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## Between India and China: the murals of Bagan

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### Introduction

The 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> c. murals of Bagan not only present a rich iconography encompassing major topics related to the Buddha, his life, *jātakas*, or footprints, and to the Buddhas of the past, but in fact also reflect a deep concern that these programmes be distributed in the monument according to very specific rules.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, these programmes do not fill all the spaces fully but are framed by ornamental devices which can cover large surfaces of the walls and ceilings.

The iconography illustrated within a monument is canonical in the sense that it can be described in literary sources, which implies that those deciding about the content of the programme and of the scenes included in this programme were members of the *saṅgha*. Moreover, discussion of the contents might also have taken place with the sponsors of the monument, a third major group of individuals, i.e. the painters, actively participating in the making of the painted ornamentation.

Sketchbooks were probably imported from India in the early phase and used for depiction of the 550 *jātakas* in the Kubyauk-gyi and Abeyadana, or of the life of the Buddha in the entrance hall of the Myebontha. A clear northern-Indian influence is noted in the programme illustrated in the Loka-hteik-pan with the cult image displaying the *bhūmisparśamudrā* as reference to the Awakening which had taken place in Bodhgaya (BAUTZE-PICRON 2003, fig. 2).<sup>2</sup> The sculpture is framed by a mural covering the wall behind it and illustrating seven further events in the Buddha’s life, altogether reproducing a model generalized in Bihar from the 9<sup>th</sup> c. onwards, where it was carved in stone (BAUTZE-PICRON 1995/96); the ‘eight-scene programme’ is similarly depicted in manuscripts of the time or can adorn the lower part of small carved or cast *stūpas*, thus constituting a major iconographic topic related to the Buddha in Northeast India – which explains its importance in Bagan at a period where the site was closely dependant on Bihar as source of inspiration. In the course of the 12<sup>th</sup> c. this model split and the seven scenes were distributed at various positions within the Burmese shrine whereas further episodes of the Buddha’s life were integrated in this cycle. Further topics were also part of the religious iconography of the monument, such as the *jātakas* and the Buddhas of the past: in all cases, the painters had to conform to iconographic precepts.

There is, however, a space where painters were free from the constraint to refer to descriptions given in literary sources and enjoyed the possibility to draw inspiration from their daily experience in the society where they developed their skills and styles, thus offering a glimpse into the period in which they lived. This space constitutes the background to the iconographic programme, including parts of the monument which were never used, or only partly, for the representation of iconographic topics: these are the ceiling, the lower part and the vertical and horizontal edges of the walls, the corners, the angles, and the frames of entrance and niches

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<sup>1</sup> On this question, see our paper “Painted and architectural ornamentation of the temples of Pagan: More than mere iconography and decoration” (2013). An earlier study bearing on the connection between Eastern India and the murals of Pagan and offering a general introduction to the topic with a list of similar motifs noted in both regions was published by Bautze-Picron 1998. In the present paper, I shall deal solely with the motifs from the point of view of their nature, forms, and position in the monument but not from the viewpoint of their meaning.

<sup>2</sup> This model is encountered only in some small temples built in the vicinity of old Bagan which can be dated around the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> c. (BAUTZE-PICRON 2003, figs 3-4).

(BAUTZE-PICRON 2013). A further element in which their work reflected their world is the depiction of garments worn by characters included in the iconographic and decorative ornamentation; this importance attributed to garments in the ornamentation has already been noted by Pierre Pichard in a detailed paper dealing with decorative grids covering the ceilings of Bagan temples (PICHARD 1993).

