

INTEGRAL STUDY OF THE SILK ROADS: ROADS OF DIALOGUE

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Artifacts and Documentary References

Connecting the Myanmar Area

With Western and Central Asia and China Proper,

From the 4th Century B.C. to the 13th Century A.D.

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Artifacts and Documentary References Connecting the Myanmar Area With Western and Central Asia and China Proper, From the 4th Century B.C. to the 13th Century A.D.

The Myanmar area (Pl. 1), blessed with a long coastline having numerous ports and the Irrawaddy River reaching up to Yunnan in China, received a plethora of artistic influences from Western and Central Asia and China proper between the 4th century B.C. and the 13th century A.D. This lecture will focus on a few significant artifacts of relevance reflecting these influences and on substantiating documentary references. Western Asia for the purposes of this paper may be defined as the Sind and Taxila area of present-day Pakistan and beyond to Eastern Persia and even the Mediterranean, whereas Central Asia signifies the present area of Sinkiang Province and sites east to Sian (1) on the main Silk Road.

The Silk Road on Land and Sea, a recent publication by an organ of Chinese People's Republic, contends that prior to the opening of the Silk Road from Xi'an, there existed an international thoroughfare leading from China's Sichuan Province to India, West Asia and Europe known in China as the Ancient Southwestern Route or the Southwestern Silk Road. The people of Southwest China, especially in the area which is now Sichuan Province, have raised silkworms since ancient times. Indeed, the early name for the present Sichuan area was Shu, the character for which in inscriptions on oracular bones is described as looking like a silkworm. The said publication states that in the 4th century B. C. Shu merchants journeyed through the Kunming and Dali areas to lower Yunnan from which they crossed the upper part of Burma and went to India and beyond. Supporting documentation for this assertion comes from "The Ethnic Groups in the Southwest", a volume of Records of a Historian by Sima Qian who wrote that in 122 B. C., the 1st year of the reign of Yuan Shou, the envoy Zhang Qian returned from Daxia (Bactria) in what is now Northern Afghanistan and said that he had seen Shu silks and bamboo sold there. When he had asked where the goods came from he had been told that they came from Shu merchants in Shenyuan, the Chinese name at that time for India. Zhang Qian suggested that a trade route be opened to the Southwest. The emperor sent an envoy to Yunnan to begin construction of a road to Shenyuan (i. e. India) and in 105 B. C. a large number of laborers was recruited to construct a road which wound past Mt. Bonan, about 95 km west and slightly south of Dali, and extended to the Lancang River, hence its name, Bonan Mountain Road. A stone tablet erected at the foot of Mt. Bonan bears a record of its reconstruction during the Han Emperor Ming Di's reign (58-75) (China Pictorial, pp. 153-162).

Further information about contacts between the East and West via this area comes from the History of the Eastern Han Dynasty: Chronicles of the Reign of Emperor He Di. “In the spring of the ninth year of Yongyuan (97 A. D.), in the first moon of the lunar calendar, the aboriginal tribes and the Shan Kingdom beyond the boundaries of Yongchang (Baoshan) paid tribute to the Emperor through successive interpreters”. The History of the Eastern Han Dynasty: Chronicles of the Reign of An Di states, “In the first year of the reign of Yogning (120 A. D.), the Shan Kingdom sent an envoy to pay tribute to the Emperor”. More detailed accounts of these two missions to the capital at Loyang appear in the History of the Eastern Han Dynasty: Record of the Southwestern Aboriginal Tribes of Ailao. In 97 A. D. “aboriginal tribes beyond the boundaries and Yongyoudiao, king of the Shan Kingdom, sent envoys through successive interpretations to pay tribute to the Emperor, and presented to His Majesty all kinds of precious gifts. Emperor He Di bestowed on King Yongyoudiao a gold seal with a purple ribbon, and the small dignitaries were also given seals with ribbons in addition to silver and silks.” (Chen Lufan, p. 126-127). The mission from the Shan king in 120 A. D. was more elaborate. Not only did he send tributes but a music band and a group of magicians. Most important is the fact that the magicians came from the Eastern Roman Empire. The Annals of the later Han Dynasty record that “The magician introduced himself (as) coming from Haixi. Haixi was also called Daqin (the Eastern Roman Empire). There was a route out of Chiao-Chou communicating with (the) Kingdom (of) Siam (Shan) and other Mans and Yis. Another route passed through Yizou communicating with them” (Huang Huikun, p. 192). Chen Lufan identifies Chiao-chou as Indochina and Yizou as another way of writing “Shan” in Chinese (Chen Lufan p. 145). The character that Chen Lufan chooses to translate as “Shan” has been translated by Huang Huikun (above) as “Siam”, and by China Pictorial as “Dan” (175). Thus one route went through Indochina and one through the Shan area. Chen Lufan interprets “the Shan Kingdom beyond the boundaries of Yongchang” as including the area covering the present-day Dehong Prefecture of Yunnan and the Shan States of Burma (Chen Lufan p. 128).

