images, together with a few

10) Further, but rare on the whole, examples are to be seen in the murals (BAUTZE-PICRON 2003: 20, figs. 13-14).

11) BAUTZE-PICRON 1999. This composition proved to be fundamental in being also observed in paintings on cloth discovered in Tibet; see BAUTZE-PICRON 1992, 1995/96 and LEOSKO 1993/94.

Himalaya. However, this pyrophyllite has also been used in Bihar and Bengal to illustrate other iconographic types, be they Buddhist or even Brahmanical, and subtle stylistic variances reveal conspicuously different geographical origins.¹²⁾

The idea of carving small images, which can be easily transported and are not necessarily aimed at being venerated in a main local shrine, might have arisen at Bodhgaya, an important international centre at that time, as it is again today, a place which pilgrims from all Asian countries used to visit. This production included not only images of the Buddha but also models of the Bodhi Temple.¹³⁾ The particular use of the *andagū* was, moreover, probably promoted by its colour and its soft polished surface reminding of ivory which had been traditionally used in India for carving images of small size.

This has been, here summarized in its broad lines, the state of research concerning the 'andagū' images up to now. However, the recent discovery in Myanmar of a group of small sculptures all carved in pyrophyllite¹⁴⁾ forces us to review and to enlarge this knowledge. What differentiates these images from the material heretofore collected is the stylistic unity which they reflect, and the diversity of iconographic sub-types which they illustrate (being given that the 'Buddha' images constitute a type, subdivided into sub-types according to the gestures and attitudes of the Buddha).

A fairly large number of these images bear inscriptions distributed in the lower part, i.e. on the front or/and sides of the pedestal (Fig. 14b), on the lower surface of the sculpture, or on the back (Figs. 2-3, 5b). While the work of deciphering these inscriptions is still in progress, one cannot exclude the possibility that some reproduce *yantras* similar to those integrated in Buddha images of



Fig. 2 Lower surface of the pedestal below the image illustrated in Fig. 21



Fig. 3 Rear side of the lotus pedestal seen below the image of Fig. 15

12) BAUTZE-PICRON 1999: 38-40 and notes 4-12 concerning the various problems related to the original place of manufacture of the images, to the various stones used in order to represent the same iconographic prototype centred on the Buddha's life, and to the various iconographic types illustrated with the medium of this pyrophyllite.

13) GUY 1991. The production of 'models' is not basically to be understood as a production of 'souvenirs'; 'models' of the Bodhgaya shrine, or sculptures showing the 'eight great events' (be they of Indian manufacture or not and whatever the material) recreate a vibrant recollection of the Buddha and wherever they are located, they help to re-enact the biography within its geographical frame.

14) The identification of the stone is based on the analysis of a few samples. The find-spot of the group, which encompasses more than the 45 images which I saw and with which we are presently concerned, remains unknown, but one can surmise it to be located in the plain of Pagan. How large the initial group was is also not known to me, the present lot seems, however, to comprise the major part of it.

Fig. 4a-b
The Buddha seated
below Mucilinda,
total size: 9 x 4.7 cm



North Thailand.¹⁵⁾ These inscriptions can be incised in a frame clearly shaped or drawn on the un-carved surface of the lotus pedestal: as a matter of fact, in the seven images of the seated Buddha which are carved in the round, the lotus-seat is not represented all around, but a plain space of varying width is reserved in the central part of the lotus in the back of the image, probably

aimed at bearing an inscription, as seen on one example – noting that none of them bears an inscription in any other place.¹⁶⁾ A more elaborated inscription is incised on a ribbed arch-shaped panel which is inserted in the back of the lotus base of a standing Buddha image (Fig. 3).

Moreover, images can be composed of various parts: the central image of the Buddha is then carved separately before being inserted in the base, in the frame constituted by Mucilinda's body (Figs. 4a-b),¹⁷⁾ or in the four niches distributed around a quadrangular shrine (Fig. 23), using here apparently two different types of stone – such a composition traces its origin at Bodhgaya where 'votive' *stūpas* of large size integrate in their four main niches independent slabs depicting various moments of Śākyamuni's life.