Garments, as we know from some inscriptions, were imported and probably considered luxury items: cotton came from India and silk from China (FRASCH 1996, pp. 281-2).<sup>3</sup> A comparison of printed garments reproduced in the Loka-hteik-pan and the Kubyauk-gyi in Myinkaba with the decoration of bands on a manuscript dedicated in the regnal year 8 of Harivarmadeva, i.e. around AD 1100, in the region of Comilla, Southeast Bangladesh, is extremely revealing, suggesting that printed cottons could have been imported from this region.<sup>4</sup>

The main motif observed on such garments is the medallion, on its own or as part of a scroll (**figs 1-5**).<sup>5</sup> It is seldom introduced in murals of the late 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, leaving space there to a completely different plant ornament with clearly drawn leaves on a plain background (**figs 7-10**). As a matter of fact, both very distinct types of motifs find their source in the arts of India and China respectively, and belong to two consecutive periods broadly dated from the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> to the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> c. and from the late 12<sup>th</sup> c. up to the late 13<sup>th</sup> c. (or perhaps even early 14<sup>th</sup> c.). As we will see below, Chinese motifs evidently reached Bagan, too, through porcelain imports; Yuan blue-and-white porcelain was in fact exported throughout the Asian world and fragments were recovered in the site, as attested by GOH GEOK YIAN in the present volume.<sup>6</sup>

## 1. The Indian connection

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The Indian connection is particularly noted in temples constructed within the old city of Bagan, like the Patho-hta-mya, or in the surrounding, i.e. the Ananda, Loka-hteik-pan, Mye-bon-tha and more to the South, the Kubyauk-gyi, Abeyadana, and Naga-yon.

### *a. The tangent circles or medallions<sup>7</sup>*

In her depiction in the Loka-hteik-pan, queen Māyā wears a skirt adorned with large individual medallions, all placed side by side in regular rows. Some are adorned with a wide open lotus flower, some with a goose (**fig. 1**). These tangent circles create interstitial diamond-shaped spaces, their outline heavily marked in some cases .

Comparing this image to the images of royal dignitaries kneeling in the lower part of the Kubyauk-gyi panels, and listening to the Buddha delivering a sermon (**fig. 2**; BAUTZE-PICRON 2003, figs 24-27, & 33; 2013, figs 1-2), we can observe that the pattern of her skirt is much more elaborate, most probably because she is the Buddha's mother. The garments in the Kubyauk-gyi murals are adorned with various geometric patterns, all based on geometrical motifs repeated in a litany, and the pattern with adorned roundel remains rather rare: only the ruler, recognizable by

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<sup>3</sup>. For a general and preliminary study on the export of Chinese textiles in South East Asia, consult LEE 1995.

<sup>4</sup> BAUTZE-PICRON 2014 & 1999 for a reconstruction of the manuscript (add BAUTZE-PICRON 2009b for further folios to the manuscript).

<sup>5</sup> Further motifs of Indian inspiration are observed in the mural, such as the monstrous faces spitting rows of pearls, distributed in the upper part of the wall (not only painted within the temples, but also stuccoed outside the walls)(BAUTZE 1999)(BAUTZE-PICRON 2003, figs 191-192), and such as the sequence of bejewelled diamond-shaped and round elements, usually showing alternating blue and red colours on a golden background forming thin vertical (BAUTZE-PICRON 2003, figs 53-56).

<sup>6</sup> BEAMISH 1995, p. 245 & fig. 24, mentions the discovery of large jars of the period in Thailand.

<sup>7</sup> In the present paper, I follow the distinction introduced by GILLIAN GREEN in her 2007 paper between 'true medallions' and 'pseudo-medallions ... [which] differ from true medallions in that they are incomplete circles that consist of leaf-like extensions alternating either side along the end of an undulating, arabesque form' (pp. 424-5).

the crown which he wears, has a garment adorned with such a relatively refined pattern. In **fig. 2**, it seems that even animals fill the central part of the medallions in the garment worn by the central figure to our left. It is thus evident that this pattern, i.e. tangent circles adorned with different types of motifs, in particular animals, characterized garments of a more expensive nature. From a general observation based on Bagan murals and painted Buddhist manuscripts, as well as cast or carved sculptures from Eastern India (BAUTZE-PICRON 2014, figs 21-22 & 25-26), it appears that such a garment definitely belongs to the main character, thus enhancing the hierarchy within the image.

