RETHINKING VISUAL NARRATIVES FROM ASIA
Intercultural and Comparative Perspectives

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Alexandra Green
INTRODUCTION
Expansive Approaches to Visual Narrative Analysis

Alexandra Green

Rethinking Visual Narratives from Asia: Intercultural and Comparative Perspectives is the product of an international conference with the same title, hosted by the Department of Fine Arts at the University of Hong Kong on the 8th and 9th of June 2009. The conference brought together twenty scholars to discuss the nature and function of visual narratives, and to explore cross-cultural connections and interactions in the interdisciplinary field of art historical narratology. During the course of the two days, the vibrant lives and artistic inter-relationships of visual narratives across Asia, in all its cultural diversity, were revealed. The result is a volume analysing and comparing these narratives, which were produced over a time span of nearly three millennia and whose points of origin stretch across Asia in its broadest geographical sense.

The papers in Rethinking Visual Narratives cover topics from the first millennium BCE through to the present day, testifying to the enduring significance of visual stories in shaping and affirming cultural practices in Asia. Taken together, these studies demonstrate how different cultures engage with narratives through text-image relationships, formats of construction, methods of narrativization, and varying forms of reception. The essays trace multiple trajectories, from the function of symbols and the salience of non-narrative material in generating stories to the relationships between static visual narratives and performance art. The essays point out a number of figures relevant to narrative studies. First, they reveal the multiplicity of ways that images can be narrativized beyond representing temporal progression through a particular space. In fact, almost all the papers indicate methods of narrativization where the significance of the imagery emerges from discourses beyond the traditional features of time, space, and action, and this challenges previous notions based on Western art. Of particular prominence are the relationships between the intentions of the sponsors/artists (narratores) in the creation of visual narratives and how the images are received by viewers, which lead to a greater understanding of the Asian cultures that generated this material. Secondly, specific narrative formats produce similarities in visual narration from disparate cultures. For example, the disposition of
narratives in an architectural space usually relates to how the space is used. Thirdly, in reading these essays we can compare and contrast how narratives function in a variety of Asian contexts. In particular, local art forms advance our knowledge of regional iterations and theoretical boundaries. Finally, the papers in this volume illustrate the relevance of pictorial stories to the cultural traditions of Asia. The popularity of telling tales visually emphasizes the importance of the genre within Asia itself, regardless of whether it is discussed by the producers and receivers of the art form. In the process of exploring specific instances of visual narratives in this volume, we can begin to see the features that are important for the analysis of Asian pictorial tales.

A short narrative of narrative theory

Narratives are found across cultures globally, yet scholarship began to focus on this "narrative turn" theoretically only in the mid-twentieth century. Critics such as Roland Barthes, Gérard Genette, Robert Scholes, and others have assessed the function of narratives in literary genres, yet before the 1980s there was limited exploration beyond structuralist patterns. When other disciplines, including art history, started to draw upon narratology as an analytical device, they too focused upon determining narrative structures, in particular how time was depicted. It is germane at this point to consider the range of recent conceptions of visual narrative theory. The question of how to define visual stories and how they function narratively is addressed by such art historians as Ina Westergaard in "Which Narrative? The Case of the Narrative Subject in Fifteenth-Century Altarpieces," Julia K. Murray in her article "What is Chinese Narrative Illustration?", Wendy Steiner in "Pictorial Narrativity," and Werner Wolf in his "Narrative and Narrativity: A Narratological Reconceptualization and Its Applicability to the Visual Arts," among others.

Westergaard suggests that art historians have applied narrative theories to a diverse range of material in two different ways—"narrative as illustration and narrative as located in the representation itself." Visual narratives have been analyzed either as an illustration of a text or as self-sufficient, the former making the work of art too derivative and the latter requiring a loose definition of "narrative." Yet, this very "looseness" makes narrative theory a valuable analytical device, even if the parameters are undefined.

A number of scholars, including Gerald Prince, Wendy Steiner, and Werner Wolf have indicated how the field in the West has moved beyond the simple binary division of narrative versus non-narrative. They emphasize that narrativity is a continuum, with narratives being considered "stronger" or "weaker" depending on which elements they exhibit. Wolf believes that the question is to what extent visual material works as a narrative. In plotting narrativity on a continuum from strongly narrative to non-narrative, he defines the core traits of narrativity as comprising three areas. Included are: perceptual (perception of time, representationality (creation of a recognizable storyworld), and the purpose of the imagery. Thematic and compositional unity, chronology, causality, and teleology are among these fundamental narrative strategies. "Strong" narratives include all or most of these elements. "Weaker" narratives infuse chronology, causality, and teleology, rather than depicting them explicitly. "Narrative reference" is even weaker, as it lacks temporality. Beyond this are "non-narratives" where there is no specific purpose or causal connection between separate segments.

Steiner defines visual narratives along similar lines, viewing narrative qualities as strongest in images portraying specific persons engaged in a particular action. Narrative components include orientation (time, place, persons, and activity/situation) and temporality (which is part of all definitions of narrative, but which she does not consider sufficient to identify a narrative). She argues that narrative has a variety of forms of cohesion, depending on sequence and configurational qualities, and it is cohesion (the continuity created by a repeated subject) that is a fundamental feature because it enables the narrative conclusion. Yet, narrative needs something further, and that is a connection with experienced phenomena, which enables the viewer to relate to and therefore interpret the material.

Both Steiner and Wolf's arguments accord with Marie-Laure Ryan's concept of narrativity as a "fuzzy set" with numerous potential characteristics. Some of these elements, such as temporality, are considered by Ryan to form a "core" and are essential to a narrative; under such a description, a narrative will be defined depending on which characteristics are present. Although it is clear that there is no consensus on what constitutes the key elements, plotting visual narratives on a continuum enables scholars to demonstrate the significance of aspects beyond the traditional "core." Of particular importance is the shift from assessing the "narrative" features of an image to considering its construction for reception. This is not a new approach. In his assessment of literary narratives, Roland Barthes proposed that the reader/viewer activated five different codes during his or her interaction with a narrative, thereby placing the observer in the foreground theoretically. Focusing on the ways images are naturalized for reception shows how images provoke responses within their cultural context, which fruitfully extends this model to the study of Asian narrative.

A brief narrative of Asian narratives

While studies of visual narration in the West extend back to the first half of the twentieth-century, narratology in Asian art history only began in the late 1980s and 1990s. At first, analyses were structural in nature. Scholarship focused on the building blocks of visual narratives—how images narrate stories, and whether or not they actually do so. For example, Pao-chen Chen, in an article titled "Time and Space in Chinese Narrative Paintings of Han and the Six Dynasties," defined the presentation of time and space visually and discussed the reasons behind the changes in these relationships over time. Vidya Deheja, in a number of articles and her Discourse in Early Buddhist Art: Visual Narratives of India, identified eight ways in which her work provoked a number of responses in the Asian art historical field. In her article "Narrative as Icon: The Jataka Stories in Ancient Indian and Southeast Asian Architecture," Robert Brown rejected not only Deheja's categories, but also the idea that the visual imagery of stories in Southeast Asia was intended to function narratively at all. Quinlan Phillips in his study of Japanese screens, "Steam Shuten Doji Sceens: A Study of Visual Narrative," explored the application of Deheja's narrative categories, but found that they did not fit the complexity and diversity of Japanese art. Indeed, he questions the need for strict categorization, and argues that Deheja's modes hide the nuances produced in Japanese art, where causal, hierarchical, and other types of associations are also significant. These components, however, are not wholly evident in a straightforward analysis of the relationship between time and space.

In his "Narrative Turn in the Humanities" in the Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory, Martin Kreiswirth wrote, "The narrative turn encompasses more and more disciplines concerned not just with story as story but with stories in forms of knowledge." As Ryan, Steiner, Wolf, Murray, and Phillips demonstrate in their different ways, narrative must be conceived broadly and flexibly for it to be useful in exploring visual narratives through time and space. Murray begins her article titled "What is Chinese Narrative Illustration?" by asking questions about how to define narrative illustration. She proposes defining Chinese narrative illustration as referring to a story "... where 'story' means the presentation of one or more events that occur in a sequence of time and bring about a change in the condition of a specific character." She goes on to say that the imagery must have a specific purpose, particularly that it "... record, affirm, inform, instruct, indoctrinate, proselytize, propagandize, or even entertain ..." According to her, the third aspect to consider is the mode of presentation, created by the interaction of three variables. These are format (the location of the image—heavily on a wall, a vase, a fan, etc.—which can affect how the narrative is presented), compositional structure (the arrangement of the story in space, and here, Murray considers a modified version of Deheja's theory useful), and conceptual approach (the general relationship between a textual or oral story and its depiction). Murray suggests that the latter aspect enables an image to function as a reminder of a story without depicting specific events from it. She concludes that there are three main combinations of these variables, and here she moves...
The contributions are organized culturally, chronologically, and thematically. The East Asian material forms the largest group and is placed first. Dore J. Levy's paper on vignonism is one of the most theoretical papers, and, as it establishes parameters for viewing the subsequent Chinese and Japanese narratives, is the commencing paper after Julia K. Murray's keynote address. The Chinese papers are largely arranged chronologically, yet this also nearly develops specific themes. Thus, the literati products seen in Murray's, Levy's, and Shane McCauley's papers are followed by Yeewan Koons discussion of images that overlook the world view of the Chinese intelligentsia. Zhang Bau's imagery, as assessed by Catharine Suen, is another unusual rethinking of traditional Chinese artistic production. Yonca Kosebay Erkan's paper on an Ottoman manuscript is presented between two papers on East Asia because it relates thematically to both of them in discussing the narrativization of seemingly non-narrative material. The papers that address narratives in architectural spaces, much of which concern South and Southeast Asia, are grouped together and arranged chronologically, except for Dominik Bonats paper on Assyrian and Khmer relief carvings. This has been placed with Leedom Lefferts and Sandra Cate's contribution and Mary Beth Heston's paper because all three address issues of performance in visual narratives.