The earliest tangible evidence of the Myanmar area’s connection with Western Asia comes from the discovery of etched beads. A Aung Thaw reported the presence of one etched agate bead at Beikthano in his 1968 report, The Excavation at Beikthano (U Aung Thaw, p. 207, Pl. LII a.). (Pl. 2) More recently, in 1984, U Aung Myint, Myanmar Photo-Engineer, in an article about Pyu cities, noted and sketched beads that had been discovered at the following ancient sites: Maingmaw, Tawngdwin, Srikshepra, Beikthano, Hanlin and Wati, and provided drawings of them (U Aung Myint 1984, pl. 8) (Pl. 3). The design on the round vertically

striped etched agate beads found at these walled cities suggests association with Taxila, where a bead of similar decoration was found in the Bhir Mound and has been dated to the 3rd century B.C. (Dikshit, Pl. IX, Fig. 10). However, an even closer parallel in design exists between those on etched agate beads from the Myanmar sites and those excavated at Ban Dan Ta Phet (see Glover, Fig. 14) (Pl. 4). Dr. Ian Glover has dated the artifacts from that site to as early as the 4th century B.C. (Glover, p.18); that being the case, a date of the same period may be assigned to the etched agate beads from Myanmar. A stone lion similar in form to the carnelian one excavated at Ban Don Ta Phet (Glover, Fig. 16) (Pl. 5) was found at Halin. What may be another lion of the same period appeared in a 1984 article entitled "Pyu Beads" in the Burmese magazine Ngwetayi (Tin Win, p.13) (Pl.6). The stylized elephants and long barrel beads found at the six "Pyu" sites may be of a later period (Pl. 7). Horace Beck in *The Beads from Taxila* dates a somewhat similar stylized elephant tentatively to the 1st century B.C. (Beck, Pl. VII, Fig. 11).

A check into the Rangoon and Bangkok antique shops brought more information. There it was reported that many early beads had been found in Srikshetra and had come onto the market. Among those photographed are two carnelian beads etched with crosses (Pl. 8), similar to a bead found at the Bhir Mound and dated to the 3rd century B. C. (Dikshit, Pl. VIII, Fig. 4); also photographed was an etched hexagonal carnelian bead probably of the same age (Pl. 9).

Photographs of beads reportedly from Srikshetra indicate that a wide variety of animal, bird etc. beads was present; for example, elephants (Pl. 10), lions (Pl. 11) tortoises (Pl. 12), a frog (Pl. 13), and falcons (Pl. 14) and a scarab (Pl. 15). Artifacts of this type are especially associated with the Sirkap Period of Taxila (180 B. C. to 80 A. D.) and with Egypt and Mesopotamia and probably have served as amulets.

Large collections of beads of this type may be viewed at the Taxila (Pls. 16 and 17) and Peshawas Museums. A comparison of the designs and materials used in the beads from Srikshetra and those in the Taxila and Peshawar Museums suggests that the beads from the former either were made in the Taxila-Peshawar region or came to Myanmar via that area.

Related to the provenance of the animal, bird etc. beads and their use as amulets is a passage from *The Glass Palace Chronicle of the Kings of Burma*. It says that King Berinda of Srikshetra, who ruled from 39-51 A. D., went to study in Taxila and "was deeply versed in medicine, charms and the vedas" (Pe Maung Tin and G. H. Luce, p. 34).