The lotus medallion, and in a later period the simple roundel, remains a motif adorning the dress of Māyā, just as her attendant wears a skirt adorned with parallel stripes of various colours. As such, this ornamentation is preserved in the Nanda-ma-nya (BAUTZE-PICRON 2003, fig. 29) and the small temple 1077 (BAUTZE-PICRON 2010, fig. 11), where both motifs are simply drawn with a dark line, without any further detail or colour added to them.

Lotuses filling circular or square medallions are often encountered on the ceilings, for instance in the Ananda (**fig. 3**). As such, this ornamentation is closely related to the generalized presence of the lotus medallion painted under the keystone of the shrine (BAUTZE-PICRON 2003, figs 197, 202, 205). The motif adorned the curved ceilings of the passages between the heavy pillars of the entrance halls of the Ananda: one ceiling has recently been cleaned of its white-wash, revealing it – and it is most likely that the motif was generalized in this position in all entrance halls of this monument. Similarly, it covered the vaults of the deep recesses corresponding to the windows in the Abeyadana (BAUTZE-PICRON 2003, figs 199-201). The inner field covered with lotuses can be framed by a band of scrolls or rhombi, the entire ornamentation seemingly reproducing a textile canopy.<sup>8</sup> Such a composition, i.e. a central space within a frame, is preserved in the following centuries, and lotuses covering the ceiling or part of it are a motif encountered in other Buddhist sites, e.g. at Tabo (WANDL 1999, figs 5-7; KLIMBURG-SALTER et alii 1997, figs 18, 193, 196).<sup>9</sup>

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Besides having been used for garments, such printed fabrics could also be selected for the cushion behind the back of the Buddha or the drapery on which he sits, as seen in the Kubyauk-gyi and the Mya-bon-tha, or for the awning covering the pavilion in which the Buddha or Bodhisattva sits (PICHARD 1993, fig. 18 & p. 102; BAUTZE-PICRON 2003, figs 33, 38, 47, 53, 57 (Kubyauk-gyi), 85 (Patho-tha-mya), & 172 (Mye-bon-tha)). A similar use is encountered in India, as seen in the illuminated manuscripts from the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> c. (BAUTZE-PICRON 2008, figs 16-18; BAUTZE-PICRON 2009a, pl. 1.5, 1.7-8).

The rich ornament worn by the queen in the Loka-hteik-pan (**fig. 1**) finds a direct echo in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> c. examples from Bengal and Bihar. There is no doubt that, even in this region, such a garment was considered to be of great value; tangent circles are seen, for instance, adorning the Prajñāpāramitā and Mañjuśrī on painted folios of a manuscript now preserved at the Asia Society, New York, and dated around the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> c. (BAUTZE-PICRON 2013, fig. 16), whereas their attendants wear a muslin garment simply adorned with tiny flowers or a short skirt adorned with printed large squares, a motif which must have been rather fashionable in Bihar and Bengal in the 12<sup>th</sup> c. (BAUTZE-PICRON 2013, figs 8-9). And as mentioned above, cast or carved examples from East India also display this type of rich ornamentation.

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<sup>8</sup> However, the shallow depth of the recesses in the Abeyadana probably accounts for the frame only running along three sides of the inner field.

<sup>9</sup> The motif is very ancient and dates back to the early phase of Buddhist art, adorning the centre of the umbrella placed above the image of the Buddha in the caves of Maharashtra or at Mathura; from India, it migrated towards the Far East passing through Central Asia (BUSH 1976, figs 32-34, note 67 p. 81 for further references to the motif in Bamiyan and China, & passim). The pearled roundel filled with a lotus apparently appeared in a Buddhist context in the course of the 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> century in India, migrating then toward Central Asia and the Far East, where it merged with the old tradition of the decorative roundel (see MEISTER 1970, p. 266).