Murray's keynote address sets the stage by describing the state of the discipline and indicating that studies of visual narratives in their local context, rather than within a more theory-based environment, would benefit art historical inquiry, in part by encouraging closer connections with other disciplines. Her analysis of the Chinese text, The Emperor's Mirror Illustrated and Discussed (Dijian tushuo), dating to the late Ming dynasty of the 1570s, looks at a series of illustrated historical anecdotes, the initial purpose of which was to provide an admonitory lesson for an emperor. As the pictures are reproduced over time and in different cultures, including France, we see how significant changes in text-image relationships, conventions of visuality, methods of narrativization, social belief systems, the connections between the imagery and contextual material, and crucially, the role of the viewer, have an impact on the text's reproduction and on the uses to which it is put. The reader/viewer's cultural context is clearly an essential feature in determining how the story was both plotted and received. This contextual construction, as well as the purpose of compiling the pictures as a group, narrativizes the depictions, which theory scholars would classify as being low on the narrative gradient.

The qualities that narrativize images are not necessarily a universal standard that can be applied through time and across cultures, as we see in a number of papers in this volume, particularly those on Chinese narrative. Dore J. Levy argues that a fundamental principle underlying Chinese narrative illustration is vignonism, which applies across genres and media. She proposes that there are two main structures—episodic and integrative—that underline this principle. The former advances the narrative through a series of episodes connected chronologically, rather than by cause and effect. This reminds viewers of their outsider status. The integrative structure, however, invites the viewer into the experience, combining text and image within a temporal and spatial progression. As it is the integrated succession of tableaux that characterizes Chinese narratives, she concludes that "the vignetted is the form of expression which allows perception of time through experience, and suspension of time through lyric transcendence." This is a redefinition of narrative for the Chinese cultural context. Here, the structure is shaped by connective themes and the integration of the lyric moment with time and space. In such instances, the roles of the narrator and, as with Murray's discussion of The Emperor's Mirror, the receiver/viewer are essential. Levy's concept of vignonism in Chinese art forms a foundation for the construction of narrative sequences that superficially appear to lack conventionally clear narrative characteristics.

Looking at artistic response to societal values, Shane McCauley asks how the process by which the artists of two handscrolls from China and Japan around 1600 turn texts into visual narratives reveals social norms and values, as well as commercial pressures. He assesses how the two paintings portray shared boundaries of East Asian narrative scroll painting in the early modern period. Dependent on patrons and their interests, the artists constructed visual narratives to transmit particular concepts to culturally literate viewers, with social presuppositions thus constraining both the painters and the viewers. The "romanticizations, embellishments, displacements, and corruptions" indicate the weight of the discourse in re-telling well-known stories. Such elements as the construction of a visual loop to indicate the continuing anguish of grief and the collation of scenes to emphasize feelings implied in the written text contribute to the narrativization of the imagery by reinforcing specific concepts and长达 beyond spatial-temporal concerns. In keeping with Levy's ideas on vignonism, these theoretically strong narratives that reveal clear story progressions thus indicate that a variety of factors beyond the "core" contribute to the construction of a narrative.

While the methods of narrativization in visual images are conservative in Murray's, Levy's, and McCauley's studies, following contemporary cultural requirements, Yeewan Koons provides an example where traditional values are rejected and subverted. The artist Su Renshan, working in the mid-nineteenth-century Qing dynasty, drew upon novels, veristicales, and classical histories and reassembled them through images and text to expose the corruption and emptiness of Chinese literature. Su dispensed with spatial and temporal constructions and created complex, multivalent images. His opposition to traditional texts and stories created new ways of narrativizing seemingly non-narrative imagery, and the textual material included in the paintings proves essential in revealing the significance of the imagery. Su played an increasingly active authorial role during his artistic career, controlling the viewer's response and giving himself a strong presence in the paintings. Ultimately, the artist's presence narrativizes the paintings by inverting the stereotype of the Chinese literati and arguing against it. The pictures project out into society, pushing for change in the future, so that the visual imagery is the starting point for a longer story. The "actual or attempted change of situation" that Wolf deems important in visual narrative representations is situated beyond the borders of Su's paintings, with his imagery framing and focalizing the social commentary.
Like Koon's work, Catherine Stuer's study of Zhang Bao's pictorial travelogue from the late Qing dynasty of the early nineteenth century reveals new relationships between text and image. Zhang Bao's six volumes, consisting of extensive landscape scenes, deliberately set out to be a narrative, following the conventions of Chinese book and literary culture, but, uniquely, use images as the body of each tale and written material as the paratextual frame. As with Su Renshan's imagery, Zhang Bao's draws upon and is expanded by the accompanying textual material, some parts written by the author, but others by friends and colleagues. The letters' interpretations of their imagery indicate potential new directions and significances for the pictorial sequences, which cause the author to rethink the plot of the narrative, and, in subsequent books, to shift the teleological thrust accordingly. In contrast to Su Renshan, Zhang Bao welcomed audience participation in his work; his is an interactive authorship. What begins as straightforward narrative development of an individual's travels is transformed and expanded into an exploration of the relationship between self and cosmos. Zhang Bao activated his illustrations of Chinese landscapes through a sequential arrangement in the books, his often implied presence as an author and protagonist, and the shifting purposes of the series. The story occurs through a sequence of pictures that often lack a perceptible protagonist, indicating that visual material functions narratively even with only an implied actor who experiences change, a feature seen also in the Ottoman Beyaz-ı Menazi manuscript discussed by Yonca Kosebey Erkan.

In the Beyaz-ı Menazi, non-narrative material, such as buildings, rivers, and plants, also tells a story—in this case, Sultan Süleyman IV's first military campaign of 940-42 AH (1533-36 CE) against the Saffavids which resolved in the fall of Baghdad. The book appears to have been a gift for Süleyman, and it was clearly planned as a source of information, a travelogue, and a celebratory artifact. Although organized sequentially, the illustrations to the text are devoid of human representation, and yet, Erkan argues, through the depictions of urban centers, topography, and the flora of the regions that the army traversed, the artist Mahrul Nasuh unfolds the sultan's successful progress. Changes in the number of imperial tents indicate the meeting of armies, and the presence (or not) of fruit and leaves tells the viewer at what season the army occupied a specific location. Although they are elements traditionally considered to represent a hiatus in a story, the details of the pictures become the narrators of an historical event. The pictures accompanying a textual document of a military campaign could be construed as a simple illustration of a text, yet the lack of anthropomorphine figures and an implied protagonist argues against this identification, as does the fact that the images report on more than just the campaign. A generalized manner of illustrating specific building types and the use of floral types to portray topography transform the pictures into a guide to what a traveler could expect to find in the region. Such images were also politicized by Nasuh through his representation of architecture as generally Ottoman in style. Thus, as the campaign is read through its details, too is the foregone conclusion of the sultan's success.

In producing the Beyaz-ı Menazi, Nasuh shapes non-narrative material into a narrative, and in Japan, non-narrative images also played such a role. Sarah E. Thompson explores how the expansive classic, The Tale of Genji, was distilled into a set of highly codified visual symbols, printed on playing cards, and transformed into a popular game, related to incense-identification and earlier shelf-matching games. The user would have needed familiarity with The Tale of Genji to participate in the activities, yet when playing, be or she would also have drawn on the imagery and discussions with other participants to develop and display knowledge of the book. Since they are largely iconic, the images are clearly "weak" as visual narratives; yet they present an implied narrative of the expanding production and consumption of textual stories across Japanese literate society aided by forms of visual codification. Initially, the original text was essential in the reception of these visual mnemonics, but eventually, the Genji poems and pictures so permeated society that they could be incorporated into visual and literary parables of the classical tradition. Thus emerges a cycle of text to image as visual clue and back to text or expansion into a "stronger" visual narrative, making reception by the viewer paramount in the comprehension and narrativization of the visual material found on the Genji cards. The relationship between text and image is thus highly complex, with a familiar story translated into codes that over time promoted new interpretations of the original story.

Images that tell stories also adorn architectural spaces in innumerable iconographic permutations. Six of the papers in this volume address the ways such narratives were received and contributed to the significance of architectural spaces in which they were housed. Playing an essential role in narrative construction, donors and patrons commissioned the embellishment of temples, caves, and palaces with pictorial stories to create an auspicious environment, and the prevalence of such imagery indicates its importance across Asia from an early period. These are often strong narratives with a clear protagonist, temporal sequence, and purpose; yet they are frequently depicted and arranged in ways that emphasize other features which narrate the imagery. Disposition within space adds an extra dimension that can convey ideas to the viewer. In a number of these papers, the argument is made that spatial form, rather than chronological or causal principles, is a major organizing principle, with specific themes determining the arrangement of the story. Here, the cohesion and coherence deemed necessary for narrativity emerge from the connections presented in the imagery; yet this requires the active participation of the viewer to make linkages. Architecture thus contributes an additional semiotic layer to the analysis of narratives, and draws the viewer into the narrative production process.