U Aung Thaw reports excavating tops and spouts of “sprinkler” vessels at Beikthano. The two spouts have pointed pouchlike bulges (Pl. 18). One of the several tops has a flanged knob with a short vertically perforated nipple (U Aung Thaw, p. 133, Fig. 66, no. 45) (Pl. 19). At Winka, north of Thaton, an area believed by many Myanmar archaeologists to have been Suvannabhumi, four tops with flanged knobs and short vertically perforated nipples were found in excavations (U Myint Aung, p. 48-49, 53) (Pl. 20). These would appear to be parts of kendi-like vessels called kuzas (Pl. 21), such as one excavated at Banbhore (Pl. 22), an ancient port on a branch of the Indus River. The vessel found there has been dated to the Scythian Parthian Period at Banbhore circa the 1st c. B. C. to the 2nd c. A.D. Similar high-necked vessels were unearthed at Taxila in the levels of the 1st century B. C. Vessels of this type have been given a Roman or Greek provenance and sherds of wares of similar shape have been reported in excavations across India and are dated circa late B.C. to the early Christian era. Probably those found in Myanmar date to the early Christian era. The style lingered on with adaptations for many centuries.

Reportedly from Srikshestra are two signet ring heads of what appear to be blue glass, one with a trident and the other with an incised figure depicting Perseus holding the head of Medusa (Pl. 23). They probably are of Ranan provenance and may be dated circa 2nd-3rd century A.D. (Krairiksh, p. 106, Pl. 9.13.).

Another artifact with Mediterranean affinities is a terracotta Roman-style lamp discovered in Pagan (Pl. 24). A nozzled lamp of this type excavated in Thailand has been dated to the 6th c. A.D. (Brown, p. 7. A similar type was excavated in Banbhore, thus indicating a Western Asian connection. It is now on display at the Archaeological Museum, Banbhore (Pl. 25).

Turning to Chinese contacts, there are indications that Mergui was the end of a Trans peninsular trading route as early as the T'ang Period, and moreover may have been a transshipment center for Chinese ceramics. The veteran British civil servant and writer, Maurice Collis, reported that when he was stationed in Mergui he collected within about one year's time 250 unbroken specimens of Chinese ceramic wares from the T'ang Period of the 18th century. Most appear to have been found in or along the Tenasserim River, but at least one fine specimen, a Sung celadon, was brought up from the ocean bottom off shore at South Rocks (12-50 degrees north latitude and 98-19 degrees east longitude), about two hours by

steamboat north of Mergui harbor. Collis thought that a boat must have capsized there, and he longed to investigate it (Collis, p. 206-233).

More evidence concerning Chinese connections with the lower Myanmar area comes from Bassein. The evidence is a small bowl of grey body with an abstract design in black at the center, probably of the late T'ang to early Sung period and from a Southeast China kiln (Pl. 26). The late Curator of Pagan, U Bokay, who was a native of Bassein, reported it as having been found in Bassein and kindly allowed it to be photographed. Statements in local chronicles that four stupas were built at the port in 984 A. D. attest to the prosperity of Bassein at the time (Guillon, p. 112).

The southern Myanmar area appears not only to have been a market for Chinese ceramic wares in the latter part of the 1st millennium A. D. but a region producing glazed ceramics as well (Pl. 27). That the Chinese knew of this production is indicated by the 9th century Manshu which records, "Due north, K'unlun kingdom is 81 day-stages from His (west) Er-ho of the Man borders. Products of the land are the bluegreen wood perfume, sandalwood perfume, areca-nut trees, glazed wares, rock crystal..." (Luce, 1961, p. 90).

A later Chinese chronicle, Hsin-t'ang-shu, completed in 1060 A. D., gives more information about the K'unlun kingdom. "After Mich'en one reaches K'un-lang, where there is the Little K'un-lun tribe. The king is called Maung-his-yueh. The customs are the same as those of Mi-ch'en borders the sea (Luce, 1961, p. 90). Luce thought it was Kyontu, that is, modern Waw, north of Pegu, which may well which one sets sail to Srivijaya and Java, probably was Martaban, known in Old Burmese in 1326 A.D. as Muttama. This might put the kingdom of Little K'un-lun in the Winka-Taikala area north of Thaton (U Aung Myint 1983, p. 116-131) and put the Great K'un-lun king at Thaton.