*b. The stripes*

The Bodhisattvas painted in the Abeyadana, like the female attendant to Māyā in the Loka-hteik-pan or the Nandamanya, wear a striped skirt (**fig. 1**) which reflects the presence of another Indian fashion found far beyond Eastern India, as far as Tabo (KLIMBURG-SALTER *et alii* 1997, fig. 28 ), although the ornament is much more elaborate in India than its Bagan adaptation with stripes, adorned with different types of motifs, i.e. roundels, zigzag line, scrolls, volutes, or even animals (BAUTZE-PICRON 2013, p. 4 & figs 11-14; see also *Tibet* 2006, cat. 32 pp. 247-53, in particularly fig.3 p. 251 ).

*c. The foliated scroll*

Medallions or more often pseudo-medallions can also be part of a scroll, in which case they often include the depiction of an animal, a human or a fantastic creature. Simple scrolls where only flowers fill the circular spaces are painted in the Patho-hta-mya, forming three superimposed continuous friezes (**fig. 4**; BAUTZE-PICRON 2003, fig. 183). The upper and lower narrower rows show a vigorous scroll where the circular flowers alternate with the curved broad stalk which splits into different parts (upper band), or ends in a broad leaf (lower band). The stalk forms perfect circles around the lotus flowers which are attached to them. The very same concept prevails in the ornamentation of the large central band: however, the scroll motif emerges here out of the tails of the two *ham̐sas* profiled at both extremities of the band. Similarly, a band painted in the Kubyauk-gyi is inserted in circles separated by twigs and with *ham̐sas* (BAUTZE-PICRON 2003, fig. 192; **fig. 5**), all profiled in a single direction.

A continuous band of scrolls runs along the external wall of the corridor in the Abeyadana, immediately below the upper row of niches; the line forms a continuous wave without any circular medallion or lotus but with elegant twigs splitting into smaller ones (BAUTZE-PICRON 2003, figs 223-226). Further development is observed in the band running in the lower part of the ceiling of the shrine in the Loka-hteik-pan, where the scroll simultaneously includes *padma* and *utpala* alternating with a curled leaf; a simplified rendering, without the leaf, is seen in monument 1111 of the Tamani group (PICHARD 1994b, p. 369, fig. 1111k).

Highly refined and sophisticated examples of the motif are noted in India, for instance adorning a garment covering the legs and breast of a Bodhisattva, probably cast in the 12<sup>th</sup> c., or stone images of the period (BAUTZE-PICRON 2014, figs 21-22, 25-26). The main scroll on the front side of the Bodhisattva's skirt is drawn with a thick line of inlaid silver which surrounds animals (elephant, monkey, goose, peacock, and lion) or fantastic creatures that are profiled and seen as if running. Again in India, it may also adorn the book-covers of Buddhist manuscripts (BAUTZE-PICRON 2014, figs 19-20).

This Indian-style motif is not extensively introduced in the painted garments in the Bagan murals, but rather in the decorative ornamentation of the walls. Showing roundels that may be occupied with depiction of an animal, this floral lattice does not altogether disappear after the 12<sup>th</sup> c., being preserved as background under the vault or on the walls (BAUTZE-PICRON 2003, fig. 177), and possibly merging with the Chinese-inspired monochromic style (see below). It may similarly adorn stuccoed door-jambes on facades (**fig. 6**).

The stairs leading to the windows of the corridor in the Kubyauk-gyi are all adorned with two large symmetric curves born out of a central stalk and filled with the depiction of different types of characters, i.e. sword-dancers, nāgarājas, ascetics, etc. (BAUTZE-PICRON 2003, figs 184-185; in press, figs 17-18). The mural must be understood here as the pedestal supporting the window above it; as such, the motif of two or more symmetric curves attached to a central stalk is noted in cast images from Eastern India.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> See also a silk tapestry from Khara Koto: PIOTROVSKY 1993, cat. 19 pp. 140-141 where two nāgarājas, probably Nanda and Upananda, support the lotus on which the Tārā sits.