These images share the same structure which traces also its source in India, most probably in the region of Magadha as far as the Burmese carvings are concerned. The Buddha image leans against

15) See SWEARER 2004: 63-68. At the time of writing the present paper, the study of these inscriptions has not yet properly started. Only some words could be deciphered by Tilman FRASCH, to whom we are thankful for looking at the inscriptions.

16) LUCE 1969-70, III: pl. 438a-b, reproduces a bronze image of the Buddha where such an unscribed space is also preserved. This treatment of the pedestal which is only possible with images carved in the round, hence with cast rather than stone images which are most often leaning against a back-slab, does not seem to have been known in Bihar/Bengal, although we cannot exclude this possibility. The tradition has been preserved till a later date, even if the uncarved space in the back is not used for an inscription, as for instance in the Wat Suthat in Bangkok (early 19th c.) where a Dvaravati stele measuring 2.40 metres in height is inserted at the back of the base of the cult image.

17) Eventually, the central image has been cast as illustrated on a unique example of an 'eight scenes' sculpture seen on <http://www.artsofasia.biz/exhibition/page2.htm>, where the image is in silver.



Fig. 5a-b *The Enlightenment*, 4.1 x 2.7 cm

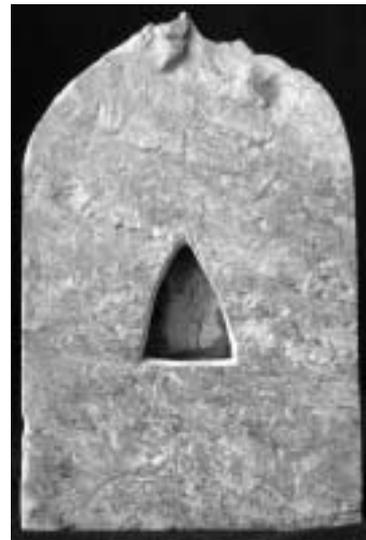


Fig. 6 *Rear view of Fig. 19*

a back-slab and sits/stands above a lotus lying above a plain pedestal; the back of the image can be smooth (Figs. 5b-6) or remains unpolished. Like in India, in the 11th and 12th centuries, an opening can be carved through in the back, allowing seeing the Buddha's back (Fig. 6). A number of images are carved in the round, which lets suggest that they might have been part of a composition as mentioned above.

Beside the fact that these images reflect a very high level of quality, letting surmise that they were produced for a major donor and/or were aimed at being preserved within a major religious institution, they share also the particularity of being, most of them, extremely well preserved, letting suggest that they remained hidden in a relic chamber all through the centuries. Moreover, they still bear remains of earth of which they smell.

STYLE

From the end of the 11th century and onwards, Pagan became also a place of international importance,¹⁸⁾ which resulted, for instance, in the diffusion of the 'short neck' Buddha, a stylistic model most probably created in Pagan, in far away regions, such as Khara Koto. As a matter of fact, I would suggest that this model initially appeared in the stuccoed images of the shrines, and resulted from the particular technique which had been used: images were really 'constructed' in bricks, and presented thus a massive structure. However, images erected this way in temples dated around AD 1100 which betray a very strong Indian impact, do not yet present the chin pressed down in the gorge which results in hiding the neck although they are rounder than the Indian contemporary testimonies,

18) For a brief presentation of this situation in the artistic creativity of the site, see BAUTZE-PICRON 2003: 3-5, 142-144 (and 223-224, notes 32-34, 36).