Since 1984 many wares believed to have been produced in the Southern Myanmar area have been found in Northwestern Thailand and in the Pegu region of Myanmar. One type is lead-glazed earthenware with tin as an opacifier. The second is celadon. Production of the lead glazed wares appears to have begun at least by the 7th to 8th century A. D. No kilns producing these wares have been discovered as yet; however, a comparison of the glazes with those on plaques from the Shwegugyi Pagoda, Pegu, a study of the lead isotopes (Yamasaki, Murozumi, Shaw and George, p. 47) and the fact that wares of the type have been found in great profusion in recent digging in the Pegu area indicates a southern Myanmar provenance.

The wares produced reflect Chinese and Middle Eastern influences plus local religious beliefs. Dated to the 7th-8th century A. D. on the basis of stylistic comparison of facial features and hair arrangement with Dvaravati Period figures in Thailand is a lion fragment of a well-known type in Myanmar which has one head and two bodies (Pl. 28). A lion of this type is especially associated with the Winka-Taikkala-Thaton area. According to Mon legends retold by King Dhammaceti of Pegu, lions with two bodies were the followers of an ogress who terrorized the shores of Suvannabhumi in the lower Myanmar area (Blagden, p. 185). The glaze of the lion fragment has been analyzed through neutron activation by Dr. Manit Sansuk, nuclear chemist of the Office of Atomic Energy for Peace in Bangkok, as being a lead glaze containing tin.

Fragments of small glazed plaques with figures in relief from Mara's army appear to be of the same period (Pl. 29). The face of one of Mara's daughters (Pl. 30) is similar to that of many Dvaravati images found in the Nakhon Pathom area.

That the potters of southern Myanmar knew Chinese T'ang Period ceramic styles is indicated by a water dropper of 7th-8th century T'ang shape (Medley, p. 116, Pl. 110) (Pl.31). Tin oxide has been added to the lead glaze not only to opacity but to assure its whiteness. Another early specimen reflecting Chinese influence is a sturdy bottle with a yellow-green glaze on display in the Moulmein Museum (Pl. 32). The almost horizontal shoulder suggests a 10th century date.

Probably of the same period is a small bowl with a metallic copper-colored glaze (Pl. 33). It seems that the potters of the area were trying to create a lustre glaze of the type used on Middle Eastern wares of the period. As in the Middle East, the metallic type of glazes appears to have been produced for several centuries. Yet another bowl, probably of the 12th to 13th century, has a very shiny grey metallic glaze (Pl. 34). In both cases, while the glaze seems to have been influenced by that on Middle Eastern wares, the shape of the body stems from that of Chinese vessels.

Yet another piece of early interest in the Moulmein Museum is a beige lead-glazed bowl with vertical striations on the exterior (Pl. 35). The shape is that of the late Sung to early Yuan period.

While Myanmar potters appear to have tried to imitate the lustre type glaze of the Middle East, their use lead glazed wares with tin oxide may not spring from the Middle East.

Lead glazed wares with tin oxide have been reported as reintroduced in the Middle East in the 9th to 10th centuries A. D. after centuries of non-use. In Myanmar the lead glaze with tin oxide, as introduced in this paper, was in use by the 7th-8th century, and considering the sophistication of the glaze and the wares, probably was produced earlier than that. The author is of the opinion that the glaze resulted as a byproduct of silver mining and coin production and discussed the matter in greater detail in a recent paper at the 3rd Biennial Conference of the Association of Southeast Asian Archaeologists in Western Europe in December 1990 (Di Crocco, Brussels 1990). It is not possible that Arab traders in Southeast Asia learned the techniques here and/or took the wares home and the use of lead glazes with tin oxide was reinstated?