Sona S. Lee analyzes the rise of pictorial Nirvana narratives in Chinese cave temples from the late seventh to the early eighth centuries. The relationship between the arrangement of the visual narratives and the architectural space was carefully designed by the sponsors to communicate their religious ideas, as well as to indicate their support of Empress Wu Zetian's regime. Lee argues that the arrangement of the stories within the caves did not follow the storyline as it was generally known, but was determined by the pathway of the devotees through the cave and how they encountered its contents. Of course, progress through the space was deliberately guided to ensure that the devotee absorbed particular ideas linked with the religion and politics of the period. Episodes associated with the Buddha's nirvana not only communicated his supernatural abilities and his final piety, but also indicated the next stage in the process of viewing the cave. While the methods of organizing the scenes elucidated the stories in one way, the overall arrangement narrativized the material in another and illuminated other significations. Spatial relationships in this case superseded temporal progression in transmitting ideas to viewers.

Spatial relationships at the Saiitve temple of Cand Loro Joggargar in central Java not only produce new narratives, but they also trace janastra diagrams within the complex and provide evidence of network connections through the specific arrangement of narratives and imagery on the buildings. The carvings represent the epic tales, the Ramayana and the Kresayana, and, due to the complexity of the material, Mary-Louise Tottum proposes that scientific network theory is a fruitful way of understanding how the images relate to each other. In analyzing how specific iconographic features form multiple "hubs" embedded in the visual narratives, Tottum explores the links between these centers, showing how they generate additional meanings and bring less prominent parts of the iconographic program to the fore. She demonstrates that complex coding enables the site to function as "a testament to its period and patrons," despite sustaining damage over its millennium-long history. Her findings parallel Thompson's analysis of the Genji code game that in one way sustained the original text over hundreds of years and enabled multiple expansions of the story in a variety of media. In the Japanese context, the text-image relationship is less important than the overall construction of Loro Joggargar and its dense methods of narrativization. The complexity of the iconographic program suggests that good comprehension of the imagery would have been limited to an educated few who had a thorough knowledge of numerology, symbols, myths, literature, and folklore. The restriction of physical and intellectual access can be seen in other narratives here. The Assyrian sculptures discussed in Dominik Bosut's paper and the Kerelan murals in Mary Beth Heston's paper are both located in areas the general
The narrative manipulation of space for political purposes also reveals the nature of donors and their intentions. Charlotte Galloway focuses on the emergence of narrative art in central Burma during the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, linking this phenomenon to the arrival of Buddhist texts. As sources of information about the Jataka stories, the life of Gotama Buddha, and the Buddha of the Past became available, they were incorporated into iconographic programs in Pagan's early temples. While the texts were a source of information, the manner in which the stories were represented stylistically corresponds to that of Pala India, and the imagery was created through the juxtapositioning of monochrome depictions of the stories. The images and texts were manipulated politically by the Burmese kings to support specific religious concepts, and the disposition of these various stories in temples politically narrativized them to demonstrate the links between merit, karun, kingship, and Buddhahood, bolstering belief in the kings' future enlightenment.

My own essay compares and contrasts similar subject matters, consisting of the Jataka stories, the life of Gotama, cosmology, and the Buddhas of the Past, and the variant disposition of mural paintings in Thai and Burmese temples of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. It examines the safest role of the donors in the narrative arrangement. The dissimilar political intentions of the Thai and Burmese sponsors, in part a result of their different social statuses (royal for the former and provincial for the latter), had an impact on the spaces utilized for the display of wall paintings. Thai murals were housed in large congregational spaces, while the Burmese murals adorned small temples primarily constructed for the purpose of enshrining an image and individual worship. These dissimilar spaces in turn mandated diverse rules for the imagery, as indicated by the disparate organization of the visual narratives themselves. Burmese narratives created an environment that focuses on the religious needs of individuals, whereas Thai murals emphasized cosmology and the defeat of Mara with large-scale depictions portraying general and particular political ideas. The intent of the sponsors thus played an essential role in the political and social narrativization of the imagery.

Performivity plays a role in the presentation of visual narratives, as the final three papers demonstrate. In such instances, the imagery not only presents but also acts on the concepts depicted. Lee Seung Lee and Sandra Cate's article shows how a painting becomes part of the recreation of the very story it represents. Mary Beth Heston describes how murals can use features essential to the performing arts, and then become a dramatic event themselves. And the relief sculptures of the Assyrian and Khmer kingdoms affirmed political worldviews by mirroring royal activities, as discussed in Dominik Bonatz's paper.

The sponsors of historical sculptures in ancient Assyria and the Khmer empire, particularly during the reign of Jayavarman VII, commissioned imagery that reflected their distinctive methods of governance. Bonatz describes how the disposition and internal organization of reliefs of hunting, warfare, building activities, and the king illustrate the necessities of royal legitimacy and ideology associated with kingship, and record the achievements of specific rulers in both politics. Limited access to the palace and temple interiors of ancient Assyria ensured that the narratives were the exclusive preserve of an elite group and acted as devices for self-affirmation. Bonatz suggests that, in contrast, the historical reliefs of the Khmer were more public and showed a very different type of kingship—one that displays the king as a "unifier of the state and guarantor of its productivity," as well as an essential patron of events. He argues that the structures of these narratives contribute to a better comprehension of how they emerged from their religio-political contexts and were agents in the manipulation of power. While they shared some formats and methods of narrativization, the imagery of the visual narratives from these two regions was constructed to be viewed quite differently by the observer.

While the arrangement of the murals of the Ramayana epic in the Mattaneri palace in Kerala, India emphasizes a martial theme, the paintings themselves focus on performative features to evoke specific audience responses. Martin B. Heston describes performance in eighteenth-century Kerala as an important literary mode that portrayed and celebrated warfare, competition, and heroism. "These performances defined kingship for rulers of the region, and in themselves became a means of inter-court competition. Rasa provides an aesthetic vocabulary that is shared across a number of art forms, and Heston argues here that the rasa (heroic, active, vigorous) is promoted in the Mattaneri murals because of the scenes chosen, the way in which space was allocated, and the expressions and body positions of the story's illustrated characters. Alankara, the concept of embellishment and ornament in all its senses, was also essential to the comprehension of the detailed painted compositions in the Mattaneri palace. Heston thus demonstrates that it is possible to incorporate aesthetic concepts associated with performance into static images in efforts to elicit viewer responses similar to those produced by dramatic performance. To experience the paintings fully, viewers needed to be familiar with visual cues from Kathakali performance and the aesthetic conventions of rasa. Relating to the use of pictures during story recitations known in India and China, elements of performance not only featured as essential aspects for understanding the visual narratives, but were fundamental in the production of the wall paintings at the palace.

The physical participation of visual narratives in performance can be seen in Lee Seung Lee and Sandra Cate's article on the painted cloth scrolls of the Vessantara Jataka, which are used ceremonially in Northeast Thailand and Laos. As part of the Bun Pheu Wet festival, participants carry the lengthy scroll from the forest back to the village, transforming their position from audience to one of active participant in the construction of the narrative. Gotama Buddha becomes "present" for those involved in the event, and his life and dispensation are thus linked with the actors. The merging of narrator and subject invites interpretations beyond the perfection of shrine-related associated with the Vessantara Jataka in the realms of Buddhist practice that ensure people's rebirth into the future Buddha's community. The re-creation of the city to receive Vessantara constitutes an apology for misunderstanding his actions and banishing him, and Lefferts and Cate suggest that this re-creates the relationships between ruler and ruled, in turn reaffirming the villagers' loyalty towards the central government of Thailand. While the imagery on the scroll presents a sequential retelling of parts of the Vessantara Jataka, the method of narrativization actually lies in the use and reception of the painting.

Conclusion

Analysis of Asian visual narratives contributes to general theoretical discussions by demonstrating that there are more permutations constituting a narrative than previously supposed. The papers in 'Rethinking Visual Narratives from Asia' reveal the necessity of considering narratives more broadly than has been done in the past. Narrative definitions need to be expanded to address the complexity and diversity of narratives beyond the confines of Western art upon which much narrative theory rests, and accepting variable features as creating narrativity is essential in examining visual narratives globally.

Both strong and weak narratives in Asia show us that telling stories visually is a vital part of Asian cultures and provide us with a greater understanding of what is important across this broad landscape. In particular, there is a focus on meaning above and beyond the creation of a "strong" narrative. The papers by Lefferts and Cate, Heston, Bonatz, Totton, Lee, McCusker, and myself present narratives that cultivate a clear protagonist experiencing change over time that results in a new, specific condition. Thus, Rama wins the war against Ravana and regains his wife, Sita; the Buddha perfects the virtues and becomes enlightened; the king demonstrates his power by defeating his enemies; and Chinese emperors suffer grief and loss due to excessive devotion to women. Despite the fact that these are "strong" narratives, however, it is not the transformation of the situation through time and space that primarily narratizes the
imagery and makes it significant to the local viewer, but the
different means by which the imagery presents a clear
purpose—the "plot" according to Paul Ricoeur.8 "Weak"
narratives lack a strong sense of temporality, chronology,
unity, action, or storyworld because we cannot see a clear
progression and change through time. Yet, as the papers
by Murray, Levy, Stuer, Koons, Thompson, Galloway,
and Ekan demonstrate, these characteristics are not essential
in transmitting a narrative concept to the viewer. Instead,
an evident sense of cohesion, in part emerging from the
audience's use, generates the necessary teleology.