Fig. 7 Detail of Fig. 15



Fig. 8 Detail of Fig. 22



Fig. 9 Detail of a standing Buddha 'walking',
15.4 cm x 5 cm



Fig. 10 Detail of Fig. 22

a feature that will be emphasized in the following centuries.¹⁹⁾ Similarly, the wooden, metal or/and stone images distributed in the Shwezigon, Ananda, Naga-yon and Kyauk-ku-umin, as well as all 'andagū' images studied in the present paper, show the head with pointed chin clearly put above the neck adorned with three incised lines. As to the 'short neck' Buddha which is encountered in sculpture (stucco images in shrines; 'andagū' and cast images) and in the murals of the site, it emerged in the course of the 12th century as a local development.²⁰⁾

Most images of the group under review show the pointed chin and an elongated face which is slightly bent downwards (Figs. 7-9). The thin eyes are half-closed or closed, and the eye-brows form a continuous incised line which is only but very slightly curved as a bow; eyes and eye-brows stretch from one temple to the other (Figs. 10-12). The philtrum is indicated through a deep incised line. The nostrils are open with two curved deeply incised lines showing the alar creases; the pointed nose is

19) BAUTZE-PICRON 2003: pls. 2-4.

20) BAUTZE-PICRON 1998b: 41; FRASER-LU 1981a: 78. For an exhaustive discussion of the 'short neck' Buddha, see CASEY n.d. (b) where the authoress suggests that the prototype is to be located in Bodhgaya, being most probably the image worshipped in the Bodhi Temple. The point would deserve further discussion, which is here out of context; it remains that this type appears at Pagan in the course of the 12th century, that it is illustrated by images erected in shrines and painted on walls, and that it succeeds a first wave of Indian influence coinciding with the style surveyed in the present article and which can be dated in Anawrattha (Aniruddha)'s and Kyanzittha's reigns (1044-1077 and 1084-1112 respectively). The repairs which were undertaken at the Bodhgaya temple during this period by the Burmese inaugurated an interest in Bodhgaya which never faded (FRASCH 1998: 78-79), and culminated in the construction of the Bodhi temple in Pagan traditionally ascribed to Nadaungmya (1211-c.1231) (FRASCH 2000 & 1998: 79-80) (monument 1670). The 'short neck' image became in the interval the main type to be depicted at Pagan, and one cannot exclude the possibility that it is as a Burmese creation that perhaps found its way to Bodhgaya (if, following Casey, it is a 'short neck' image located at Bodhgaya which was reproduced in the subsequent centuries in Tibet). The expression 'short neck' should not let us overlook the fact that this stylistic type is also characterized by (1) a round face with broad forehead, (2) a rather robust body, with round and falling shoulders, heavy limbs without any sign of musculature, and which is strongly bent toward the front, (3) the lines following supple movements with no acute angle, the whole resulting in infusing the image with an impression of softness.



Fig. 11 Detail of Fig. 1 Fig. 12 Detail of Fig. 14 Fig. 13 Detail of Fig. 22

clearly drawn through straight lines, and, when seen in profile, is straight with its tip rounded or slightly curved. The lower lip is thick, the upper one very thin; their corners are drawn upwards. Seen from the front, the lines of the upper lips and of the eye-brows can be parallel; or the lower full lip can follow the line of the pointed chin. Moreover, the eyeballs are directed downwards, hidden by the upper lid, which makes them practically invisible when seen from the front and possibly creates a thick dark line. The hairline is bow-shaped and parallel to the eye-brows.

Whereas some images show a plain surface (Fig. 12), tiny squares usually replace the curls of the hair (Figs. 7-11). They are very regularly distributed, forming for instance a band which runs along the hairline (Fig. 8) whereas further concentric rows are drawn around the cranial protuberance (Fig. 13). This protuberance arises at the back of the upper part of the skull and is in line with the back of the skull. A plain flame or jewel tops the *uṣṇīṣa* which, as seen from the side, is slightly curved towards the front.

The shoulders are broad and falling, the waist narrow and, when looked at from the side, the chest is powerfully swollen (Figs. 14, 18b). The arms and legs are smoothly modelled without any indication of musculature. The hands are usually carved completely flat without any curving of the fingers. When displayed in *dhyānamudrā*, the hands show fingers of same length; similarly, the toes can be of the same size in the case of standing images and follow otherwise a very straight line.