Turning to the making of celadon in lower Myanmar, how early it began is unknown. However, that production was underway by the 13th century is indicated by a well-executed grey-green monochrome bowl (Pl. 36). The shape indicates late Southern Sung influence. Probably of the same period is a finely wrought camel's head suggesting Middle Eastern or Central Asian influence (Pl. 37). A kiln producing celadon wares has been discovered at Lagumbyee, an old walled town between Rangoon and Pegu (Hein, Barbetti and Grove, p. 17)

In the Northern Myanmar area, as in the Southern, evidence of lead glazing with tin oxide in the 8th century appears in the form of an imposing Pagan pagoda, the Ngakywenadaung, covered with tiles of a medium green glaze over what appears to be a yellow slip (Pl. 38). A small fragment collected from neutron activation analysis that it is a lead glaze with tin. Stupas of this type have been dated to the 8th century. While this glaze, as pointed out earlier, may have developed locally, another type, an alkaline glaze of turquoise color, may have resulted from Middle Eastern influence. Many sherds of heavy mouthed jars have been found in the Pagan area and also a beehive type kiln where they were made, a kiln such as was used at that time in the Middle East and is still used today in Pakistan (Dello Strologo, Pagan Section) (Pl. 39). Although no large Sassanian turquoise-glazed jars have been reported found in the area it is not unreasonable to think that the Pagan Kingdom was included in the Persian trade as well as kingdoms in Thailand where sherds of such wares have been found. On the other hand, the influence may have come via land, from Taxila and Swat areas. In Taxila, dark green tiles once decorated the great Dharmarajika Stupa. Bright turquoise and mustard tiles, on the other hand, were placed on the terrace of the Butkara Stupa in Swat, probably during its restoration in the 8th century (Pl. 40). A Persian lion in front of the stupa suggests Sassanian influence there.

In the 8th century the road between India and China via northern Myanmar which had long been closed was reopened (Pl. 41). In 762 A. D. Ko-lo-feng, the king of Nanchao, turned his interest to Southwestern Yunnan and the Pyu Kingdom (Backus, p. 77). A road ran north of his capital in the area of modern Ta-Li on the banks of the Er-hai Lake to Chengtu in modern Szechuan Province, and went on to the T'ang capital at Ch'ang-an (modern Xi'an) and thence to the main Silk Road. The two routes connecting the Myanmar area and ultimately Western Asia with the main Silk Road are described by the Chinese geographer Chia Tan (730-805 A.D.) in the Chiu-t'ang shu. A translation by the Myanmar historian Chen Yi-sein follows (Chen, p.4).

From yang-chu-mieh (Ta-li) to the west, one reaches the old commandery Yang-ch'ang (modern Pao-shan). The distance is 38 li. Again, to the west, after crossing the Nu-chiang (the Salween), one reaches Chu-ko-liang city (probably modern Lung-ling). (The distance) is 200 li. Again to the south, one reaches Lo city (the city of the Mo-so tribe, probably modern Che-fang). It is 200 li. Again, entering the border of the P'iao kingdom (Luce translates it as "capital", 1985, p. 69) and passing through the eight tribes including Wan-Kung, one reaches His-li city (probably Thibaw). It is 700 li. Again, going through T'umin city (probably Kyaukse) one reaches the P'iao kingdom. (Luce translates it as "capital", 1985, crossing the black mountains (the Chin Hills), one reaches Ch'ieh-mo-po (Kamarupa) kingdom of Western India. It is 1, 600 li. Again, going southeast, one reaches Ko-chu-wen-lo (?Kajingala) kingdom on the south bank of the River Ganges, on the eastern frontier of Central India. It is 400 li. Again, going west, one reaches Magadha kingdom. It is 600 li.

The second route is described as follows:

"From Chu-ko-liang city (probably modern Lung-ling), to the west, one reaches T'eng-ch'ung city (modern T'eng-ch'ung or Momein). It is 200 li. Again, to the west, one reaches Mi-ch'en (Chan-his or Ku-yang). It is 100 li. Again, to the west, after passing over a mountain, and going 200 li, one reaches Li-shui city (probably Waingmaw). Thence to the west, crossing the Mi-no river (the Chindwin), and going 1, 000 li, one reaches the Ta-ch'in Brahmin Kingdom (Assam). Again to the west, after crossing a big mountain range and going 800 li, one reaches Ko-mo-lu (Karnarupa) kingdom, on the northern frontier of Eastern India. Again to the southwest, going 1,200 li one reaches Pen-na-ta-t'an-na (Pundravardhana)

kingdom, on the northern frontier of Central India. This route joins the one leading to the Brahmin route (i.e. the route mentioned above) from the P'iao kingdom.”

The site of the Pyu capital is clarified somewhat by the Manshu, and a third route via the Irrawaddy to the ocean and beyond is indicated (pl. 35). Luce (Luce 1961, p. 20) translated as follows.