As a group, the papers in Rethinking Visual Nar-
ratives from Asia provide a series of vignettes drawn from
the visual narratives of Asia, revealing the multiplicity
of ways in which pictorial stories have been conceived,
produced, received, and performed across the region.
As Greg M. Thomas observed in his conclusion to the
conference, the papers offer a cross-cultural perspective
to the discipline of narrative studies, and reveal the
great potential for visual storytelling that extends across
time and borders. His contribution here indicates how
the multiple ways of presenting and viewing visual narratives
reify the emphasis on audience perception, interpretation,
and response that is highly relevant for narrative studies
today. Micke Båå and Norman Bryson warn against the
easy generalization of societal viewing expertise, arguing
that any analysis of reception must include the degree to
which audiences understand the narrative codes.9 Yet,
the variant methods of narrativizing imagery represented
in this volume reveal the perceived need to guide and
shape the viewer's reception of the visual material and
the numerous ways in which this is accomplished in
Asia. Most of the images presented here strongly direct
viewers towards a specific understanding of the picto-
rial material, with little room for debate from those with
shared cultural backgrounds. This creates fairly rigid rela-
tionships between the pictures and audience, although
the spectators' participation in these prescribed viewings
is still required. The manner in which narratives shape
their viewers' responses is clearly a critical part of assess-
ing Asian visual narratives. However, Thompson's dis-
cussion of The Tale of Genji, in which the visual chapter
codes gave rise to new narratives, Stuer's analysis of the
changing purposes of Zhong Biao's pictorial books, and
Murray's presentation of the ideological alterations of The
Emperor's Mirror over time and across cultures demon-
strate that not all narratives close off audience participa-
tion in the construction of narrative purpose. Viewers'
actions and responses remain an essential feature in
creating and sustaining the full narrative significance of
the imagery.

In sum, this juxtaposition of diachronically and
synchronically disparate narratives will enable theoretici-
s to define further a narrative gradient by expanding
our knowledge of Asian cultures. Asian art historical
analyses give us local specificity within broad criteria of
what constitutes a narrative, drawing on interdisciplinary
material so that narrative art is seen as part of culturally
salient perception and experience.

Notes
1. The regions represented in the papers were not deliberately
orthogonalized. Papers were chosen on the basis of their narrat-
ive approach and thematic relationship to other submissions.
This has resulted in some areas of Asia not being represented.
However, it is not possible in a volume of this size to explore
all the particulars of such a vast region over extended periods of
time. Here, papers on the particular must stand for the general.
2. Marie-Laure Ryan separates "narratives" from images possess-
ing "narrativity." Marie-Laure Ryan, "Narrative," in Routledge Ency-
clopedia of Narrative Theory, eds. David Herman, Manfred Jahn,
and Marie-Laure Ryan (London and New York: Routledge,
2003), 347.
3. Julia K. Murray, "What is "Chinese Narrative Illustration?" The
4. Urs Westergaard, "Which Narrative? The Case of the Narrative
Subject in Fifteenth-Century Albertinum," IN PICTUROM 1
Steiner, "Pictorial Narrativity," in Narrative across Media: The
Languages of Storytelling, ed. Marie-Laure Ryan (Lincoln, NE:
University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 145-77; Westergaard, "Narrative
and Narrativity: A Narramorphological Reconcentration and Its
Applicability to the Visual Arts," Word and Image 19, 3 (2003):
180-97.
5. Westergaard, "Which Narrative?" 62.
6. Ibid.
7. Steiner, "Pictorial Narrativity," 147; Wolf, "Narrative and Nar-
ративность," 150; Gerald Prince, "Surveying Narratology," in What
is Narrativity? Questions and Answers Regarding the Status of
а Theory, eds. Tom Keight and Hans-Hard Reif (Berlin: Walter de
Gruyter, 2003), 46.
10. Ibid., 149.
11. Ibid., 146, 154-55.
12. Ibid., 146, 155-56.
Wang, 1975). For a summary, see Mcke Båå, "Narrative and
15. Pi-chen Chen, "Time and Space in Chinese Narrative Paint-
ing of Han and the Six Dynasties," in Time and Space in Chinese
Culture, eds. Chih-chien Huang and Erik Zurcher (Leiden: E.J.
Blu, 1995), 239-83.
16. Vidyarthi Dabbi, "On Modes of Visual Narrative in Early
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Studies 7 (1991): 45-75; Disney and Robert Brown, Visual
Narratives of India (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publish-
er, 1997).
17. Robert L. Brown, "Narrative as Icon: The Jataka Stories in
Ancient Indian and Southeast Asian Art," in Jhaveri and Souza
(ed. Julian Schober (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001),
64-109.
19. Martin Kayser, "Narrative Turn in the Humanities," in Routledge
Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory, eds. David Herman, Manfred Jahn,
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid., 612.
Narrative Theory, eds. David Herman, Manfred Jahn, and
ed. David Herman, Manfred Jahn, and Marie-Laure Ryan
(London: Routledge, 2005), 421.
27. Vicente Navie and Performativity: Chinese Picture Revival and
Its Indian Genesis (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press,
1988).
29. Micke Båå and Norman Bryson, "Semiotics and Art History,"
9 BUDDHIST NARRATIVE IMAGERY DURING THE ELEVENTH CENTURY AT PAGAN, BURMA
Reviewing Origins and Purpose
Charlotte Galloway

Narrative is an integral feature of Burmese Buddhist art, yet there has been little investigation into why or how visual narratives came to dominate the Buddhist artistic repertoire. The origins of these narratives can be found in Buddhist canonical and non-canonical literature. Initial interpretations viewed imagery as a literal representation of the textual narratives. Pictorial narrative theory now acknowledges that a visual narrative may be seen as concurrently representing a particular story and illuminating multi-layered meanings. This paper reviews the multiple narratives that are dominant visual features of the Ananda temple at Pagan and offers an interpretation that extends beyond the text-image pictorial narrative view.

Pagan, Burma's great Buddhist historic site, was the capital of the first Burmese empire, which flourished from the reign of King Anawrahta in the mid-eleventh century through its demise in the early fourteenth century. The legacy of this formative period in Burma's history is a vast plain that is home to more than two thousand stupas and temples. Located in central Burma on the edge of the Irrawaddy River, Pagan is a Buddhist pilgrimage center. The site is also where a distinctive Burmese Buddhist artistic narrative emerged, and Burmese Theravada Buddhism established itself as the country's foremost religion.

The temples at Pagan are characterized by extensive and elaborate decoration, both inside and out. Temple exteriors with stucco reliefs and glazed tiles, usually of bright turquoise, green, and cream or yellow, were also decorated with narrative plaques depicting Jataka tales. Representations of deities, guardian figures, rampant lions, and other animals associated with Buddhism or Burmese symbolism, such as naga, boar, deer, and peacocks all combined with golden spires to produce a riot of visual activity. The interiors of the temples continued this theme of illustrative density. Walls were invariably painted floor to ceiling with a variety of Buddhist scenes, which by the end of the twelfth century became quite formulaic. There were panels of Jataka illustrations, scenes from the Buddha's last life, repeated patterns of small images of
the Buddha in the thousands, and roundels on entrance ceilings containing images of the Buddha's footprints (the Buddha-pada). Any remaining space was filled with floral design features, images of bhuddhas, and other Buddhist motifs.  

Early visual narratives at Pagan appeared in the forms of terracotta plaques depicting the Jatakas, temple wall paintings, and sculptural scenes of the Buddha's last life. These narrative images were interpreted by colonial scholars as illustrating the life of the Buddha as found in Theravada texts, such as the Jataka-sidhanas, for the purpose of education, thereby supporting the historical narrative of a Theravada ascension in Burma.  

Scouring of Pagan's early temples considering alternative views of narrative purpose reveals the foundations of Pagan's, and subsequently Burmese, art history. This paper is concerned with the early period of Pagan, during the eleventh century and the opening years of the twelfth, when temple advancement was reaching its peak. It describes the development of the dominant themes of narrative art independently of stylistic change and suggests an alternative interpretation for the visual narratives found within these early temples. The narrative themes are discussed within the framework of an evolving form of Buddhist practice that culminates in the complex narrative repertoire found in one of Pagan's greatest temples, the Ananda.

It was during King Anawrahta's rule (c. 1044–77) that narrative imagery became established as part of Pagan's artistic repertoire. Anawrahta's history is rather mysterious, with no epigraphic material dating to his reign except for dedicatory phrases on his votive tablets. The legendary story of his life as told in The Glass Palace Chronicle of the Kings of Burma, Burma's pre-eminent written history, remains the most comprehensive source of information about this first ruler of the Burmese kingdom. It was compiled under the direction of King Bagyiwad (r. 1819–37) when a committee of learned men were tasked with writing a chronicle of Burmese kings using all available sources. More than ten local chronicles and numerous inscriptions all contributed to the final assemblage. While there are fanciful elements through-out the chronicle, there is a thread of historical continuity that has some basis in fact. Anawrahta rose to prominence rapidly and oversaw the expansion of the Burmese empire from a small collection of villages around Pagan to a region extending from around Mergui in the far south of Burma to Momeik in the north, as evidenced by the presence of his votive tablets. He had neighboring kingdoms including Sri Lanka, Angkor, the Nan-chao in Yunnan, and the Mon in southern Burma, and also traveled to India. In the absence of Burmese inscriptions from the period, knowledge of these events comes from non-Burmese accounts, as well as later Burmese sources.

At Pagan, the rise of Theravada Buddhism is integrally linked to the development of narrative imagery. As Luce notes, even though the early histories are rather muddled, "all are agreed that he [Anawrahta] was a champion of Buddhism, whose main purpose was to secure copies of the Tipitaka and Relics of the Buddha."  