The painted frieze in the Kubyaug-gyi illustrates smooth transition between the animal and floral elements: the tails of the geese are transformed into a series of curls, further tiny tendrils are held in their beaks, and a large whorl replaces their wings (**fig. 5**). Only the long neck attached to the main line of scroll remains, while the breast and legs are only depicted in every other image. This deliberate confusion very soon disappears, giving way to a clearer, but also simplified, rendering of the scroll: a thick line runs forming large curls with foliage in the intermediary spaces (BAUTZE-PICRON 2003, figs 194-195), the curls being eventually replaced by circles (BAUTZE-PICRON 2003, fig. 186). Similarly, the animals introduced in these circles are usually depicted as if on top of the scrolls, thus no longer reflecting the merging of the animal and floral worlds.

In the course of time, twigs and secondary leaves may disappear and only the main stalk runs following a strong, thick line (**fig. 7**; BAUTZE-PICRON 2003, figs 97-98). A similar treatment is encountered on cloth-paintings from Khara Khoto, where it adorns a cloth apparently hanging behind the image of the god or goddess: a strong line forms meanders there around large peony flowers, a motif of Chinese origin (PIOTROVSKY 1993, cat. 25, 27, 31, & 32). The lotus flower and animals may also disappear from the Bagan murals, being replaced by further floral motifs of Chinese inspiration (see below) whereas the polychrome rendering of the scrolls noted in the early period gives way to the monochrome style (below) (BAUTZE-PICRON 2003, figs 93 & 208). Whereas the shading of the leaves and twigs created volume and depth, the later, monochromatic style is associated with flatness.

#### *d. The clouds*

Clouds may not at first appear as a distinctive motif, painted as they are behind divine characters flying down from heaven. As seen in the Kubyaug-gyi or the Abeyadana, large volutes constitute the cloud edged by a thick waving line (BAUTZE-PICRON 2003, figs 101, 129-130, & 173) which forms a frame to the motif. The frame progressively takes precedence over the volutes which become simplified in the course of time (*ibid*, figs 133-134) and may finally include an entire panel, for instance Māra's army (*ibid*, figs 135-137).

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## **2. The Chinese and Yuan connection**

#### *a. The floral lattice & the monochrome and polychrome styles*

The monochrome style mentioned above is characterized by a thin white scroll forming large curls on a plain black, more rarely red, background (**figs 7-9**), a manner probably inspired from the sgraffito technique used in Chinese ceramics of the Northern Song (960-1127) and Yuan periods (WATT 2010, pp. 275-277 & figs 303-307; RAWSON 1984, fig. 62a p. 83). It may, however, also be possibly related to the blue-and-white or Cizhou type of porcelains.

This style is reflected in garments and cushions (BAUTZE-PICRON 2003, figs 64-65, 117, 160, etc.), but also characterizes the background behind standing, seated or flying figures (**fig. 7**). The now thin line – when compared to the thicker Indian-style vine – uncoils in neatly drawn roundels filled with leaves and flowers or with animals, a type of floral motif also encountered in Buddhist cloth paintings or tapestries found at Khara Khoto or dated in the Yuan period as mentioned above (WATT 2010, fig. 146 pp. 112-113; WATT & WARDWELL 1997, cat. 25 pp. 95-99).<sup>11</sup>

The foliated scroll in this style no longer displays the same continuous curved line showing various widths and shades, creating volume and depth in the motif; the line of the scroll is here thin and regularly bears the peduncle of the spiked lobed leaf; the flower, when depicted, is no longer the lotus, but the peony.

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<sup>11</sup> Similarly, a brocade covers the wall of the background on which cloth-paintings also hang in a mural dated 1324 (*ibidem*, fig. 86 p. 61); for such brocades of the Jin (1115-1234) and Yuan (1279-1368) periods, see Watt & Wardwell 1997, pp. 106-125.