“... Flowing south, it passes west of Li-shui city. Then to the south it reached Ts'ang-wang. Then to the southeast it passes Tao-wu ch'uan (river-valley) of the kingdom of Tao-shwang. To the west it passes Mi-no-tao-li stockade. Then to the west it unites with the Mi-no-chiang (river), flows past P'iao Kingdom, and to the south enters the sea...”

Luce translated Mi-no-chiang as the Chindwin River (Luce 1985, vol. 1, p. 69) as does Chen Yi-sein above. That being the case, the Pi'ao (i. e. Pyu) capital would have to be below the junction of the Chindwin and Irrawaddy Rivers, seemingly either Pagan or Srikshetra, but more likely, in the opinion of this author, Pagan. (Di Crocco, Brussels 1990).

The routes opened up trade between Nan-chao and the Pyu Kingdom. Pyu trade missions went north, bringing with them, according to the Manshu, white cloth, glazed jars and “river pigs” (porpoises?) (Luce 1961, p. 91).

What type of jars the Pyus took north is not yet known, but evidence is available suggesting that the exchange of goods brought Chinese stylistic influences to bear on local ceramics of the Pyu region in north central Myanmar. Brushwashers, basins and bowls at Beikthano clearly bear Changsha influence, circa 9th century A. D. (Compare U Aung Thaw, Fig. 57, Nos. 16g-19a and Fig. 58, Nos. 19b-22 with Lam, Figs. 66-74) A redslipped ewer reportedly found in Pagan and of local manufacture is of the same shape as one from the Shiwan Kilns in Guangdong Province (Fung Ping Shan Museum, Pl. 232b) (Pl. 42). The Shiwan vessel has been dated to the Northern Sung Period. Unfortunately the lip of the Pagan ware has been restored incorrectly. A celadon vessel in the Pagan Museum has a low carination and is similar in shape to Chinese incense burners of the 11th-12th century A. D. (Pl. 43). Yet another ware in the Pagan Museum, a bowl with vertical striations like that mentioned earlier as on display at the Moulmein Museum, has design affinity with late Southern Sung and early Yuan wares (Pl. 44). However, the glaze is a white monochrome from lead with tin oxide, of the same school as that in the Moulmein Museum, but the body of the piece is of Pagan clay.

Many influences from Central Asia also came via the Yunnan route. In the late 8th and 9th centuries the Pyus along the Irrawaddy began to experiment with new building techniques in an effort to aggrandize their religious edifices. The methods of construction gained from the Silk Road and employed early on in such viharas as the East Zegu in Shrikshetra would make possible the building of the Large viharas as the East Zegu in Shrikshetra would make possible the building of the large viharas in classical Pagan during the 11th to 13th centuries A. D. An important element was the method of laying the bricks, an age-old one dating back to Mohenjodaro. The brick bonding method is to place rows of horizontally laid bricks between rows of upright headers (Pl. 45). This brick branding was used in conjunction with arches and vaults. The combined architectural method may be viewed easily at the Nagayone Vihara south of Minkaba in the Pagan area (Pl. 46). These techniques were employed in building some of the baked brick structures in the cities of Jiaohe (Pls. 47, 48) and Gaocheng (Pl. 49) at Turfan on the Northern sector of the main Silk Road.

In the mid-9th century great persecutions were conducted by the Chinese emperor against the Buddhists and Christians in Central Asia. Those espousing the faith sought refuge as best they could. It is not surprising that some of them found their way Pagan. What in the author's opinion are among the earliest extant murals in Pagan indicate their presence. The murals are in the Kyansittha Umin in Pagan proper (Pl. 50) and have long been described as paintings executed when the Mongols conquered Pagan in the 13th century A. D. A closer look reveals costumes reflecting fashions from the 9th century Silk Road, particularly from the Turfan area. The King and queen are depicted as going forth in their carriage preceded by ministers wearing great cloaks of silk with Sassanian rondels. Many pieces of silk from the period with such patterns have been found along the Silk Road and are carefully preserved in museums in the area. The ministers wear headgear in the shape of a rhinoceros horn like that of many Middle Eastern traders on the Silk Road. The men preceding the ministers play reed instruments not unlike the khaen which is popular in Northeastern Thailand and the dancer in the front leading the procession wears a tall hat with a turned-up brim straight from the Silk Road (Pl. 51). One can identify the specific area of the Silk Road from the influence came be the manner in which the ministers walk carrying flowers. The carrying of flowers in this manner while worshipping is associated with the Uighurs at Bezeklik, a great cave complex near Turfan (p. 52). In the murals once at Bezeklik but now in the West Berlin State Museum, Uighur princes in silk robes with large floral patterns and with elaborate coiffures walk sedately, each carrying one long stem of flowers (Pl. 53).