Two events associated with Anawrahta's reign that were crucial to the establishment of a Theravada canon at Pagan included the arrival of the Mon monk, Shin Aranab, and the relocation of the Mon court of Thaton in lower Burma to Pagan around 1056. Shin Aranab took on the role as spiritual guide to the king, and the first version of the Tipitaka at Pagan was that known to the Mon. Anawrahta became a devout proponent of Buddhism, but in the early phase of his reign it was a form of Buddhist practice that was still developing in its own character. There are clear indications that spiritual life at Pagan, while embracing Buddhism, was initially extremely eclectic. Luce writes, "There is ample evidence to show that he and his successors had close relations, religious, cultural and matrimonial, with Pāṭihāriya (west of Comilla) in East Bengal. There, Mahāyāna, Tantrism, and various forms of Brahmanism flourished." The suggestion here is that Anawrahta was influenced by these interactions, and indeed, the art associated with the early part of his reign supports this.

The earliest imagery of Anawrahta's reign is likely that seen on the many votive tablets which bear his personal dedication. Found throughout Burma, the tablets are varied in their subject matter and arrangement—single images of Lukanatha and Tara, goddesses associated with Mahayana Buddhism, single images of the Buddha most commonly in bhumisparsa mudra, tablets that feature either five, ten, thirty-one, or fifty repeated images of the seated Buddha, and the Buddha with Lokanatha and Maitreya, along with other variants. The votive tablets served the important role of spreading word of Anawrahta's authority through the reaches of the expanding kingdom and promoted Buddhism.

There was no clear pattern or preference for Buddhist imagery at this point, except possibly for images of the Buddha in bhumisparsa mudra, and iconographically and stylistically Anawrahta's early votive tablets are direct copies of Mahayana Pala India models. The script was often a mix of Pali and Sanskrit, indicating that both Mahayana and Theravada ideas prevailed, a major sign that it was a period of exploration in the history of Burmese Buddhism. Imagery associated with Mahayana and Theravada practices also existed, but by the end of Anawrahta's reign, there was a preference for imagery that supported a Theravada philosophy.

The most important historical factor to influence the development of Pagan's narrative imagery was Anawrahta's access to the Pali canon. Believed to have arrived with the Mon court, the texts allowed Shin Aranab to embark on a uniform approach to Buddhist expansion under the auspices of his patron, Anawrahta. The Glass Palace Chronicle portrays Shin Aranab as a fervent Buddhist who instilled in Anawrahta "an essay of faith unbounded" and became Anawrahta's guide on all spiritual matters. It was during this period that karmic Buddhism, which focuses on merit making to generate kammava, became a fixture of Burmese Buddhist practice. The law of kamma "is simply a cosmic law in that all crimes are suitably punished and all good deeds rewarded, in the long run." The accumulation of enough good kamma, generated by supporting the Three Jewels of Buddhism (the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha), ensures eventual Buddhahood.

At Pagan, merit making for Anawrahta emerged as temple building and adornment to the Buddha. While there are no dedicatory inscriptions attributed to Anawrahta's reign, they are found in later temples and indicate that temples were built for the purpose of paying homage to the Buddha, which accumulated merit for the donor. For example, the dedicatory inscription of the Shwe-gu-gyi, built in 1131 under King Aungwaung's patronage (r. 1113–69), in part states, "Make a pleasing lovely room, a fragrant chamber [Pali: gandhabhat] for the mighty Seer, Gotama Buddha," confirming the temple as an offering to the Buddha. Anawrahta also supported the Sangha, which is believed to have grown quickly during the early Pagan period with wealthy residents patronizing monasteries. Strong support for the Sangha is found in later Pagan inscriptions, including the palace inscription of King Kyazonitha (r. 1084–1113), which mentions the presence of large numbers of monks overseeing the dedication ceremony. Along with this evidence of tangible activities, there was a need for spiritual merit making achieved through acts of selflessness that produced kamma through the promotion of the Dhamma. In the context of karmic Buddhism, these three elements offer a rationale for the narrative focus of Pagan's art.

The importance of earning kamma is a theme running throughout much of the Pali Tipitaka. It is, however, in the Sutta Pitaka that the primary source for examples of merit making is found—the Jatakas, stories of Gotama Buddha's past lives. Over many cycles of rebirth, the Buddha was able to accumulate enough merit to attain Buddhahood. As Lu Pe Win notes, of the three paths that can be followed to become a Buddha—Paccha Bodhi, Saccha Bodhi, and Samma Saddhābhūti, it is through the Jatakas that a Buddhist learns how to follow the latter path and strives to become a "world teacher of universal knowledge, wisdom and light, and ultimately to obtain the Mahaparinibbānī."  

The earliest narrative scenes in Pagan's art appear at the East Hpet-leik and West Hpet-leik pagodas (Fig. 9.1). They are located close to the Loka-manda stupa, near the Irrawaddy River's East bank along the road between

Buddhist Narrative Imagery during the Eleventh Century at Pagan, Burma 161
Old Pagan and New Pagan. The Hpet-leik pagodas are thought to have been built shortly after the arrival of the Mon at Pagan, and were probably completed as early as 1057. The central stupas include a square-shaped ambulatory corridor housing Pagan’s first known visual representations of the Jatakas. The timing of the construction no doubt follows the arrival of the Tipitaka with the Mon court and artisans, as prior to this there is no evidence, visual or textual, to suggest that Jataka narratives were known to Pagan’s inhabitants.

This first expression of Buddhist visual narrative appears in the form of individual terracotta plaques, each representing a Jataka tale. They feature a narrative scene in relief, are numbered and titled in Pali using Mon script, and are installed in three-tiered (West Hpet-leik) and four-tiered (East Hpet-leik) rows encircling the interior walls of the enclosed ambulatory corridors (Fig. 9.2). The sequence of 530 Jatakas represented follows the Sri Lankan recension of 547 Jatakas through number 497. The remaining plaques do not correspond and are thought to represent a variant order in the Mon copies of the Tipitaka. The assumption here is that the copies of the Mon Tipitaka were the source for these Jataka plaques, or if not the text, then this version of 550 Jatakas was known orally to the Mon who came to Pagan. There is no other likely source for this variation. There is evidence that the Mon were familiar with creating images of Jatakas, as seen in relief carving on boundary stones (sima) found near Thaton, the best-known dating as early as the eleventh century. Their sophisticated rendering suggests a long-term familiarity with such depictions. A limited number of Jataka plaques has been found inset into the middle terrace of the Thagy pagoda at Thaton, but whether its construction predated the Hpet-leik pagodas is unclear. Unfortunately, the absence of extensive Mon architectural remains means that it is not possible to determine whether the use of the plaques in an extended architectural format, as seen at the Hpet-leik pagodas, was a new innovation or drew on a known tradition.

The Shwe-san-daw stupas, built around 1057, also featured illustrations of the Jatakas and many disparate visual elements. Large bifurcated lions are located at each corner of the square base, and images of what appear to be Hindu deities and deas serve protective roles on the corners of the highly terraced. Remnants of decorative stucco hint at a highly ornate exterior surface. Niches are inset into the ground plinth to house Jataka plaques. Only 288 plaques were included, and as all are now missing, it is impossible to determine which Jatakas were depicted. Remnants of stone images of Brahma have been found in the compound, along with stone umbrellas and other sculptural works. The relic chamber held vases and bronzes with Sanskrit, Pyu, and Mon script. According to The Glass Palace Chronicle, it was at Shin Arabun’s behest that Anawrahta cast a golden image, which was also enthroned in the relic chamber. The Shwe-san-daw incorporates mixed imagery associated with both Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism, along with influences from Hindu and Brahmanic traditions. While coherent narratives are not evident here, the Shwe-san-daw is indicative of an emerging aesthetic favoring an increasingly dense and layered visual repertoire. As the largest monument of the day, the Shwe-san-daw would have sent a powerful message to the populace, or was it many or mixed messages? Because it probably was Anawrahta’s first major merit-making effort, the imagery can be seen as representing his developing understanding of Buddhist concepts. The inclusion of the Jatakas suggests a move towards the development of a visual repertoire supporting the newly arrived Tipitaka and karmic Buddhist practice.
Extensive use of Jataka plaques within the architectural fabric of stupas and temples at Pagan was a sporadic phenomenon, utilised by Anawrahta and then Kyanzittha at the Shwe-szigon stupa and Aunganda temple, and by later kings at the Mingalazedi and Dhamma-yazika stupas.26 The Jataka narratives, however, became an almost permanent fixture in Pagan’s artistic repertoire as they were transferred to the temple interior and became popular subjects for wall paintings.

As the first visual narratives to be popularized at Pagan, it is easy to suggest that the Jatakas were meant to serve an educational purpose, a tool for monks to focus on when telling the story represented by each plaque. We recognize that they represent morality tales in the context of understanding the Buddhist law of cause and effect, but did Pagan’s populace understand this? In the case of the Hpet-leik pagodas, the densely arranged narratives are almost a visual assault for a first-time viewer. For the images to be understood as individual narratives, viewers either had to be literate and/or have learnt the stories through oral means. Given that Mon script was used and the Burmese at that time had no script of their own, it is highly unlikely that devotees could have read the text. It is impossible to determine if the stories were transmitted orally at Pagan, as there are no extant texts or visual material to suggest this. At the Shwe-san-daw, without knowing which Jatakas were represented, it is hard to make a useful assessment of their purpose, but as at the Hpet-leiks, we must ask who could have “read” these narratives and how were they read? The Mon were familiar with the stories and pictorial representations of them, as evidenced by their depictions on rock stones, but there is no proof of their use in a such a visually dense manner. In either case, we must consider the option that they were seen as symbolic of the Buddhist ideal of following a personal path to Enlightenment, as suggested by Lu Pe Win, rather than being an educational tool to be literally understood.