The polished surface of the images makes them very smooth to the hand. The image and its setting form a harmonious and elegant composition; the lines never show acute angles but follow sinuous movements, in particular in the standing images, enhancing the shape of the body in front of the dress falling straight around and behind it (Figs. 15a-b, 16a-b). The deep carving creates a thick shadow around the body. A strong tendency towards strict symmetry is also noticed: considering the standing images displaying the *abhayamudrā* ('gesture of fearlessness'), for instance, indicates how



Fig. 14 Side view of Fig. 21

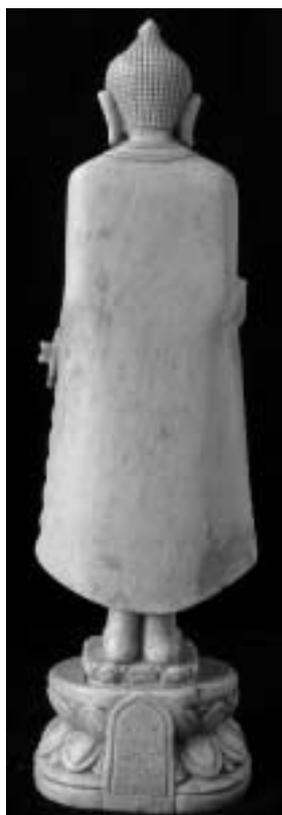


Fig. 15a-b Standing Buddha showing *abhayamudrā*, 18.5 (with pedestal) / 16.1 (without pedestal) x 5,5 cm (largest width at level of robe). See also Figs. 3 & 7

Fig. 16a-b Bejewelled Buddha, standing, 15.9 x 4 cm

both hands are practically at the same level, a feature unknown in India at that period.²¹⁾ A great care has been given to the carving of details, in particularly the rendering of trees, of Mucilinda's multiple bodies, of the skeleton and sinews of the emaciated Buddha, of his head-dress, his beard, his hair (Figs. 4, 17, 18).

These images share a number of features with the sculptures in the Ananda. The back-slab is carved with the motif of the nimbus lying above the rectangular back of a throne, reproducing a composition borrowed from India. The nimbus, often adorned with a row of pearls, is usually flanked by two *hamsas* or geese whose tails form volutes framing it, more rarely by two volutes. The lintel of the throne includes one or two sets of mouldings lying above two flat pillars. The aura made of two rows of beads and flames is likewise encountered in the Ananda sculptures. Their elongated features compare also to the same elements in the Ananda whereas the faces tend to more roundness and the

21) To the best of my knowledge, only Ajanta artists reproduced the Buddha standing and displaying the *abhayamudrā* while he keeps the left hand at shoulder level holding the extremity of the dress (as in the case of the Buddha showing the *varadamudrā*) – a model which probably constituted the prototype for the images from Thailand showing the double *vitarkamudrā* or double *abhayamudrā*.

Fig. 17a-b The Buddha meditating
below a tree, 4.9 x 2.8 cm

body becomes more robust and heavy in the Naga-yon, a tendency that is still rarely observed among the 'andagū' under survey (Fig. 19).

ICONOGRAPHY

As shortly evoked above, the images of this group introduce iconographic types, i.e. sub-types, not present in the already known corpus of 'andagū' images. Thus we list:



a) Single images

- images in *padmāsana* ('position of the lotus', i.e. crossed legs) displaying the *bhūmisparśa-mudrā*: seven lean against a back slab, three are free-standing; Figs 5a-b.
- images in *padmāsana* displaying the *dhyānamudrā* ('gesture of meditation', i.e. hands in supination): three lean against a back slab, two are free-standing, two sit below Mucilinda, one sits below a tree; Figs. 4a-b, 17a-b.
- two images of the Buddha as an emaciated ascetic seated in *padmāsana* and displaying the *dhyānamudrā*, leaning against a back-slab (BAUTZE-PICRON forthcoming: fig. 13). For the second one, see here Figs. 18a-b.
- one image of the Buddha in *padmāsana*, left hand in supination, right hand put around his alms bowl, free-standing; Fig. 20. See two panels in the Ananda (LUCE 1969-70, III: pls. 291b & 294a; COOLER n.d.: figs. 54 & 65; SEIDENSTÜCKER 1916: 49, Abb. 65). The position of the hands is mirror-reversed when compared to the carvings in the Ananda (the same is noticed on the image of the standing bejewelled Buddha on Fig. 16a).
- one image in *padmāsana* and displaying the *dharmacakrapravartanamudrā* ('gesture of the turning of the wheel of the law') against a back-slab.
- two images in *pralambāsana* ('position of legs falling', i.e. in the 'European way'), hands in supination holding the alms bowl, both leaning against a back slab; Figs. 14 & 21.
- two free-standing images, displaying the *abhayamudrā* while holding the extremity of the dress in the left hand; another such image is included in the shrine of Fig. 23.
- one free-standing image displaying the *dharmacakrapravartanamudrā*; see a panel in the Naga-yon (LUCE 1969-70, III: pl. 202a); Fig. 22 (details in Figs. 8, 10, 13); such an image is also introduced in the shrine of Fig. 23.
- one standing image leaning against a back-slab, with the left hand put on the chest near the heart, the right hand falling along the body, in a probable attitude of walking; another similar image is included in the shrine seen on Fig. 23.