This Chinese-inspired floral vine follows a thin undulating line progressing with a repetitive movement and thus creating empty surfaces which are filled with leaves and possibly flowers and animals (BAUTZE-PICRON 2003, figs 188-189), whereas the Indian-inspired scroll fills the entire space (**fig. 4**). Considering the similarity of composition of the mural in monument 1150 (**fig. 9**) (BAUTZE-PICRON 2003, fig. 189) with one noted at a much earlier date in China,<sup>12</sup> we may conjecture that the mural of temple 1150 might have been inspired by a similar, later Chinese example.

To be noted are two variants of this floral lattice which covers the ceilings entirely: beside the thin scroll in a rather empty setting described above, a thicker rhizome has also been painted, evidently drawing inspiration from the Indian prototype but winding up in unrealistic splinter-like leaves only vaguely reminiscent in shapes of the Chinese spiked lobed leaf (BAUTZE-PICRON 2003, fig. 210). Roundels are regularly scattered in this floral trellis, still evocative of their Indian prototypes with lotuses or figures mounting real (lions, elephants, buffaloes, *ham̐sas*) or fantastic animals like *makaras*.

Although the bestiary is predominantly of Indian inspirations, we also observe animals rather suggestive of a Chinese connection, such as the phoenix, which is inserted in a polychrome interlaced floral lattice in monument 1150 and in the nearby Nanda-ma-nya (BAUTZE-PICRON 2003, fig. 189) (**figs 8-9**).<sup>13</sup> Lions or *ham̐sas* are likewise seen in monument 585 (in the mural reproduced by PICHARD 1994a, p. 51, fig. 585h). A similar approach with complete covering of the background is attested in silk lampas of the Yuan period (WATT & WARDWELL 1997, cat. 37-41 pp. 146-152).

*b. The spiked lobed leaf*

Observed in the monochrome style, palmate and elongated leaves alternating with peonies form a scroll noted in Chinese porcelain of the Northern Song and Yuan periods (**fig. 11**; RAWSON 1984, figs 62, 65f (= 98), 86-87; CARSWELL 2000, p. 39 and fig. 41),<sup>14</sup> and this clearly constitutes the prototype for a similar motif encountered in the murals of Bagan (**figs 7-9**).<sup>15</sup>

*c. The polylobed frame*

Anonymous male figures usually seated above one or more animals, real or fantastic, are inserted in the lower part of the painted ornamentation decorating the edge of walls, having evidently inherited the function of protection held in an earlier period in the temples south of the city by tall Bodhisattvas.<sup>16</sup> They are inserted within a polylobed frame (BAUTZE-PICRON 2003, figs 180-182) which can also be introduced in the ceiling ornamentation, surrounding an image of the Buddha in these cases (**fig. 10**) (BAUTZE-PICRON 2003, fig. 204). Such a shape had gone through prolonged development in Chinese art before it reached Bagan (RAWSON 1984, pp. 125-138): lobed and cloud-collar panels belong to the range of motifs in the blue-and-white porcelain which emerged in particular during the Yuan dynasty (**fig. 11**; RAWSON 1984, figs 114, 123; CARSWELL 2000, figs 36, 39, 51-53; *Blue and White* 2009, pp. 13-14, 17-23, 46-47, 51-57; BEAMISH 1995, figs 21-25).<sup>17</sup>

<sup>12</sup> A mural in the Ssu-ma Chin-lung tomb dated 474/484 AD: BUSH 1976, fig. 26c: after *Cultural Relics* 1973, p. 145.

<sup>13</sup> Compare to WATT & WARDWELL 1997, cat. 40 pp. 150-151 (= WATT 2010, fig. 288 p. 265); WATT 2010, fig. 289 p. 265.