The next development in visual narrative is the appearance of scenes from the Buddha’s life in sculptural form. The earliest are from the Kyauk-ku-umin, which dates to around 1060.27 This temple, located remotely in a ravine northeast of Nyang-ku, was both a temple and a place for monastic meditation. While there are no Jataka illustrations here, there are narratives in the form of sculptures representing scenes from the Buddha’s last existence.28 These stone carvings depict stories of the nativity and later events as well as scenes of the eight great events of the Buddha’s life—the birth, enlightenment, first sermon, descent from Tavatimsa Heaven, taming of the Nalagiri elephant, twin miracles, retreat to Parayyaika forest, and the Parinibbana. A number of images were already missing when Forchhammer first described the temple in the late 1800s, so we can only speculate what the full narratives series may have contained.29 The complex arrangement of the site, with part of the temple built into the hillside, has sculptures located in niches on three walls of the square interior. The fourth wall faces the entrance and houses the central shrine image. Doorways on either side of the shrine image lead to corridors built into the hill with numerous small meditations cells branching off the passageways. In the central shrine area, the three available walls are inset with three tiers of niches of unequal numbers, as each space is shaped to house images in horizontal and vertical (seated and standing) format.30 The Kyauk-ku-umin also features complex, stone decorative elements on the exterior entrance, including guardian figures carved in relief, repeat friezes of floral motifs, and Buddhist symbols, although much of this is now lost.

The Kyauk-ku-umin is one of the earliest examples of a temple with specially designed niches inset into walls to accommodate a predeterined set of narrative figures. Other temples attributed to Anawrahta, such as the Mon-go, also show inset niches, although no images remain. Temple 820 is another likely Anawrahta-period temple, and excavations in the late 1990s revealed large sculptural images depicting life scenes of the Buddha at this site. An arrangement that suited the inclusion of both sculptural works and wall paintings developed at this time; it was characterized by a rectangular vestibule leading into a square or rectangular main space that contained a central square core surrounded by an ambulatory corridor. The corridor walls were painted and/or constructed with niches for sculptures. As devotees circumambulated, they would pass paintings of the Jatakas and/or sculptures representing scenes from the Buddha’s life.

While the appearance of the Jatakas relates to the arrival of Buddhist texts from the Mon region, imagery of the Buddha’s final existence is not so readily explained. There is no complete written narrative of the Buddha’s last life in the Tipitoka; rather, events of his life are scattered throughout the scriptures, and specific episodes are sometimes used to stress an aspect of the Buddha’s teachings.31 Expanded accounts of the Buddha’s life, from his birth to the attainment of enlightenment, belong to non-canonical literature.32 In the case of the Kyauk-ku-umin, the likely textual origin for the scenes of the Buddha’s life is the Pali Nidana-kathaka, as there are close parallels between the text and the imagery. Compiled as an introduction to the Jatakas, the Nidana-kathaka traces the Buddha’s life from his former existence as Sumedha to the dedication of Jetavana monastery during his dispensation. While some of the less well known scenes, such as the Pwawo Festival, are also found in the Lattavatara, a popular version of the Buddha’s last life associated with the northern Sarvastivadins sect of Theravada Buddhism, the imagery most closely follows the Nidana-kathaka narrative. The Nidana-kathaka is a version that may have appealed more to Anawrahta and Shin Arakan as the attainment of the ten parami (virtues/perfections) is a strong theme throughout, building on a major aspect of the Jatakas.33

The origin of the eight great events of Gotama’s life as a concept is also difficult to identify, as there is no direct textual linkage. The closest reference source comes from the Maho-parinibbana Sutta of the Sutta Pitaka, in which the Buddha describes the four places where a Buddhist may worship—these are the site of his birth, enlightenment, first sermon, and death.34 The reason for the remaining four events’ inclusion in this artistic repertoire is still unclear, but we do know that this aspect of artistic form was introduced from India, where the eight great events were popular in Pala art.35 As early Pagan art draws on Pala India models, it is serendipitous that textual knowledge of the life of the Buddha arrived around the same time as the visual images of the same events. Without an existing model for depicting scenes of the Buddha’s life, Pagan artists adopted a Pala-derived format in much the same way that they embraced Jataka illustrations introduced by the Mon.

While most temples associated with Anawrahta are in poor repair and it is difficult to assess the full development of their narrative scripture, it is possible to identify yet another narrative theme that emerged towards the close of his reign—the narrative of the twenty-eight past Buddhas. They are described in the Buddharama, a section of the Khuddaka Nikaya of the Sutta Pitaka. Here, Gotama Buddha relates that beings must perfect the virtues to attain Buddhism. The past Buddhas also form part of the Nidana-kathaka narrative, as each future Buddha received a prophecy in a former life that predicted his final rebirth.36 Without the prophecy, Buddhism would not have been achieved.

The Myin-pys-go, attributed variously to Anawrahta or the early phase of his son Sawla’s reign (c. 1077–84), is a large temple that has lost much of its exterior stucco decoration, though the remnants again hint at a visually rich exterior. After passing through a modest entrance vestibule, there is an ambulatory corridor that is completely covered with paintings on the exterior wall. These include Jataka scenes with glosses for identification, as well as decorative floral friezes and rows of repeated images of the preaching and earth-touching Buddhas.37 There are no niches on the exterior wall, which is interrupted only by an arched doorway to the entrance vestibule. Similar archways lead to matching vestibules on the remaining three sides, but the original decoration in the vestibules is almost completely lost. At each end of the walls there is a pierced stone window. The internal walls of the ambulatory corridor are inset with niches containing images of the Buddha complemented with decorative paintings. Also present are sculptured lions, birds, guardian figures, and the like (Fig. 9.3). Luce suggests that the original intent was to have twenty-eight images on each half of the building, as the north and west sides have fourteen niches each. This number is reduced in the south and east corridors to thirteen as life scenes are included, and the horizontal format of the remaining Buddha restricts the amount of space available.38 Rep-
representations of the life of the Buddha narratives include the Fast, when the Buddha practiced austerities, and the Buddha under the sara, one of the seven stations he occupied after enlightenment. Life scenes are interspersed by images of the Buddha seated in bhūmiparā mudrā.

The Myin-pya-gu brings the Anawrahta period to a close. During Anawrahta’s thirty-year rule, narrative imagery is first seen in the form of Jatakas, strong symbols that represent a personal path to attaining Buddhahood through the perfection of the ten paramis. These are a form of homage to the Buddha, and also acknowledge a significant part of the Pali canon associated with karmic Buddhism. Scenes from Buddha’s life then became an integral part of temple design, though not in any regular format. During Anawrahta’s reign, the Jatakas assumed a role supportive of the sculpted life scenes more readily visible to the devotee. The latter are large and were placed in niches at a height that ensured easy viewing, and their positioning, often on the internal wall of the ambulatory corridor, meant that they received maximum illumination from the limited amount of natural light that enters Pagan’s temples through the regularly spaced window wells covered with brick lattices or pierced stonework. The mural paintings covering the interior are often not entirely visible or identifiable by the viewer due to their position high on the walls, the lack of light, and the stylized or condensed subject matter. In this position the Jatakas became symbols of the merit-making process rather than being objects of close study. Their inclusion is a deliberate choice by the donor, linking the stories of the Buddha’s kamma-earning lives with the donor’s meritorious act of dedicating these images in the Buddha’s honor. The sculptural depictions of key events of the Buddha’s life recognize his great achievements during his many cycles of rebirth, which culminate in his last earthly existence. Towards the end of Anawrahta’s reign, the twenty-eight Buddhas also made their appearance and signal an appreciation of the Buddhavasana, building on knowledge of the Jataha-nidana and the Maha-parinibbana Sutta.

At the Paheto-tha-naya, attributed to the reign of Swala but not necessarily to him personally, there is further development in the arrangement of visual narratives.\(^{44}\) Luce describes it as one of the most beautiful temples at Pagan, because the architectural design and decoration come together masterfully.\(^{45}\) Instead of sculptural depictions of the Buddha’s entire life story, the pre-Enlightenment stories appear in the main corridor as wall paintings with discrete narrative scenes arranged chronologically when viewed during circumambulation (Fig. 9.4). These images are located on the external wall, while those on the interior wall, which are much more easily seen due to their position in relationship to the incoming light, illustrate the eight great events. The paintings are accompanied by ink glosses from the Vinaya, a clear indication that a Theravada canon was now well established at Pagan. Luce writes of Pagan’s monks:

We can but admire their devotion, industry and accurate scholarship. We may guess that they first studied texts of the Vinaya, the discipline of the Order; and then went on to the Suttanta, first the Diṭṭha then the Majjhima Nikāya. Meantime, with the help of the Nidānakathā and other texts, they greatly enhanced their knowledge of the life of Gotama, both before the Enlightenment and after. All of these...\(^{46}\)

Curiously, the Jatakas are not present; their place appears to be taken by the illustrations of the Vinaya. Luce suggests that the paintings and their glosses represent the beginning of a shift from devotion to instruction.\(^{47}\) Considering the merit-making avenues already mentioned, I argue that the selection of narratives reveals the patron’s understanding of more complex aspects of Buddhist doctrine. The use of the Vinaya as an illustrative source is not commonly seen and is indicative of an exploratory approach to Buddhism and temple art, and,
more importantly, an acceptance of new narrative ideas and approaches.