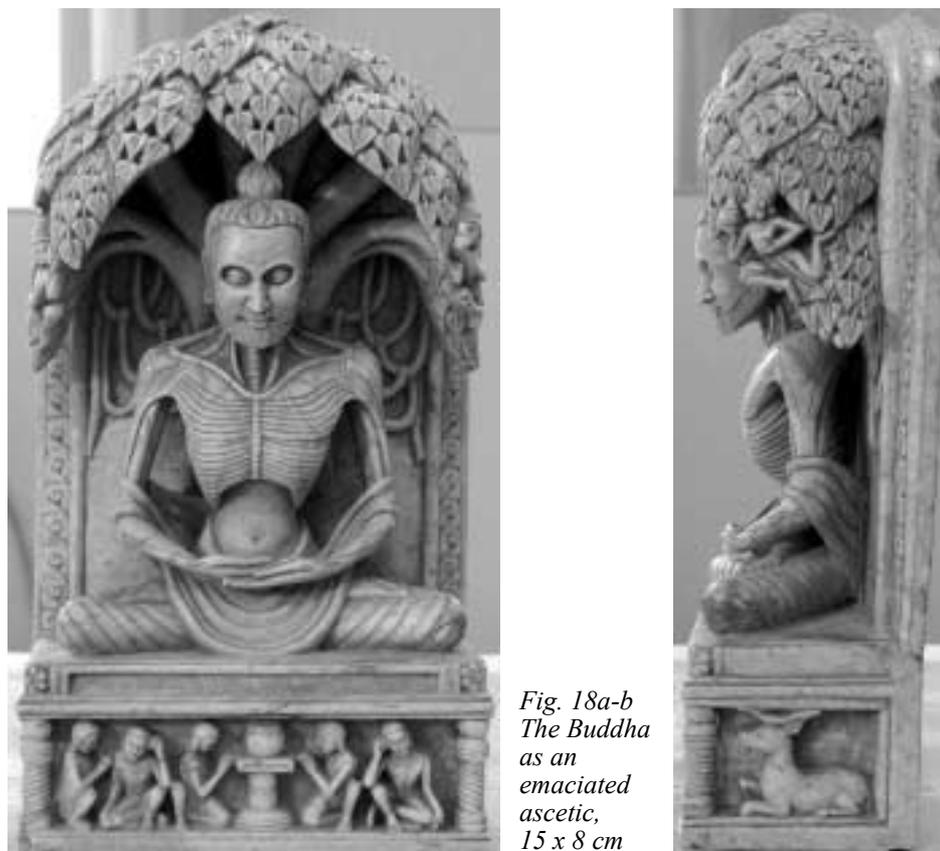


Fig. 18a-b
The Buddha
as an
emaciated
ascetic,
15 x 8 cm

b) Composition

- standing Buddha in a niche showing the *abhayamudrā*, flanked by two tiny images showing him meditating below Mucilinda and seated in *pralambāsana*, hands in supination and holding the alms bowl; two human devotees in the lower part, two semi-divine figures flying in the upper part of the image.
- two images showing the ‘eight scenes’ model (one reproduced in Figs. 6 & 19).
- one image showing the ‘eight scenes and seven stations’ model, and adding to it the topic of the last ten *jātakas* on the pedestal (Fig. 1).²²⁾
- three images illustrating events: the birth, the descent from the heaven of the 33 gods, and the ‘last look at Vesali’ linked to the taming of the wild elephant Nālāgiri; it is possible that these images were part of a larger composition.
- two images showing the *bhūmisparśamudrā*: one as an independent carving where the Buddha sits below an arch and is flanked by four attending figures (two among them are clearly devotees) and one which was part of a larger composition where the Buddha sits below a tree and is worshipped by four monks.

22) Concerning the type, see BAUTZE-PICRON 1999 and 1998a (concerning the *jātakas*).



Fig. 19 The 'Eight Great Events', 11.2 x 7.1 cm. See also Fig. 6



Fig. 20 The Buddha taking food, 5.1 x 3.7 cm

c) Bejewelled Buddha

- two images of the Buddha seated in *padmāsana* and displaying the *bhūmisparśamudrā*, leaning against a back-slab.
- one seated in *padmāsana*, with hands in supination holding the alms bowl.
- one standing with the right hand lying on the chest, left hand falling at the side. Numerous wood carvings have been recovered in Pagan illustrating this iconography, but with the reversed position of the hands, i.e. the left hand lies flat on the heart (Figs. 16a-b).²³⁾
- one seated in *padmāsana*, showing the *bhūmisparśamudrā*, flanked by two standing bejewelled Buddhas, with either the left or the right hand on the chest (and the other hand falling at the side of the body).
- one seated in *padmāsana*, displaying the *dhyānamudrā*, attended by two monks with hands folded in front of the chest.
- one 'eight scenes' image with the bejewelled Buddha only in the central scene.
- one standing image showing the *varadamudrā* and flanked by two monks with hands folded in front of the chest.

Bejewelled Buddha images are rather rare among the murals of Pagan where they present the *bhūmisparśamudrā*,²⁴⁾ in this context, they relate to images observed in Bihar and Bengal. On the contrary, a group of standing bejewelled Buddhas carved in wood depart from the Indian tradition

23) See footnote 4 above.

24) BAUTZE-PICRON 2003: 19 & figs. 13-14.



Fig. 21 The Buddha seated in the 'European way', holding his alms bowl, 9.8 x 4.3 cm. See Figs. 2 & 14

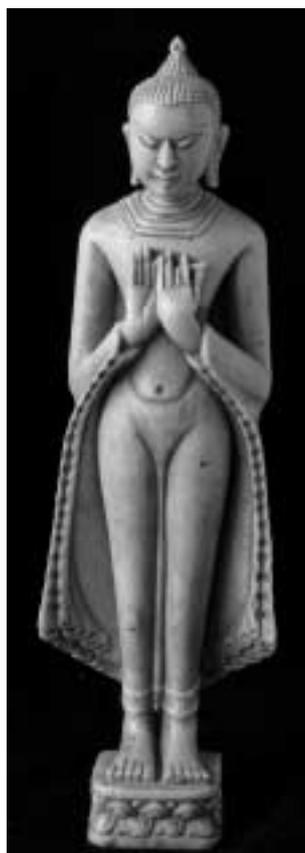


Fig. 22 Standing Buddha displaying the gesture of teaching, 14 x 4.5 cm; pedestal: 2.2 x 2.5 cm. See Figs. 8, 10 & 13