The murals at the Kyansittha Umin probably date from the 11th century A. D. and may have been painted by two different artists, since two of the scenes reflect an immediate knowledge of late Byzantine painting conventions and Western clothing fashions. In a mural depicting a scene in which hunters, in this case probably royal ones, shoot an arrow at a bird in a tree (Pl. 54), the artist has arranged the characters and established the scenes in the manner customary in the secular paintings of Byzantine times (Huyghe, p. 145, Pl. 289) (Pl. 55). The costumes of what may a traveller and perhaps his protector be in yet another mural also appear to be 11th century Byzantine (Pl. 56).

Chau Ju-kua, the Chinese chronicler, in his work on the Chinese and Arab trade in the 12th and 13th centuries entitles Chu-fan-chi, writes that in the year 1004 A.D. P'u-kan (Pagan) sent a tribute mission to China together with the Kingdom of San-fo-ts'I and Ta-shi (the Arabs) and in 1106 P'u-kan again sent tribute (Hirth and Rockhill, p. 58). Did the Arabs in the tribute mission or missions come to Pagan? Was there a Middle Eastern presence?

These questions are very pertinent in regard to the architecture and plaques of the Ananda Vihara (Pl. 57). Do the Bactrian camels, the type of camels used on the main Silk Road, and moulded on plaques depicting Mara's Army on the lower part of the Ananda (Pl. 58), suggest that the unknown architect came from Central Asia and used his experience from buildings in cities like Gaochang (59, 60, 61) to plan the great vaulted halls around the central pillar I, creating a rotunda effect, and the long rows of arched niches on the side walls which climb higher tier by tier similar to a Byzantine cathedral? (Pl. 62) Could the influence have come from Ctesiphon, a 2nd c. A.D. Parthian city with its great arched gate flanked by tiers of arched niches? Ctesiphon, 20 miles southeast of Baghdad, was a famous city on the western sector of the Silk Road, and travellers and traders would know its architecture well. (Pl. 63) Or was the architect from Western Asia himself?

The Glass Palace Chronicle of the Kings of Burma says that eight noble saint's form Mt. Ganhamadana appeared in front of King Kyansittha I who built a monastery and offered it to the saints for the rainy season. He invited them to the palace and continually provided them with food during the three months of rain. Once he entreated them to call up by their power the likeness of Nandamula grotto on Mt. Gandhamadana. They did so and from this the Ananda was built. It may well be that these saints were the artists with a heritage from the Bezeklik caves in Turfan (Pe Tin Maung and Luce (p. 11).

The kings of Pagan continued to wear their great silk cloaks. The Glass Palace Chronicle reports that King Narapatisithu (1174- 1211 A.D.) counted Chinese silks among his imported revenues (*ibid.*, Pl. 42) (Pl. 64).

The Myanmar area had been in contact with Western Asia, central Asia and China for over a millennium before the fall of Pagan in the late 13th century. The relationship had brought many art influences into Myanmar as well as reciprocal trade. And at least in one area, that of lead-glazed ceramics with tin oxide, the Myanmar, region may in turn have had an important art influence on the West Asian world.