<sup>14</sup> As noted by CARSWELL, this leaf “seems to have no parallel in the natural world”.

<sup>15</sup> Beyond Pagan, it becomes also part of the ornamentation of Sukhothai and Sawankhalok porcelains of the 14<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> c., see BROWN 2000, plates XXVIIa & XXIXc.

<sup>16</sup> BAUTZE-PICRON 2003, pp. 93-103 & figs 103-106 for these earlier standing Bodhisattva images who can still be preserved at a later period (ibid, figs 114-116). See ibid, figs 180-182, 232 for the anonymous ‘Bodhisattva’ inserted in the polylobed frames.

<sup>17</sup> The cloud-collar outline also appears in textiles: WATT & WARDWELL 1997, fig. 12 p. 55, figs 26-27 p. 75, & fig. 28 p. 80

#### *d. The clouds*

The volutes framed by a thick line disappear and are replaced by monstrous animal faces set side by side, forming a cushion below the flying figures. Although comparison with the dragons flying in the sky in Chinese paintings comes to mind, there is no evidence, to our present knowledge, to suggest more than a distant relation between the two types of motifs. Nor can we rule out the possibility that these faces find their origin in the monstrous animals mounted by the soldiers of Māra's army (BAUTZE-PICRON 2003: figs 129-139). On the other hand, a rare band painted in the Hpaya-thon-zu includes volutes which closely resemble the foam of waves or the clouds as seen in Chinese painting.<sup>18</sup>

#### *e. Intersecting circles and polylobes*

The ceilings of Bagan temples are highly ornate with a great diversity of motifs,<sup>19</sup> most of them having probably taken their inspiration from fabrics, as noted above. Whereas in the earlier Indian-inspired period the roundel was a clearly discernible element of this ornamentation, a wide range of variations are noted in the later period, as illustrated by Pierre Pichard in his 1993 paper. I wish to draw attention here to two particular motifs which find an echo in the art of Dadu. Intersecting circles are painted on the lower surface of the vault of the Bagan temples (PICHARD 1993: figs 19.9-11), and likewise they are observed on stone slabs recovered in the ancient Yuan capital<sup>20</sup> where they serve as background to a four-lobe frame bearing a floral and animal motif (**fig. 12**), a shape which is similarly encountered in the Bagan murals (PICHARD 1993: figs 19.14-16).

## Conclusion

The short survey presented here does not fully account for the ornamental richness of the Bagan murals, nor can it claim to be exhaustive. As a matter of fact, the Indian and Chinese influences include further aspects not dealt with here, such as the depiction of Chinese characters in 13<sup>th</sup>-century monuments. The use of the floral lattice covering the entire background exemplifies an ornamental practice noted in Buddhist art, with richly decorated brocades or lampas depicted as hanging behind the cult image. We referred above to such cloth paintings collected at Khara Khoto, a Tangut site located in the Gobi Desert which flourished during the Yuan dynasty; the style of these paintings is somewhat heterogeneous, reflecting influences originating from North India, Nepal, Tibet, China, and even Burma, as attested by the presence in the group of paintings showing the Buddha with head sunken in the shoulders, short neck and heavy round shoulders (PIOTROVSKY 1993, cat. 6 pp. 118-119; RHIE & THURMAN 1991, cat. 135 pp. 341-342). In Bagan, as in other regions of South East Asia, porcelain and textiles must have been luxury goods imported from China,<sup>21</sup> inspiring local artists who assimilated their elaborate ornamentation into the monuments, creating gorgeous ceilings such as those painted in the Nandamanya (**fig. 9**).

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<sup>18</sup> RAWSON 1984, pp. 138-141; BAUTZE-PICRON 2003, fig. 188 to be compared to MAEDA 1971, plates 8, 12. Reference can also be made to a cloth-painting from Khara Khoto (PIOTROVSKY 1993, cat. 38 pp. 180-181).

<sup>19</sup> We owe a detailed study of them to PIERRE PICHARD (1993).