Fig. 23 Four-faced shrine, 32 x 14.5 x 14.5 cm

and appear as a proper Burmese creation; in those images, the Buddha has the right hand falling at his side whereas the left one is put flat on the chest.²⁵⁾ In the group presently under study, the images reproduce gestures traditionally presented by the Buddha whatever his dress, royal or monachal, i.e. he calls forward the earth, he meditates, he gives. A standing image, however, comes closer to the group of wooden carvings; wearing an elaborated girdle with broad beaded arches and loops hanging on both legs, a necklace elegantly knotted in the back and a tiara, the Buddha puts the right hand flat on the chest (Fig. 16).

d) Shrine

A particular composition is illustrated by a two-levelled shrine (Fig. 23): in the four niches of the lower level, free-standing images have been inserted, showing four different sets of *mudrās*, i.e. *abhayamudrā*, *dharmacakrapravartanamudrā*, falling along the body/lying on the chest ('walking

²⁵⁾ See footnote 4 above.

Buddha'), both falling on either side of the body. The four niches of the upper level include small slabs showing the Buddha displaying the *dhyānamudrā* or the *bhūmisparśamudrā*. The shrine is inserted in the pedestal, hiding the *dharmacakra* which is carved in the hollow.

Such compositions were also found in India: most famous is a 12th-century four-faced shrine in pyrophyllite which is preserved in Cleveland.²⁶⁾ The niches of the lower level integrate the arch pediment encountered in Pagan monuments and introduced also in a group of representations of the Bodhgaya temple carved in *andagū*.²⁷⁾

CONCLUSION

The images under discussion belong to the early phase of Burmese sculpture, i.e. the end of the 11th century, sharing a number of stylistic similarities with the stone and cast images of the Ananda and Shwezigon. Most of them betray a high level of carving, which lets surmise that they were produced by an atelier which was trained or directed by a master with a great experience, and as suggested above, that they were produced for a major shrine and/or at the order of an important donor. The existence of contacts with Bodhgaya at that period could imply that Burmese artists got acquainted with the carving of stone in this site before returning to Pagan. However, the presence in a few images of specific features, such as the heaviness and robustness of the face and body, announces already the development of the more clearly genuine Burmese style of the 12th and 13th centuries.

The richness of topics which are illustrated relates them also to the iconographic program of the stone images of the Ananda; whereas the presence of elements such as Mucilinda or the alms bowl for instance helps to suggest a rather precise identification of moments of the Buddha's life, the absence of specific features in most cases cannot let us refuse the possibility of considering the images as depicting further biographical events or at being perhaps included within larger compositions.²⁸⁾ Moreover, some images introduce topics, such as the 'last look at Vesali', which announces later development of the Buddhist iconography in Burma and Thailand.

Although the state of research concerning these 'andagū' images is still in its initial phase and although they will deserve a more thorough and detailed study, still to come, bearing on their style and iconography, it is evident that they constitute a major discovery in the field of Burmese art history.

26) HUNTINGTON & HUNTINGTON 1990: 168-170, cat. 41; whereas the Cleveland image shares its material with the objects from Pagan, the particular structure of the presently considered shrine echoes a shrine preserved in the Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin (BAUTZE-PICRON 1998b: 60-61, cat. 136) where the standing figures are carved in the upper level, the seated ones in the lower one; another similar one from Nalanda includes depiction of the eight great events in the two levels of niches (GUY 1991: fig. 23). The structure in two parts, i.e. the shrine inserted into a separated pedestal, is likewise encountered in Bihar (BAUTZE-PICRON 1998b: 59-60, cat. 135). Further similar models have in the meantime been published by U. von SCHROEDER (2001: pls. 116A-E, 117A-E).

27) GUY 1991: 364, figs. 11, 18, 25; concerning this arch at Pagan, see LUCE 1969-70, I: 248-249.

28) See for instance how images are introduced within architectural structures, i.e. the Bodhgaya mandir (von SCHROEDER 2001: pls. 111A-B).

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