Sawbu was succeeded by Kyansitzha, known at the "uniter" of Burma, a title that refers not only to a physical consolidation of territory under Burman rule, but a spiritual unification as well. Having served under Anawrahta as a general, Kyansitzha experienced the rise of Theravada Buddhism at Pagan, and he was well acquainted with his predecessor's achievements. Like Anawrahta, he upheld Theravada Buddhism. Inscriptions from this time, written in Mon, often refer to the Buddha's fictitious prophecy of the coming of Kyansitzha, along with other grandiose claims that include Kyansitzha's position as a takha wheat (universal monarch). He continued the merit-making approaches of Anawrahta through his support of the Sangha and commissioned some of Pagan's most impressive temples, completing the Shwezigon stupas that had been started under Anawrahta's patronage, the Naga-yan temple, and the Ananda temple. Kyansitzha, through contact with Sri Lanka, also obtained copies of the Sinhalese Tipitaka and adopted this version, which soon affected Pagan's visual narratives.

The Naga-yan, built around 1090, contains the various Buddhist narratives mentioned previously, but these are now arranged in a more cohesive manner. The spacious entrance hall is inset with niches holding narrative sculptures of the major events of the Buddha's life. The niches of the external wall of the ambulatory corridor display sixty stone relics of the Buddha. The corridor's inner hall has twenty-eight, which are thought to represent the twenty-eight Buddhas of the Past. The wall paintings are illustrations of scenes from the Dīgha Nikāya, Majjhima Nikāya, and Jataka with accompanying glosses. Most of these are not visible, because they are located high on the walls and are in darkness for much of the day. The remaining wall space is filled with decorative elements and Buddhist figures, such as budhisattas. The Naga-yan narratives consolidate an emerging pattern. We see a repertoire that includes narrative sculptures of the Buddha's last life, wall paintings that continue to reference Buddhist texts, with the Jatakas well represented, and images of the Buddhas of the Past. A hierarchy relating to image placement also emerges. The Jatakas and other illustrations of the Vinaya move further away from the central shrine image to make way for life scenes that are found in a visually prominent place, on the inner or outer walls of the ambulatory corridor. When present, the twenty-eight Buddhas occupy a position closest to the center of the temple, the inner wall of the ambulatory corridor. This combination of narrative imagery became a "formula" for later Pagan rulers and established a pattern of merit making through veneration of the Three Jewels with Gotama and the past Buddhas as the central focus.

It is at the Ananda temple, completed around 1105, that visual narrative at Pagan reaches a crescendo. Here, all of the elements previously seen are expanded and elaborated in new ways that are not repeated later. Over 1,500 sculptures co-exist with a nearly equal number of terra-cotta plaques. The Ananda is arguably the most well-known and revered temple at Pagan, sharing the distinction of being a major Burmese Buddhist pilgrimage site with the Shwezigon stupas (Fig. 9.5). Its floor plan is unique, designed as a symmetrical Greek cross with four entrances and two internal ambulatory corridors. The approach to the temple can be made from any direction through the four gateways set into the perimeter wall that encloses the temple compound. The four corridors lead to the central square core against each side of which stands a colossal image, one of the four Buddhas of the current eon—Kokoshindha, Konagamana, Kesuppa, and Gotama.

The narrative components of the Ananda are arranged in discrete parts. Figurative glazed plaques illustrating the Jatakas line the roof terraces. The exterior of the temple's plinth is encircled with a band of glazed tiles depicting Mara's army on one half and the celebration of the Buddha's triumph on the other (Fig. 9.6). Each of the four entrance halls is designed to encourage circumambulation around a series of sixteen sculptures, divided architecturally into two sets of eight, representing scenes from the Buddha's life. The external wall of the first interior corridor features eighty sculptures illustrating the narrative of the Buddha's life before Enlightenment (Figs. 9.7 and 9.8). These are arranged in two bands, one below eye-level and the other above. The inner wall of this corridor and both sides of the inner corridor are lined with images of the Buddha in dharmaraja and bhumiiparca mudra, and occasionally in abhaya mudra (Fig. 9.9), also not positioned to be comfortably visible. Recent restoration work has revealed repeated images of seated Buddhas and decorative designs painted under the now heavily whitewashed interior walls, and it is reasonable to suppose that the subject matter was similar to that found in earlier temples.

Although the Ananda is a prominent and complex edifice, discussion of the rationale behind its construction has been surprisingly unremarkable, focusing on description rather than interpretation. Links between the narrative components of the Ananda and its predecessors have not been examined. Yet each narrative element has a precursor in earlier visual narratives, and if these are assessed against their earlier representations, the Ananda can be seen as a symbol of a whole, rather than a sum of component parts.

The main entrance is generally considered to be in the west, in the narrative of Gotama's last life in sculptural form found in the external ambulatory corridor starts here. On entering the temple compound, the first visible narrative are the plaques surrounding the plinth. When circumambulating around the exterior of the building, the devotees first pass scenes of Mara's armies, all facing in the same direction. Starting on the south side of the east face, the plaques then depict the Buddha's triumph with images of asuras, martyrs, brahmins, and the like. The triumphal images are arranged in two halves, all facing the east entrance and thereby emphasizing the importance of that direction. This is the only temple that has such an extended display of the defeat of Mara's armies, and they occupy a prominent place.
was this event so important to Kyazittha? The groups represent the moment of Enlightenment and Gotama Buddha's greatest victory. However, I suggest that this warrior king included an expanded narrative of the event for more personal reasons, as it symbolized not only the great Buddhist moment of Enlightenment through the triumph over temptation, but also because it paralleled his own previous successes on the battlefield. Given Kyazittha's propensity for self-aggrandizement as ascertained through his inscriptions, an extended narrative relating to the Buddha's ultimate "battle" is reasonably explained through the donor's more personal attachment to this particular event.32

The Jatakas plaques covering the roof terraces depict a revised recension of 547 Jatakas, rather than the 550 represented at the Hpet-leik pagodas and the Shwe-gzig.33 This is accepted as indicating Kyazittha's support of the revision of the Tipitaka based on newly obtained versions of the canon from Sri Lanka, where the former recension is standard. However, the order of the last ten Jatakas on the Ananda is inconsistent with the Sri Lankan version. The series starts on the southwest corner of the roof and progresses clockwise, spiraling upwards on each terrace. Inscribed with its title in Pali using Mon script, each Jataka is represented by a single tile, for the last ten Jatakas, the Mahanipat, which are represented in an expanded form for the first time, in approximately 389 plaques. The roof of the Ananda is surrounded by these visual representations of the ten paranis. The expansion of these narratives indicates a greater understanding of the Buddhist canon and the role of these narratives in kammic Buddhism. However, it says something about the temple's patron as well. In this Buddhist context, the king is perceived as a likely future Buddha, and it is his role to perfect the ten virtues.34 Such a deliberate focus on these Jatakas suggests that Kyazittha related strongly to the concepts they represent, which positioned him as a universal monarch who had attainment of the paranis within his grasp. Lining the Ananda's roof terraces, the Jatakas are essentially invisible, unable to be physically accessed or seen clearly by the naked eye and consequently incapable of serving an educational purpose.35 The presence of the Jatakas is therefore symbolic.

On entering the temple from any direction the devotee sees narrative sculptures depicting scenes from the Buddha's life, principally the eight great events. These are mostly the same in each hall, and variations are probably the result of later replacements for damaged or lost sculptures. The narrative images in each entrance hall were described by Luce as being a way of managing "fast-day crowds where, simultaneously, official guides or Monks explained and shewed [in] the villagers carefully selected scenes from the life of the Master.36" If we look back to the early appearance of narrative sculptures, at the Kyauk-ku-umin, we can see again a meaning that goes beyond education or, as Luce suggests, a means of keeping people occupied. Instead, these images symbolize the path to Enlightenment. Having perfected the ten virtues, as illustrated by the Jatakas plaques on the temple's exterior, on entering the temple a devotee finds himself surrounded by the Buddha's life story. The presence of
imagery associated with Gotama’s final life, which is full of miraculous events far beyond the realm of most mortals, honors the Buddha and his achievements.

Next, the devotees enter the first ambulatory corridor. The lower sculptures are easily recognizable as illustrating Gotama’s life from the time he is in Tusa Heaven awaiting his final rebirth, until the moment of Enlightenment. They are arranged in two tiers of forty images. Higher on the walls are further niches of diminishing size that contain sculptures of the seated Buddha. On entering from the western side and turning left, the lower register on the outer wall opens with a scene of the Buddha-to-be seated in Tusa Heaven accepting the request from the gods to prepare for his final rebirth. This tier ends with Prince Siddhartha looking at his wife and son before leaving the palace. The second tier commences with the Great Departure and concludes with the attainment of Enlightenment. When in 1914 Darrois published a comprehensive account of the Ananda temple’s narrative sculptures which line the exterior walls of this corridor, they were interpreted as simply representing the “succession of events based on the Nidānakatha,” the Pali version of the Buddha’s life story. In the context of Pagan’s narrative art, however, like the scenes from the Buddha’s life in the entrance halls, they also have a symbolic meaning as this narrative represents the final journey in a Buddha’s life. Here, the expanded narrative is another indication of the influence of kammic Buddhism, as this story reveals the great personal sacrifices that must be made in order to reach enlightenment.