<sup>20</sup> RAWSON 1984, fig. 126: after *Cultural Relics* 1973, p. 83; HAN YONG 2000, fig. 134 p. 164. The four-lobe frame is also seen on another stone slab from Dadu (*Cultural Relics* 1973, p. 82, also in RAWSON 1984, fig. 82).

<sup>21</sup> The same had taken place in Cambodia as shown by GILLIAN GREEN's research on the topic (2000, 2007).



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Unless mentioned, all photos are courtesy of Joachim K. Bautze



1. Loka-hteik-pan, queen Māyā & attendants



2. Kubyauk-gyi



3. Ananda





4. Patho-hta-mya



5. Kubyauk-gyi



6. Let-put-kan



7. Winido-hpaya

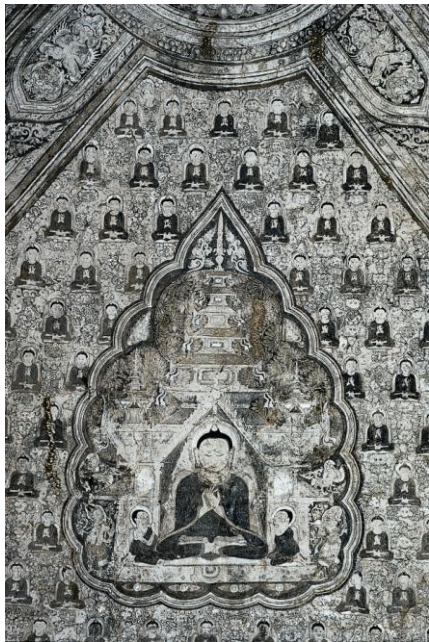


8. Monument 1150

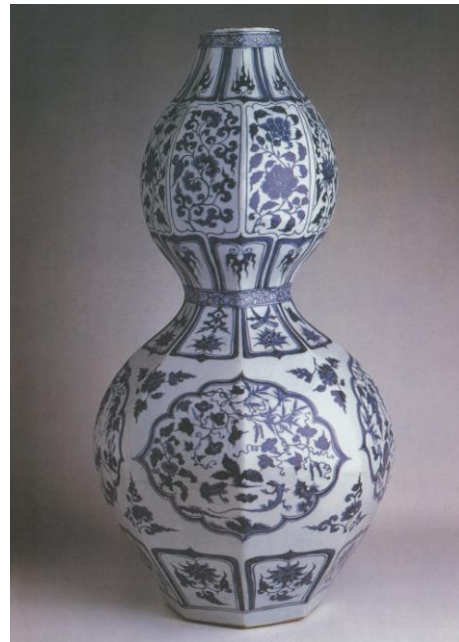




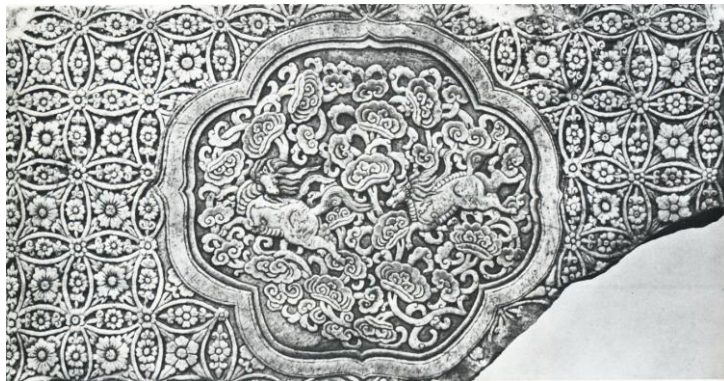
9. Nandamanya



10. Ma-la-phyit-hpaya



11. Blue and white Yuan vase  
After CARSWELL 2000, fig. 51 p. 48



12. Carved stone, Dadu, after *Cultural Relics* 1973, p. 83