Endnote

1. Romanization is as in the references.

Plates

1. Map of ancient cities in the Myanmar area.
2. Etched agate bead and other early artifacts from Beikthano, 4th c. B.C.
3. Sketch of etched agate beads and animal beads from Myanmar sites, 4th-1st c. B. C.
4. Etched agate beads from Ban Don Ta Phet, 4th C. B.C.
5. Carnelian lion from Ban don Ta Phet, 4th c. B.C.
6. Etched agate and other beads, sketch from Ngwetayi.
7. Sketch of etched and animal beads from Myanmar sites.
8. Carnelian beads etched with crosses, Srikhetra, c. 3rd C. B.C.
9. Etched carnelian bead, Srikhetra, c. 1st c. A.D.
10. Elephant beads, Srikshetra, c. 1st C. A.D.
11. Lion beads, Srikhetra, C. 1st c. B.C.
12. Tortoise beads, Srikhetra, c. 1st c. A.D.
13. Frog bead, Srikshetra, c. 1st c. A.D.
14. Falcon beads, Srikshetra, c. 1st C. A.D.
15. Scarab bead, Srikshetra, C. 1st c. A. D.
16. Animal, bird etc. beads on display at the Taxila Museum.
17. *Ibid.*
18. Spouts with pointed bulges, Beikthano, early Christian era.
19. Flanged “springler” top from Beikthano, early Christian era.
20. Spouts and flanged tops from Winka, early Christian era.

21. Kuza, Archaeological Museum, Banbhore, c. 1st c. B.C. – 2nd c. A.D.
22. Part of the ruins at the ancient Banbhore harbor
23. Signet ring heads, one of them bearing an incised trident and the other Perseus holding the head of Medusa. Glass, probably Roman, c. 2nd-3rd c. A.D.
24. Roman style lamp, terracotta, Pagan, c. 6th C. A.D.
25. Roman style lamp, terracotta, Pagan, C. 6th C. A.D
26. Bowl found in Bassein, Chinese, late T'ang to early Sung.
27. Map of ancient cities in the Myanmar area?
28. Lion fragment, mottled green and dark brown lead glaze with tin oxide, 7th-8th C. A.D.
29. Plaque fragment, Mara's Army, brown lead glaze with tin oxide, c. 8th C. A.D.
30. Plaque fragment, Mara's daughters, yellow lead glaze with tin oxide, c. 8th c. A.D.
31. Water dropper, white monochrome lead glaze with tin oxide, 7th-8th c. A.D.
32. Bottle, yellow-green lead glaze with tin oxide, Moulmein Museum.
33. Bowl, copper-colored metallic lead glaze with tin oxide, 10th C. A.D.
34. Bowl, grey metallic lead glaze with tin oxide, 12th-13th C. A.D.
35. Bowl, beige lead glaze with tin oxide, late 13th c. A.D.
36. Bowl, celadon, 13th C. A.D.
37. Camel head, celadon glaze, 13th C. A.D.
38. Ngakywendaung Pagoda, Pagan, 8th-9th C. A.D.
39. Turquoise tile, Butkara Stupa, Swat, c. 8th C. A.D.
40. Turquoise tile, Butkara Stupa, Swat, c. 8th c. A.D.
41. Map of the 8th C. A.D. routes in Northern Myanmar.
42. Ewer, red-slipped, Pagan, Northern Sung, 10th-early 12th C. A.D.
43. Vessel, celadon, courtesy of the Pagan Museum, 11th-12th C. A.D.
44. Bowl, white monochrome with tin oxide, late 13th C. A.D.
45. Pyu-type brick bond used in present day Yunnan.
46. Nagayon Vihara, Pagan, 11th C.
47. Ruins of Jiaohe, Turfan area, Northern Silk Road.
48. Buildings with Pyu-type brick bond, Jiaohe.
49. Ruin of one of the many large edifices at the old city of Gaochang, Turfan area, Northern Silk Road.
50. Kyansittha Umin, Pagan, c. 11th C.
51. Mural of a procession, Kyansittha Umin, C. 11th C.

52. The Bezeklik Caves, Northern Silk Road.
53. Uighur princes, Bezeklik Caves, Northern Silk Road, 2thC. A.D.
54. Mural depicting a scene with hunters, Kyansittha Umin, 11th C.
55. Byzantine hunting scene, circa 1th C.
56. Men from Western Asia, Kyansittha Umin, 11thC.
57. Ananda Vihara, early 12th C.
58. Bactrian camel from the Mara's Army plaques, Ananda Vihara, early 12th C.
59. Ruins of Gaochang, near Turfan, Northern Silk Road
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.
62. Sketch of an inner corridor of the Ananda.
63. Ruined gate at Ctesiphon, 2nd C. B.C.
64. Silk found on the Silk Road.

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