The inner ambulatory corridor is devoid of a recognizable narrative. The inner and outer walls are inset with sculptures of the Buddha seated, predominantly in bhumiavaca and bhumi-parsa mudra with a predella below. They have been described by Luce as “devotional,” a term that can be used to dismiss the sculptures as merely there to take up space. Yet Luce alludes also to another possible purpose, suggesting these figures may represent the Buddhas of the Past. To date, the scenes in each predella have not been analyzed, as was done at the Nagoya, and such identification cannot be confirmed. However, in the context of the Ananda’s other expanded narratives, this interpretation is plausible. They may also represent the infinite number of Buddhas of the Past, not just the twenty-eight mentioned in the Buddha-story and previously seen at the Pahot-tha-nya and Naga-yan temples.

The Ananda temple narrative builds on its predecessors. As at the Nagoya, the hierarchy of narrative themes is retained overall at the Ananda, with the Jatakas being located furthest away from the central shrine, the life scenes positioned closer, while the multiple images of the Buddha, possibly representing the twenty-eight past Buddhas are positioned nearest to the temple’s core. In the context of narrative development in Pagan’s early art, the Ananda’s complex imagery moves beyond a literal educational purpose. One theory put forward by Robert Brown for the presence of these expanded narratives is that Kyusithi’s motivation was to “lock in and regularize the imagery and its meaning so that it is, like the Tipitaka, the complete, correct, final, and here quite literally unshakeable (visual) doctrine.” This is a likely motivation, but the basic premise for narrative selection is not addressed, namely that the foundations lie in the kammic Buddhism first promoted by Shin Arakan and an acceptance of the Three Jewels. I suggest that the story being told at the Ananda is one that brings together Kyusithi’s personal view of himself as holding the supreme position within the kingdom and his commitment to kammic Buddhism as the path to Buddhahood. At the Ananda, the narratives are symbolic of the central Buddhist concept of correct moral behavior as a path to Enlightenment and the role of the earthly monarch in upholding that moral code. This is represented through support of the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha. After the Ananda, these narrative themes are presented in a much more contracted format. Never again do we see such a complex and all-encompassing visual narrative in Burma, and few temples of this scale were produced again.

When tracing the early development of the primary narratives in Buddhist art at Pagan, the most influential factor appears to have been the availability of Buddhist texts. Early scholars focused on direct text-image relationships when interpreting these pictorial narratives. However, if an interpretive view that considers the tenets of Buddhist thought is considered, the imagery takes on a different role. The arrival of the Tipitaka with the Mon heralded the beginnings of Burmese narrative art in the form of the Jatakas. Their appeal lay in what they represented rather than their specific meaning, namely that the Jatakas indicated a means for individuals to comprehend the law of cause and effect and therefore embark on the path to Enlightenment through the attainment of the path. Personal moral practices relate to accumulating merit to become popular, and the Three Jewels offered three means of earning merit. Kammic Buddhism thus profoundly influenced artistic expression at Pagan. Representations of the Jatakas appeared first at Pagan, and then the Buddha’s life became an artistic focus. This was a logical next step as the narratives became more personally connected with their kingly patrons’ aspirations towards future Buddhahood and also served to generate merit by paying homage to the Buddha. The expansion of the narrative repertoire to include the twenty-eight Buddhas can be seen, in the context of a Buddhist philosophical interpretation, as an extension of these ideas, as the king looked towards the prophecies that have heralded the arrival of all Buddhas and considered his own worthiness to be the recipient of a prophecy in the future. These three narratives—the Jatakas, the Buddha’s last life, and the stories of the past Buddhas—thus became the foundation themes for Burma’s art history.

Notes


4. Luce, GREP, 1: 15.


6. Luce, GREP, 1: 17, 46.

7. Ibid., 18.

8. Ibid., 19.

9. Burmese historians tell how Shin Arakan helped restore spiritual order to the growing city, and his role as a historical personage is supported by Kyusithi’s palace inscription that mentions Shin Arakan’s participation in the dedication ceremony. C. O. Blagden, "Men Inscriptions Nos. 9–11," in Epigraphia Birmanica, being Lists and Other Inscriptions of Burma 3 (1905–06), ed. C. Dussartle (Rangoon: Archaeological Survey of Burma, 1923).

10. The Chronicle also tells that Awantha succeeded Thiun and brought King Manala and his court to Pagan, after the latter refused to give Awantha a copy of the Tipitaka. This version of events is disputed by scholars today.

11. It is impossible to date Awantha’s tablets using temple construction dates, but votive tablets are easy and quick to make and would have been an expedient way to promote Awantha’s piety and authority. As votive tablets have been found in some of Awantha’s early temples, their presence at least coincides with the earliest Buddhist monuments associated with his reign. See Luce, GREP, 1: 15–18.


15. Sunkottl was also used by the Burmese writers of the twelfth century, followers of the Therosanu canon from northern India.


19. Luce, GREP, 1: 69.


22. In contrast to Luex, I argue that the Hpet-keik pagodas predate the Shwe-an-daw. See Galloway, "Burmese Buddhist Imagery," 133-41. The dating is of minor import here as the emphasis is on the rapid development of narrative imagery. As the Hpet-keik and Shwe-an-daw were likely built within three years of each other, the argument for narrative development is little affected by which one came first.


25. Steadman, Buddhist Plain of Marit, 234.

26. Only around twenty plaques have ever been found. Luex, OGREP, 1: 261.


30. For descriptions, see Steadman, Buddhist Plain of Marit, 2005.


32. It is possible there may have once been wall paintings that included Jataka scenes, but the temple is very degraded and no wall decoration remains except for carved figures of the Buddha in the ceiling vaults.

33. See Forchtmanter, Pagans, 1.

34. Most narrative sculptures at Pagan depict scenes with the central images in a seated position. Images composed in a horizontal format include Mañjula's dream and the Parinibbāna. The birth and descent from Tavatimsa Heavens were usually composed with the central images standing, and the niche size was adjusted accordingly.


36. Ibid., 46-47.


41. Luex, OGREP, 1: 304.

42. Ibid., 292-93.

43. Ibid., 49.

44. Ibid., 262-3.

45. Ibid., 204.

46. Ibid., 61.

47. Ibid., 50-53.

48. Ibid., 53.

49. Ibid., 61-62.

50. Ibid., 314. Luex notes that the pedastals have scenes that help identify the Buddhas, and the illustrations follow the Buddhas quite closely.

51. Ibid., 315-24.

52. The Ananda temple sculptures were first described and interpreted by C. Donnachie, "The Stone Sculptures in the Ananda Temple at Pagan," ASI (1913-14): 63-77. The next major assessment of these sculptures is Luex, OGREP. For a review of the sculptural narrative portrayed and its relationship to Buddhist narrative texts, see Galloway, "Burmese Buddhist Imagery," 292-99.

53. Comprehensive photographs of the Ananda sculptures can be found in Luex, OGREP, 3: pp. 277-334.

54. There are a small number of images in different masbas, including two showing figures with the left hand in Anuruddha mudra. Galloway, "Burmese Buddhist Imagery," 185-86.

55. Luex, OGREP, 1: 63-79.


58. Steadman, Buddhist Plain of Marit, 101. Their use here has similarities to the Jatakas role in wall painting as seen towards the end of Anawrahta's reign where they are not as readily visible or identified.

59. Luex, OGREP, 1: 369.

60. Donnachie, "The Stone Sculptures," 70. Imagery that did not relate to the textual narrative was assumed to be an error. For example, Donnachie noted that the scene showing Prince Siddhartha hurling his jewels to Channa has the prince positioned "at the door of a palace or temple, which strangely enough appears at every step in those lovely spots. Apparently the sculptor saw nothing incongruous in it, or else they worked without thinking of the matter at all." Ibid., 88. For a revision of an exclusive Tharavaad interpretation, see Galloway, "Relationships between Buddhist Texts.""}

Narrative components of murals can be placed in specific patterns for ideological and religious reasons. The arrangement of narratives therefore conveys ideas that cannot be viewed as random plot manipulations or as simple aids to visual storytelling. In other words, the organization and re-organization of visual stories produces new narratives, as can be seen in a number of articles in this volume, including Sonya Lee's work on nirvana narratives in seventh- and eighth-century cave-temples in China, Mary-Louise Totton's analysis of the networks generated by the disposition of imagery on Loro Jonggang in central Java, Mary Beth Heaton's examination of the eighteenth-century Ramayana murals of the Mottanerai Palace in India, and Dominik Bonat's comparison of historical narratives in ancient Assam and Angkor. In each of these examples, the disposition of the imagery generates concepts beyond the original significance of the narratives. In Burma and Thailand during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, recognizable patterns were established for new narratives, painted according to re-emergent mural traditions and created within sacred spaces through the disposition of Buddhist concepts and stories. The connections between the art of Thailand's central area and Burma have not been the focus of major scholarly activity, however, and this paper starts to redress this lacuna.

Central Thai and Burmese murals share strong similarities in subject matter, including the ten great Jataka stories, the life of gotama Buddha, and the enlightenment of the Buddha, due to the Theravada Buddhism espoused by both kingdoms. In Theravada Buddhism, the enlightenment was the culminating moment for the Buddha, separating his lives within the samsaric cycle from his dispensation, where he taught and assisted others in following his example, and his Parinibbāna. The Jataka stories and the life of Gotama illustrate the path by which the Buddha became awakened. However, in Thailand, the repetition of the "defeat of Mara" (Maraṇavijaya) theme in the main, sculpted image and in the painted version, and the large size of the Maraṇavijaya picture have a different emphasis from that of the